

Upper Big River Recreation & Camping Guide

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Situated about 2½ hours drive north east of Melbourne via Marysville or Warburton, Big River State forest is a popular area with many kilometres of forest roads and tracks. The heritage classified Big River is at the scenic heart of the forested valley.

Location and Access

From Marysville - Take the Woods Point Rd. After 18km, veer left at the Cumberland Junction then turn left down Eildon Warburton Road.

From Warburton - Follow the Warburton Woods Point Rd and turn right at the Cumberland Junction, then left down Eildon Warburton Road.

Big River Rd is 6km on the right and travels through the heart of the Big River State Forest. Big River Road is an all-weather gravel road and has numerous riverside camping areas. Between 25 Mile Creek and Enochs Point, Big River Road is suitable for four wheel drive vehicles only.

Things to see and do

With many kilometres of forest road and tracks, the area is extremely popular for recreational use. There are opportunities for camping, fishing, deer hunting, canoeing, gold fossicking, bush walking and vehicle touring.

History

The Big River State forest is the traditional land of the Kulin nation. The Taungurung tribe looked after the land in the north and the Wurundjeri tribe looked after land in the south. Stone artefacts identified along the Big River highlight the area was frequently visited and used for camping.

Gold prospectors first visited the area in the 1850's and there is abundant evidence of widespread alluvial mining. Deep lead mining was carried out near Stockman's Reward and in the 1920's a large steam-driven dredge also operated in this area.

The Yarra track, which provided access to the Woods Point goldfields, originally crossed the Big River at Stockman's Crossing, now known as Stockman's Reward. Cattle were grazed in the forest until the 1960's and in more recent years the forest supplied sawlogs for local industry. Today the forest is managed primarily for recreation, timber production and water supply.

What facilities are provided?

A number of camping areas are located throughout Big River State forest. Some sites can accommodate caravans but all sites are unpowered with toilet facilities and fireplaces provided at designated sites (see map overleaf).

Campfire guidelines

Campfires are permitted, provided the following guidelines are observed:

- **Campfire safety** - Use fireplaces where provided. The fire must be in a fireplace or trench 30cm deep, must be no bigger than 1 square metre in any direction, with the ground and airspace within 3m of the outer perimeter of the fire clear of flammable material. The fire must also be attended at all times by a person with the capacity and means to extinguish it. Ensure the fire is extinguished with water before leaving. **If it's cool to touch it is safe to leave.**
- **Campfires are prohibited on days of Total Fire Ban.** This ban does not apply to a person preparing meals on a gas or electric appliance that has been designed and commercially manufactured exclusively for cooking provided:
 - the ground and airspace within 3m of the appliance is clear of flammable material.
 - when in use and alight, the appliance is in a stable position and attended by an adult who has the capacity and means (minimum of 10 litres of water on hand) to extinguish the fire.

Upper Big River camping areas are located in the North Central Total Fire Ban (TFB) district, with the exception of Snowy Rd, which is located in the Central TFB district.

It is your responsibility to know if a Total Fire Ban is declared. If in doubt, do not light a campfire.

Forest use guidelines

- There is no rubbish collection service so please take your rubbish home.
- Dogs are allowed in State forest but must be under direct control at all times and are expected to be on a leash in picnic and camping areas or when near other visitors.
- Motor vehicles including motorcycles must not be driven off formed roads or on walking tracks. All vehicles must be registered and drivers licensed.
- Use toilets where provided. At some sites hand washing facilities and toilet paper may not be supplied. Come prepared.

Firearms

Normal firearm laws apply in State forests.

- A licence is required and firearms must be registered.
- It is prohibited to shoot on, from or across roads.
- Use of firearms in camping areas is prohibited.

All native birds and animals are protected by law. State forests are popular recreation areas. Take special care with firearms.

Camping - Minimal impact

To protect the delicate environments 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 drop their limbs at any time (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.
- 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 – Take your rubbish home.

Safety information

- On Code Red Fire Danger Rating days, parks and State Forest are closed to the public. Do not enter parks or forests on Code Red Days. If you are already there when a Code Red day is announced, you should leave the night before or early in the morning. For more information contact DELWP (see below).
- Be responsible for your own safety. Be aware of extreme weather events, carry your own first aid kit and let someone know before you go.
- This area is dotted with many mine shafts. Exercise care while walking through the bush and keep dogs on a leash.
- The forest was severely impacted by bushfire in 2009. Visitors are advised to avoid the forest in very wet or windy weather when hazards may be increased.

Seasonal road closures

Some roads within the forest are seasonally closed each year from the Thursday after the Queen's Birthday holiday through to the Thursday before Melbourne Cup. This is 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 enforced by a gate. Contact DELWP for more information on road closures.

For more information

The Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning (DELWP) is responsible for managing Victoria's State Forest. For further information contact DELWP's Customer Service Centre ☎ 136 186 (TTY: 1800 555 667) or visit DELWP's website at <http://www.delwp.vic.gov.au>

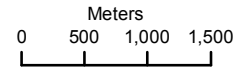


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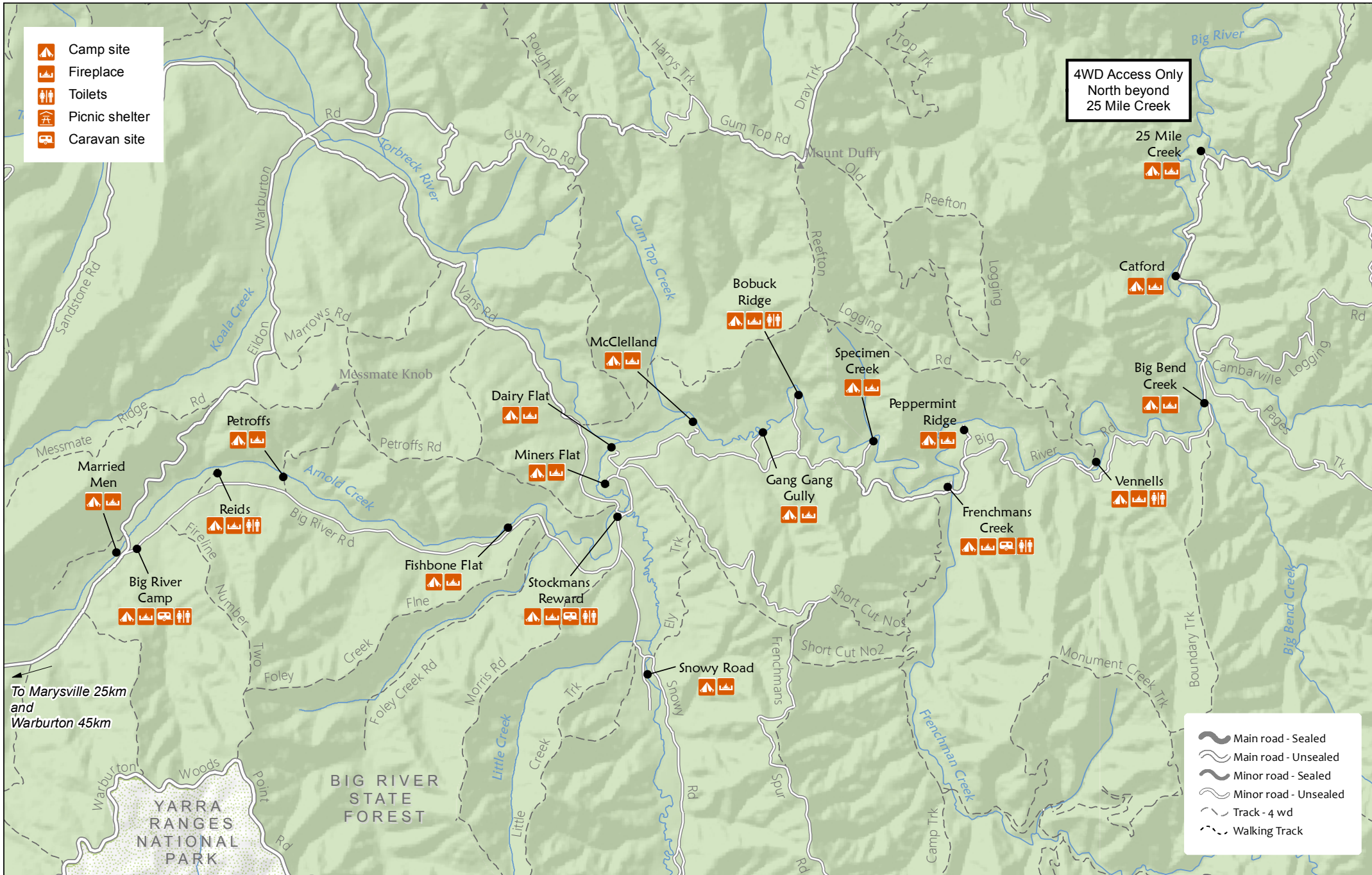
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Forest Notes Map
FS-0052



- Camp site
- Fireplace
- Toilets
- Picnic shelter
- Caravan site

4WD Access Only
North beyond
25 Mile Creek

- Main road - Sealed
- Main road - Unsealed
- Minor road - Sealed
- Minor road - Unsealed
- Track - 4 wd
- Walking Track

To Marysville 25km
and
Warburton 45km

YARRA
RANGES
NATIONAL
PARK

BIG RIVER
STATE
FOREST