

Alpine National Park - around Heyfield, Licola and Dargo

Visitor Guide



The Alpine National Park stretches from central Gippsland all the way to the New South Wales border where it adjoins Kosciuszko National Park. In this south-western section of the park, you will find pleasant Snow Gum woodlands, sprawling mountain vistas, spectacular rivers and gorges, as well as rich cultural heritage - from the rock scatters of the Gunaikurnai people on lofty vantage points, to grazier's huts nestling in protected folds of the high country.



Getting there

This area of the Alpine National Park is situated approximately 250-320 km east of Melbourne. To get to Heyfield take Princes Highway to Traralgon, then take Traralgon-Maffra Road. Alternatively, stay on Princes Highway to Sale and continue onto A1 to Dargo

The main access is from Licola via the Tamboritha Road, which leads to the Howitt and Moroka Roads.

Mountain roads are often unsealed, narrow and winding. Take care as roads may be slippery and surface condition poor.

Away from the main Howitt and Moroka Roads many tracks are suitable only for experienced four wheel drivers, with many closed seasonally between early June and late October or longer.

Things to see and do

Walking

Some of the best mountain walking country in Australia is found in the Alps. Some tracks are suitable for day and weekend family walks. Others are long, rough and challenging, requiring a high degree of bushwalking skill and stamina.

Mt Howitt – 14km, 5 hours return

Start at the car park on the Howitt Road, 81 km north of Licola. The first 5 km passes through pleasant snow gum woodlands and open snow grass plains. Vallejo Gantner Hut near Macalister Springs, built in 1970, has a unique copper clad inclined A-frame design.

Beyond the hut the track follows a narrow ridge, with spectacular views into the headwaters of the Macalister River and Wonnangatta River - Terrible Hollow.

After a short climb the Australian Alps Walking Track is reached. From there, it is a short walk to the open rolling summit of Mt Howitt and Howitt West Peak. The view from here is one of the best in the Victorian Alps.

Bryce Gorge Circuit – 8km, 2.5 hours return

The walk starts at the carpark on the Howitt Road, 46.5 km north of Licola. Follow the well-defined track across open snow plains for about 1.7 km to the waterfall on Pieman Creek. The best view is from a lookout about 50 metres beyond the sign.

Return to the main track and continue around the clifftops of Bryce Gorge for 2 km to Conglomerate Falls. From the falls the track follows Conglomerate Creek through Black Sallee woodlands and across open plains to a junction with the Wonnangatta Track. Guy's

Hut is a further 3 km through groves of snow gums. Built in 1940, the hut is an excellent example of bush architecture. Continue 1 km south east from the hut to the carpark.

First Falls and Moroka Gorge – 6km, 3 hours return

From Horseyard Flat the track crosses a footbridge over the Moroka River before meandering through snow gum woodland and crossing wetlands on boardwalks. It follows the river downstream to the First Falls. A rock platform is an ideal viewing point to see the rushing Moroka River plunging into a deep pool.

Beyond First Falls there is no track and the route is unmarked. The slopes are steep, with cliffs, logs and regrowth making it challenging. Self-reliant and experienced walkers can descend to the gorge.

Tali Karng – 13-20 km each way – 2-4 days

Tali Karng, 'the hidden lake' is the place of remarkable beauty and Dreamtime legend near Licola.

For different routes to the lake, see Tali Karng Visitor Guide.

Car touring

Depending on track condition, many key attractions can be reached in a conventional two-wheel drive vehicle. Check www.parks.vic.gov.au for any changes to road conditions or closures. Popular drives include:

The Pinnacles - Moroka Road - 91 km - 2 hours from Licola

On a clear day the view from this high rocky crag takes in the Gippsland Lakes to the south, Mt Hotham to the north the settled areas of the Wonnangatta Valley beneath. Other features along the way include Moroka Hut and Horseyard Flat Camping Area.

Howitt and Snowy Plains - Howitt Road - 82 km - 2 hours from Licola

Superb alpine and sub alpine scenery with expanses of colourful fragrant herbfields and snow grass plains are some of the highlights along the way. Other features include Dimmick Lookout, Bryces Gorge and Guy's Hut, Howitt Hut and Mt Howitt Walking Track.

Grant Historic Area - 17 km - 0.5 hours from Dargo

A short drive north from Dargo along the Dargo High Plains Road will bring you to McMillan Road and the Grant Historic Area. This thickly forested area hides many features of the mining days including cemeteries, township sites and mining relics. For more information on these, see Grant Historic Area Visitor Guide.

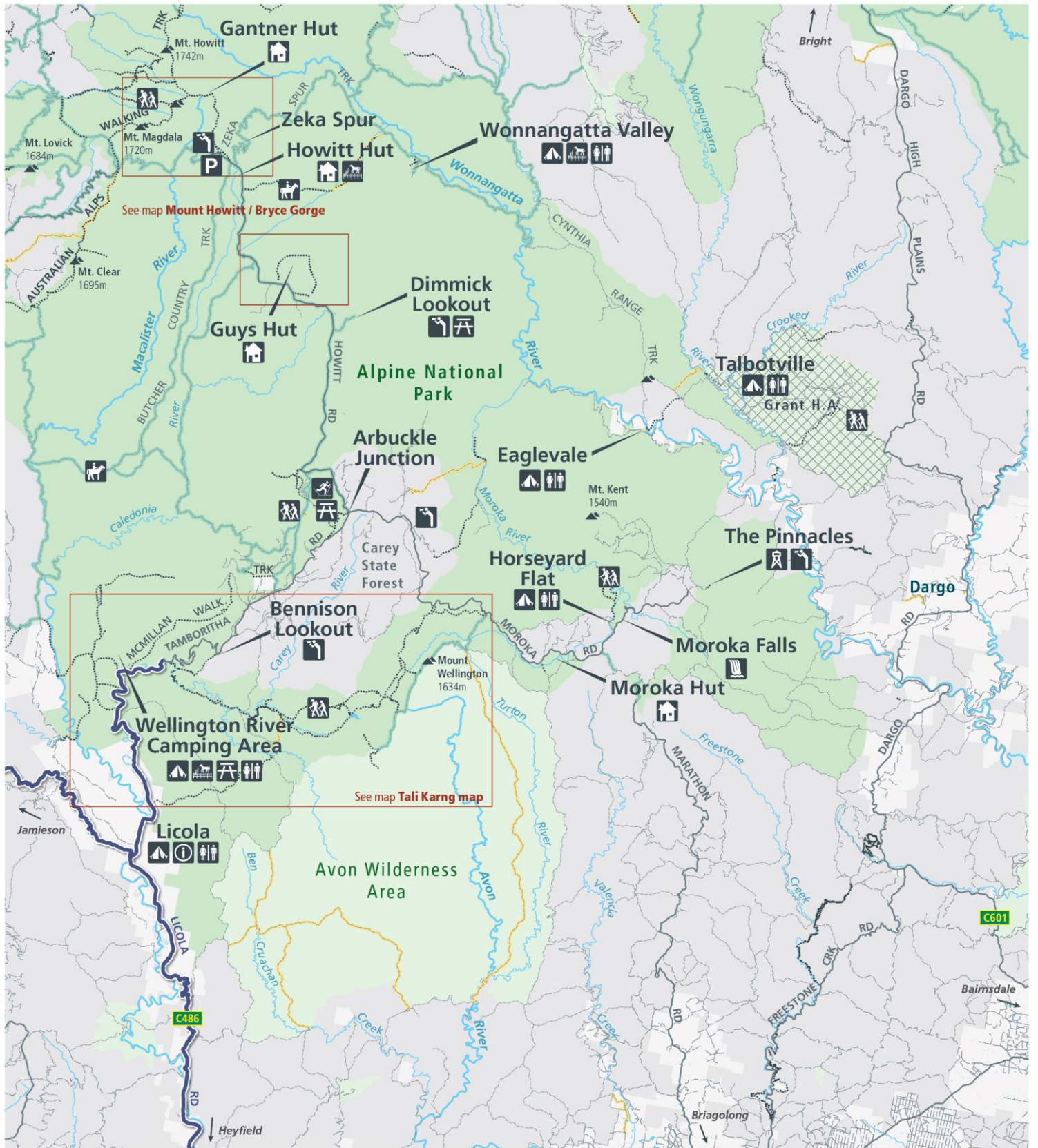
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Alpine National Park

Heyfield, Licola and Dargo in the Wonnangatta area

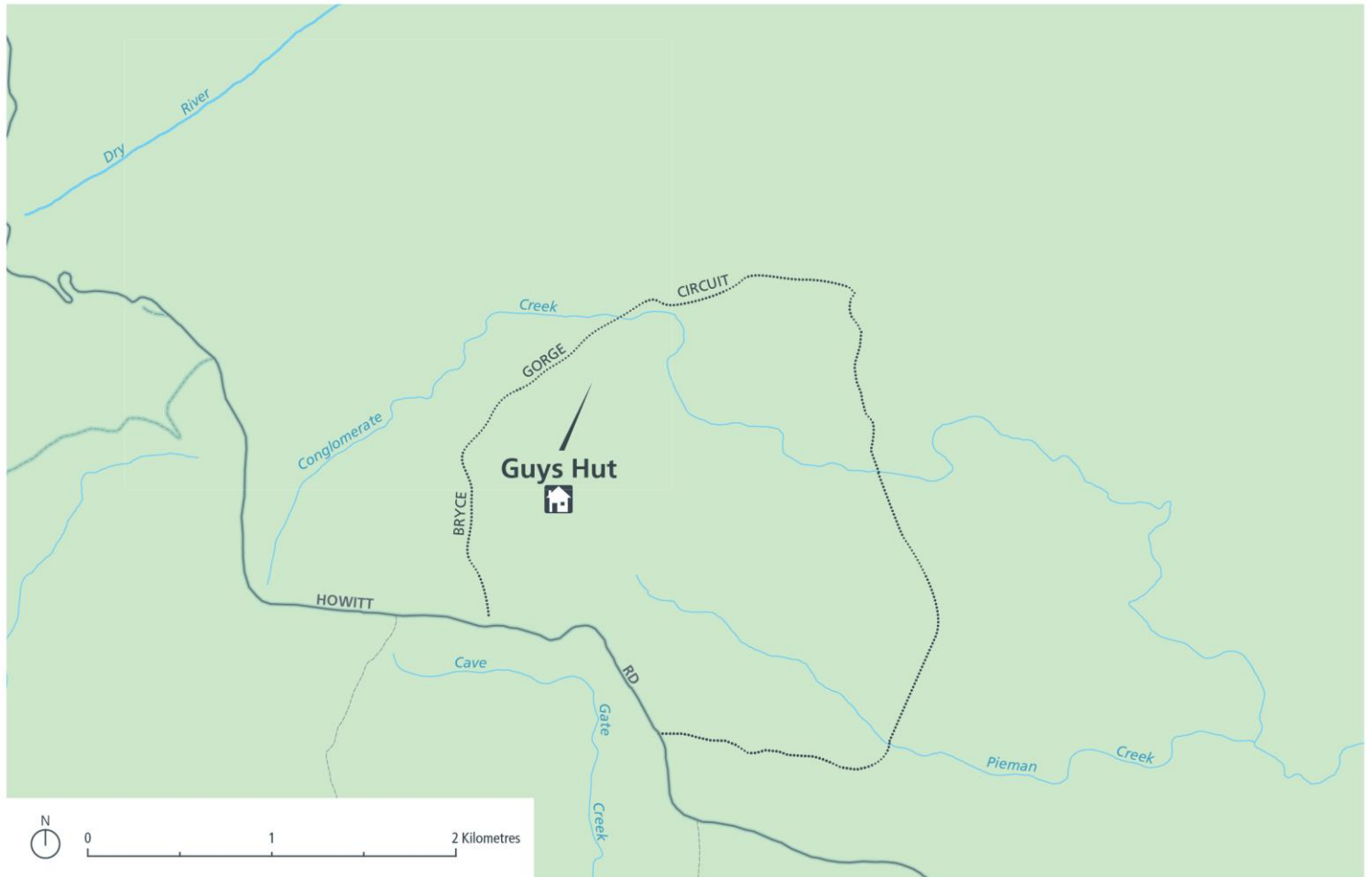
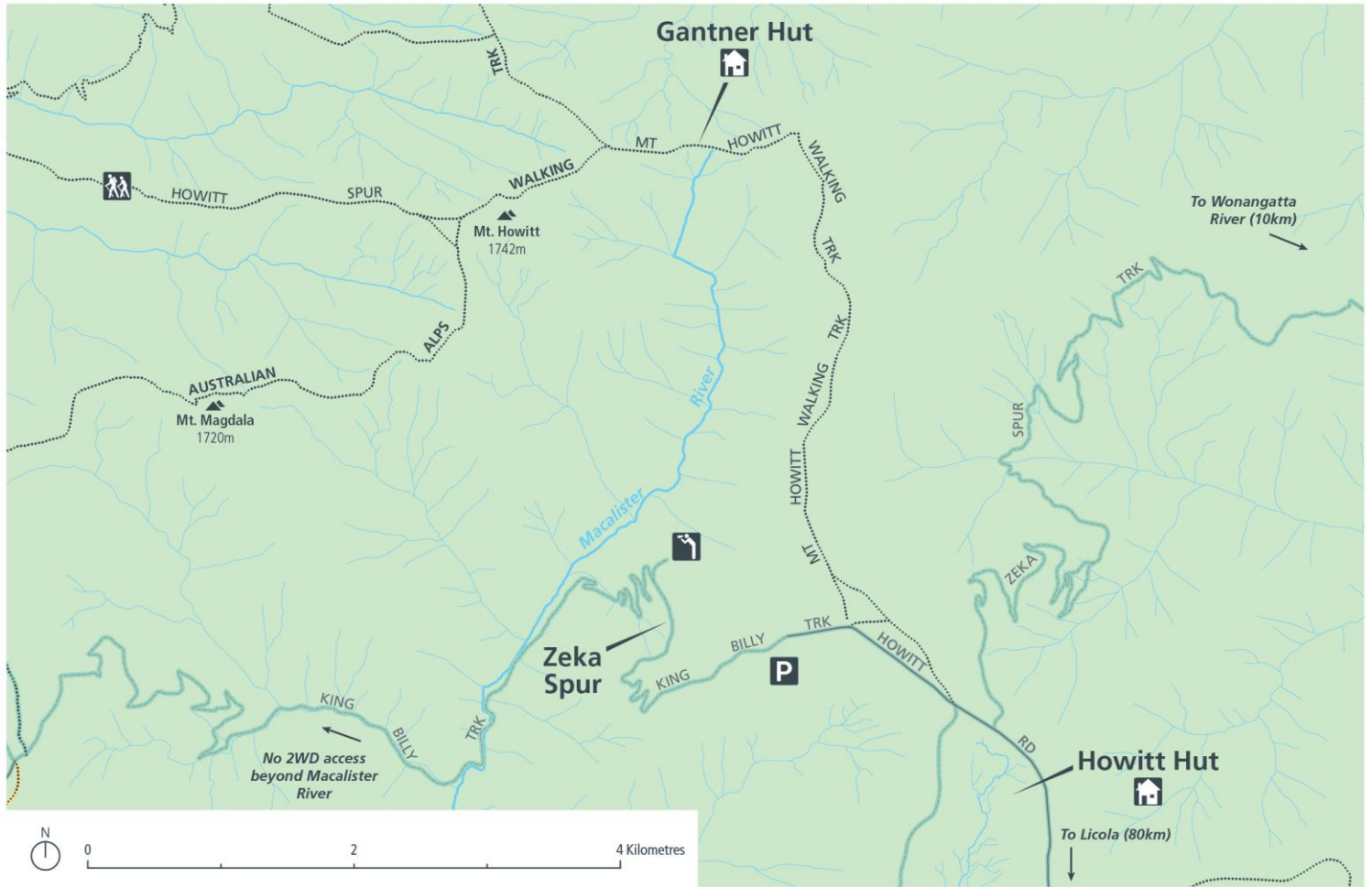


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|--------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Camping area | Historical hut | Licola/Tamboritha Rd | Vehicle management/walking track only | Alpine National Park |
| Information | Horse riding | Main road | Seasonal road closure | Other park |
| Toilets | Stable | Sealed road | Major river | Public land |
| Lookout | Fire tower | Unsealed road | Minor river | Grant Historic Area |
| Hiking | Cross country skiing | 4WD | | |
| Picnic table | Waterfall | Walking track | | |



Alpine National Park

Mount Howitt / Bryce Gorge



Four-wheel drive (4WD) tours

There are many 4WD trips in the area, some of the more popular ones being the Zeka Spur to the Wonnangatta Valley and around the historic Eaglevale and Talbotville regions.

Remember to check road and track conditions before setting out. Vehicle access is limited to formed roads and tracks open to the public. Some tracks are also seasonally closed during winter.

Wonnangatta Drive – 222km loop from Mansfield

This iconic 4WD adventure covers a generous section of the Alpine National Park, passing through Mansfield, Talbotville, Dargo and many historic huts and remote camping areas. Allow two to three days for this epic drive. Refer to <http://www.iconic4wd.com.au/> for more information.

Cross country skiing

In winter, skiing is popular in the Lost Plain - Holmes Plain area. More experienced skiers can explore the extensive, but remote open snow plains, particularly the Snowy and Howitt Plains.

A 4WD vehicle may be necessary to access the areas along the Tamboritha Road. Even then a relatively arduous walk may be necessary to reach skiable snow past the seasonal road closure on the Howitt Road.

Horse riding

Horse riding is popular during summer and autumn, especially along the Bicentennial National Trail, which passes through the Wonnangatta Valley.

Restricted times and group sizes apply so please refer to the 'Alpine National Park – Horse riding' park note for further details.

Fishing

The major streams and rivers such as the Wellington, Macalister, Wonnangatta, Dargo and Caledonia Rivers provide good fishing opportunities. Check your Fishing Guide for trout seasons and freshwater cray regulations and ensure that you hold a current Victorian fishing licence. For more information, go to www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/fisheries

Hunting

Sections of the Alpine National Park and Avon Wilderness Park are regarded as world class for Sambar Deer stalking. Throughout the Avon Wilderness Park and within sections of the Alpine National Park Sambar Deer may be hunted by stalking only between 15 February and 15 December. The use of dogs to hunt Sambar Deer is not permitted.

Other conditions also apply, please visit The Game Management Authority website www.gma.vic.gov.au for all information about hunting in Victoria, including licences, where and when to hunt and all regulations.

Camping

Dispersed camping is permitted throughout the area. Make sure you are at least 20 metres from any lake, river or stream.

Some camping areas have toilets, picnic tables, and fireplaces (no bookings are required):

Wellington River has 14 numbered camp sites beneath shady peppermints and manna gums. There are horse yards at site 12.

Horseyard Flat is set among Black Sallee on the banks of the Moroka River.

Eaglevale is located on the Wonnangatta River below the towering ramparts of Mt Kent and Snowy Bluff.

Wonnangatta Valley (4WD access only) includes the historic site of the Wonnangatta Station.

Talbotville is set on the grassy flats of the Crooked River. Two-wheel drive access via McMillans Track.

Grant is a grassy clearing in the forest and all that remains of a once thriving gold mining town.

When camping you should be fully self-sufficient with food, water and camping equipment. Always carry a tent. Huts are for emergency use only.

Huts

There are many old huts in the area, some of them historic. Moroka (1946), Guy (1940) and Howitt Huts (early 1900's) are all easily accessible and reflect the grazing history of the area.

Enjoy visiting the huts, but please do not use them for overnight accommodation as their cultural values can easily be destroyed, they can be used for emergency refuge only.

To find out more about high country huts and to get involved, go to www.hutsvictoria.org.au/

Be prepared and stay safe

Fire

For emergency assistance call Triple Zero (000).

This part of the Alpine National Park is in the Maclister fire district. Bushfire safety is a personal responsibility. Anyone entering parks and forests during the bushfire season needs to stay aware of forecast weather conditions. Check the Fire Danger Rating and for days of Total Fire Ban at emergency.vic.gov.au, on the VicEmergency smartphone app 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. 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 conditions at parks.vic.gov.au or by calling 13 1963.

Fuel Stove Only Areas

Firewood supplies are limited especially in the alpine and sub alpine areas, therefore use of camping stoves is preferred. Tali Karng and Macalister Springs are fuel stove only areas.

Fires must be kept small and within fireplaces provided. Fires must not be left unattended. Extinguish fire with cold water.

Driving

- Check road conditions and river crossing levels before starting out.
- Vehicle access is limited to formed roads and tracks open to the public. Public vehicles are not permitted in Wilderness Areas.
- Many roads and tracks are closed seasonally for environmental and safety reasons.

Walkers

All visitors, and 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, including a wind and waterproof jacket
- gloves, hat, sunglasses and strong footwear
- first aid kit and sunscreen
- energy food and water
- compass and relevant topographical map

Before you go, let someone know where you are going, and when you expect to return. Please keep your group small (4 - 8 people).

Please keep to walking tracks, particularly in old gold mining areas where there may be mine shafts or unsafe cliff edges.