



The Trail Mail



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RAIL TRAIL USER COUNT OVER EASTER

Bicycle Victoria intend to do a count of rail trail users on the Easter weekend and we are looking for Friends to support them.

Statistics which support the public use of our trail will definitely assist our funding applications, especially for a trail manager.

Volunteers need only give a few hours.

Contact Michael, Sue or Janice to offer your services.

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SUCCESSFUL OPENING DAY!

The population of Nowa Nowa trebled on Saturday, January 28

as more than 300 spectators gathered to watch Peter McGauran cut the ribbon to open the Nowa Nowa to Orbost section of the East Gippsland Railtrail. On a hot and humid day many had cycled



Four Grinning Hats

Graeme Stoney

from Bairnsdale, Bruthen or Orbost to celebrate this long-awaited event. Others had walked or driven there to be a part of the festivities. A contingent of equestrians rode in just as the band began to play and this added to the fun of the afternoon. There was entertainment from the Nowa Nowa Men's Choir and the Bairnsdale Civic Band as well as a free barbecue lunch.

The completion of the 94 km railtrail makes the East Gippsland Railtrail one of the longest trails in Australia and certainly one of the most varied and remote.

It has taken several years of arduous persistence in campaigning, cajoling and organizing for their efforts to be rewarded. So members of the the early Friends group should be justifiably proud of this achievement.

Present committee members, too, were pleased with the realization of their endeavours and particularly with the support of members and the public on the opening day.

Probably the best evidence of the success of the extension, however, can be seen each day on the trail as significant numbers of cyclists, walkers and equestrians use it. The residents of Orbost, Newmerella and Simpson's Creek are making the most of this wonderful facility!

This report of the opening day comes from Sue Peirce.

The bus was a popular choice for locals and out of towners on the opening day. The bus started loading bikes at Bairnsdale 7.30 and departed with 40 passengers at 8am for Bruthen, where another 8 cyclists joined us. Another pickup at Nowa Nowa, and drop off, and we arrived at Burns Rd about 9am. All to schedule!

The trailer was very impressive – each bike was held by the cross bar – so no need to remove pedals, and easy to load. Thanks to the Railtrails Australia group for helping Ian Gillick to load and unload bikes, as well as the other bike owners.

At Nowa Nowa after our hot ride and lunch the air conditioned bus proved attractive not only for the Orbost folk wishing to return but some Bairnsdale folks going along for the ride!

At 2.30 the bus returned to Nowa Nowa and the rest of us boarded, stopping at Bruthen to collect some who had chosen to ride from Nowa Nowa to Bruthen – quite an achievement in the humid, hot conditions.

Some of the out of towners had elected to ride to Bruthen but, as expected, did not reach Bruthen by our departure time of 3.30. They had an alternative plan to ride back to Bairnsdale or contact another of their group for a car lift back.

Later, at the Nicholson pub, we bumped into this group, and were delighted to hear that Alex and his friend, Nigel, had done the entire trail on opening day – so here is a picture of Alex and Nigel – the first riders to complete the trail, or so we believe.

Alex and 5 cheerful friends, plus some parents, had come to Bairnsdale for the opening, overnight for 2 nights. At the pub our group of 7 and their group of 10 enjoyed good food and cold beer, all of us were there because of the rail trail. This is one small example of how the rail trail generates local business.

About 16 folk from Melbourne came to the opening using the bus. They had heard of the event through the Friends of East Gippsland Rail Trail or Bicycle Victoria's new rides information internet site.

Another group of 6 we came across the previous day on the trail, and again at the opening, had come from Canberra for the event. This indicates the potential for some organised rides on the trail...any ideas?

Thanks to Ian Gillick from Gillicks Buslines for being helpful and accommodating and flexible, all the while keeping a sense of humour!



Alex Leahy and Nigel Goodman rode from Orbost to Bairnsdale on Opening Day.

BIKE PATH DISCOVERY DAY

Another item from Bicycle Victoria:

Bike Path Discovery Day 2006 will be held on 7 May 2006

It's an opportunity to try a bike path you've never been on before.



- ◆ Get a group from school or work together
- ◆ Invite the coffee club
- ◆ Help a new rider get up to speed
- ◆ Choose a distance and a destination to suit you
- ◆ Set yourself a challenge
- ◆ It's the perfect recipe for a great day out.

Check out the Bicycle Victoria web-site for further info.

WEBSITE STATS

The attached images show that the website usage has fallen from the highs of January but remain well above previous levels.

Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits
Jan 2006	941	1222
Feb 2006	442	654
Mar 2006	340	470

The main referrals remain as Bicycle Vic and Railtrails Aust.

Links from an external page (other web sites except search engines)

- http://www.bv.com.au/inform.php	49 49
- http://www.railtrails.org.au/states/trails.php3	34 34
- http://www.railtrails.org.au/forums/viewtopic.php	10 10
- http://home.vicnet.net.au/~bruthen/home.htm	9 9
- http://www.orbostbikerides.net/railtrail.html	8 8
- http://www.bicycles.net.au/links/clubs.html	7 7
- http://www.travelvictoria.com.au/bairnsdale/	4 4
- http://www.bentbike.observationdeck.org	3 3
- http://www.wildernessbikeride.com.au/links.htm	3 3
- http://www.bv.com.au/search.php	2 2

Potential Trail Rides

Now that we have almost 100 kms should we organise a whole trail ride? This could be done from Orbost and Bairnsdale on alternative years. Transport would be needed to bring riders and bikes back to the start. Morning and afternoon tea stops and lunch could easily be accommodated, for a moderate cost.

This could be preceded with a series of on trail training rides to encourage those for whom 100 kms is a BIG challenge.

It could also be promoted on Bicycle Victoria's website.

As we all know, riding with a group of bike riders is such a good way to spend a day. It's easy to travel longer distances having buddies around, so 100 kms is achievable, as well as providing security in case of bicycle or rider breakdown.

All I need is a bit of encouragement and assistance to give this a try. We would need some support folk for food stops and a small team to do the organizing and promotion.

If you are interested in this idea please give me (Sue Peirce) a call on 5156 8228.



Bridge at Nicholson



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ACTIVITIES CALENDAR 2006 **RIDES**

Date	Location	Contact
30 Apr 06	Meet at Nicholson Jetty at 10 am. We will go on the rail trail from Nicholson to Mossiface via Swan Reach Rd, then over the Tambo River at Swan Reach, (this will involve a short distance, less than 0.5 kms, on Princes Hwy), then along the Upper Tambo Rd to cross the Tambo at Tambo Upper and then rejoin the rail trail back to Nicholson Jetty. Total distance approx 20 kms on trail and 15 kms on bitumen road.	Sue 51568228
13/14 May 06	Weekend trip to Buchan. 9.00a.m. Forest Park, Orbost. Overnight in Buchan. First day 60km. Second day 85km. Check web-site for details of accom.	Keith 51541232
21 May 06	Orbost end. 10a.m. Forest Park, Orbost.	Eddie
11 Jun 06	Bairnsdale to Nicholson Starting at 10 am at start of the rail trail in Bairnsdale, opposite Howitt park. This will be an easy 20 kms total on the bitumen to encourage our family and less confident riders. Dust off the bike, put some air in the tyres and enjoy a gentle amble along the trail. There are even two new seats (courtesy of the Mitchell River Rotary Club), to enjoy a break along the way. One is in memory of the late Ron Rawson who was one of the small group who floated the idea of the rail trail. We will have lunch at the Nicholson jetty (BYO). For those wanting to do more k's they can head to Bumberrah and return (an additional 20 kms, unsealed trail)	Sue 5156 8228
2 Jul 06	A.G.M. Hold meeting Bruthen pub. Ride to from Nowa Nowa to Bruthen or Bairnsdale to Bruthen	Janice
27 Aug 06	Bairnsdale area	Alan 5153 1454
15 Oct 06	Orbost area	Vicki
5 Nov 06	From Bairnsdale or Orbost to Nowa Nowa for Nowa Nowa Nudes	Janice



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MEETINGS

April 10 – ORBOST
(venue to be top pub 7:30 pm)
July 2 – A.G.M. NOWA NOWA
August 14 – BRUTHEN
October 9 – NICHOLSON
December 11 – ORBOST

Contact Sue or Janice for further details of venue or check out the web-site closer to the date.

WORKING BEES

May 7 – Nicholson. Removal of dead black wattle and planting. Meet at 10 am at Lanes Rd intersection with trail. This is the second road intersection from the Nicholson Bridge, heading towards Bairnsdale, and the 5th from Bairnsdale.

There will be black wattles to remove, cut up and stack for burning, some revegetation, and general tidying up. We have equipment belonging to the Friends group (including chain saw) and tools for use but please wear suitable clothing, bring gloves, hat etc. Register at the site on the day. BBQ after (BYO) at Nicholson Jetty at 12ish
Contact: Sue Peirce. 5156 8228

June 4 – Bairnsdale trail entry. Weeding and planting.

September 10 – Nowa Nowa

October 10 – Bruthen

Other scheduled working bees: check our web site for updates and details.





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LOOKING AFTER OUR RAILTRAIL

East Gippsland Shire Community Grants

An application has been made for \$1300 as a contribution to materials to make and install two shelters along the new section of the trail. The idea is to copy the Bumberrah shelter. If successful we will be hoping for assistance from Orbost groups. We will know the result of our application soon and announce details on the web site.

Trail notes (from the Management Committee).

Gates on the new section will soon be fitted with locks. Keys will be distributed to essential services. Barriers and other chicanes will be installed to try and reduce illegal and damaging vehicle access to the trail. Stock are prohibited on the trail.

Major structural issues exist at the Stoney Creek trestle bridge, and Drivers Break cutting (west of Nowa Nowa) which continues to erode sand onto the trail. Quotes for remedial or route bypass works are into telephone number figures. Meanwhile there are other urgent upgrades needed, including the highway crossings each side of Bruthen, and decking on the Nicholson River bridge. Vandalism on the latter is aggravating our capacity to cope with maintenance issues.

- ★ As you use our trail be observant! If you notice any recent damage or maintenance problems report it to a committee member or to the DSE.
- ★ Any vandalism or dangerous activity on the trail should be reported to the local police station.
- ★ We currently have 19 Business Friends, 31 Family members (= at least 62 persons!) and total membership of 94. Let's make it 100!!
Please encourage other local businesses, families and individuals to join our ranks.
Application form available as a PDF at our web site or call 5156 8228.
- ★ Encourage the use of our trail. Spread the news to locals and tourists!

REMINDER

Our A.G.M. is in July. Now is the time to think about committee nominations.