

## East Gippsland Rail Trail - Trail Notes

### EGRT/Section 1: 1- 6

(Bairnsdale to Nicholson)

(v.07012009)

**Trail Notes** are a supplement to the printed information and map brochure and are a 'work in progress'. As new material becomes available the Notes files will be amended and replace the current version. These Notes are only available as PDFs from this web site. Download and print as required. Because these files are updated from time to time please check the version and production date. There may be a later version if you have previously downloaded one of these files.

**Trail Notes** are referenced by the black numbers shown on the map included in the Trail brochure. Copies of the brochure are available at Visitor Information Centres (Federation Square and Southern Cross Station in Melbourne, Traralgon, Sale, Bairnsdale, Lakes Entrance, Orbost) and from other locations in East Gippsland, or by request by post via the web site email Comments facility.

The PDFs have been prepared as 5 files with the Location reference numbers grouped as Sections of the Rail Trail plus the SIDE TRIPS. The numbers follow the map sequence, west to east.

<b>EGRT/Section 1: 1- 6</b>	<b>(Bairnsdale to Nicholson) This set.</b>
EGRT/Section 2: 7-15	(Nicholson to Bruthen)
EGRT/Section 3:16 - 22	(Bruthen to Nowa Nowa)
EGRT/Section 4:23 - 3 1	(Nowa Nowa to Burn Road)
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**Visitors are invited to contribute notes, comments, etc on their observations about any of the areas references by these Trail Notes. Please use the Comments facility provided on the Trail web site. Photos are also welcome but the files need to be kept small. If you would like to provide digital photos please tell us about that in your message and an arrangement will be made for getting them delivered to the Trail Notes editor. Repeat: please DO NOT email photo files.**

**NOTES. This Rail Trail is a Crown Land Reserve. It is open 24/7 and no charge applies. HOWEVER - user onus applies. If you are not prepared to accept that there can be from time to time rapid and unexpected changes to conditions (Trail surface variations, effects of wind, fire, flooding etc), DO NOT enter the Trail Reserve. Bicycle and horse riders entering the Trail Reserve must have a sufficient level of competence and be equipped to be independent during their visit. The Trail may be subject to closure in part or whole at very short notice. Check weather conditions before travel. Kilometre marker posts are being installed within 5 Kms of towns and at some other points. ALWAYS CARRY SUFFICIENT WATER FOR YOUR TRIP. Check the Trail web site for late breaking information.**

### **EGRT/Section 1: map reference numbers 1- 6 (Bairnsdale to Nicholson)**

(includes: Schulers Creek, Middle Creek at Morrisons Lane, Princes Highway crossing, Sandfords Lane, Lanes Rd, Bosses Swamp, Sarsfield Rd, Nicholson River & Bridge).

#### **Map reference 1. Leaving Bairnsdale**

The entrance at McEacharn Street features a landscaped planting done in 2002, with seats and bicycle parking "U" rails.

The white signal mast (yet to be fitted with a signal arm to indicate the start of the Trail had been located just east of Bailey Street. It was the 'home' signal which gave the trains leaving Bairnsdale Station the all clear to begin the run to Orbost.

Thanks go to VicTrack (for permission to salvage the mast), local industries Venables, and Johns Abrasive Blasting, for their efforts to have this mast cleaned up and then located in the present position in 2007.

The bronze plaque which was unveiled as part of the Opening Ceremony for this section on December 4th 1998 is mounted on the mast (installed November 28th 2008).

An illustrated sign provides details of the **Lakes Discovery Trail**, which can be accessed from the Rail Trail, near Seatons Track in the Colquhoun Forest. (See Map reference 17).

Another sign beside the Trail acknowledges the original inhabitants of the region and may also carry other information relevant to Trail visitors, especially any WARNINGS.

The Trail enters a shallow cutting as it leads eastwards. Some of the houses on the right have gardens out on the Reserve. Arrangements are being made to require any such garden to be licensed, with restrictions on fencing and dumping of garden waste.

On the the left are indicators of Bairnsdale's commercial development.

The Trail side avenue of trees was planted in 1998 to mark the opening of the sealed section to Nicholson.

Phillips Lane is the first road crossing, with stock controls on each chicane. A local farmer owns the land each side of the trail, east of the Trail. If the arms are down, stock are being moved so please pass and leave the gateways as you found them.

Chicane/gates from this point onwards include some locked and others not. The gates are for use by Trail management vehicles only. In any case, gates must not be left open.

**Private vehicles including motor cycles are not permitted to use the Trail. Infringement penalties apply.**

### **Map reference 2. Crossing the Broadlands**

The next few kilometres to the Princes Highway crossing are across the Mitchell River flood plain known as The Broadlands. Two water courses cross the Trail. Schulers and Middle Creeks.

There are two seats provide nearby for walkers to take a rest stop.

The first seat is dedicated to Ron Rawson, previous owner of the bike shop still trading with his son Glenn in charge. The story has it that Ron and two other well known locals discussed the idea of a rail trail, in the bike shop workshop one day in the early 1990's, and that started the move to establish the Trail.

The second seat was donated by the Selwyn family. It is located at the old 174 mile post (repaired and replaced in 2008 by volunteer Friends of the Rail Trail, providing a photo opportunity stop. An information sign and more native vegetation planting is planned for this spot. The results of a school group tree planting effort can be seen to the south. Further re-vegetation work will be carried out along this section.

Then it's across Morrison Road and on towards the Princess Highway crossing.

Noteworthy vegetation includes Kangaroo Grass (Themeda) with its golden brown seed heads (in Spring and Summer), regenerating stands of Blackwoods and quite prehistoric looking Pine trees which bear cones much to the taste of large Black Cockatoos. These birds are almost silent on the wing but in season the chewed up cones strewn along the Trail are testimony to their activity overhead.

Another seat provided by the Mitchell River Rotary Club is tucked away on the LHS near these trees.

### **Map reference 3. Princes Highway crossing - Manuka and small birds**

A set of rails can still be seen where the trail crosses the Princes Highway.

**This is a very busy 100 KPH Highway and visitors need to take great care when crossing.**

The Trail has been gradually rising from the Broadlands. To the south there are views of the famous Gippsland Lakes. After crossing the Highway the trees each side on this wide section were planted in 2003/4 to mark the return of the V/Line train service to Bairnsdale.

Over the rise is a down hill run, passing another seat, donated by nearby neighbours, the Garden family. Between this seat and Sandfords Lane (gravel road) is a dense stand of a low bushy plant called Manuka. Such dense plant growth along the Trail is usually habitat to small birds. Stay quiet awhile and they will investigate your presence.

### **Map reference 4. Old drains and a potential 'side trip'**

Sandfords Lane (gravel) provides an opportunity for a detour northward to Olivers Road (sealed) which runs west-east between the Omeo Highway and Sarsfield Road. All excellent cycling roads.

On the section just before Lanes Road are signs of old bluestone drains and near the gateway is a bluestone culvert. A helpful neighbour to the north assists with controlling heavy grass, and a small group of indigenous trees were planted by volunteers. This section also illustrates the problems of dealing with dead Black Wattle trees, which have a short life and when dead all too easily fall, often damaging fences, or across the Trail.

### **Map reference 5. Bosses Swamp**

You are now on the last few hundred metres of sealed Trail, running through a low area called Bosses Swamp. The Trail crosses part of the Swamp on large diameter corrugated barrel culverts. Take care on this surface, which is beginning to degrade. To the right is the Bosses Swamp wetland, often home to Spoonbills, Swans and other water birds. This waterway links to the flood plain of the Nicholson River. Other smaller birds are common here and occasionally a wandering fresh water tortoise. Wombats and the ubiquitous pest rabbit use the embankment for burrows. The wetland extends on the north side (LHS) of the Trail. After heavy rain this water area is a cacophony of croaking from frogs. Stop a minute and listen. A family of Tawney Frogmouths also live in this area. Horses and camels live in the paddock to the north.

The Trail rises through a delightful stand of Eucalypts before arriving at the sealed (and often busy) Sarsfield Road at the Nicholson township. A grassed **parking area** is provided (day use only) at Sarsfield Road (RHS of the gate/chicane). From the Bosses Swamp culvert to Sarsfield Rd = 400metres; Sarsfield Rd to the Bridge = 500metres.

**Map reference 6. Nicholson, the Nicholson River, a major bridge, and a remnant rain-forest rehabilitation project**

On each side of the Trail are the extensive former Nicholson Station grounds, now used under license for grazing (horses). Nothing remains of the Station or the sidings and goods shed, unlike the situation in NSW and Queensland. When a line in Victoria was closed down all the infrastructure was stripped out, greatly reducing the opportunity to include historic structures on rail trails, a sad loss.

On the western river bank each side of the former railway bridge is a remnant rain forest rehabilitation project. An information board, a picnic table/seat and a memorial seat provide more reasons for a pause in your journey. There are wonderful views up river. The former farm land to the north will be subdivided into 28 house allotments so enjoy the vista while it is still open land.

**Nicholson offers a number of 'pause a while' attractions and amenities.**

The riverside path leads to the Princes Highway, PO, hotel, and via under the road bridge to BBQ facilities at the Nicholson wharf area. This is a very popular boating and fishing location, with model sail boats battling for line honours on the 2nd and 4th Saturday monthly.

The old railway bridge now has a new reinforced concrete decking (April 2008). One of the two very important working bridges on this Trail, it is constructed partly of steel and concrete (the river spans) and traditional timber (over the eastern flood plan). In the 1950's an attempt was made to blow up the timber section to disable the railway and, so the story goes, to stop competition with the emerging road transport of saw logs. **END.**

