

East Gippsland Rail Trail - Trail Notes EGRT/Section 3:16 -22 (Bruthen to Nowa Nowa)

(v.12012009)

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.

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|-------------------------------|--|-----------------|
| EGRT/Section 1: 1- 6 | (Bairnsdale to Nicholson) | |
| EGRT/Section 2: 7-15 | (Nicholson to Bruthen) | |
| EGRT/Section 3:16 - 22 | (Bruthen to Nowa Nowa) | This set |
| EGRT/Section 4:23 - 3 1 | (Nowa Nowa to Burn Road) | |
| EGRT/Section 5:32 - 3 3 | (Burn Road to Orbost : off-road link path) | |
| EGRT/SIDE TRIPS: 34 - 40 | | |

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 3: map reference numbers 16 - 21 (Bruthen to Nowa Nowa)

(includes: Colquhoun Forest, Bruces Rd, Lakes Discovery Trail entry point, former Colquhoun station site, Costicks Weir, Stoney Creek bridge, Drivers Break, Nowa Nowa township).

Map reference 16. Into the Colquhoun Forest

Now you begin a long (but gentle) climb away from farm land into the more remote Colquhoun Forest. The Trail was reconstructed during 2007 but sections have areas of rougher gravel (small ballast stone) until the top of the first climb. This section is due for re-surfacing in 2008/09. You might encounter a Bower Bird on the 5 kilometre section to Bruces Road. Several small cuttings, large embankments, big trees and a real forest feel provides a quite different experience to the earlier section of the Trail. Ahead are longer views hemmed by the forest, and the expanded Trail side space created when the underground (Alinta) gas pipeline was laid. This line joins the Rail Trail easement just west of Bruces Road. The railway line passed through a long shallow cutting but the Trail now diverges to the right. This road crossing is a popular stopping and reassembly point. Time for a snack before settling into the forest run and less steep grades.

In the past there has been extensive damage done to the Trail edge vegetation re-growth when machinery used to clear over the gas line track has trespassed on to Rail Trail space and mown down native trees and other indigenous plants (the last such episode was in late 2007).

Because of the frequent forest road crossings towards Nowa Nowa there are too often vehicles being illegally driven on the Trail. Trail bikes in particular cause serious damage. Any information which can be provided about such incidents (discretely taken photos etc) will be appreciated. Offenders can be prosecuted if sufficient evidence is available.

Map reference 17. Seaton Track; access to The Lakes Discovery Trail & Lakes Entrance

At the Seaton Track intersection a large descriptive notice board announces another adventure option. There is a full description which includes a detailed map available for [download](#). (533 MB PDF). This Trail is not

formally part of the EGRT. It is under DSE management and any issues related to it should be referred to the DSE contacts provided in the brochure.

Map reference 18. Colquhoun siding

The trail climbs and descends on its way to the former Colquhoun Station site, a small area rapidly being overgrown by the encroaching forest. A photo of the small station building is reproduced at page 58 of the Railtrails Australia guide book, *Rail Trails of Victoria & SA*. (refer to resources at www.railtrails.org.au)

Map reference 19. Costicks Weir

Originally a small earthen dam wall was constructed downstream from the concrete dam which was used as a water supply for the steam trains on the Orbost line.

The widespread and disastrous 1939 bush fires prompted the construction of this weir as a reliable water source. 'Jack' (John Hilbert) Cosstick was the forester of the day who supervised the building of the weir as a fire fighting supply water. Apparently the weir was built by the womens land army. The weir today provides a rare example of a substantial structure built of local materials to provide a supply for fire fighting. It was no longer needed by the railway when steam trains were replaced with diesel locomotives.

Map reference 20. Historic Stoney Creek Bridge, & Drivers Break cutting

The next big historic and famous feature is the Stoney Creek bridge. Details are provided on an information board near the car park. A composting toilet facility is located near the west end of the bridge on the south side of the Trail.

This impressive bridge structure, 276 metres long and 19 metres high is deteriorating with age as the timbers gradually decay.

Do not venture UNDERNEATH this bridge. NO NOT WALK ONTO THIS BRIDGE.

There are many tonnes of ballast stone high overhead and pieces are likely to fall through the gaps in the decaying timber planks without warning.

Establishing a stable pathway on the eastern slope has required extensive engineering works to manage storm water run off. Earlier attempts to maintain a passable track on the slope had been frustrated by illegal vehicle damage. Barriers are being installed to prevent such access. In early 2008 a special concrete pathway system was installed. It has a rough surface to provide better grip. Riding up the slope is a real challenge (very low gears needed) but riding down **is not advisable**. Please keep to the Trail pathway.

The next significant point of interest is a former cutting known as Drivers Break.

When the gas pipe line was installed the trenching work affected the stability of the local sandy soil. Water action led to a collapse of the cutting and several very costly major earth works efforts have been required to try and stabilise the embankments.

Some plant re-growth is helping to stabilise the slopes but sand movement is still a major problem as water rapidly erodes the fragile slopes.

Please exercise due care in case there are sand spills on to the Trail.

Shortly after Drivers Break on the right hand side you might notice a jumble of fallen trees. This was the result of a very localised and fierce wind storm in 2006.

It is then only a short distance to the edge of Nowa Nowa township. The site of a former timber mill is on the left. During 2007/08 a major new road through the centre of the town area has resulted in a realignment of the Trail access, which diverges to the right. Follow the signs and the fence line of the corner house to the sealed road. This leads down to the Princes Highway, with the hotel to the right, and Mingling Waters opposite. To get across the new road take the concrete footpath which passes the shop and toilet block, then through the underpass and the pathway which leads to the new shared bridge over Boggy Creek. The Trail access is then straight ahead. **HOWEVER**, there are lots of things to see around Nowa Nowa, so make it a stopping point, and better still, an over night stop so you have time to explore the many natural and other features, including the top end of Lakes Tyers.

Map reference 21. Nowa Nowa town, and Lakes Tyers

Nowa Nowa has a long history as a major timber mill town in years past, but today there is only one mill still in operation but the area is rich in natural assets, The most obvious of these is the headwater of Lake Tyers with a waterway link to the coast. This is a great place to go kayaking along the peaceful water filled valley. Another quite remarkable feature is Boggy Creek, which runs between very rugged rock walls, made up of a 400 million year old Devonian strata. The former railway bridge (of a similar construction to the one at Nicholson) spans this scenic Boggy Creek Gorge. A good spot to get a view of this bridge bridge is from the new pedestrian/bicycle bridge next to the highway bridge, but the full details can be seen by following the stream side pathway to the north.

The Sculpture Trail is a recent community initiative which adds extra interest to the town. Nowa Nowa also

has a Walks network and the details are provided in a colour brochure and map available from the caravan/camping parks, hotel and store. The petanque court is a popular gathering spot for locals and visitors. And along the way make a stop at the Caravan Park beside Boggy Creek to explore the quaint collection of memorabilia. Visitors very welcome.

Nowa Nowa has an hotel and two caravan parks, one with cabins and a cafe (opposite the hotel and located beside the Lake Tyers headwater).

When you have to leave Nowa Nowa and head on further east along the Trail, use the new concrete shared pathway bridge and follow the signs (straight ahead when you cross the bridge) to reach the access path which goes by the former railway station site (east of Boggy Creek) and back onto the former line easement, marked by a steel gate/chicane. The former station site is now an emergency helicopter landing place.

The next stop will be **Ironstone Creek** but before that in the future there will be yet more changes to the Trail alignment (and the engineering works involved) where a major re-alignment of the Princes Highway will require the Trail to be moved northward. These works are under the direction of VicRoads.

This work was start in on January 12th 2009 and will cause some delays from that date for about 6 weeks. The contractor (Whelan Earthmoving P/L) will have trucks and other machines working on that section. By arrangement with the Management Committee the contractor is required to allow and provide safe passage for Trail visitors. The Management Committee DOES NOT advocate use of the Princes Highway. Delays of about 15 minutes can be expected.

Updates will be posted on the Trail web site.

Further major works in this locality could be undertaken during 2009.

With apology for any inconvenience.

While the works are in progress please follow direction signs and instructions from contractor staff on site, and use due care near earthworks and diversions.

END of this section of Notes.