



Where can I go bushwalking?

Bushwalking has long been a popular recreational activity in forest and there are many areas of public land where bushwalkers can go to enjoy Victoria's great outdoors.

Bushwalkers are welcome to use most areas of State forest in Victoria (see map), with a variety of walking tracks throughout the State suitable for bushwalking. The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) is responsible for managing State forest. Specific information



on tracks and trails in State forest can be obtained from the DSE office nearest to your walking destination.

Bushwalking is also allowed in some national parks and other reserves, where it does not pose a significant conflict with conservation. Due to some differences in regulations between national, state, wilderness and other parks, to avoid disappointment it is best to check with Parks Victoria.

Where can't I walk?

In State forest, walkers are generally not encouraged in certain areas such as reference areas. For safety reasons, entry into operational logging coupes and operational firewood coupes are also not encouraged.

These limitations are in place to protect significant and environmentally sensitive areas, for your safety and to prevent the introduction and spread of noxious and exotic plants.

For restrictions on bushwalking in national parks and reserves, contact Parks Victoria for further information.

When are permits required?

Permits are generally not required for small scale, casual bushwalking in State forest. They are however required for:

- events that are of a competitive nature or that may pose a risk to public safety
- commercial events (ie. entry fees apply, prizemoney involved)
- any activity involving constructions or the marking of a course
- any activity requiring the total or near total exclusive use of DSE picnic or campgrounds

To apply for a permit, please contact DSE at least four weeks prior to the event.

The bushwalking code

In some areas, walking tracks are being upgraded to minimise the impact of increasing foot traffic; boardwalks are necessary in some places with large numbers of visitors. You can help minimise damage in the following ways.

- ♦ **Stay on the track** even if it's rough and muddy. Walking on the track edges and cutting corners on steep 'zigzag' tracks increase damage, erosion and visual scarring, as well as causing confusion about which is the right track.
- ♦ **Observe the fire lighting regulations.** Regulations governing the lighting and use of fires vary from State to State. You should check local variations if you're planning to walk and use open fires.
- ♦ **Where there is a toilet, please use it.**
- ♦ **In areas without toilets, bury your faecal waste.** Choose a spot at least 100 metres away from campsites and watercourses. Dig a hole 15 cm (6 inches) deep (take a hand trowel for this purpose). Bury all faecal waste and paper, mixing it with soil to help decomposition and discourage animals.
- ♦ **Boil water for at least five and preferably ten minutes** before drinking in high-use areas or areas with low water flow.
- ♦ **If you've carried it in, carry it out.** Don't burn or bury rubbish. Carry out all your rubbish, including those easy-to-forget items like silver paper, plastic wrappers and

orange peel, which won't easily decompose. If you have the misfortune to come across other people's rubbish, do the bush a favour and pick that up too.

♦ **Don't wash in streams and lakes.** Detergents, tooth paste and soap (even biodegradable types) harm fish and waterlife. Wash at least 50 metres away from streams and lakes.

♦ **Practice low impact camping.** Camp at an existing campsite rather than a new one, and keep at least 20 metres away from watercourses and the track. Spend only one or two nights at each campsite. Use waterproof tents and foam sleeping-mats to minimise damage to camping areas. Digging trenches around tents is damaging, and unnecessary if the tents are sited properly.

♦ **Always carry a fuel stove when camping.** If you carry warm clothing and a fuel stove, fires will not be needed for warmth or cooking. Compared with campfires, fuel stoves are faster, cleaner, easier to use in wet weather and they don't scar the landscape.

Classification Types

To assist walkers in choosing a walk to suit their needs, tracks have been classified according to the walker 'skill level' and 'fitness level' required to do the walk.

Skill Level

Basic - Users do not need any previous experience and are expected to exercise normal care regarding their personal safety.

Moderate - Users do not need bushwalking experience. However they may encounter natural hazards such as steep slopes, unstable surfaces and minor water crossings. They are responsible for their own safety.

Intermediate - Users require a moderate level of specialised skills such as navigation. Users may require maps and navigation equipment to successfully complete the track. Users need to be self-reliant, particularly in regard to emergency first aid and possible weather hazards.

Advanced - Users require a high degree of specialised skills such as navigation. Users may require maps and navigation equipment to successfully complete the track. Users need to be self-reliant, particularly in regard to emergency first aid and possible weather hazards.

Expert - Users require previous experience in the outdoors and a high level of specialised skills such as navigation. Users will generally require a map and navigation equipment to complete the track. Users need to be self-reliant, particularly in regard to emergency first aid and possible weather hazards.

Fitness Level

Low - A low level of fitness is required. Grade is mostly flat.

Average - An average level of fitness is required. Grade has some moderate inclines.

High - A good level of fitness is required. Some steep inclines which may be sustained.

Endurance - A high level of fitness is required. Regular steep inclines which may be sustained.

Planning your trip

♦ **Let someone know** before you go bushwalking. Tell them about your party, your route, when you plan to return and the equipment the party is carrying. Remember to contact them when you get back.

♦ **Keep your party small** (4-8 people). Large parties have more environmental impact, affect the experience of others and are socially unwieldy.

♦ **Go off peak.** If possible avoid the peak times of the year (December to February) and the more popular areas. You will miss the crowds and spread the impact, giving the environment a chance to recover.

For more information

The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) is responsible for managing Victoria's State Forest. For further information and maps about where to go in State forest, contact DSE's Customer Service Centre on ☎ 136 186.

Parks Victoria Contacts

For further information about where to go in national parks and reserves, contact the Parks Victoria hotline on ☎ 131 963

Visit DSE's website

<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au>
then select "Forestry".

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