

Stanley State Forest

Situated east of Wangaratta, the Stanley State Forest abuts the township of Beechworth and provides some great opportunities for scenic driving and picnicking through the picturesque mixed species eucalypt forests of the region.

The Beechworth district is rich in cultural history dating back to the gold mining days of the mid-1800s. This brochure details a scenic half-day drive taking in these features of the district and Stanley State forest.

Getting there

The Stanley State Forest is most easily accessed from Beechworth, which lies 36km to the east of Wangaratta, in Victoria's north east.

Flora and fauna

Rich in history, Beechworth and its surrounds are perhaps less well known for their mixed species eucalypt forests. Mixed species eucalypt forests will vary in species composition depending upon local topography.

- ◆ On drier sites such as ridges with shallow, less fertile soils, you will more commonly see eucalypt species such as Red Stringybark (*E. macrorhyncha*) and Broad-leaf Peppermint (*E. dives*).
- ◆ Species common to gullies and low-lying areas where soils are deeper and higher in nutrients include Blue Gum (Eurabbie) (*E. globulus bicostata*) and Narrow-leaf Peppermint (*E. radiata*).
- ◆ Other species found in the Stanley State forest include Red Box (*E. polyanthemos*), Candlebark (*E. rubida*), and Brittle Gum (*E. mannifera*).

The forests surrounding Beechworth support a variety of native fauna species, which include black wallabies, wombats, echidnas, and several species of possum and glider.

The echidna (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*) is an unusual native mammal related to the platypus. The echidna and platypus are the only examples of egg laying mammals (or monotremes) in the world.

Once mature, their diet consists predominantly of ants. They have large, strong claws for digging, and a protective covering of spines which are actually modified hairs.



Forest Drive Circuit

Beechworth Forest Drive

26 km, 1 hour driving time

The Beechworth Forest Drive begins in the Beechworth town centre. Set your vehicle trip meter to zero at the start of the drive indicated on the map. *The distances noted at each site indicates the distance that feature is located from the start of the drive.* Note that trip meters may vary from vehicle to vehicle, and any side trips that are taken will also alter trip meter readings from feature distances on each respective drive. Be aware of other road users, and drive according to the prevailing road and weather conditions.

This scenic drive (see map) begins and finishes in Beechworth and takes you through sections of Stanley State forest, the orchard industry and Beechworth Historic Park. From Beechworth's Post Office head south down Ford St one block to High St. Turn left up High St travelling for approximately 1 km, then turn right down Elgin Rd. After approximately 0.5 km turn left onto Red Hill Road and set your trip meter to zero to start the forest drive.

1. Beechworth Historic Park 3.0 km

Part of the Beechworth Forest Drive takes you through the Beechworth Historic Park, managed by Parks Victoria. This forest in this part of the Park is typical of the drier foothill forests of north-east Victoria. Dominant tree species include Red Stringybark (*Eucalyptus macrorhyncha*), Narrow-leaf Peppermint (*E. radiata*), Brittle gum (*E. mannifera*), and Apple Box (*E. bridgesiana*).

Throughout the drive you may observe some of the local birds and other wildlife native to the region.

2. Lake Kerferd 4.0 km

This picturesque lake supplies Beechworth's town water. Camping, swimming and boating are no longer permitted at the lake, although fishing is still a popular activity throughout the year.

Named after George B. Kerferd, who advocated the dam's construction, the dam was officially opened in 1874, giving the town a permanent water supply. G.B. Kerferd was a prominent Beechworth citizen, who was elected mayor of Beechworth four times, subsequently going on to become Premier of Victoria.

3. Wallaby Mine (optional side trip)

Located approximately 3 minutes drive from the main forest drive route, the mine offers an insight into the activities that took place in the area during the 1850s.

**4. Fletchers Dam (optional side trip)**

This small picturesque lake set amongst pines is a short distance off the forest drive circuit. The lake offers fishing activities and is an ideal place for a picnic lunch.

5. Apple Orchards**6.0 km**

If you look straight ahead, you will see a large apple orchard, typical of the Stanley area. After the gold rush, many of those remaining in the Stanley district began growing apples for income. The climate and the soils proved to be suitable and over the years the industry has flourished. More recently, the district's fruit industry has seen an increase in crop diversification with the growing of cherries, nectarines and other stone fruits, and nuts. From the early 1900s until the 1960s, potato farming occurred in the Stanley district. Manual labour was hard and diseased crops produced low harvest returns, thus leading to a decline in the industry. (An old potato storage shed can be seen 11kms into the drive).

6. Pine Plantations**8.3 km**

Pines in the Stanley area were originally planted on degraded mining land by Forest Commission employees and sustenance workers.

Sustenance camps near Stanley were established by unemployed men from Melbourne during the depression in the 1930s.



The plantations were worked by Italian interns during WW II, and following the war, by immigrants who came to Australia through naturalisation programs during the 1950s and 1960s.

The area, now managed by Hancock Victorian Plantations Pty Ltd locally based at Myrtleford, is currently in its second and third rotation. The pines are thinned at approximately 15 and 20 years to provide pulp for newsprint, toilet tissue, and particle board, finally being clear-felled at 28-30 years for veneer and sawlogs. The area is then immediately re-planted beginning the next crop rotation.

7. Stanley Township**9.9 km**

Originally known as Snake Gully or Nine Mile, Stanley was a bustling gold mining town during the 1850s and 1860s. In 1857, the township was surveyed and officially named 'Stanley'. By this stage there were over 5000 people residing in the district. The town had a number of hotels, a bakery, a general store, a brewery, a bootmaker, a carpenter, a butcher and a sawmill.

Today, Stanley has a general store and the Indigo Inn. While the building has been replaced, the site and licence

remain original. Opening as the 'Star Hotel' in the 1850s, it was part of J.A. Wallace's chain of hotels across north-east Victoria, all named the 'Star'.

8. Mt. Stanley (optional side trip)

15 minutes drive from Stanley is Mt. Stanley (1050m). There are picnic facilities here, and on a clear day, the Victorian Alps and surrounding region can be seen.

9. Sluicing**11.4 km**

You will notice along the right hand side of the road, the lower level of ground. These are examples of sluiced out banks. Sluicing is one form of gold mining, which was adopted to mine large areas for alluvial gold deposits.

The ground here would have been literally washed away, into 'races' where the gold (being heavier) settled into ridges, while the remaining rock and soil was washed away.

**10. Stanley State Forest****13.1 km**

The unusual tree next to the marker is a Brittle gum and a Narrow-leaf Peppermint which have grown together. The forest along this section of the drive can be seen in the surrounding moist gullies and drier ridges. The gullies generally contain stands of Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*), Narrow-leaf Peppermint (*E. radiata*) and Candlebark (*E. rubida*). Understorey species include Dogwood (*Cassinia aculeata*), Silver Wattle (*Acacia dealbata*) and Bracken Fern (*Pteridium esculentum*). As the road climbs onto the drier ridgetops, the vegetation in the forest changes. Main tree species include Red Stringybark (*E. macrorhyncha*), Broad-leaf Peppermint (*E. dives*) and Blackwood (*A. melanoxylon*). Understorey species in these drier areas include a variety of native orchids and other wildflowers, usually best seen during spring.

Please remember that all plants in the forest are protected.

11. Clark's Corner**13.3 km**

At this fork intersection, veer right to reach Clark's Corner picnic area. The house that stood here until early this century was once occupied during the gold mining era by William and Eliza Clark and family. The Clark's ran a small market garden supplying miners locally with fresh produce.

During the late 1940s and early 1950s, a small group of migrants were assigned to work for the Forests Commission to assist in road construction. They also lived in this section of forest in a portable hut that was later moved to the Elbow Camp, just out of Stanley.

12. Murrumgee Lookout**15.0 km**

From here you can look over the cropping and grazing lands of the Murrumgee basin. Further south is the Ovens Valley, and beyond, the horizon is silhouetted with the magnificence of the Victorian Alps from Mt Buffalo to Mt

Buller. The facilities at this site make it a great place to stop for a picnic lunch with a fantastic view.

13. Buckland Gap 17.0 km

Once was the site of the Royal Oak Hotel. In the days of the horse drawn carriage, this Buckland Gap was renowned for the 'thrill' of the ride over it. The Buckland carriage was fitted with a third brake, which could be operated by nervous passengers when negotiating the steep descent to the south of the Gap.

Picnic sites

Picnic areas with picnic tables and fireplaces are available at Clark's Corner, the Murrungee Lookout and Bates Dam.

Looking after our forests

- Fires are permitted, except on days of 'total fire ban', but please use fireplaces provided rather than create new ones. Use only dead fallen wood (as dead standing trees provide homes for wildlife) and ensure that fires are completely extinguished before leaving.
- Only light fires in fireplaces or 30 cm deep trenches. Fires must be less than 1 metre square and at least 3 m clear of burnable material.
- Where there are no toilet facilities, bury your faecal waste 15cm deep and at least 100m from any watercourse.
- Dogs are permitted but must be kept under control and are expected to be kept on a leash in picnic and camping areas or when near other visitors.
- Don't disturb native plants or animals.
- There is no rubbish collection service, so please take your rubbish home. If you have the misfortune to come across other people's rubbish, do the bush a favour and take it out with you too.
- Vehicles and trail bikes must be registered and roadworthy and may only be driven on designated public roads and tracks.

For more information

The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) is responsible for managing Victoria's State Forest. For further information contact the Department of Sustainability and Environment office at Beechworth (☎5720 8190) or DSE's Customer Service Centre on ☎136 186.

Visit DSE's website

<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au>
then select "Forestry".

The Stanley 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 North East Forest Management Plan can be viewed on the Department's website on the Internet at

<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au>
then select "Forestry", then select "Publications".

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