

## **RIDE 7      STANLEY - MOPOKE TRACK**

**DISTANCE:**                      32 km Alternative return #2 + 2km

**GRADE:**                              Medium +

**TECHNICAL ABILITY:**      Some technical ability is required in the Stanley forest due to steep descents, deep culvert drains and possible fallen logs .

**TRACK CONDITION:**      The ride from Fletchers Dam on to Stanley is on gravel roads that are stony in parts with some longer ascents. The trails through Stanley Forest are old 4wd tracks covered in leaf litter with some steep ascents and descents. Be on the look out for oncoming vehicles. The descent down Tully Track or Mopoke Track is generally good although steep in parts. Some bitumen is encountered on the return to Beechworth.

**HIGHLIGHTS:**                      A pleasant start along the Pipeline Track. The Stanley Hotel can provide cool refreshments before the climb into Stanley Forest. Tully Track and Mopoke Track provide some exciting descents.

**TRAILHEAD:**                      This is a circuit ride that begins at the old Post Office building on the corner of Camp and Ford Streets and heads out to Lake Kerford via the Pipeline Track (see Ride 3).

**ROUTE DESCRIPTION:**      Once at Lake Kerford, turn right onto the bitumen road of the retaining wall, up and over the small hill for 400 metres to a "T" intersection with Hurdle Flat Road. Turn left and ride along for 900 metres to another "T" intersection. Turn left, then immediately turn right onto Fletcher's Dam Road.

Ride along Fletcher's Dam Road for about 900 metres to a cross road with Rawes Road. Continue through the intersection, over Rawes Road and start to descend 400 metres down to Fletchers Dam Road. This is a good place to stop for lunch or a swim if it's hot.

From Fletcher's Dam, continue riding over a low causeway, past the dam, still following Fletcher's Dam Road as the trail curls and starts to climb around towards the south through the pine forest. The road rises steadily for about 1.5 km, on a fairly stony road. Fletcher's Dam Road then opens to a wide cleared area shortly before a "T" intersection with Number One Road.

At the "T" intersection turn right from Fletcher's Dam Road, onto Number One Road for about 650 metres, where it then hits another major intersection. Cross over and continue along Welches Gate Road. After about 1.5km, turn left at the next "T" intersection (un-signposted Pioneer Road) and continue on this road for about 750 metres until it meets the bitumen of the Beechworth - Stanley Road.

At the bitumen turn left and ride for only about 200 metres to the centre of Stanley. There is a Milk Bar and Hotel in Stanley for those essential provisions you forgot to pack.

At the "Y" junction in the middle of Stanley turn right and proceed for 400 metres where you turn right onto Six Mile Road (signposted). Follow this road for 1.6 km then veer right at the intersection with Flagstaff Road. This is part of the Scenic Drive through Stanley Forest, so be on the look out for hat wearing tourist traffic along this road.

After approximately 800 metres turn right onto Dingle Rod and start climbing ! Just before the top of the hill turn left onto the signposted Tully Track (1.1 km along) which undulates steeply between ridge tops. About 1 km into Tully Track you will come to Mopoke Track on the right. This provides an alternative descent to Tully Track that is less steep but just as enjoyable and meets back with Tully Track at the bottom.

**#A - Tully Track Descent.**

*Tully Track descends steeply and has a number of water bars that should be approached with caution. At the bottom of Tully Tk. turn left onto what is signposted as West Dingle Track, and follow the ride description below.*

**#B - Mopoke Track Descent.**

*Take Mopoke Track off Tully track and continue down with care avoiding an un-signposted track junction on your right. Keep left as you enter North Dingle Track (signposted) about 1.2 km in from the beginning of Mopoke Track. 500 metres further on the track veers left sharply then continues to descend for another 1.2 km to the bottom of the hill.*

Turn left at the first track you cross and you should find a signpost about 50 metres along which indicates Tully Track to the left. Follow along for about 500 metres until you come to a distinct track that enters from the left - this is the junction with the Tully Track descent.

At this junction, the trail you were on becomes West Dingle Track (signposted) and undulates through the forest with glimpses of the apple orchards off to your right.

Avoid the track that goes off to the right after about 1 km and continue for about another 1.7 km to where West Dingle Track comes out to a major gravel road at a "T" intersection. Turn right onto Six Mile Road (un-signposted), where a 1.4 km descent brings you out at the bitumen of the Beechworth - Myrtleford Road.

There are two options for the return to Beechworth - either straight back on the bitumen (Alternative#1) or a diversion via some back roads with less traffic (Alternative #2)

**Alternative #1 (5km)**

*Turn right from Six Mile Track onto the Beechworth - Myrtleford Road and follow until you come to a "T" intersection with Albert Road in town. Turn left and cycle up the hill back to the Post Office.*

**Alternative #2 (7.3km)**

*Turn right from Six Mile Track onto the Beechworth - Myrtleford Road and follow until you come to Library Road (on your left after only 300 metres). Turn left onto Library Road and follow for about 3 km to the "T" intersection with Fighting Gully Road at the end Turn right into Fighting Gully Road (un-signposted) and on for only 200 metres to the junction with Stilley Road signposted to the left.*

*Ride along Stilley Road for only 400 metres to the Rail Trail crossing. Turn right onto the Rail Trail and follow for 5km to the junction with Albert Road. Turn left onto Albert Road then up for 300 metres back to the old Post Office building to finish.*