

Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park

White Box Walking Track

The White Box Walking Track will introduce you to some of the natural and historical features of the Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park. The 8.5 kilometre track will take about two to three hours to complete. Numbered posts along the track correspond with these notes.



Golden Bar Mine

Background

Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park is a remnant of a forest type (Box-Ironbark) that was once much more widespread in Victoria. It is made up largely of Grey Box, White Box, Red Box and Mugga Ironbark. Red Stringybark and Blakely's Redgum are also common.

Originally consisting of large, well-spaced trees and a grassy floor, this Box-Ironbark forest has changed considerably since European settlement. The discovery of gold in 1858 resulted in many of the trees being cut down to supply timber for the mines and firewood for local people. Today the vegetation is mainly regrowth and the trees are mostly young (less than 60 years old), straight and relatively close together.

As you wander along the track look and listen for the different flora and fauna of the park as well as the occasional mining relic.

Note: There are many old mine shafts in the area so please remain on the track.

Starting at the Honeysucker Picnic Area, walk north-east towards Cyanide Road, turn right and follow the road 300 metres to Bar Trail.

The pile of stones (mullock heaps) you see is the waste material left from mining operations.

Turn right at the White Box Walking Track sign and proceed uphill to the Golden Bar Open-Cut Mine.

1. Golden Bar Open-Cut Mine

The small open-cut you see before you is a reminder of the search for surface gold bearing ore. Most of the gold from the area was extracted from the hundreds of mine shafts sunk throughout the forest. One of the biggest being the nearby Golden Bar Mine.

Proceed further uphill along the track.

Typical vegetation of the area includes Blakely's Redgum, Mugga Ironbark and Red Stringybark with understorey shrubs such as Daphne Heath, Hibbertias and Parrot peas. In Spring a variety of wildflowers including many native orchids add to the colourful display of the local flora.

2. Vegetation of the ridges

On the ridges the soil is shallower and water run-off is higher. Conditions for growth are less favourable resulting in hardier specimens. The smooth-barked spindly trees known as Blakely's Redgum dominate the overstorey whilst Daphne Heath dominates the understorey.

Many understorey shrubs attract small nectar feeding birds such as the Fuscous Honeyeater.

The Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park boasts an extraordinary diversity of birds with over 200 species having been recorded within its boundaries.



Regent Honeyeater

One of the birds you may be lucky enough to see is the rare Regent Honeyeater. It is a medium sized, mainly black bird with pink warty skin around its eyes and yellow wing and tail patches. If you do see one, please report your sighting to the ranger.



Notice the vegetation as you descend from the ridge. It consists of Red Stringybark, Mugga Ironbark and a tall understorey of Golden Wattle.

Also look for Cherry Ballart, a small cypress-like tree with pine-like foliage. Partly parasitic, it takes some of its water and nutrients from other plants. Note the close proximity of a eucalypt host tree. Fruiting from August to September, Cherry Ballarts provide food for native birds in the park. They are also a favourite shady resting site for kangaroos and wallabies. You might be able to see some of their droppings.

Continuing along the track you will encounter a vehicle barrier. Go around the barrier and cross over Ballarat Road and re-enter the walking track on the other side.

3. Vegetation change

Examine the vegetation changes in this area. The Ironbarks and Stringybarks have given way to a mixture of Apple Box, White Box, Red Box and large Blakely's Redgums.

The vegetation change is mainly due to the increase in the amount of soil and water. The damp moist gully is also favoured by Tall Sedge and rushes. Reptiles, including skinks, may also be seen.

4. Fuel reduction burns

Fuel reduction burns are carried out to decrease leaf litter and bark on the ground which assists in the control of wildfire. The area on your left has had a "fuel reduction burn". Note the charring on the Stringybark trees. The understorey is denser due to the regeneration resulting from the burn.

Many plants such as wattle and pea-flowers require fire for germination. Their seeds may lay dormant in the ground for years then suddenly germinate when fire cracks the hard seed coat.

Further along this section of the track look out for some of the few remaining large remnant Box or Ironbark trees. Nearly all of the large diameter trees were removed during the early gold-mining days or from subsequent forestry operations.

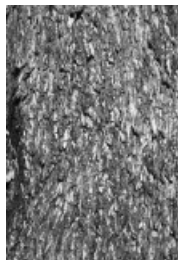
These old remaining trees have large hollows which provide habitat for larger tree dwelling mammals such as Brushtail or Ringtail Possums as well as Barking and Powerful Owls.

5. Quiet area

Relax and take a well earned rest. Surrounding you are examples of the most common trees in the park. Mugga Ironbark, Red Stringybark and Red Box.



Ironbark



Box



Stringybark

Their flowers provide nectar for insects and mammals with many migratory birds arriving in spring to feed on their blossoms.

Mugga Ironbark generally flowers from May to October and is an important winter food source for Honeyeaters, Swift parrots, Lorikeets, Squirrel and Sugar Gliders.

Continue until you meet another vehicle barrier, cross over the gravel track (Pooleys Track) to the opposite side and follow the "White Box Walk" sign.

6. White Box



This stand of White Box gives the walking track its name. White Box prefer soils on gentle slopes and plains and are distinguished by their blue-green adult leaves and large whitish buds and fruit. They flower from January to June.

As you climb up the hill you will notice the smooth-barked Blakely's Redgum re-appearing.

White Box Illustration by L. Costermans

Look for the small rock ferns found growing at the base of rocky outcrops and in gullies. Their fronds are hairless and broadly triangular, new growth can be seen in early winter or spring.



Rock Fern, DSE

When you meet the gravel road turn left and follow this road along for about 100 metres. Look for the "Whitebox Walk" sign which is on the right hand side of the road.

7. Hill View

You have now reached the highest point of the walking track (340 metres).

As you descend the spur look out for the shy Swamp Wallaby, distinguished by its very dark fur and pale-striped cheeks. It feeds on small shrubs, ferns and grasses.

In the warmer months you might see the Lace Monitor commonly called the tree goanna. A predator of nesting birds, it eats eggs, lizards, rabbits and carrion. Goannas are the only native lizards with deeply forked tongues.



Tree Goanna

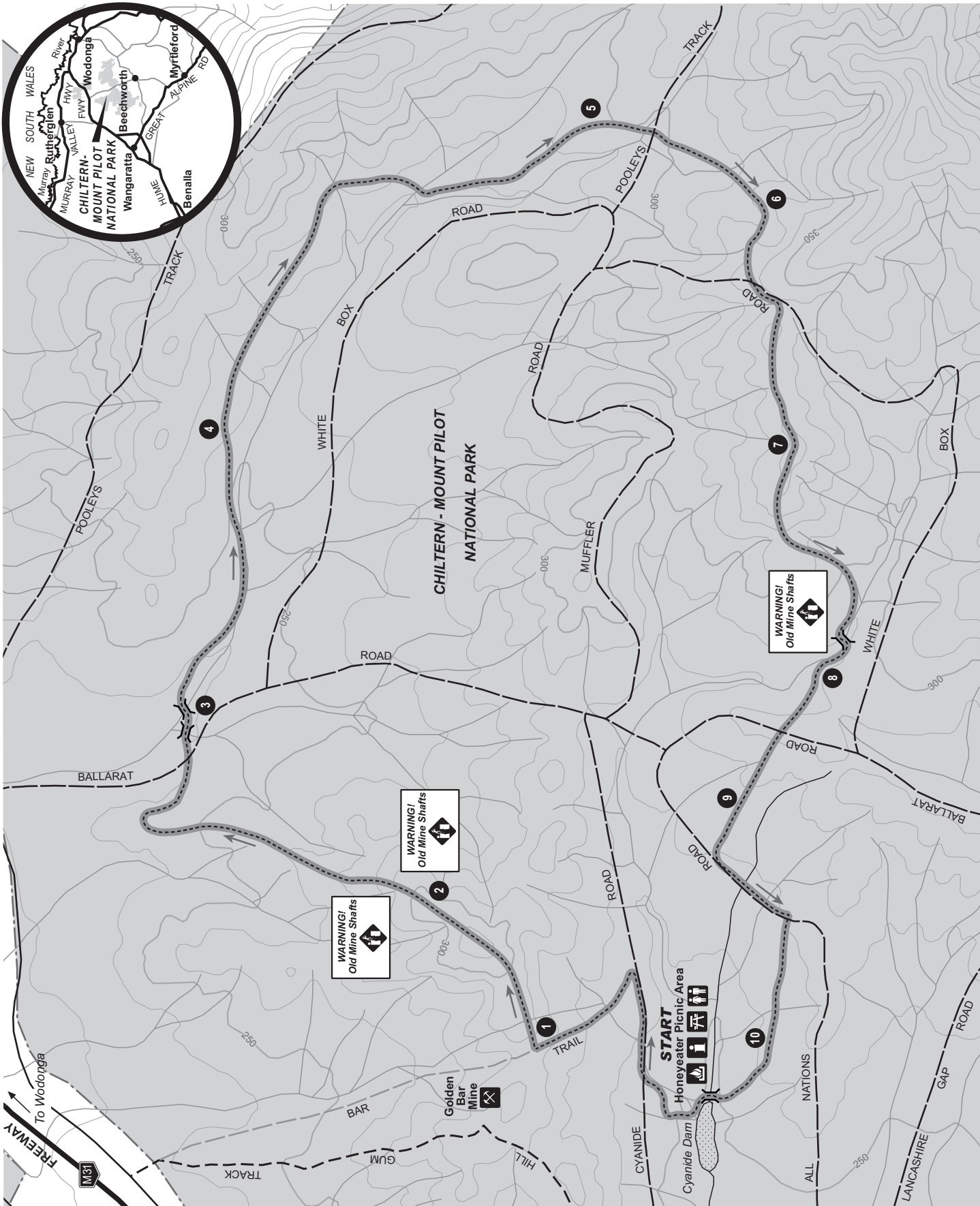
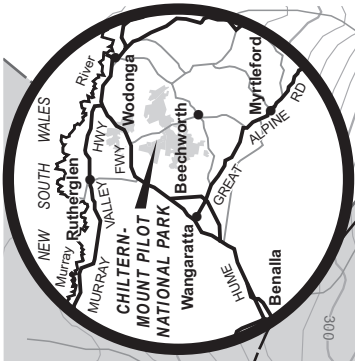
8. Erosion

Early mining was particularly destructive on the environment, causing in later years large erosion problems. In this area the forest has repaired itself to some extent, however the scars on the creek walls are still present.

Can you find any Varnish Wattle growing beside the track? This wattle has thin, flat, green leaves and the foliage is often shiny and sticky as if sprayed with varnish.

Some of the trees in this area have a black fungal growth appearing on one side of the trunk. It's possible this may be caused by the dampness of the area and the slowness to dry out on the sheltered side.

The track rejoins Ballarat Road. Cross over and continue.



Chiltern - Mount Pilot National Park

White Box Walking Track

- Freeway
- Sealed road
- Unsealed road
- Vehicle track (4WD)
- Management Vehicle Only track
- White Box Walking Track
- Bridge
- National Park
- Water body
- Mine shaft
- Point of Interest

Recreational Facilities

- Fireplace
- Mine site
- Park information
- Picnic table
- Toilets

Contour interval 10 metres
0 125 250
M E T R E S
Cartography by Spatial Vision 2005
M/7611

MELBOURNE

Parks VICTORIA

Touring the area:

Beechworth Information
Centre
Old Shire Hall
Ford Street
Beechworth 3747
Phone: 03 5728 3233

Gateway Visitor
Information Centre
Gateway Village
Lincoln Causeway
Wodonga 3690
Freecall: 1800 800 743

Caring for the environment

Help us look after your parks by remembering these guidelines:

Please take rubbish home with you for recycling or disposal

All plants, animals, historical and archaeological sites and geographic features are protected by law

As this area is of historic and conservation significance, fossicking, including gold panning, is not permitted.

Dogs and other pets are not permitted in the park,

Firearms are prohibited

Light fires only in fire places provided. Bring your own firewood for barbecues.

Gas barbecues are Recommended.

No fires, including barbecues, may be lit on a day of **Total Fire Ban**.

Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park is in the **North Eastern Total Fire Ban District**

Vehicles, including motor bikes, may only be used on formed open roads. Drivers must be licensed and vehicles registered and roadworthy

9. Grass-trees

Austral Grass-trees (*Xanthorrhoea*) were probably once more common in this area, many of the larger specimens being destroyed as a result of widespread mining activity.



Grass-tree

Members of the Xanthorrhoeaceae family, Grass-trees produce a mass of cream-white flowers on a stout spike up to three metres tall. The number of spikes produced is greatly increased by bush fire, although some plants are also killed by fire. Up to 7000 seeds can be produced at any one time by the flowering stem.

The flower spike can grow at a rate of 2.5 centimetres a day whilst the base takes an estimated 100 years to reach a height of 1.3 metres. Grass-trees provide excellent habitat for many small, native animals with shade and protection provided by the grass skirt.

During spring and summer wildflowers proliferate throughout this area. Everlastings, grevilleas, pea-flowers and orchids are common and provide a colourful display.

About 100 metres further on you will join the All Nations Road. Turn left and follow the road south-west for 200 metres until it links up again with the walking track on your right hand side.

10. Hybrids

Examine some of the trees in the area and you will notice they are a mixture of more than one species. Occasionally, Mugga Ironbark and the box species produce hybrids. Look back along the track at the large blackish tree on the left hand side. This is a good example.

If you continue along the track it will take you back to Honeyeater Picnic Area where you will find more information on the board.

We hope you have enjoyed this nature walk.

If you have finished with this parknote and do not wish to keep it, please return it to the box for someone else to use.

Other interesting places to visit

Chiltern Historic Drive - Start along the Chiltern-Rutherglen Road and finish at Barnawartha Road east of Chiltern. Allow around 1.5 hours for the 25km trip.

Mt Pilot Lookout - Take a short walk from the car park to the 545metre summit of Mt Pilot, where you are rewarded with a 360 degree view of the surrounding countryside. On a clear day Mt Buffalo is easily recognisable on the Southern horizon.



The view from Mt Pilot looking north to Chiltern

Yeddonba Aboriginal Cultural Site - Situated at the foot of Mount Pilot, this heritage area provides an insight into local Aboriginal culture.

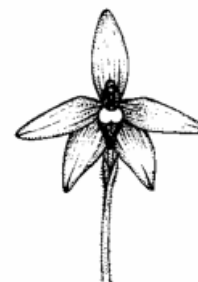
Woolshed Falls - A five minute drive north from Beechworth provides the opportunity to view the falls, have a picnic or take a self-guided walk around the alluvial gold workings. The falls are spectacular after heavy rainfalls.

Beechworth Historic Park - There are a number of walking tracks close to Beechworth. The Gorge Scenic Drive provides spectacular views of Spring Creek and Cascades Waterfall.

Warby Range State Park - Extending 25km north of the town of Glenrowan is a steep scarp range known as the Warbys. The Warbys provide excellent views, pleasant picnic spots and an outstanding variety of birdlife and wildflowers.

Murray River Reserves - The Murray River, with its majestic River Red Gums, sandy beaches and a large variety of wildlife, provides the ideal backdrop for camping and a range of water-based recreation.

Eldorado Historic Reserve - visit the largest, most intact gold dredge in Australia.



Wax-lip Orchid

Ask at the Visitor Information Centre for information on these sites.