

RAINFOREST

In 1990 Cobb Hill rainforest was declared a National Rainforest Site of Significance and was to be protected as such under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act. However, in December 2011, in defiance of their own laws, state government logging agency VicForests sent contractors into this area for logging.

The Victorian public were astonished that rainforest is still logged in Victoria. Environment groups were alarmed at the flagrant disregard for laws intended to guarantee a secure future for threatened plants and animals. Protests and arrests ensued, and regional conservation group Environment East Gippsland took legal action in the Supreme Court against VicForests.

The case was settled with VicForests agreeing not to log Cobb Hill and eight other Rainforest Sites of Significance. **Since then, VicForests has been found to be logging in areas of rainforest on numerous occasions. Until proper protections are in place, citizen science is critical to help monitor against unlawful logging.**



Gippsland Waratah | Judith Deland

The Errinundra Plateau is one of East Gippsland's most outstanding and ancient natural areas. It is unique in that it offers both cool temperate and warm temperate rainforest. The Plateau's tall, wet eucalypt forests of Shining Gum and Cut-tail Ash include giants many hundreds of years old. It is well worth taking your time when exploring this majestic wilderness to get the most from your visit. With plenty of tranquil camping spots, you will be spoiled for choice if you stay the night. There are numerous sites with picnic tables, fireplaces, and toilet facilities for rest and meal stops. In addition to the day-long drive from Melbourne to East Gippsland, allow at least a full day for this tour and be prepared for wet weather at any time. Due to road conditions sections of this route are closed between June and November. When driving this route during the Winter months, the stops north of Goongerah are reliably accessible, however accessing the plateau can be more difficult.

TRAVELLING SAFELY

- Take a detailed to-scale topographic map, a full tank and carry extra fuel
- Take ample drinking water
- Drive slowly and be aware that log trucks use these roads
- Roads may become slippery in heavy rain and may require 4WD
- Many areas don't have mobile phone coverage
- Natural hazards occur within forest environments
- Check for road closures and fire warnings in summer
- For injured wildlife call Wildlife Victoria on 1300 094 535

DISCOVER THE ERRINUNDRA PLATEAU

FOREST ISSUES

These forests support a wealth of native wildlife which all depend on intact, healthy forests for their survival. Unfortunately, these forests are under immense pressure from logging. **Worryingly, logging is reducing the number of hollow-bearing trees which many endangered animals depend on for survival.** Colonies of huge Greater Gliders, tiny Feather-tailed Gliders, and Ring-tailed Possums all need these hollow-bearing trees for shelter, nesting and breeding. Powerful Owls, Masked Owls and Sooty Owls also need these hollows to thrive.



Devastating logging, Errinundra Plateau | Judith Deland

Logging increases the likelihood and the severity of bushfires. By protecting our forests from logging, we are safeguarding them from the increasing threat of severe bushfires. Trees keep the climate in balance by absorbing huge amounts of carbon from the atmosphere and storing it in wood and soil. This process limits the amount of greenhouse gases expelled into the atmosphere and generates clean air. Logging is making climate change worse. **We don't need to log these forests. Left standing, they are worth so much more.**

These are *your* forests and we hope you have enjoyed exploring them. Large areas of forest in East Gippsland are under immense pressure. Even in the 21st century, these ancient forests are still being destroyed.



Connecting with nature | David Caldwell

Being part of the solution is easier than you think.

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Visit: ethicalpaper.com.au

VOLUNTEER WITH US – By volunteering, you'll be joining a growing movement of passionate people taking action for our forests.

Visit: wilderness.org.au/volunteer and geco.org.au/volunteer

DONATE – By making a tax-deductible donation, you'll be helping to protect our beautiful, natural wilderness for future generations.

Visit: wilderness.org.au/donate and eastgippsland.net.au/donate-to-ee

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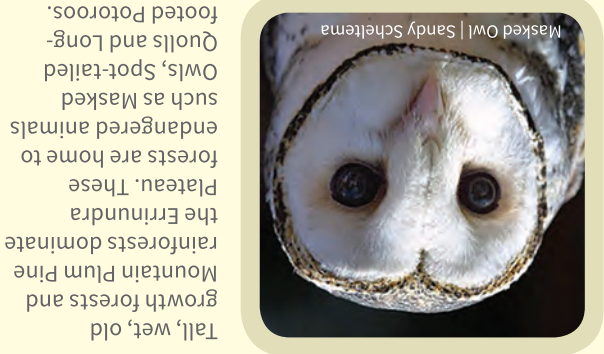
Produced by campaigners and volunteers at the Wilderness Society Victoria, with assistance from Environment East Gippsland (EEG) and Goongerah Environment Centre (GECO).

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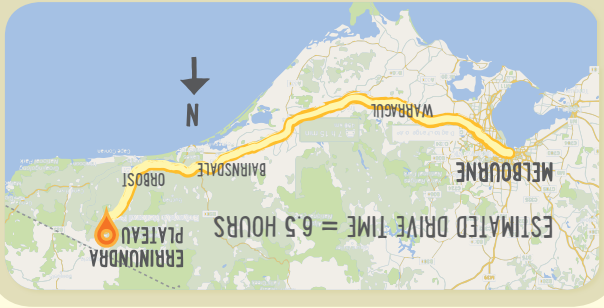
WELCOME TO EAST GIPPSLAND

East Gippsland is home to the most extensive area of forest wilderness in Victoria and is one of the most diverse temperate forest ecosystems on Earth. It's a must-see for anyone seeking the relaxing feeling of being far from the city, enveloped by beautiful nature. A full-day's drive from Melbourne will take you to spectacular rainforests, towering old growth and alpine wetlands. **Discover ancient rainforest gullies, clear mountain streams and wondrous wildlife.** Meander your way around the peaceful boardwalks. If you're feeling energetic, take a walk up to one of the many lookout spots for some breathtaking views.



Masked Owl | Sandy Scheltema

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the forests of East Gippsland, who have lived in and cared for this country for thousands of years.



- SELF-DRIVE MAP -



Errinundra National Park | David Caldwell

EXPLORE AND DISCOVER THE MAGIC OF THE FOREST



East Gippsland

- SELF-DRIVE MAP -

KEY

ROUTE TO FOLLOW

3

NUMBERED STOP

SEALED ROAD

2WD GRAVEL RD OR TOWN RD

WALKING TRACK

RIVER

SEASONAL ROAD CLOSURES

Due to road conditions sections of this route are closed between June and November. When driving this route during the Winter months, the stops north of Goongerah are reliably accessible, however accessing the plateau can be more difficult.

SOME SIGNIFICANT LOGGING COUPES

SUGGESTED LUNCH STOP

FIREPLACE

TOILET

CAMPING SPOT

LOOKOUT AREA/ SPECTACULAR VIEWS

PICNIC TABLE



Please note this map is not exactly to scale.

GETTING THERE: From Orbst, take the Bonang Highway (route C612) towards Goongerah. Before you leave, fuel-up at service stations located in Orbst (closes 8pm) or Newmerella. Driving through the Martins Creek area (about 47km from Orbst), notice the large vines and tree ferns of this National Rainforest Site of Significance.

There is a free campground with toilets and fireplaces in Goongerah down Ellery Creek Track (look for metal owl sculpture). This is a lovely spot to camp and start the Self-drive Tour the next day.

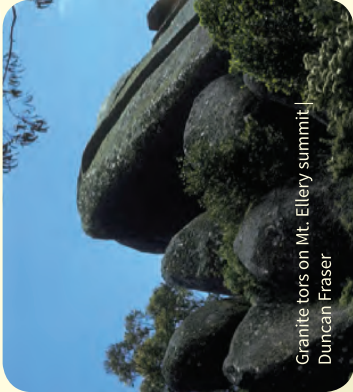
To start the Self-drive Tour, take Sardine Creek Rd, off the Bonang Highway.

1. ELLERY CREEK CATCHMENT AND ELLERY SUMMIT WALK:

Travelling along Sardine Creek Rd, turn left onto B.A. Rd. In 10km you will see Big River Rd on the right (road sign is next to National Park sign). Turn right here if you decide to do the Ellery Summit Walk (2 to 3 hours return), which starts on the left around 3km along Big River Rd.

The ecosystem on the mountain is very special and the area is a significant place for Traditional Owners. Massive granite monoliths stand sentinel in the lush forest marking the highest point in the region at 1,219m. **Take the opportunity to walk through some spectacular forest, amongst very old Alpine Ash trees with a flourishing, grassy understorey.**

The short and demanding but very rewarding 1km climb takes you to the giant granite tors on the summit of Mt Ellery.



Granite tors on Mt. Ellery summit | Durcan Fraser

6. OLD GROWTH FOREST WALK

Backtrack to the intersection of Goonmirk Rocks and Gunmark Rds. Turn right and follow Gunmark Rd towards Tea Tree Flat camp area on the left. Situated on the Delegate River and in contrast to the tall, wet forests elsewhere on the Plateau, Tea Tree Flat features sphagnum moss and heath plants.

This rare, alpine wetland is inside the National Park, but is drying up due to logging in its headwaters. Logging decreases the quality and quantity of water in the landscape.

Continue to the Orbst-Bendoc (Gap) Rd intersection. Turn left and look for the Old Growth Forest Walk carpark on left 1-2km down the road. This 2 to 3 hour walk with sections of boardwalk will take you through tall wet forest, rainforest, and one of Victoria's largest trees, discovered and protected from logging by Goongerah Environment Centre conservationists in 2003.

Unique and endangered wildlife live in this old-growth forest, such as Australia's largest gliding marsupial, the Greater Glider.

They live high in the treetops, eating gum leaves and are capable of gliding up to 100m in a single leap.

Large Tree protected after discovery by GECCO | Ed Hill



GETTING HOME: Continue along Gap Rd until you will reach Bonang Rd. Turn left to go Goongerah and Orbst. This is the direction for Melbourne.

Greater Glider | Pavel German



5. LOGGING COUPES: From Rooty Break Trail continue along Goonmirk Rocks Rd for around 4km to the junction with Clarkeville Rd. Continue to the right along Goonmirk Rocks Rd. **You will notice the forest change dramatically as you enter this area of devastating logging coupes. Be sure to take a close look at the impacts of the logging.**

The trees you see left standing are 'habitat' trees and are left due to their supposed seed spreading ability and alleged habitat value for native wildlife. You will see these trees are now very unhealthy. The ecological disturbance caused by logging and post-logging burns leads to high death rates. Dead or alive, these trees are no longer suitable habitat for the species that depended on them. Ecosystems inside the Errinundra National Park are also impacted due to the effects of logging here.

From Clarkeville Rd continue for around 3km over the hill on Goonmirk Rocks Rd to the Back Creek Rd / Hensleigh Creek Rd junction and turn right. Travel 0.5km down Hensleigh Creek Rd and you will see a large logging coupe on the right. In 2015, the Goongerah Environment Centre (GECO) reported unlawful rainforest logging here. Without the watchful eye of this citizen science we would not know the significance of logging in this area. **Ancient rainforest canopy trees such as Sassafras and Black Olive Berry were bulldozed in the gully.**

The giant stumps near the road were once Eucalyptus trees, some over 500 years old. The state government investigated and condemned the logging but refused to take regulatory action.



600 years to grow, one hour to destroy | Environment East Gippsland

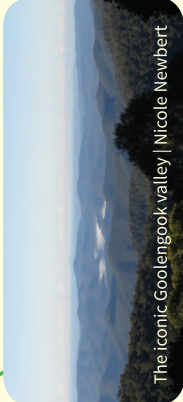
4. ROOTY BREAK TRAIL: From the rainforest walk continue on Errinundra Rd until you reach the intersection of Errinundra and Gunmark Rds. Turn right and drive along Gunmark Rd until you come to the junction with Goonmirk Rocks Rd. Turn right into Goonmirk Rocks Rd towards Rooty Break Trail (2.3km from Gunmark / Goonmirk Rocks junction, sign on the right but hidden behind vegetation).

This spectacular rainforest walk goes down Rooty Break Trail to Coast Range Rd. It takes about 20 minutes to reach Coast Range Rd, **passing ginormous Shining Gums and thickets of Errinundra Plum Pine that scientists say are over 1,000 years old!**

For a longer walk, turn right onto Coast Range Rd at the end of the trail and follow it back to Goonmirk Rocks rd, turn right towards Goonmirk Rocks and follow the road back to your car.



Errinundra Plum Pine | Ian Sutton



The iconic Goolengook valley | Nicole Newbert

2. OCEAN VIEW (GOOLENGOOK) LOOKOUT:

Drive back to B.A. Rd, turn right and continue to Ellery Saddle. B.A Rd becomes Greens Rd. Ocean View Lookout is on the side of the road on the right (0.5km before Ada Divide Track).

Ocean View Lookout is on the edge of the Errinundra Plateau looking south. **Soak up this spectacular view of the Goolengook valley and the blanket of old growth forest – some of the most spectacular left on mainland Australia.**

The Goolengook valley was to be logged and woodchipped, but in the late 1990s conservationists took direct action. After five years, the longest running forest protest in Australia's history resulted in the addition of 5,000 hectares of the magnificent Goolengook forest to the Errinundra National Park.

3. ERRINUNDRRA SADDLE RAINFOREST WALK:

Continue along Greens Rd (becomes Errinundra Rd) towards Mt Morris Picnic Area. For those wanting to take more time doing this tour, the Mt Morris walk is an easy short walk through Alpine Ash forests to a granite outcrop that looks over the Snowy River country.

Continue along Errinundra Rd, passing Hammond Rd on the right. Not far after this, the Errinundra Saddle Rainforest Walk at Blockade Track is on the right.

This easy trail winds its way under the ancient, cool-temperate rainforest canopy and over small streams. You will see many elegant ferns and colourful fungi when it is wet. This part of the forest is dominated by Southern Sassafras and Black Olive Berry.

The giant Errinundra Shining Gums on this walk are over 600 years old and were only first described as a species in 1991. Breathe deeply as you take in the rainforest atmosphere, and please stick to the boardwalk that is designed to protect the delicate rainforest environment.



Picnicking in the rainforest | Environment East Gippsland