



Forest Notes

Nunniong Forest Drive

DSE – Swifts Creek

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The Nunniong Forest Drive starts at Ensay and takes in the scenic and historic sites of the Nunniong State Forest, managed by the Department of Sustainability and Environment. The drive is approximately 67kms and will take a leisurely half to full day, particularly if you wish to include one or more of the walks and explore the sites along the way.

Getting there

From Melbourne travel 285km east along the Princes Highway to Bairnsdale. Take the Great Alpine Road and travel approximately 81km to Ensay, passing through the townships of Bruthen and Tambo Crossing on the way.

Main attractions

A number of activities can be enjoyed in the Nunniong State Forest. These include fishing in the headwaters of the Tambo and Timbarra Rivers, four wheel driving, bush walking, horse riding, photography and flora and fauna appreciation.

Bentley Plain is a highlight of the drive, where you can picnic or camp at either “Moscow Villa” or the “Bush Hilton”, providing a base for the various activities.

Walking tracks

Bentleys Plain Walk - This walk meanders through Eucalyptus forests and wet gullies.



Return 2.5km	1 hour
Short steep hills	Formed track, some obstacles
Sign posted	Many steps
Some bushwalking experience recommended	

Douglas Reserve Walk - This walk crosses a branch of Bentley's Creek and passes through tall Mountain Gum Forest.



Return 400m	15 minutes
Short steep hills	Formed track, some obstacles
Sign posted	Many steps
Some bushwalking experience recommended	

Camping sites

Camping facilities are provided at:

- **Bentley Plain** – Bush Hilton hut, picnic rotunda, five dispersed campsites, earth pit toilet, four picnic tables and wood / pit barbecues.
- **Moscow Villa** – Log cabin, earth pit toilet, picnic table, wood fire pit.

Significant flora and fauna

Box-dominated woodlands in the Tambo Valley, occupying the relatively fertile lower slopes and river flats, have mostly been cleared for agriculture; the remaining stands are of high conservation value.

These areas support populations of woodland birds more typically found north of the Great Dividing Range. Many migrate from the north into this rainshadow area during the summer months. Of statewide significance, woodland bird species of this area include Hooded Robin, Brown Treecreeper, Diamond Firetail and Swift Parrots along with regionally significant Rainbow Bee-eater and Dollarbirds.

The sub-alpine grasslands and heathlands of Bentley Plain and Nunniong Plain contain many important flora species restricted to these areas. These include Rough Eyebright, Strawberry Buttercup, Marsh Daisy and Tasmanian Bladderwort. Adjacent to the Plain are reserved areas of old growth forest comprising Wet Forest, Damp Forest and Tableland Damp Forest. The old growth areas are habitat for the endangered Powerful Owl which requires the large hollows found in these trees for breeding. They feed mostly on possums and gliders which are also dependent on older trees with hollows for their breeding.

Looking after our forests

You can help protect and preserve the beauty of the area.

- Don't disturb native plants and animals.
- There is no rubbish collection service, so please take your rubbish home.
- Dogs must be under direct control at all times and are expected to be kept on a leash in picnic and camping areas, or when near other visitors.
- Take care with fire – observe all fire regulations and Total Fire Ban days. Preferably use existing fireplaces; keep fires small to conserve the available firewood; never leave fires unattended; ensure fires are completely extinguished when you leave.
- Keep to the roads. Do not drive off formed roads with vehicles or bikes. Observe seasonal road closures.
- If using any of the huts, clean the hut and close the door securely when you leave.

Forest driving tips

- Keep to the left, particularly on narrow roads and corners. Drive as if you were expecting a vehicle to come around the next bend.
- Log trucks operate in this area for most of the year so extra care is needed when driving on these roads.
- Watch out for wildlife and stock along the way.
- Be careful of pot-holes and watch out for stones being thrown up by other vehicles.
- Unsealed roads require extra care when driving, particularly on wet gravel roads.
- Forest roads are public roads. Normal road rules apply
- Chains should be carried during winter.

Nunniong Forest Drive

An easy drive through Nunniong State Forest with a taste of history.

4WD Classification: Easy

Distance: 67 kms

Duration: Half day but bring lunch and take five or six hours to appreciate the forest scenery.



Warnings: Log Truck Traffic. This area has been subject to recent widespread bushfires. Visitors are advised to be aware that: trees and branches may fall; rocks and soil may be dislodged and track surface may deteriorate. Hazard may be increased with wind or heavy rain and flooding. Unsuitable for caravans.

Seasonal Road Closure- South Escarpment Rd (side trip to Nugong Tower)

START on the Great Alpine Rd at **Ensay** head north travel 0.6 kms ➔ turn right onto Johnson Rd (signage to Little River Inn) travel 0.7 kms ➔ turn right onto Little River Rd (at Little River Inn) travel 11.1 kms ➔ at McKenzies Tk intersection veer right onto the start of Bentley Plains Rd (veer left at Camp Oven Gap Rd) travel 16.4 kms ➔ **Bentley Plain**. Sub-alpine grassland and wet heathland that contain many important flora species restricted to these areas. The Bentley Plain Walk and the Douglas Reserve Walk are nearby.

Continue travelling 200m ➔ **Moscow Vila**. A log cabin built in the 1940s by Bill Ah Chow who staffed the original Mount Nugong Fire Tower. The Bentley Plain Walk and the Douglas Reserve Walk are available from this site. Continue north on Bentley Plain Rd travel 3.2 kms ➔ Nunniong Rd intersection (East leads to **Nunniong Plain**. A series of open plains interspersed with Snow Gum woodlands and stands of Alpine Ash. At times, cattle and feral horses graze these plains.) ➔ veer left onto Nunniong Rd travel 400 m ➔ turn left onto South Escarpment Rd travel 1.4 kms ➔ **Nugong Tower**. A fire spotting tower used by the Department of Sustainability and Environment over the bushfire season.

Return to Nunniong Rd turn left travel 1.8 kms ➔ **Washington Winch**. A relic of past logging operations the winch is the only steam-powered engine of its kind in Australia. Built in Seattle, USA it was able to haul big logs up

steep slopes, carrying them onto the road and load them onto trucks.

Continue on Nunniong Rd travel 7.5 kms **Bindi Lookout**. Enjoy the views looking towards Bindi Station and Mount Tambo.

Continue on Nunniong Rd travel 10.1 kms (noting the marked difference in vegetation to Shrubby Dry Forest and Grassy Dry Forest. Enjoy the views over the **Tambo Valley Golf Course**. The course layout was established in 1969 and features a pine plantation planted in the early sixties on land previously used for dairy farming) turn left onto Bindi Rd travel 4.4 kms turn left onto Great Alpine Road travel 8.1 kms **Swifts Creek**. The Aboriginal name for the site of Swifts Creek was Bun Jirrah Gingee Munjie, which translates as 'big kangaroos go to that place'. The township was originally settled by Europeans in the gold rushes of the mid 1800s and has a history of grazing and timber milling. The timber mill has been a feature in the town since the end of World War II.

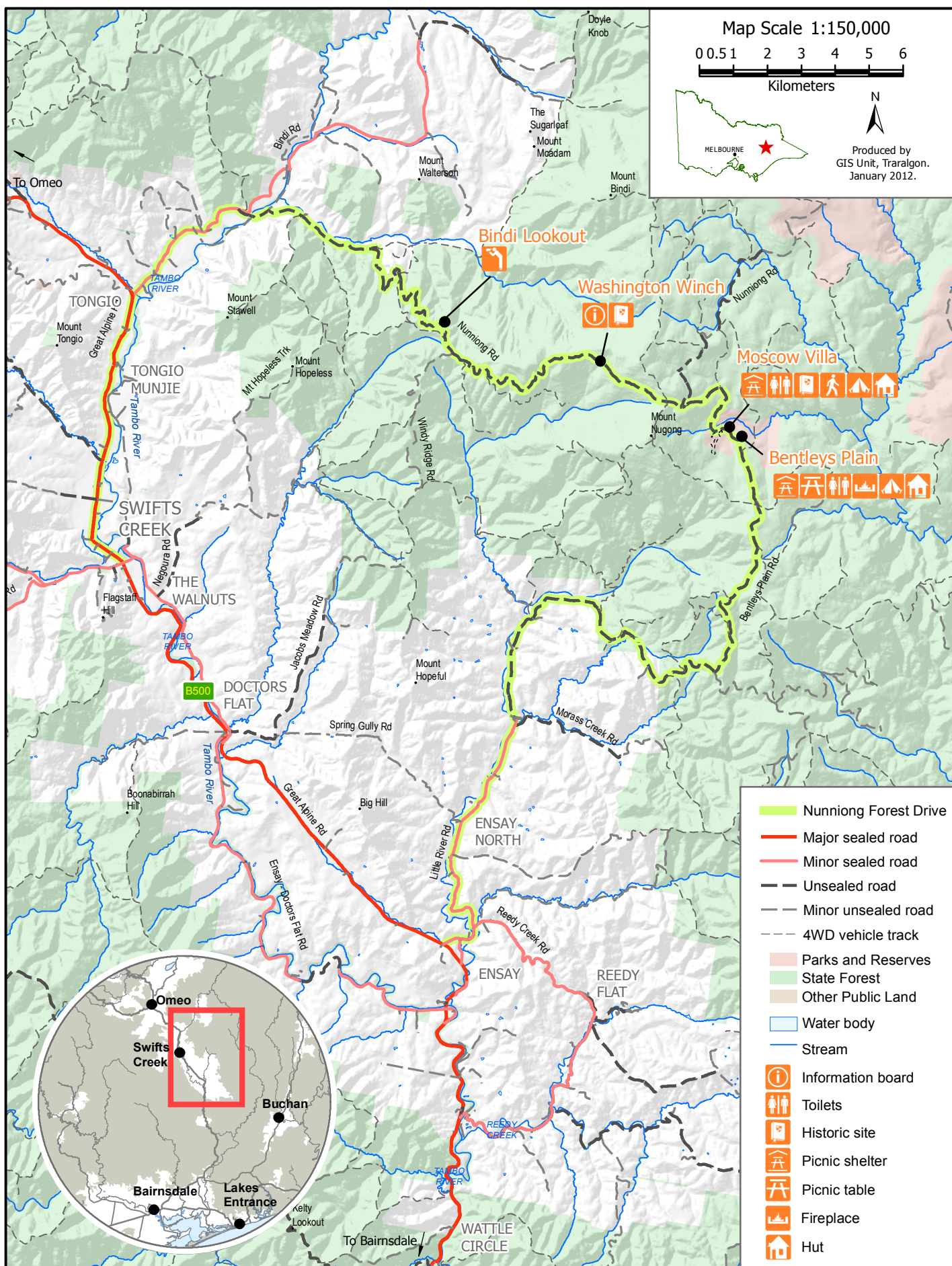
Safety

- 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 DSE (see below).
- Pit toilets are common at State forest sites but hand washing facilities and toilet paper may not be supplied. Come prepared.
- Campfires are banned on days of Total Fire Ban. If in doubt, leave campfires out. Use fireplaces where provided. The fire must be attended at all times by an adult and extinguished with water before leaving. **If it's cool to touch it is safe to leave!**
- Check the weather forecast before you go. Be prepared to turn back if weather deteriorates.
- Let someone know where you are heading. Take along sufficient water and suitable clothing.
- Mobile coverage cannot be relied on in these forests.

For more information

The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) is responsible for managing Victoria's State Forest. For further information contact DSE's Swifts Creek office ☎ (03) 5159 5100 or DSE's Customer Service Centre ☎ 136 186 (TTY: 1800 122 969) or visit DSE's website at <http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/forests>

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