

Rubicon State Forest

Located approximately two hours drive north east of Melbourne, Rubicon State forest provides excellent opportunities for camping, bushwalking, picnicking, fishing, mountain biking, and recreational driving.

Location and Access

Situated between Lake Eildon National Park and Maroondah Hwy, the attractions of Rubicon State forest can be accessed from Taggerty-Thornton Rd, Goulburn Valley Hwy or Eildon-Jamison Rd.

History

The area is home to the Taungurung people. Evidence of indigenous habitation exists throughout the forest, such as artefact scatters and scar trees.

The Rubicon Valley Historic Area has been set aside for the protection of the area's historic sites and values. Timber harvesting was historically the major industry of the region, beginning in the early 1900's. Eight sawmills were operating in the Rubicon forest in the first half of the century.



The first sawmill to operate in the Rubicon forest in 1907. Photo: courtesy Peter Evans

A network of wooden tramways connected the sawmills to the edge of the forest. A 2ft gauge steel tramway connecting Rubicon Forest to the township of Alexandra carried the sawn timber by steam engine, then in 1935, by diesel engine. These two diesel engines, the first Victorian built diesel locomotives, have been restored and are in operation at the Alexandra Timber Tramway and Museum.

The Historic Area is the site of the first Victorian hydro-electric power scheme. The Rubicon scheme, completed in 1929, consists of four power stations and associated dams, aqueducts and pipelines. During the 1930's, the scheme

contributed about one-fifth of Victoria's electricity needs. While still in operation today, its contribution to meeting the State's energy needs is now small.

A 1.3 km haulage, with an average grade of 1 in 3, from the Rubicon Power Station to the top of the spur, still exists today. A steel tramway used to maintain the aqueduct between the Rubicon Power Station and the Rubicon Dam was in operation until the mid 1990's when All Terrain Vehicles (ATV) took over the work of the tramcars. Three impressive trestle bridges form part of the tramway at Lubra Creek, Beech Creek and at the Fifteen Thousand Foot Siphon. A fourth trestle bridge is located at Royston Power Station. While still in operation today, public access to the power stations and associated infrastructure is not permitted.



15000' Siphon trestle bridge, named because of its distance in feet from the beginning of the tramline at the top of the haulage, has been reconstructed to original specifications

The entire hydro-electric scheme has been added to the Victorian Heritage Register along with many of the former mill sites and associated tramways which are still apparent in the forest today.

Severe fires in 1939 destroyed a large part of the forest, its sawmills and associated tramways. Some sawmills and tramways were reconstructed to salvage the fire-killed timber. Damage to the hydro-electricity scheme was largely restricted to the steel tramway adjacent to the Rubicon aqueduct that had badly buckled from the heat and sections of wooden-stave pipes and power lines. Twelve men lost their lives in the Rubicon forest during the 1939 fires. The area was again damaged by fire in 2009 destroying the Beech Creek Trestle Bridge. The bridge has since been rebuilt.

Things to see and do

Rubicon Camping Areas



The Rubicon Valley Historic Area has three camping areas. A short picturesque walking track connects Kendalls and The Boys campgrounds. A longer circuit walk also begins from The Boys Camp.

Snobs Creek Falls



Main Falls 100m one-way
Cascades 25m one-way

Snobs Creek Falls is situated in the foothills of Rubicon State forest. The pristine waters of Snobs Creek are an important supply to the Snobs Creek Fish Hatchery six kilometres below. There is a short walk from the carpark to viewing platforms. The viewing platform at the top of the falls offers spectacular views as they drop more than 100 metres over a series of rocky outcrops.

Prior to European settlement, the local Taungurong people referred to the falls as 'Bunyarrambite', which is believed to mean 'be against water' or 'twilight water'. In the early 1860's, Snobs Creek was also known as Cataract Creek, but is rumoured to have later changed to 'Snobs' after 'Black' Brooks, a West Indian man who operated a bootmakers shop in close proximity to the creek and present highway. Snob is an old English term used to describe a bootmaker or boot repairer.



An early sketch of Snobs Creek Falls, then known as Bunyarrambite Falls, by Eugene von Guerard.

Image courtesy of Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW – PXC 309/14.

Mt Torbreck Summit Walk



Return 4.2km | 3 hours
Very Steep | Rough track, many obstacles
Limited signage | Experienced bushwalkers

Mt Torbreck summit walk begins from the Barnewall Plains visitor area on Barnewall Plains Rd. Rising to an altitude of 1516m; the views from around the summit are breathtaking on a clear day and well worth the long climb. A rock cairn

marks the summit location. This area was an important source of Bogong moths for the Taungurong people who occupied the area prior to European settlement. Bogong moths were a major seasonal food source for indigenous people.

Vehicle access to the beginning of the walk is restricted during the winter months (see Seasonal Road Closures for more information), when Barnewall Plains Road is closed to within a 10 minute walk of Barnewall Plains.

Morris Lookout



Morris Lookout provides stunning views of the surrounding area, including the townships of Thornton and Eildon. Access to the lookout is via Herbs Rd. This road is closed during the winter months (see Seasonal Road Closures below for more information).

Safety – Please read

- On Code Red Fire Danger Rating days, State forest and parks are closed to the public. Do not enter forests or parks on Code Red Days. If you are already there when a Code Red day is announced, you should leave the night before or early in the morning. For more information contact DELWP (see below).
- Be responsible for your own safety. Be aware of extreme weather events, carry your own first aid kit and let someone know before you go.
- Pit toilets are common at State Forest sites but hand washing facilities and toilet paper may not be supplied. Come prepared.
- When on forest roads, be prepared for the unexpected. Timber trucks, 4WD's, hikers, horse riders, trail bike riders, cyclists and native animals may also be using your chosen track.

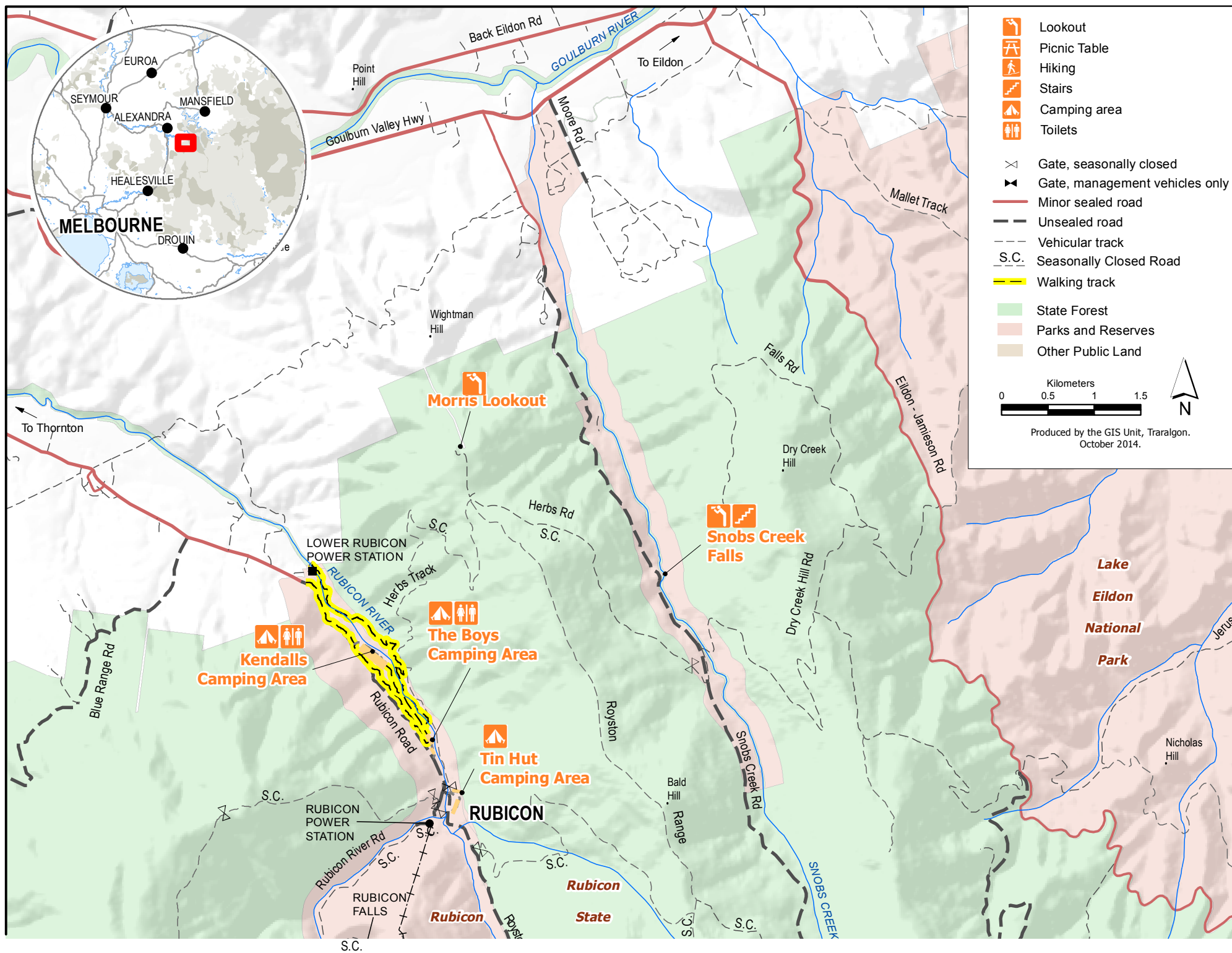
Seasonal Road Closures

Some roads within the forest are seasonally closed each year from the Thursday after the Queen's Birthday holiday through to the Thursday before Melbourne Cup. This is to protect track surfaces and the environment, and for public safety. Road closures may be extended beyond these dates, depending on weather conditions. These closures are enforced by a gate or sign. Contact DELWP for more information on road closures.

For more information

The Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning (DELWP) is responsible for managing Victoria's State Forest. For further information contact DELWP's Customer Service Centre ☎ 136 186 (If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service on 133 677) or visit DELWP's website at <http://www.delwp.vic.gov.au>

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