

Alpine National Park



The High Country - walks around Bogong High Plains and Mountain Creek

Walking is one of the best ways to discover the variety and beauty of the alpine environment. The day walks described in this leaflet are just a selection from many possibilities. The walking season lasts from early November until late May as the area is usually snow covered during winter and early spring. Park cars on the roadside and not on the native snow grasses, which are easily damaged. Please check the 'take care' advice on the back page.

How far, how fast?

In good weather along a track, a fit person can cover 3 - 4 kilometres an hour. Remember to make allowances for long steep climbs, photography and rests. Let someone know before you go, and fill in Intention Books.

Around Bogong High Plains

① Australian Alps Walking Track

The Australian Alps Walking Track (AAWT) passes across the Bogong High Plains on its mountainous 650 km (10 week) journey through the Australian Alps from Walhalla (Gippsland, Victoria) to Tharwa (near Canberra, ACT).

Between Loch Carpark (Mt Hotham) and Mt Bogong there is a numbered snow pole line spaced 40 metres apart adjacent to the AAWT. Pole 1 is at Loch Carpark and Pole 1285 at Mt Bogong. Many people undertake this beautiful high country section of the AAWT as a 60 km 5 day (4 night) hike.

Walkers must be self sufficient with food, water, first aid and camping gear, and be skilled in the use of maps and compass.

② Roper Lookout (5.0 km, approx 1.5 hours return)

The walk starts at the "Roper Lookout" sign at the eastern end of the Rocky Valley dam wall. Follow the aqueduct for 1.5 km before climbing a small gully among Snow Gums. Roper Lookout is a small basalt knoll with excellent views of Falls Creek Resort and the surrounding high country. Return along the same route.

③ Heathy Spur Circuit (10 km, approx 4 hours return)

Start at the "Heathy Spur - Mt Nelse" sign beside the Bogong High Plains Road (about 500 metres past the Rocky Valley dam wall). Follow the walking track as it climbs gently through alpine herbfields and Snow Gums to Heathy Spur.

The track then meanders through open grasslands and scattered Snow Gums, meeting the AAWT and adjacent numbered snow pole line after 4.5 km. Turn right along the AAWT, and down Big River Fire Track (Watchbed Creek), and right again at the Bogong High Plains Road for about 2 km back to your starting point.

④ Mount Nelse (9 km, approx 3.5 hours return)

Drive 3.1 km along the Bogong High Plains Road from the Rocky Valley dam wall and turn left just after crossing Watchbed Creek, at the Big River Fire Track. It is possible to drive a further 1 km up the fire trail to a gate (please keep the gate clear), but it is recommended that you park near the Bogong High Plains Road and walk from the intersection. Follow this track up through Snow Gum woodlands along Watchbed Creek before coming out into open grassy plains to meet the AAWT.

The AAWT follows a snow pole line adjacent to a grassy fire trail which skirts around below the summit of Mt Nelse. The summit is reached about 500 metres east from the highest point (saddle) on the track. Return along the same route.

⑤ Mount Cope (3 km, 1.5 hours return)

A walk across grassy snow plains and up through scattered Snow Gums and small boulders to the rocky summit.



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 and Mt Beauty **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 your rubbish home, most rubbish will not burn or rot

Dogs and other pets are not permitted

Firearms are only permitted in the park in accordance with Hunting Regulations

Choose a firm, dry, well drained camp site at least 20 metres from any watercourse

Keep to designated tracks

Use a portable stove instead of lighting a fire - especially above or near the tree line

Always check fire danger forecasts. No fires (including stoves) on days of Total Fire Ban. This park is in the North-East Fire Ban District

Fuel Stove Only Area. Due to vegetation damage and visual scarring no campfires are to be lit on Mt Bogong or its approaches

Where toilets are not provided, bury your waste at least 100 m from water or camp sites

Enjoy a visit to a hut, but do not use them for accommodation, always carry a tent

Water - be self-sufficient and treatment of any water collected is recommended

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!



Around Mount Bogong (Not shown on map)

At 1986 metres, Mt Bogong is the highest peak in Victoria. Climbing Mt Bogong is strenuous and a high level of fitness is required. You must also be prepared for sudden unexpected weather changes, including snow, even in mid summer.

Staircase (16 km, one hard day return)

The track to the summit begins at the Mountain Creek Picnic Area and follows a vehicle track to the foot of the Staircase Spur, where the ascent begins through a forest of Peppermint Gums. Bivouac Hut, about halfway along the climb, offers a welcome resting place before the track passes through Snow Gums and out onto the steep rocky ridge leading to the summit plateau.

The exposed treeless plain of the summit offers little shelter in poor weather. Strong winds, fog, freezing temperatures, rain and snow are all common at this altitude. Navigation can be extremely difficult so turn back at the tree line if conditions are poor or deteriorating.

Eskdale Spur (8 km, 6 hours return to Camp Creek Gap)

Follow the track up Mountain Creek past the bottom of the Staircase Spur for approximately 5.5 km to Camp Creek Gap. It is also possible to access Camp Creek Gap in a 4WD vehicle along Eskdale Spur Track from Trappers Gap.

The track climbs steeply up the Eskdale Spur past Michell Hut to the tree line where the track intersects with the Granite Flat Track. Once the shelter of the Snow Gums is left behind the remainder of the walk is very similar to the exposed rocky ascent of the Staircase onto the summit plateau.

Around Mountain Creek (Not shown on map)

The walks start from the Mountain Creek Picnic and Camping Area, 10.5 km along Mountain Creek Road from the Kiewa Valley Highway.

There is a range of walks from 15 minutes to 2 hours, through cool moist fern-filled gullies or among drier peppermint forests on the slopes.

Shady Gully Nature Walk (1 km, approx 15 minutes return)

There are information plaques along the track

Tree Fern Walk (2 km, 1 hour return)

Peppermint Walk (2.5 km, 1.5 hours return)

Tour guides

A number of licenced tour operators run tours (four wheel driving, bushwalking, horseriding and rafting) in this area. Contact Tourism Alliance Victoria for details on (03) 9650 8399 or visit their website www.tourismalliance.com.au

Take care!

All visitors, 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:

- warm clothing
- wind and waterproof jacket
- gloves, hat, sunglasses and strong footwear
- energy food and water
- compass and relevant topographical map

Also, please keep your group small. 4 to 6 is ideal.

Other publications

For more details and extensive coverage of the Alpine National Park see the following:

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

The High Country

- around Bright, Mt Beauty and Omeo

The High Country

- walks around Feathertop and Mt Hotham

Our Mountain Heritage

- around Heyfield, Licola and Dargo

Valleys and Bluffs

- around Mansfield and Whitfield

Source of the Rivers

- around Mitta Mitta, Benambra and Corryong

Books

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

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

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Healthy People®

Around the historic huts

Wallace Hut

(1.5 km, approx 45 minutes return)

The walking track to Wallace Hut commences 7.7 km along the Bogong High Plains Road from the Rocky Valley dam wall. Park your car on the side of the road and walk down the short well-graded track to Wallace Hut. Built in 1889 from Snow Gum slabs and Woollybutt shingles, this timeworn cattleman's hut is thought to be the oldest on the high plains.

Cope Hut

(0.5 km, approx 15 minutes return)

The track to Cope Hut commences a further 2 km along the Bogong High Plains Road. Cope Hut was built by the Ski Club of Victoria in 1929 after the state experienced a surge in skiing in the 1920s. The hut was called "The Menzies of the High Plains" by early skiers and walkers because of its size and comfort.

6 Wallace to Cope Heritage Trail

(6 km, approx 2.5 hours return)

Start with the walk to Wallace Hut and continue past the hut to the aqueduct. Cross the aqueduct and turn right onto the AAWT. The track takes you past the Rover Chalet. Turn right at the "T" junction about 200 metres past the creek crossing and follow the track up to Cope Hut and the Bogong High Plains Road. Return to the start along the road or by taking the walking track down a heath-filled valley to the Wallace Hut Track.

7 Fitzgerald Hut and Kelly Hut

(10 km, approx 4 hours return)

The start of this walk is the same as that for Mt Nelse, but just after you join the AAWT a signpost "Fitzgerald Hut" and a snow pole line is reached branching to your right. Follow this pole line for 4 km to an indistinct intersection. The left hand track drops gently past several magnificent old Snow Gums to Kelly Hut and the right hand walking track goes to the picturesque Fitzgerald Hut. The original hut was one of the oldest and most appealing of the cattlemen's huts in the park. It was destroyed by fire in December 1991, but skilfully rebuilt in 1993 using salvaged and recycled timbers.

8 Tawonga Huts

(8 km, approx 3.5 hours return)

Drive to Pretty Valley Pondage via the Pretty Valley - Mt McKay Road. Walk over the causeway and follow the Fainter Fire Track to the west. This rough vehicle track climbs 140 metres over a spur before dropping gently down to Tawonga Huts (and on to the Fainters). About 1 km before the huts, a short diversion to the south takes you to a small saddle where magnificent views can be seen towards Mt Hotham and Mt Feathertop and into the West Kiewa River Valley. The cattlemen's huts known as the Tawonga Huts nestle in a small snow plain below the rock outcrops of the Niggerheads.



Alpine National Park - Walks around the Bogong High Plains		Recreational Facilities	
	Sealed road		Bushwalking
	Unsealed road		Camping
	4WD Vehicular track		Disabled access
	Walking track		Drinking water
	Route Only		Fireplace
	Gate		Horse yard
	Building		



9 Roper Hut Ruins

Roper Hut was destroyed in the bush fires of 2003, but was rebuilt in early 2008.

The start of this walk is the same as that for Mt Naise. After climbing the Big River Fire Track beside Watchbed Creek, follow the AAWT past the signposted turnoffs to Edmondson Hut and Johnston Hut and the exposed rounded summits of Mt Naise and Mt Naise North. Continue on across the huge expanses of rolling high plains with panoramic views west to Mt Buffalo and north across the steep slopes of the Big River Valley to Mt Bogong. 10 km from the Bogong High Plains Road, Roper Hut ruins are reached nestled on the edge of the high plains among old gnarled Snow Gums. A pole line leads from the AAWT to a lovely grassy area, perfect for camping or picnics.



Fire in the Alps

During the summer of 2003 and 2006 a number of fires swept through the Australian Alps. Fire killed trees that now may be unstable and fall at any time. Take care in fire affected areas.

Visiting the huts

There are nearly 60 huts and hut ruins in the Bogong area of the Alpine National Park. Enjoy a visit to one of these historic huts, but do not use them for accommodation - they are only for emergency refuge. Always carry and sleep in your tent, and take your rubbish home where you can dispose of it thoughtfully.



Huts may be difficult to find or already full, often with native Bush Rats or antechinuses - another good reason to BYO tent!