



Alpine National Park- Mount Bogong and Bogong High Plains

Visitor Guide

This section of the Alpine National Park features some stunning alpine landscapes, including mountain peaks, rocky outcrops, cascading waterfalls, sensitive bogs, and grassy high plains. The unique ecosystems provide a great place for nature lovers to explore, enjoy and caretake.



Parks Victoria acknowledges all the Traditional Owners who have lived, visited, and recreated on this country for tens of thousands of years. We recognise their long-standing care, custodianship and connection to the land and pay our respects to their Elders, past, present, and emerging.

Getting there

The Bogong High Plains are approximately 400kms from Melbourne. To get there follow the Hume Highway until just south of Wangaratta. Take the Snow Road exit towards Milawa and follow this road until you reach the Great Alpine Road. Turn right onto Great Alpine Road and pass through Myrtleford before turning left onto Happy Valley Road and right onto Kiewa Valley Highway, where you will pass through Mount Beauty. Alternatively, after Myrtleford continue straight on Great Alpine Road and pass through Bright and over scenic Tawonga Gap before taking the Kiewa Valley Highway to Falls Creek. Beyond the ski resort there are many trailheads to begin a walk from, sights and activities to enjoy.

There are multiple access points to the park. If you are coming from the South or East, you could take the Omeo Highway until you reach Bogong High Plains Road. To access the trails that take you up Mount Bogong, head to Mountain Creek campground, about a 10 minute drive from Mount Beauty.

As this area is snowy in winter and early spring, there are seasonal road closures to be aware of. During winter access to these areas via vehicle is restricted. You will need to park at Falls Creek and pay a resort entry or visit Mountain Creek for free. Please note you will need to check weather, snow cover, track condition, track status before deciding what type of vehicle and skill you need. Vehicle will also require snow chains to be carried during

the winter. Make sure to check the parks website, Falls Creek snow report and a trusted weather app before you go.

Things to see and do

Walking

Walking is one of the best ways to discover the variety and beauty of the alpine environments. 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 within allocated car parks at popular trail heads or on safe sections of roadside. If parking on roadsides be aware of native vegetation like snow grasses, which are easily damaged. Please check the 'Stay Safe in Victoria's Parks' advice located on the Parks Victoria website www.parks.vic.gov.au.

Walking times are intended as a guide only. Times may vary significantly depending on fitness level and hiking experience.



Download the free park map/s to your phone from [Avenza Maps](https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/avenza). If you don't have the app installed, you will be prompted to download it (WiFi is recommended).

The app uses your phone's GPS location service to show you where you are even if there is no mobile phone signal.

Around Bogong High Plains



Hotham to Bogong- 60km, 5 days Grade 5

The Australian Alps Walking Track (AAWT) passes across the Bogong High Plains on a mountainous, remote, 650km (approx. 10 week) journey from Walhalla (Gippsland, VIC) 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 60km 5-day hike. Walkers must be self sufficient with food, water, first aid and camping gear, and be skilled in the use of map and compass.



Roper Lookout- 5km, 1.5hr return Grade 3

The walk starts 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 basalt knoll with excellent views of Falls Creek Resort and the surrounding high country. Return along the same route.



Heathy Spur Circuit- 10km, 4hr return Grade 4

Start at the Roper Lookout trailhead and follow the walking track as it climbs gently through alpine herb fields 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.



Mount Nelse- 9km, 3.5hr return Grade 3

Beginning at Watchbed Creek trailhead on the Bogong High Plains Road, this walk follows Big River Fire Trail 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 500m east from the highest point (saddle) on the track. Return along the same route.



Mount Cope- 3km, 1.5hr return Grade 3

This walk starts on the Bogong High Plains Road. Park at the Mount Cope carpark. A walk across grassy snow plains and up through scattered snow gums and small boulders to the rocky summit.

Around Mount Bogong



Staircase- 16km, 10hrs return Grade 3

The track to the summit of Victoria's highest mountain 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- 8km, 6hrs return to Camp Creek Gap Grade 4

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



Shady Gully Nature Walk - 1km, 15min return Grade 3



Tree Fern Walk- 2km, 1hr return Grade 3



Peppermint Walk- 2.5km, 1.5hr return Grade 3

Around the Historic Huts



Wallace Hut- 1.5km, 45min return Grade 2

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- 0.5km, 15min return Grade 2

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.



Wallace to Cope Heritage Trail- 6km, 2.5hr return Grade 2

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.



Fitzgerald Hut and Kelly Hut- 10km, 4hr return Grade 4

The start of this walk is the same as that for Mt Nelse, but just after you join the AAWT a snow pole line is reached branching to your right. Follow this pole line for 4 km to an indistinct intersection. The left track drops gently past several magnificent old Snow Gums to Kelly Hut and the right 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 skillfully rebuilt in 1993 using salvaged and recycled timbers.



Tawonga Huts- 8km, 3.5hr return Grade 4

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 Jaithmathangs.



Roper Hut- 10km, 4hr return Grade 4

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 Nelse. After climbing the Big River Fire Track beside Watchbed Creek, follow the AAWT past the exposed rounded summits of Mt Nelse and Mt Nelse North.

Continue 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 and east past Mt Wills to the Main Range in New South Wales. Roper Hut is nestled on the edge of the high plains among old, gnarled Snow Gums.

Camping

The Alpine National Park offers some of the most authentic and scenic bush camping opportunities in Victoria.

Camping in the park is suited to hikers and campers that are self-sufficient. There are many designated camping areas that include facilities such as pit toilets, picnic tables and fireplaces (as seen on map).

Dispersed camping is free and permitted throughout much of the park. Camping is not permitted within 20m of any waterbody, and within 200m of roads, or other designated camping or picnic areas. Camping must be at least 100m from any hut site with the exception of Wallace's Hut which has a 200m exclusion zone.

When camping you should be fully self-sufficient with food, water, and camping equipment. Always carry a tent. Huts are for emergency use only. Firewood supplies are limited, especially in the alpine and sub alpine areas, so the use of camping stoves is preferred. Dispose of your waste responsibly by packing out what you pack in. Where there are no toilet facilities, bury toilet waste in a hole at least 15cm deep, at least 100m away from waterways.

Mountain Biking

Riding is accessible within the park in much of autumn, spring, and summer. There are networks of roads open to the public, management vehicle tracks and aqueducts on

the Bogong High Plains that you can ride along. Bikes are not permitted on walking tracks.

Outside of the National Park, in nearby Falls Creek Alpine Resort, where there are downhill mountain bike trails suited to a range of ability levels.

Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing

Cross country skiing is a great way to experience Alpine National Park in winter and early spring. Experienced skiers can enjoy remote skiing around Mount Bogong, and on the High Plains off formed trails. Due to the remoteness of the area, navigation skills and skiing skills are vital.

Falls Creek Alpine Resort provides access to marked and groomed cross country ski trails suitable for all levels.

Picnics

Bring your family or friends, or enjoy the surroundings solo with a picnic. There are many picnic tables around the park to give you some inspiration for a place to stop and smell the wildflowers. No bins are provided- please take your rubbish with you, including food scraps.

Visit Mount Bogong

The highest mountain in Victoria, Mount Bogong, is part of a unique Australian alpine environment. Dominating the northern horizon of Alpine National Park, the peak's undulating planes are home to dozens of specialised species, along with abundant opportunities for adventure and some of the most spectacular views in the state. Mount Bogong cannot be accessed by vehicle, only by foot.

Visit Historic Huts

There are around 200 historic huts in the Australian Alps, built from the 1860s onwards. These huts are a piece of European History, built for shelter by pioneers including farmers, surveyors, miners, skiers, foresters and bushwalkers. Each hut has its own story.

You can visit many of the huts around Bogong and Bogong High Plains to connect more with this time in history. Some are easily accessible by road or short walks and others require a hike or overnight stay. Huts are for temporary or emergency shelter and not for sleeping in, as their special values can be easily destroyed.

Horse riding

There is a seasonal horse riding period across the Bogong High Plains, and year-round opportunities at lower elevations. Please follow the horse riding conditions in the 'Greater Alpine National Parks Management Plan'.

As horses cause damage to sensitive areas such as moss beds, peatland, wetlands, snow patch areas, wet heathlands, and alpine bogs, it is important to avoid these areas when taking your horse to the high country.

There are horse yards you can use to camp with your horse on the High Plains at Pretty Valley and Langford West campgrounds, and in the West Kiewa at Diamantina horse yard. These are free but must be booked in the peak season from December 1st to April 30th.

Caring for the park



Help us look after your park by following these guidelines:

- Dogs and cats are not permitted.
- Please take rubbish home with you for recycling and disposal.
- Bicycles are not permitted on walking tracks.
- Light fires only in fireplaces where provided. Ensure that:
 - a three-metre area is cleared of anything flammable
 - at least 10 litres of water is available for immediate use
 - an adult is in attendance (awake, within 50m and with a clear line of sight) at all times
 - put your fire out with water, not soil. When it is cool to touch it is safe to leave.
- No fires may be lit on a day of Total Fire Ban, including campfires, solid and fuel barbecues and ovens. Built in and portable gas or electric barbecues may be used, provided they meet the first three criteria above.
- All native plants and animals are protected. Leave the park as you found it.

Maps

There are numerous topographic maps you can use for navigating in the national park. Visit Mount Beauty Information Centre for the most relevant map to you.

Listed below are a few options:

Spatial Vision Touring the Victorian Alps

1:140,000

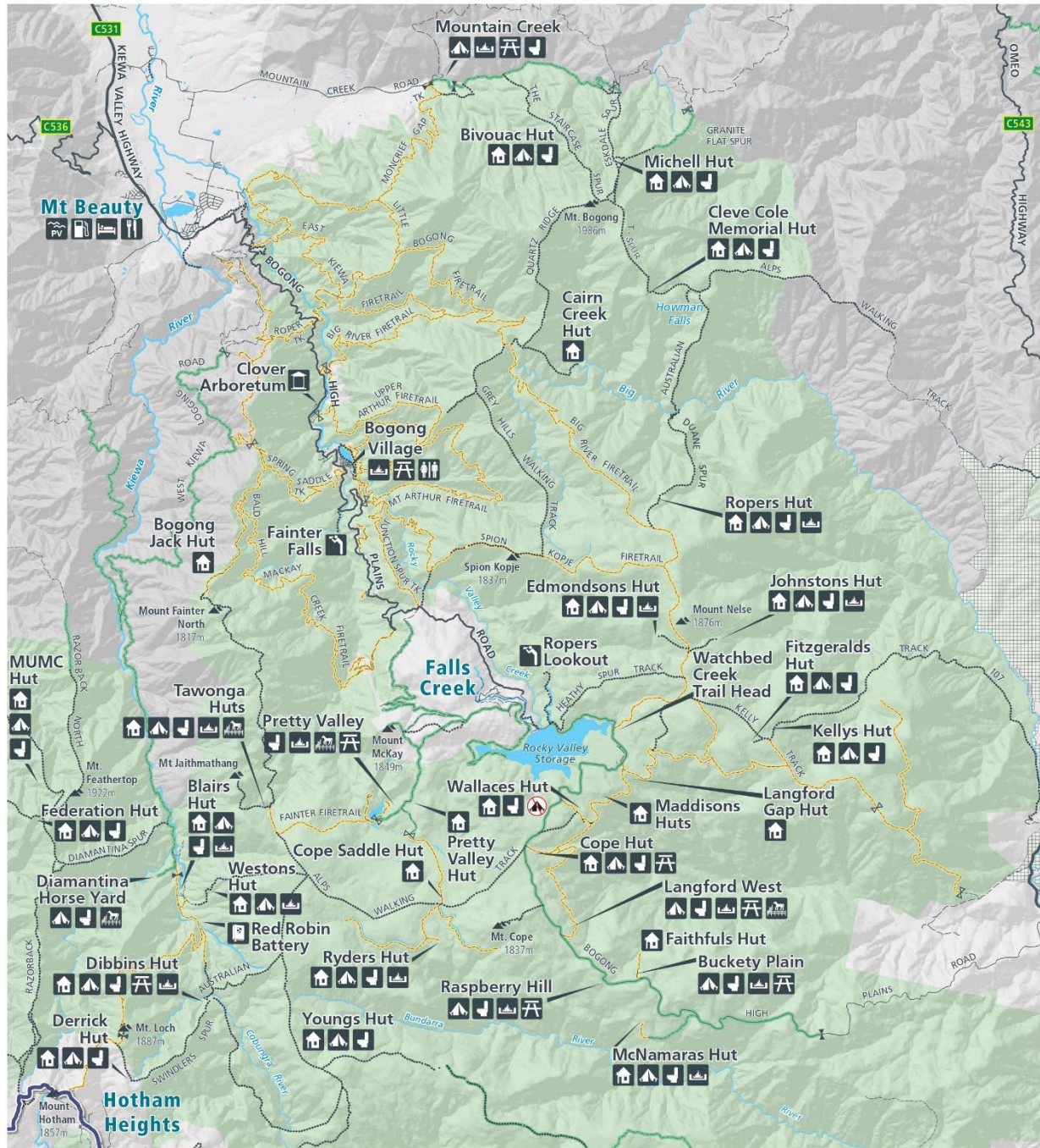
Spatial Vision 1:50,000 Bogong Alpine Area

Vicmap 1:50,000 Falls Creek

Vicmap 1:50,000 Mitta Mitta

Alpine National Park

The Bogong High Plains and Mt Bogong



www.parks.vic.gov.au
 Disclaimer: Parks Victoria does not guarantee that this data is without flaw of any kind and therefore disclaims all liability which may arise from you relying on this information. Data source acknowledgements: State Digital Mapbase, The State of Victoria and the Department of Environment and Primary Industries. Cartography by Parks Victoria October 2023.
 For mobile App search for Avenza PDF Maps



*Please note this map is an overview of the area and not a navigational aid. See above for recommended maps.

Plants and animals

The alpine and subalpine areas of this region are home to hundreds of species of native flora and fauna. As the environment is cold and covered in a blanket of snow for a portion of the year, food and shelter becomes scarce, and wildlife here has adapted to thrive in harsh conditions.

Some animals, like the Broad Toothed Rat, and Swainson's Antechinus live in the pockets between the snow and the ground in winter, called the subnivean zone, where temperatures remain more constant than in the open air. Mountain Pygmy Possums, snakes, other reptiles, and amphibians hibernate or go into torpor, reducing their metabolic rate and becoming inactive so that they require very little energy to survive. Birds such as the Flame Robin and Pied Currawong move to lower altitudes and other birds migrate to warmer latitudes. In spring and summer animals return to their active lives and can be seen all over the high country.

A special insect that can be seen around Mount Bogong is the Bogong Moth. These huge moths flock in billions to the high plains to survive the heat of summer, travelling up to 1000kms from their breeding grounds in warmer QLD and NSW to undergo a hibernation period in the rocky crevices of the higher altitudes. As they are high in fat and protein, they are a great source of food for a wide range of animals. This bounty has also been harvested and feasted on for tens of thousands of years by First Nations people.

The dominant flora cover in Alpine National Park changes with elevation. There are distinct zones where the transition between vegetation communities can be seen. In the alpine zone there is no tree cover as it is too cold and snowy for portions of the year. Here you can find heathland, herb fields, and grasslands that grow close to the ground and have adapted to survive the harsh conditions. In the sub-alpine zone Snow Gums are prominent trees, with an understorey of low growing shrubs, or grasses and herbs. In spring and summer, there is a plethora of wildflowers to spot. As you get lower down, the transition between subalpine and montane forest brings much taller trees such as Alpine Ash and other species of Eucalyptus. The environment is moist here and the understorey comprises of ferns and smaller trees.

Be prepared and stay safe



Walkers

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 scarce, so always be prepared with:

- warm and waterproof clothing
- gloves, hat, sunglasses, and strong footwear
- energy food and water
- compass, relevant topographical map, and the ability to navigate in challenging conditions
- Also, please keep your group small. 4 to 6 is ideal.

Avalanches

Hazards in winter at higher elevations include unstable and deep snow, steep icy slopes, cornice formation, extreme weather, and avalanches. Visitors travelling through the backcountry on skis, snowboards or on foot, should ensure they have the required training, equipment, and experience to navigate the terrain and understand the conditions.

Fire

Bushfire safety is a personal responsibility. Anyone entering parks during the bushfire season needs to stay aware of forecast weather conditions. Check the Fire Danger Rating and for days of Total Fire Ban for the North East District at emergency.vic.gov.au, on the VicEmergency smartphone app, web page (www.emergency.vic.gov.au), or call the VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226.

No fires may be lit on Total Fire Ban days.

On Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating days this park will be closed for public safety. Warnings signs may be erected, but do not expect a personal warning. Do not enter the Park. If you are already in the Park, leave the night before or as early as possible in the morning.

Check the latest park conditions at www.parks.vic.gov.au/coc-listing or by calling 13 1963.

Emergencies

For emergency assistance call Triple Zero (000). If there is a green emergency marker sign near you, read the information on the marker to the operator.