

Bunyip State Park



Visitor Guide

Escape where you can breathe fresh air and enjoy native plants and animals. See a mosaic of green from heathland on river plains to Mountain Ash forest covering steep slopes.

Whatever recreational pursuit you enjoy, Bunyip State Park provides opportunities for all.

Location & access

Bunyip State Park is only 65km east of Melbourne. You can get there via Gembrook, from the Princes Freeway, or from Woori Yallock (Melway reference 612 K5).

When approaching from Gembrook or Woori Yallock, trail bike riders and four wheel drivers are advised to enter the park via Beenak East Road and Black Snake Creek Road for access to four wheel drive tracks and trail bike unloading areas.

Things to see & do

Bunyip State Park is 16,600 hectares in size. In February 2009, 45% of the park was burnt by bushfire. Despite this dramatic event the park is once again green. The exceptional natural condition of much of the park, with its diversity of flora and fauna, and high landscape values, creates a distinctive bush atmosphere.

In May 2006, the Bunyip Recreation Framework was approved by Government. Recommendations aimed to provide protection for residents and other users from motorised vehicle noise, conserve important environmental and cultural areas while still catering for all legal recreational activities.

Visitors to Bunyip State Park are able to explore and experience the Park's rugged bush setting through a range of activities.

- Explore the Four Brothers Rocks.
- Have a picnic at Mortimer or Dyers Picnic Ground.
- Enjoy passive use activities such as walking, nature appreciation, horse riding, or cycling on tracks in the south of the park.
- Opportunities for four wheel driving and trail bike riding in the north of the park on designated tracks and into the adjoining state forests (detailed park note available).

Suggested short walks

1. **Mortimer Nature Walk**
1.2km, 45 minutes return, easy

A self-guided nature walk introducing the plants, animals and other features of William Wallace and Diamond Creeks.

2. **Lawson Falls Walk**
750m, 40 minutes one-way, easy

A short walk which takes you to the only waterfall within the park.

Longer walks

1. **Buttongrass Nature Trail**
3km, 1 hour return, easy

A walk through a wet heathland area starting at Guide Track. Along this self-guided walk you can see a variety of flora including hakeas, wattles, tea-trees, mistletoe, swamp bush pea and button grass.

Mortimer Circuit/s

2. **4.3km, 1.5 hours return, moderate**

Starting from Mortimer Picnic Ground follow Ferres Track. At the top of the steady climb turn left onto Silvertop Ridge Track and return to Mortimer via Triangle Road.

3. **9.5km, 4 hours return, moderate**

Starting from Mortimer Picnic Ground follow the Mortimer Nature Walk and turn into Steege Road. Tree Fern Track with its tall shady trees, is the next path to follow which crosses Link Road and then joins into Nichols Hut Track. The last leg of your journey is along Silvertop Ridge Track and Ferres Track, and before you know it, you are back at Mortimer Picnic Ground.

If you want a shorter loop you can turn right at the end of Steege Road and return to Mortimer via Windy Point Road and Triangle Road (5.5 km, 2 hours return).

For further information

Parks Victoria
Information Centre

Call 13 1963

or visit the

Parks Victoria website

www.parks.vic.gov.au

Caring for the environment

Help us look after your park by following these guidelines:

Take all rubbish home with you

Firearms are prohibited

Dogs are not permitted but are allowed on a lead within Kurth Kiln Regional Park

Do not collect plant or animal specimens. Leave them for others to enjoy

Light fires in the fireplaces provided in the picnic and camping areas. No fires may be lit on Total Fire Ban or Code Red days

Keep to the constructed tracks

Observe signs for 'management vehicles only', 'walkers only' and 'horses, walkers & bicycles only'

All roads and tracks in the park are public roads. Vehicles and motorbikes must be road registered and drivers and riders must be licensed

Horse and mountain bike riding is permitted on roads and designated tracks, but is not permitted on "Walkers Only" tracks or in picnic areas

4. Weatherhead Range Circuit 10km, 4 hours return, moderate

Start at Buttongrass Nature Trail and follow Camp Road. Turn left into Guides Track for the climb up the Weatherhead Range, then turn right into Luptons Track. Turn left into Avars Track and cross over Tynong North Road, heading west up Pooley Road. Take Sandpit Ridge Track through a heathy woodland community and head back to the start via Cannibal Creek Track, Camp Road and Buttongrass Nature Trail.

Camping

There is a designated area with basic facilities at Nash Creek.

Please respect the environment, other campers and future users by:

- keeping noise levels to a minimum (generators are prohibited);
- disposing of soap and detergent at least 50 metres from waterways;
- leaving the site as you found it;
- Not camping at picnic grounds within the park.

History

The first people to live in the area were the Balluk-William clan of the Woiworung (Yarra Yarra) Aboriginal people.

The first Europeans to visit the district were the miners and prospectors, in the mid 1850s, but the promise of gold elsewhere lured them away.

The Bunyip State Park area soon became popular for its timber. The Mortimer Mill of 1898, located at the present site of Mortimer Picnic Ground, is thought to be the earliest timber mill in the park.

A narrow-gauge rail line from Ferntree Gully to Gembrook was completed in 1900. Tramways were then used to take timber from the bush sawmills to the Gembrook yard. Throughout the park are remnants of timber tramways and large sawdust heaps. A large sawdust heap can be seen opposite Dyers Picnic Ground. Forest harvesting ceased in 1990 and the park was declared in 1992.

The legend of the bunyip

Beware of the Bunyip, a dark furry animal with a round face, small ears and fiery eyes that glow in the dark!

According to the Aboriginal people, the Bunyip or "Bunee" (as spelt on early maps which show the river, first cattle run and township) is a spirit that punishes bad people.

Local Aboriginal people believed the Bunyip lived in the swamps of the Bunyip River, and therefore avoided the area. Many early settlers, believing this story, never pitched their tents near a 'Bunyip hole'. People were also careful not to make ripples when collecting water. This upset the Bunyip.

Flora & fauna

Bunyip State park has amazing biodiversity values with a vast array of flora and fauna to be seen.

Swamp heathland covers much of the low poorly drained areas where heath and Prickly Tea-tree are found. The insect eating Southern Emu Wren is the smallest of the birds inhabiting this area. It has a unique long barbless tail of only six feathers.

The heathy woodland has some interesting plants, ranging from the taller Mealy Stringybark trees, to the understorey of attractive Hairpin Banksia, Furze Hakea and rare Swamp Bush-pea. Foothill forests of Silvertop and Messmate are found higher up. Here you can see White-throated Tree Creepers hopping around tree trunks searching for insects. Below is a dense layer of smaller plants including Common Correa, Hop Goodenia and Dusty Miller, where Yellow-rumped Thornbills and Superb Fairy Wrens feed. Mountain Ash, the tallest flowering plants in the world, grow on the steep southern slopes in the northern end of the park.

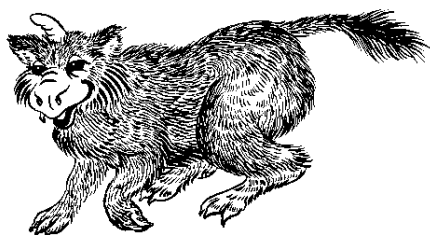
Most of the animals which inhabit the park, such as possums, bandicoots, antechinus, bats, owls and gliders, are active only at night. During the day you may be lucky enough to catch a glimpse of a Swamp Wallaby in the forest shadows or a Goanna basking in the sun.

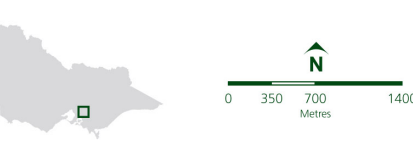
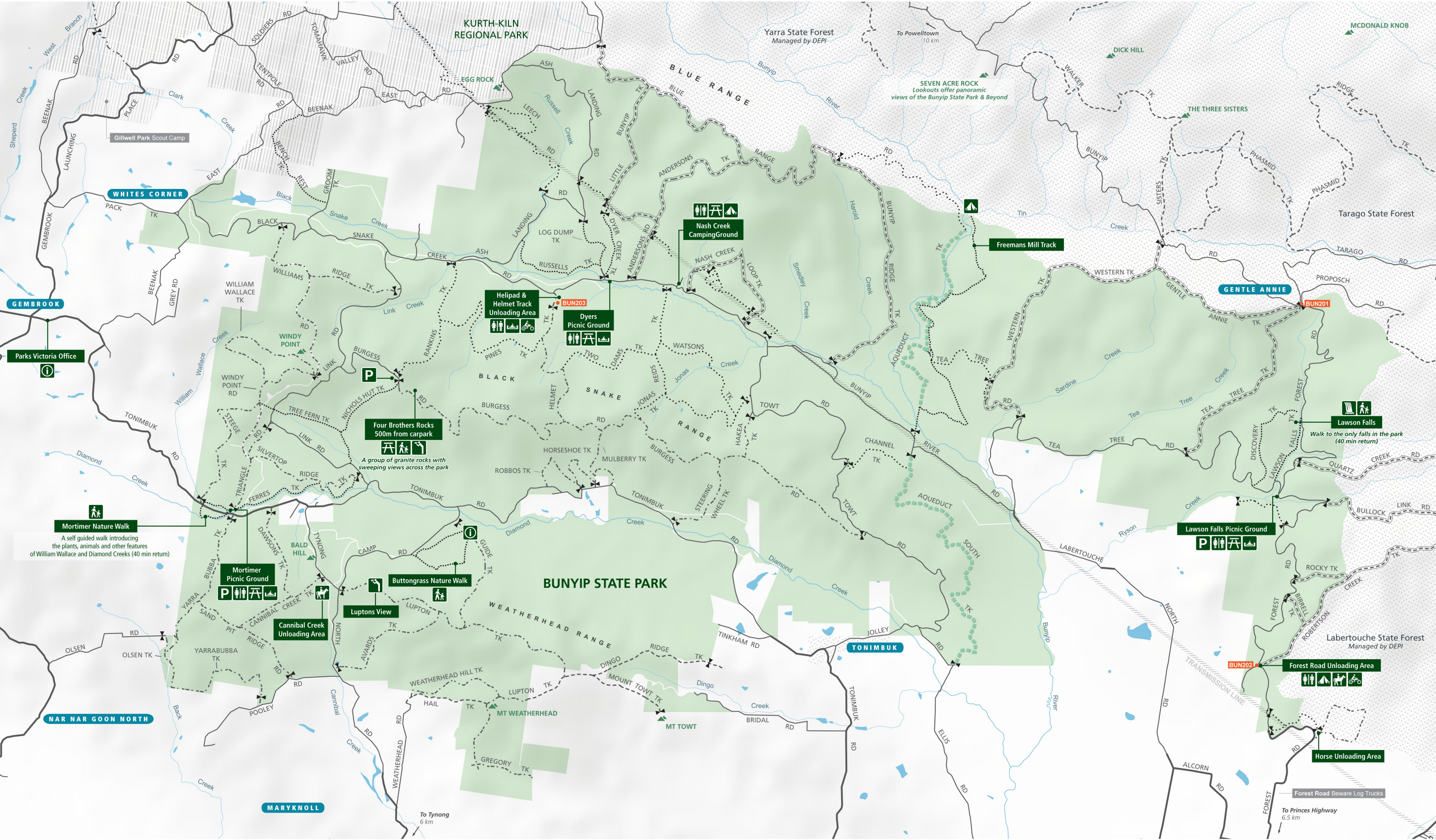
Community involvement

The management and preservation of Bunyip State Park is actively assisted by a voluntary community groups called Friends of Bunyip State Park. Regular working bees are held to maintain the natural values of the forest.

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!





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| Parking | Picnic table | Trail bike unloading area | Sealed road | Walking track | Bunyip State Park |
| Park information | Fireplace | ESTA emergency marker | Unsealed road | Authorised vehicles & walkers only | Other Park/Reserve |
| Toilets | Horse unloading area | Gate | 4WD track | Authorised access only | State Forest |
| Family walk | Camping | | Shared Horse/Walk/Bicycle | 4WD subject to Seasonal Closure | Waterbody |