

Alpine National Park



The High Country - around Bright, Mount Beauty, Omeo and Dargo

The Bogong and Dargo High Plains and associated alpine peaks are part of a unique Australian alpine environment. Victoria's highest mountain, Mt Bogong (1986 m) and second highest, Mt Feathertop (1922 m) dominate the subtle, broad undulating high plains. Combined with extremes in weather, these features provide some of the most spectacular landscapes and recreational opportunities in Victoria.

Getting there and getting around

The area is situated approximately 365 km north east of Melbourne or 100 km south east of Albury - Wodonga.

From the south access is via the Great Alpine Road, from Bairnsdale to Omeo and Mt Hotham or the Dargo High Plains Road from Dargo to Mt Hotham. From the north access is via the Bogong High Plains Road from Mount Beauty or the Great Alpine Road from Bright to Mt Hotham.

Please remember that mountain roads are often narrow and winding, and due to cold conditions at any time of the year, potentially slippery and icy. Snow chains must be carried during the snow season and fitted where directed.

Car touring

The main attractions of the high country are easily accessible in a 2WD car. The Dargo and Bogong High Plains Roads and the alpine resorts of Mt Hotham and Falls Creek provide walking and skiing access. The alpine scenery from the Great Alpine Road over Mt Hotham is particularly spectacular.

If you have a full day (overnight is even better) it is possible to drive the Great Alpine Circuit (250 km) which follows the Great Alpine Road between Bright and Omeo, linking with Falls Creek and Mount Beauty via the Omeo Highway and Bogong High Plains Road.

The Dargo High Plains Road, although suitable for 2WD cars, can be rough and dusty in sections and slippery after rain.

The Bogong High Plains and Dargo High Plains Roads are closed by snow in winter and many of the four wheel drive tracks accessing the Barry.

Mountains are seasonally closed between early June and late October.

Please remember:

- check road conditions before setting out
- vehicle access is limited to formed roads and tracks open to the public
- wheel chains must be carried and fitted where directed during the snow season, June to early October inclusive

Walking

Some of the best mountain walking country in Australia is found in the Alps. Some tracks are suitable for day and weekend family walks. Others are long, rough and challenging.

Shorter family walks can be undertaken to Mt Loch, along the Hotham to Dinner Plain Trail, Ropers Lookout, Wallace - Cope Hut circuit, Heathy Spur and Mountain Creek.

Longer more challenging day and overnight hikes are the Razorback or Bungalow Spur to Mt Feathertop, Tawonga Huts and the Fainters, and Staircase Spur or the High Plains to Mt Bogong.

The long distance Australian Alps Walking Track (AAWT) passes through the area on its 650 km journey between Walhalla (Gippsland) and Namadgi National Park (near Canberra). This AAWT track varies from a four wheel drive track along the Barry Mountains to a foot pad across the snow grass plains of the high country, from Mt Hotham to Mt Bogong.

Bushwalking along the AAWT and other longer routes is only for fit, experienced self reliant walkers.



For further information

Parks Victoria
Information Centre
Call 13 1963
or visit our website at
www.parks.vic.gov.au

Parks Victoria Offices at:
Bright, Mt Beauty, Dargo and
Omeo **Phone 13 1963**

Caring for the environment

Help us look after your park
by
following these guidelines:

All native plants, animals,
archaeological and historic
sites are protected by law

Take rubbish home with you
Dogs and other pets are not
permitted

Always check fire danger
forecasts. No fires (including
stoves) on days of Total Fire
Ban (East Gippsland & North-
East Fire Ban Districts)
Use a portable stove instead
of lighting a fire, especially
above or near the tree line

Fuel Stove Only Area. Due to
vegetation damage and visual
scarring no campfires are to
be lit in the Mt Bogong and Mt
Feathertop areas, including
access tracks
Firearms are only permitted in
accordance with Hunting
Regs

Choose a firm, dry, well
drained campsite at least 20
metres from any water course

Use of vehicles, including trail
bikes, is restricted to existing
roads and tracks. Vehicles
must be fully registered and
drivers licensed

Do not pollute waterways with
refuse, detergent or human
waste. Use existing toilets or
bury your waste at least 100
metres from any waterway or
campsite

*Please don't throw this park
note away. Keep it, return it
for others to use, or recycle it*

Healthy Parks Healthy People

*Visiting a park can improve
your health, mind, body and
soul. So, with over four million
hectares of parkland available
to Victorians, why not escape
to a park today!*



Tour guides

A number of licensed tour operators run tours (4WDing, bushwalking, horseriding and rafting) in this area.

Visit www.parks.vic.gov.au to see a list of tour operators and the type of tours you can participate in.

Fire in the Alps

During the summer of 2006 a number of fires swept through the Australian Alps. Tracks within this section of Alpine National Park are now open.

To assist with regeneration please keep to tracks and trails, especially in fire affected areas.

In the past

Many Aboriginal people have a remarkably rich history of Aboriginal use in the Victorian Alps and a vast knowledge of the cultural sites, oral history and ancestral stories that relate to the alpine region of Victoria. Throughout the many seasons each year, Aboriginal groups would come from as far away as the coast and south west slopes, to meet with the tribes of the mountains for intertribal ceremonies and feasting on Bogong Moths. During these festivities they would exchange cultural objects and materials for tools. Aboriginal sites such as shelters and campsites provide a deeper understanding of the Aboriginal connection with the high country. Throughout the Alps their custodianship still endures.

Following in the footsteps of explorers such as John Mitchell and Baron von Mueller, miners and graziers pioneered the mountains in the 1850s in search of gold and suitable summer pastures.

The value of the mountains for recreation and tourism was realised as early as the 1880s with the establishment of the Bright Alpine Club and numerous Government hospices.

In 1939 the SEC began work on a major scheme for electricity generation in the Kiewa Valley. The aqueducts, Rocky Valley and Pretty Valley dams on the Bogong High Plains are all part of the scheme which was completed in 1961.

Plants

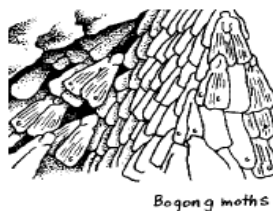
The Bogong and Dargo High Plains contain the most extensive and botanically rich area of alpine vegetation in the Victorian Alps. Smaller changes in aspect, wind, cold air drainage, water, soil and rock type create a mosaic of plant communities such as mossbeds, herbfields, heathlands and Snow Gum woodlands.

Animals

These habitats support a variety of animals such as the rare Mountain Pygmy Possum, Broad-toothed Rat, Bush Rat, Brown and Dusky Antechinus and Lesser Long-eared Bat.

Common bird species are the Australian Kestrel, Flame Robin, Little Raven and Pied Currawong. Reptiles in the alpine environment include the White-lipped Snake and Alpine Copperhead.

The Bogong Moth inhabits the alpine peaks between November and April - away from the heat of the inland plains.



Bogong Moths shelter in rock crevices where they provide food for Mountain Pygmy Possums and Little Ravens.

For more details of the Alpine National Park see the following maps and publications:

Maps

Spatial Vision Touring the Victorian Alps
1:140,000

VicMap 1:50,000 Bogong Alpine Area

VicMap 1:50,000 Dargo Plains - Cobungra

VicMap 1:50,000 Howitt - Selwyn

Alpine National Park park notes

Source of the Rivers

- around Mitta Mitta, Omeo, Tallangatta and Corryong

Our Mountain Heritage

- around Heyfield, Licola and Dargo

Valleys and Bluffs

- around Mansfield and Whitfield

Wilderness and Snowy

- around Benambra, Buchan and Bonang

Horseriding in the Alpine National Park

Books

The Australian Alps Walking Track and Alpine National Park by John Siseman (Pindari Publications)

Victoria's National Parks Explorer's Guide (See Australia Guides)

Explore the Australia Alps - Car touring guide to the Australian Alps national parks by Australia Alps Liaison Committee (New Holland Press)

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Other Walking park notes to refer to include:

- 1 Walks around Bogong High Plains
- 2 Walks around Feathertop, Hotham & Dinner Plain

Walkers must be self sufficient with food, water, first aid and camping gear and be skilled in the use of maps and compass. Do not rely on arriving at a hut.

Cross county skiing

The high country boasts some of Australia's finest ski touring areas, from well defined and groomed trails near the resorts to the winter wilderness of the Dargo High Plains.

Popular localities include areas adjacent to the Falls Creek and Mt Hotham Alpine Resorts such as the Bogong High Plains, JB Plain and the Mt Loch area.

Mt Bogong, The Razorback, Mt Feathertop and the Dargo High Plains are visited by more experienced skiers.

Downhill skiing and alpine resorts

The alpine resorts of Falls Creek and Mt Hotham, adjacent to the Alpine National Park, are managed by separate resort management boards, and are not part of the Alpine National Park.

These areas have been set aside to provide accommodation and facilities for downhill skiing, snow boarding and other snow based recreation.

On horseback

Horseriding is popular during summer and autumn, especially on the Bogong High Plains. Restrictions apply to group size and the location and timing of rides to minimise the impact on the environment and other park visitors.

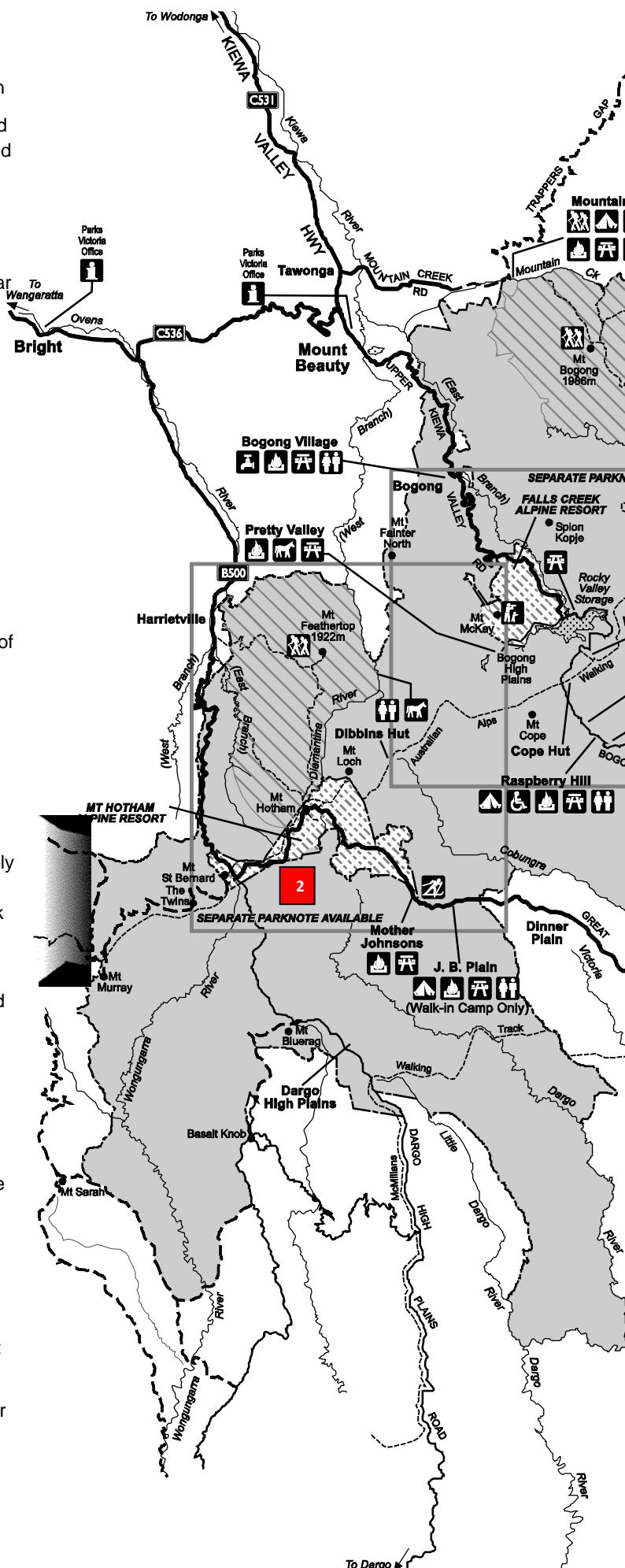
Where riding is permitted, permits are required for horseriding parties larger than five. Riding in alpine and subalpine environments is permitted only between 1 December and 30 April inclusive.

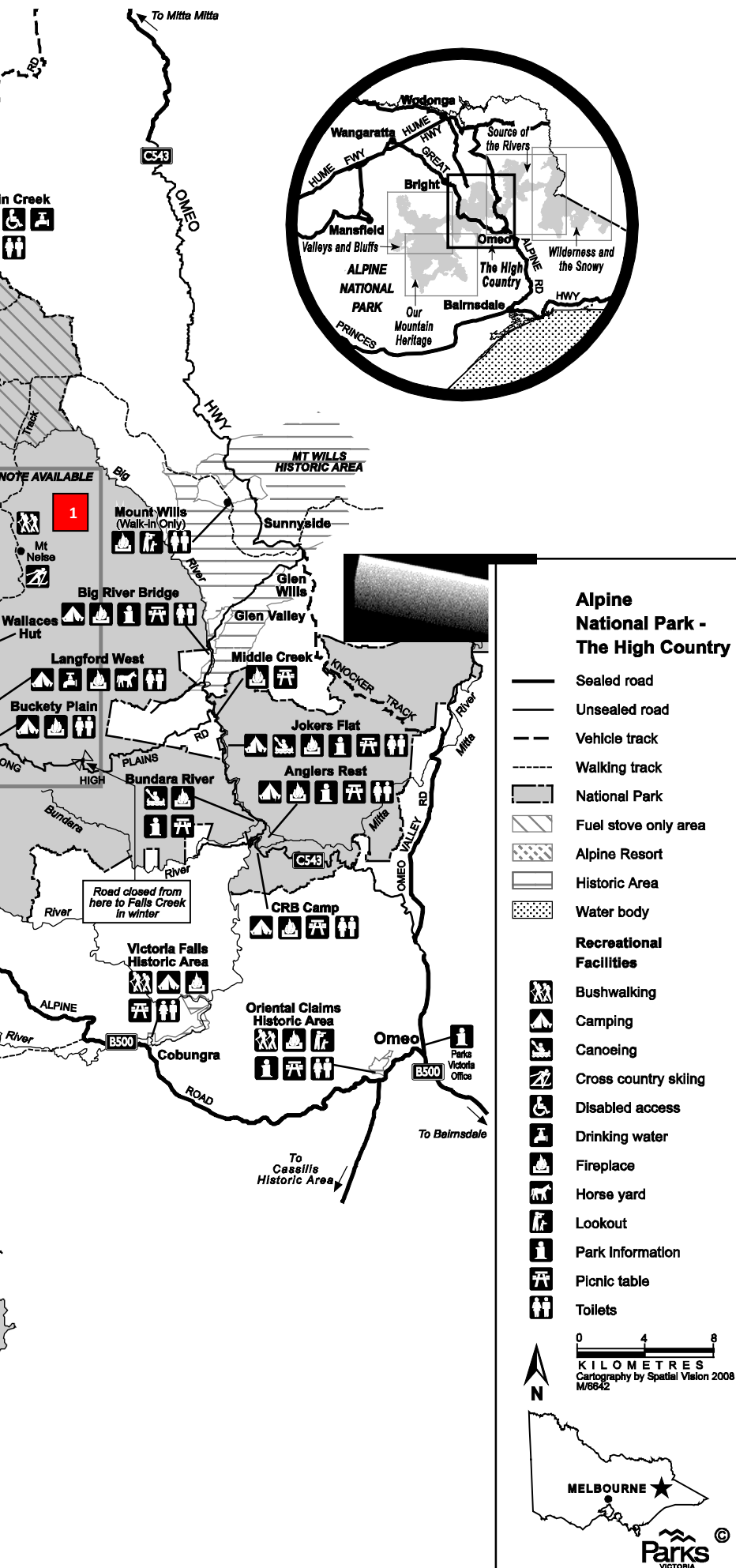
Mountain bike riding

The Dargo and Bogong High Plains offer some great opportunities for exploration by bicycle. Track surfaces vary from sealed roads to steep, rough four wheel drive tracks. Cycling is not permitted on walking tracks.

The following roads and aqueducts are available for bicycle riding:

- all public roads, except if seasonally closed
- Rocky Valley, Cope East, Cope West, Langford East and Langford West aqueducts
- all management vehicle only (MVO) roads, except for Spion Kopje Track





Setting up camp

Dispersed bush camping is permitted throughout the area, except within 200 metres of the Bogong High Plains or Pretty Valley Roads.

If you prefer the use of toilets, picnic tables and fireplaces the following camping areas are provided:

- JB Plain between Hotham Village and Dinner Plain on the Great Alpine Road (walk in only)
- Buckety Plain, Raspberry Hill and Pretty Valley & Langfords West (horse yards) on the Bogong High Plains east of Falls Creek
- Mountain Creek at the foot of Mt Bogong near Tawonga

When camping you should be fully self sufficient with food, water and camping equipment.

Huts

There are 60 huts and hut ruins in the area, many of them historic having been built by early graziers, miners or government authorities. Wallaces Hut (built 1889) on the Bogong High Plains is typical of the bush architecture employed by the cattlemen of that time. Enjoy visiting the huts but do not rely on them for accommodation - they may be difficult to find or already occupied.

Fires

Firewood supplies are limited, especially in alpine and subalpine areas, so the use of camping stoves is preferred.

Mt Bogong, Mt Feathertop and approaches are fuel stove only areas. No fires are permitted in the open.

In other areas if you must use a fire, keep it small and within fireplaces provided. No fires, including camp stoves, may be lit on days of Total Fire Ban.

Take care!

All visitors, and especially walkers, should realise that weather conditions can change rapidly in alpine areas. Snowfalls can be experienced at any time of the year and water can be extremely scarce, so always be prepared with:

1. warm clothing
2. wind and waterproof jacket
3. gloves, hat, sunglasses and strong footwear
4. first aid kit and sunscreen
5. energy food and water
6. compass and relevant topographical map

Before you go, let someone know where you are going, and when you expect to return, and fill in the intentions book provided. Also, please keep your group small (4 - 8 people).

Please keep to walking tracks, particularly in old gold mining areas where there may be mine shafts.