

Lower Big River Recreation and Camping Guide

Emily Borton - Alexandra

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Big River State forest

Situated about 180 km north east of Melbourne, south east of Eildon, Big River State forest provides excellent opportunities for camping, bushwalking, picnicking, fishing, mountain biking, trail bike riding and recreational driving. The heritage classified Big River is at the scenic heart of the forested valley. Today, the Big River State forest is managed primarily for recreation use and water supply.

The Lower Big River camping areas, situated within Big River State forest, consist of a number of riverside camping areas and day visitor areas scattered along Eildon-Jamieson Rd and Big River Rd (see map overleaf).

Location and access

From Melbourne, follow the Maroondah Highway to Taggerty, turn-off to the right onto Taggerty-Thornton Rd and continue through to Thornton. Turn right onto the Goulburn Valley Highway, then right again onto Eildon-Jamieson Rd. Alternatively, the camping areas can also be accessed from the south via Marysville and Woods Point Rd. The camping areas on Eildon-Jamieson Rd are accessible by 2WD, however, 2WD vehicles are not recommended on Big River Rd.

History

One of the most popular features of this forested area is the 'Big River'. In the 1850's, it attracted large groups of prospectors when rich deposits of gold were discovered. Continuing until approximately 1900, there is still evidence today of widespread alluvial mining in the area as far south as Enoch Point.

The Old Coach Rd from Darlingford (now under Lake Eildon) to Enoch Point was constructed by pick and shovel to allow horse and coach traffic to travel to this remote area. Parts of this track (now closed to vehicles) are popular for walkers and nature enthusiasts. A variety of wildlife can be observed along the way.

What facilities are provided?

There are a number of camping areas available in the Big River State forest. Of these, Chaffe Creek has flat areas suitable for large group activities. There are also two picnic areas located within the valley (see map overleaf).

There are no facilities for rubbish collection so you must take rubbish with you when you leave and ensure the area is clean for future campers. Do not bury or dump litter in the forest. Campfires are permitted, provided the following guidelines are observed:

- the fire is in a fireplace or trench 30 cm deep. Please use existing fireplaces rather than create your own
- the fire is not more than 1 square metre and 3 metres around the fire is clear
- the fire is not left unattended and is put out before you leave
- collect only fallen wood for fires – Cutting down trees or damaging standing vegetation is not permitted
- **fires of all types, including portable gas and liquid fuel stoves, are prohibited on days of TOTAL FIRE BAN**

It is your responsibility to know if a TOTAL FIRE BAN is declared.

Fees are not charged and booking is not necessary, although the camping areas may be crowded during peak holiday periods.

Minimal impact camping

Forests are special places, but to remain so they need your help. To protect the delicate environs of the forest, we need to 'tread lightly' in the bush to minimise our impact on the natural environment.

- Camping is not permitted outside of designated areas or within 20 metres of any river, stream or lake.
- Be careful of camping under trees. Trees can lose their limbs at any time, but particularly during high winds.
- Do not dig trenches around tents. With modern tents, this is unnecessary, particularly if you choose a well-drained or raised site.
- Use toilets where provided.
- All native plants and animals are protected.
- Dogs are allowed but must be under direct control at all times and are expected to be kept on a leash in the camping areas.
- Protect water quality – wash up at least 50 metres away from the river and avoid using soap (use gritty sand and a scourer instead).
- Leave campsites tidy.

- Motorbike riders must be fully licensed and motorbikes must be road or recreation registered and only ridden on roads that are open to the public.

Things to see and do

The surrounding forest provides excellent opportunities for fishing, recreational four-wheel-driving, camping, mountain bike riding, bushwalking, horse riding and trail bike riding. However, when on forest roads, be prepared for the unexpected. Timber trucks, 4WD's, hikers, horse riders, trail bike riders, cyclists and native animals may also be using your chosen track.

A short drive away are other places worth visiting, including Mt Torbreck (see Forests Note FS0054 - Mt Torbreck Walking Track), Snobs Creek Falls (see FS0056 - Snobs Creek Falls), Mt Terrible, Lake Eildon National Park and the township of Jamieson.

A number of camping areas exist further south on Big River Rd, known as Upper Big River camping areas, accessible via Big River Rd from the north or Marysville from the south (see Forests Note FS0052 - Upper Big River State forest).

Firearms

- Normal firearm laws apply, including the requirement for a licence and the prohibition of shooting on, from or across roads.
- All native birds and animals are protected by law.
- Big River is a popular recreation area. Take special care with firearms.

Seasonal Road Closures

Some roads within the forest are closed each year between mid June and late October, to protect track surfaces and the environment, and for public safety. Road closures may be extended beyond these dates, depending on weather conditions. These closures are usually enforced by a gate or sign. Contact DSE for more information on road closures.

For more information

The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) is responsible for managing Victoria's State forests. For further information contact the Department of Sustainability and Environment Office at Alexandra (☎ 5772 0200) or DSE's Customer Service Centre on ☎ 136 186.

Visit DSE's website

<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au>

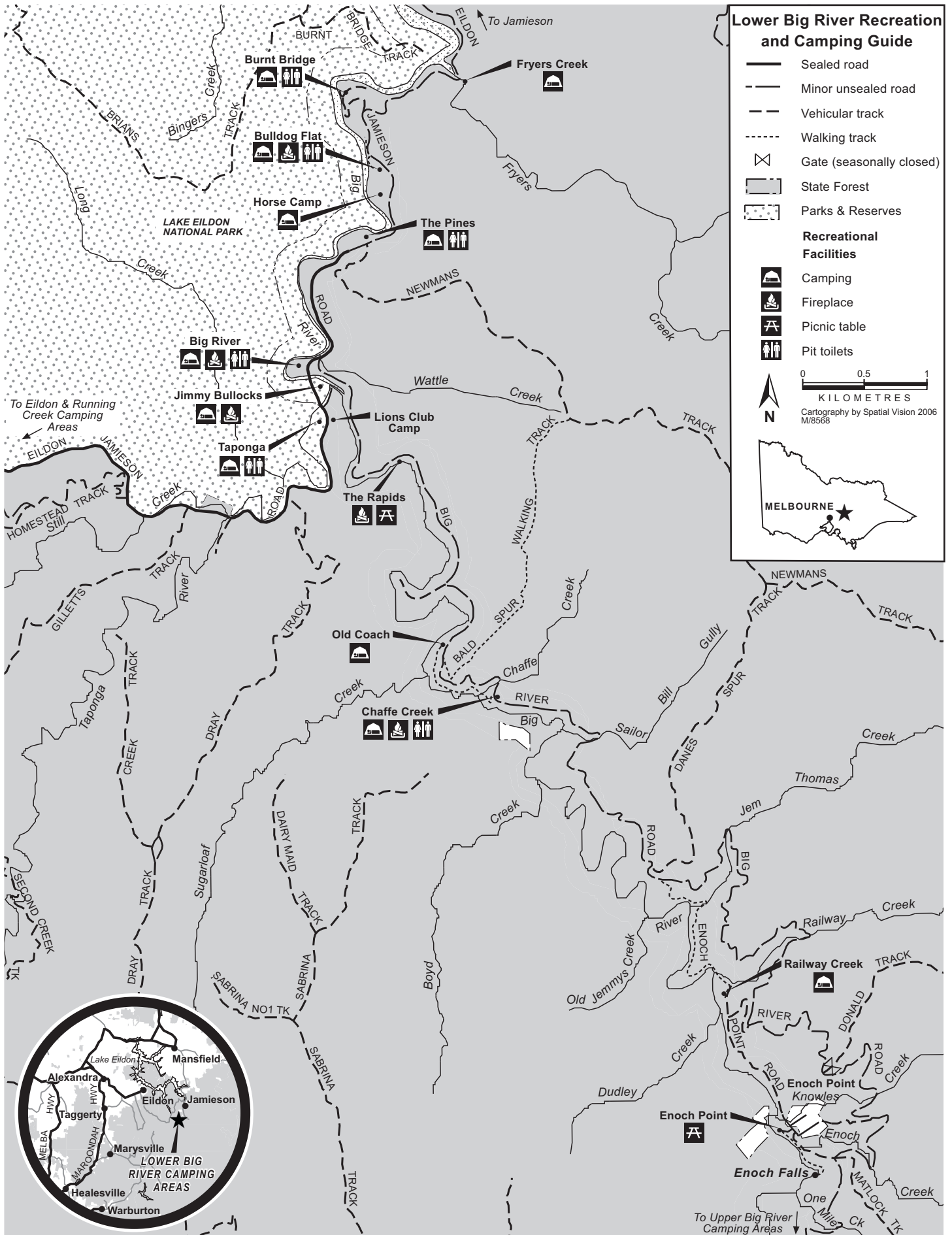
then select "Forestry".

The Big River State forest is managed for a wide range of uses including catchment protection, timber production, recreation and conservation. If you are interested in how State forests are managed, the current Central Highlands Forest Management Plan can be viewed on the Department's website on the Internet at

<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au>

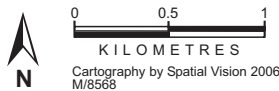
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- Sealed road
 - Minor unsealed road
 - Vehicular track
 - Walking track
 - Gate (seasonally closed)
 - State Forest
 - Parks & Reserves
- Recreational Facilities**
- Camping
 - Fireplace
 - Picnic table
 - Pit toilets



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