

Beechworth Historic Park

Visitor Guide

The rugged landscapes of this park provide opportunities to explore natural and historical features close to the historic township of Beechworth.



The Cascades after rain

Things to see and do

A variety of short and long walks in and around the Gorge and Lake Kerferd allow visitors to explore the natural and historical features of the park.

Drive, cycle or walk along the sealed Gorge Scenic Drive for spectacular views of the granite landscape, local gold mining history and the surrounding countryside.

Some sections of the walks can be steep. Walkers should ensure they have suitable footwear, water, sunscreen and a snack.

Facilities and accommodation

There are two caravan parks close to the park – at Lake Sambell and Silver Creek. Motel and B&B accommodation is available in Beechworth.

Plants and animals



Nodding Greenhood Orchid

Unique plant and animal communities have evolved to live in this drier environment. Stringy-barks, native cypress pines, boxes and Blakely's red gums dominate the overstorey. Hardy bush peas, grevilleas and

wattles are common understorey species, while a range of lilies, orchids and other wildflowers can be found on the forest floor. Around the rocky outcrops tough lichens and mosses grow abundantly despite a lack of soil and little water.

Kangaroos, wallabies, possums and wombats are common within the park. Koala numbers are increasing and it may be possible to spot one asleep in the fork of a tree. Many bird species call the park home including honeyeaters, parrots and small insectivorous species. Reptiles including the lace monitor can often be seen during the summer months.



Parks Victoria Ranger

"Victoria has all the outdoors you could wish for – mountains, forests, beaches and bushland, all preserved in our parks. Our natural landscapes have been here longer than anyone knows, and together we can make sure they're here forever."

For more information call the Parks Victoria Information Centre on 13 1963 or visit our website at www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

History

The Duroora tribe was one of the Aboriginal groups who inhabited this area. Other Aboriginal groups such as the Pangerang, Jaitmathang and Minjambuta would have passed through the area or camped in the valleys.

Art sites of significant importance to Aboriginal people can be seen at nearby Mount Pilot.

Gold was discovered near Beechworth in 1852 and thousands of miners flocked to the Spring and Reids Creek goldfields. By 1857 no less than 14,000 ounces, or half a tonne, of gold left the fields on the fortnightly gold escorts to Melbourne.

Shallow alluvial mining and sluicing were used to extract gold from the deep layers of sands and gravels. Most of the work was done by hand and many miners received little or no reward for their efforts.

As the alluvial gold was exhausted, companies were formed and deep lead and quartz reef mining was developed throughout the surrounding forest.

Evidence of gold mining can be seen at Spring and Reids Creeks, the Powder Magazine, Rocky Mountain Tunnel and along the walk from Lake Sambell to Lake Kerferd.

Gorge Drive

1. One Tree Hill was named for the single mature red stringy bark tree that survived the miners' need for timber.

2. The Powder Magazine was built to hold gunpowder for mining operations. Take a tour of the National Trust listed building.

3. Granite Tors - rain, frost, wind, sun and the action of plants have all weathered the granite into strange and unusual shapes. Some have been given interesting names such as Pumpkin Rock and The Sphinx.

4. Spring Creek Bridge was built as part of the Scenic Drive. There are many rock pools along the creek. In spring a variety of wildflowers line the creek including the green-flowered Correa and purple-flowered Chocolate Lily.

5. Rocky Mountain Tunnel can be seen on the opposite side of the creek. The Rocky Mountain Extended Mining Company built the tunnel to reduce water levels in Spring Creek and expose new areas for sluicing. Running for 800 metres under the Beechworth township, the tunnel cost 13,5000 pounds or \$600,000. The tunnel was a rich source of gold - 6,500 ounces (about 182 kilograms) of gold was recovered from sluice boxes placed in the tunnel between 1869 and 1876.

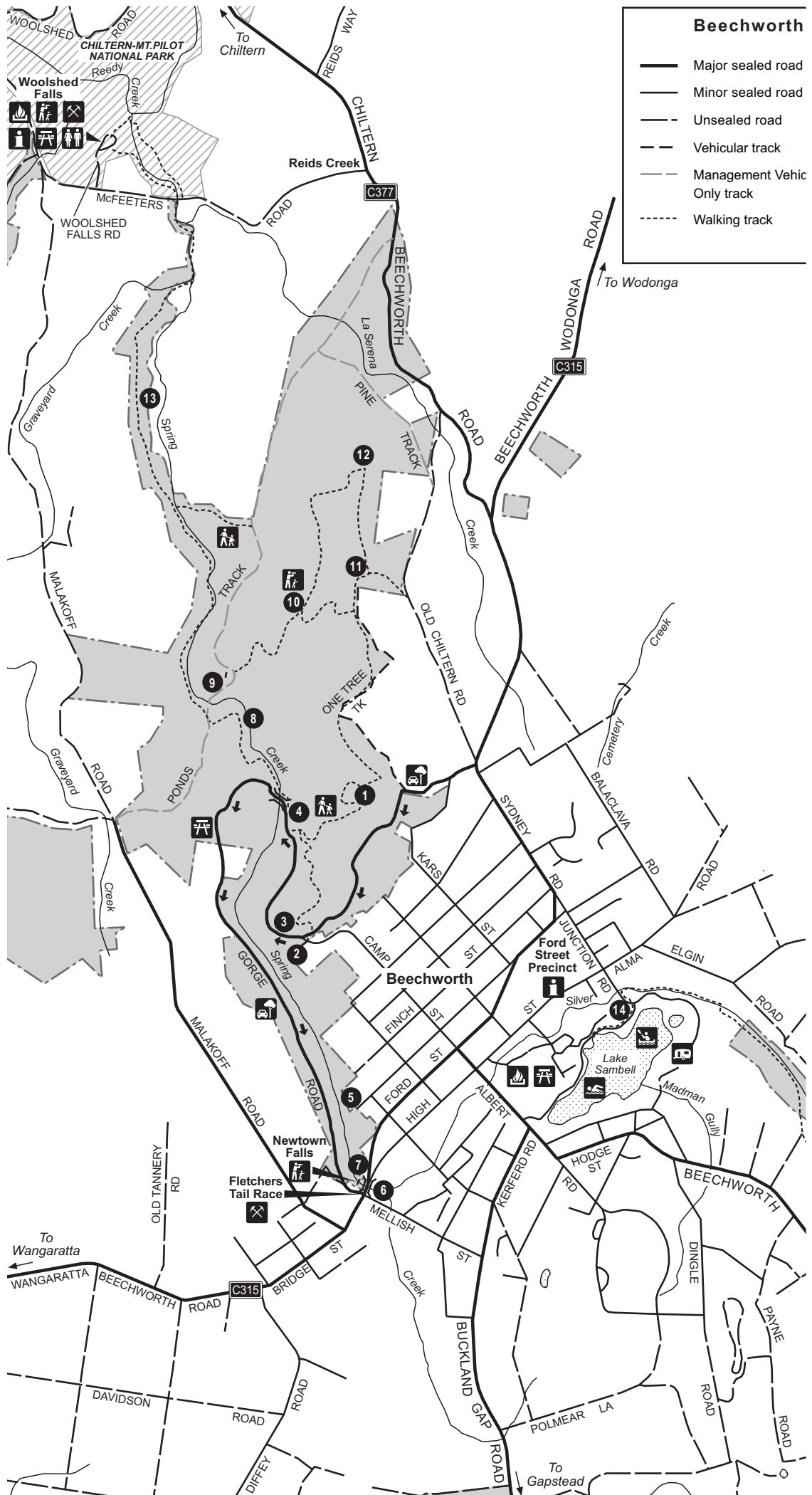
6. Newtown Bridge was built by Scottish stone masons in 1875. The granite keystone bridge replaced an earlier bridge further upstream.

7. Chevalier's Mill, a water-powered mill, once stood at the head of the falls on Spring Creek. Built in 1855, it supplied the townspeople with flour and timber. The tail race or channel (2.4 metres deep and 410 metres long) visible below the bridge, was cut through solid granite over a two year period in the late 1860s, enabling the area upstream to be sluiced for gold.





8. The Cascades - a series of waterfalls from which Spring Creek drops down into the valley below. Try to time your visit after rain!

9. Diversion Dam was built to divert water from a gully into a water race where it could be channelled for mining operations.

10. The Precipice provides an excellent view of the former Reids Creek goldfields.

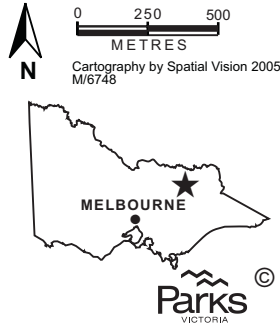


11th Historic Park

- ad  Historic Park
- ad  Other parks & reserves
-  Water body
- Point of Interest 

Recreational Facilities

-  Canoe access
-  Caravan park
-  Carpark
-  Family walk
-  Fireplace
-  Lookout
-  Mine site
-  Park information
-  Picnic table
-  Scenic drive →
-  Swimming
-  Toilets



11. Ingram's Rock - named after James Ingram, a pioneer and leading member of the Beechworth community. He died in 1928, within six weeks of his 100th birthday.

12. Fiddes Quarry is one of many granite quarries in the area. You can imagine that the stone masons have just stepped out for a few moments.

13. Reids Creek Goldfield - other than a few shafts and some alluvial mining sites, little can be seen of what was once the richest goldfield in the area.

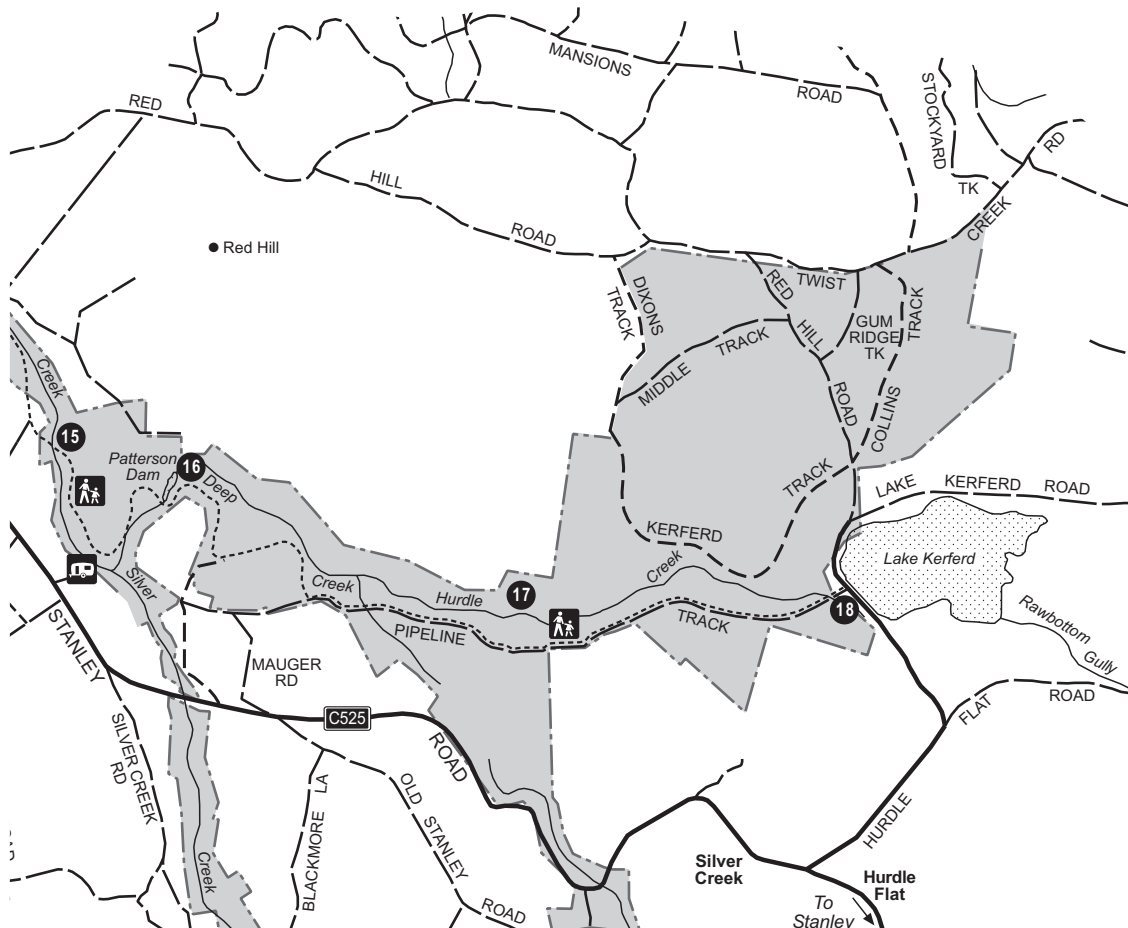
14. Lake Sambell was created by damming a mining site which had been extensively sluiced and dredged by the Rocky Mountain Mining company over a period of sixty years. The lake was built with funds from winning the Ideal Towns competition in 1928 and is a popular recreational area.

15. From Lake Sambell to Silver Creek Caravan Park the track passes through **old mining sites** including areas where many deep vertical shafts were dug to reach the gold deposits. *Please stay on the track to avoid these shafts.*

16. Patterson Dam was one of the many storages built to provide water for mining. Today it is a peaceful habitat for freshwater wildlife.

17. From Patterson Dam to Lake Kerferd the walk follows a vehicle track built to service the water pipeline to Beechworth. The vegetation here reflects the moister conditions of the area, with taller and larger trees such as blue gums, peppermints and white-barked brittle gums. The understorey supports many shrub species including blackwoods, silver wattles, dogwood and hop bitter-peas. Wildlife is varied in this section of the park. Look out particularly for swamp wallabies, wombats, koalas and many birds.

18. Lake Kerferd provides Beechworth's water supply. The town council built the dam, retaining the waters of Hurdle Swamp in 1862, but disputes over water rights delayed the supply of water to the township until 1874. The lake was once the scene of annual regattas and has provided Beechworth with a reliable water source even through the harshest droughts.



Touring the area:

Beechworth Information
Centre
Old Shire Hall
Ford Street
Beechworth 3747
Phone: 03 5728 3233

Gateway Visitor
Information Centre
Gateway Village
Lincoln Causeway
Wodonga 3690
Freecall: 1800 800 743

Caring for the environment

Help us look after your parks by remembering these guidelines:

Please take rubbish home with you for recycling or disposal

All plants, animals, historical and archaeological sites and geographic features are protected by law

As this area is of historic and conservation significance, fossicking, including gold panning, is not permitted.

Dogs are permitted in the park, but must be kept on a leash at all times

Firearms are prohibited

Light fires only in fire places provided. Bring your own firewood for barbecues.

Gas barbecues are Recommended.

No fires, including barbecues, may be lit on a day of **Total Fire Ban**

Beechworth Historic Park is in the **North Eastern Total Fire Ban District**

Vehicles, including motor bikes, may only be used on formed open roads. Drivers must be licensed and vehicles registered and roadworthy

Gorge Scenic Drive

The five kilometre drive was constructed in 1926 to provide access to the scenic countryside near Beechworth. The Gorge Scenic Drive is now also popular for walking and cycling. Points of interest are listed on the map page. Start your drive at Wodonga Road or at the Powder Magazine.



Spring Creek Bridge

Walking Tracks

The Gorge

Large granite outcrops in the Gorge area support dry forests where a network of tracks allow walkers to select their own route and distance. There are 12 kilometres of track leading to many points of interest. Entry points to the walk include the Powder Magazine, One Tree Hill, Ingrams Rock and the Gorge Road. Look for the signs, follow the arrows and stay on the established tracks.

Lake Sambell to Lake Kerferd

Beginning near Lake Sambell on Junction Road, this five kilometre walk follows Spring and Hurdle Creeks to Lake Kerferd passing through moist foothill forest growing on sedimentary soils.



Fiddes Quarry

How to get there

Beechworth Historic Park is located adjacent to the town of Beechworth in north east Victoria. The park is approximately 3.5 hours from Melbourne and 30 minutes from Wangaratta (Melway Ref: 522 E6).

Other interesting places to visit

Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park - from the 545metre summit of Mt Pilot you are rewarded with a 360 degree view of the surrounding countryside. On a clear day Mt Buffalo is easily recognisable on the southern horizon.

Aboriginal rock art can be found at the Yeddonba cultural site.

At Woolshed Falls - A ten minute drive north from Beechworth, take the opportunity to view the falls, have a picnic or take a self-guided walk around the alluvial gold workings. The falls are spectacular after heavy rainfalls.

Warby Range State Park - Extending 25km north of the town of Glenrowan is a steep scarp range known as the Warbys. The Warbys provide excellent views, pleasant picnic spots and an outstanding variety of birdlife and wildflowers.

Murray River Reserves - The Murray River, with its majestic River Red Gums, sandy beaches and a large variety of wildlife, provides the ideal backdrop for camping and a range of water-based recreation.

Eldorado Historic Reserve - visit the largest, most intact gold dredge in Australia. Ask at the Visitor Information Centre for information on these sites.



View of Woolshed Valley from The Precipice