



# McMillan's Track 1864

## HISTORY

In 1864, veteran explorer Angus McMillan was called out of semi-retirement at Dargo by the Victorian Government to lead a track cutting expedition through the high country of Gippsland. His work, from March to May, greatly expanded the existing track network and linked the goldfields and towns of Omeo, Dargo, Crooked River, Harrierville, Woods Point and the Jordan. The main track from Omeo to the Jordan was eight feet wide (2.4m) and was suitable for packhorses. A sixteen feet wide (4.9m) dry road was also constructed from Dargo to the Crooked River goldfields.

Some parts of McMillan's Track have been upgraded to form roads but others have become overgrown. In 1983, the Ben Cruachan Walking Club, based at Maffra, began a project to relocate, map and mark the original route taken by McMillan's party. The walking track is the result of this work, carried out in co-operation with the (then) Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands. Venture Scouts from Operation Raleigh (a program to give young people around the world a chance to work on conservation projects in other countries) also joined in. The group cleared and marked the section along the Moroka River early in 1987.

The development of this walking track is an ongoing project and is likely that several minor changes could be made to the route over the next few years to increase its appeal to walkers. Where possible, the final route will follow the original path cut by McMillan's party in 1864.



This brochure is produced by Ben Cruachan Walking Club with funding from the Parks Victoria Community Grants Program. For further information about the walk and its history contact the Ben Cruachan Walking Club, PO Box 70, Maffra, VIC 3860.

## TRACK NOTES

*These notes give general directions to assist walkers follow the track. They MUST be used in conjunction with the topographical maps listed below. Comprehensive track notes are available from the Ben Cruachan Walking Club. The track passes through remote country. Walkers should be experienced, proficient in map-reading and the use of a compass.*

Maps required are:

VICMAPS Dargo-Cobungra, Crooked River-Sieve, Tamboritha-Moroka, Licola-Wellington, Connors Plain, Skene South, and Woods Point.  
VMTC Maps cover some of the track: Crooked River-Dargo, Macalister River Watershed, and Snowy Plains-Mikent-Tali Karang.

Section: Victoria River—Jeff Davis Spur  
Distance: 50 km, 2-3 days  
Access: Alpine Rd, Dargo High Plains Rd  
Campsites: Mayford (212950)  
Bright Shire Hut (148926)

The original track commenced at Omeo but it has been destroyed here by the Alpine Rd. The recommended starting point is the Victoria River Track (342946) 17 km from Omeo. Follow this track across a small bridge over the Victoria River then begin the first climb up the Great Dividing Range. Turn right along Dinner Plain Track then left down Mayford Spur Track. The steep descent to the Dargo River gives excellent views of Mayford and the surrounding mountains. Cross the river (219944) and walk upstream for 1.5 km to the site of the old gold mining town of Mayford(209952).

This is a good place to rest before attempting the stiff climb up Treasure Spur to King Spur Track and onto the Bright Shire Hut on the Dargo High Plains Rd. A water race and nearby old mine workings can be inspected near the top of Treasure Spur. The view into the Devil's Hollow should not be missed. Fresh water is at Lightbound Creek (200 m north of the Bright Shire Hut). The Dargo High Plains Rd now replaces the original track. This can be followed for 26 km to Jeff Davis Spur Track. There is an alternative route which bypasses the long road walk. It is signposted. It starts 500 m along the Dargo High Plains Rd (148919), heads across Gow Plain and follows the fence around to the White Timber Spur Track (136900). Ritchie Road joins at 136844 and the track leaves Ritchie Road at 136835. This takes you to the junction of 30-Mile and 25-Mile Creeks (123773). After leaving the 4WD track, there is a marked and cut track down to the creek junctions. From here, there is a benched track all the way to the junction of Crooked River and Good Luck Creek (101714).

Section: Wellington River—Woods Point  
Distance: 63 km, 4 1/2 days  
Access: Tamboritha Rd, Licola-Jamieson Rd, Woods Point  
Campsites: Wellington River (660474)  
Macalister River (614478)  
Rumpff Flat (553482)  
Stander Creek (382433) limited to 2-3 tents  
Goulburn River (359403)  
Lazarini Spur (444496)  
water at 454500

From the western end of the Melbourne Grammar School camp, follow the creek to a junction (657475). A marked pack track is followed to the top of the divide between the Wellington and Macalister Rivers. A side trip to the Crinoline (Mt Ligar), 2 km to the north, starts here. The track leaves the divide (638485) following a spur down to the Macalister River near its junction with McMillan Creek (616471).  
Cross the river by following markers then go up the zigzag on to the divide between the Macalister River and Glencairn Creek (609473) then on to the Glencairn-Licola Road (603472). Follow this road (Middle Ridge Road) past the junction with Bull Plain Road (577487) across the Barkly River bridge to Morris Road (553483). Follow Morris Road (McMillan Spur), turning left at 552483, to its junction with the Licola-Jamieson Road (538452). Follow the Heyfield-Jamieson Road for approx 4 kms to where the N-18 Track leaves the road (505475). Here there are two alternatives. The first is take the real McMillan Track on the N-18 Track. Turn northwest at 503471, following an old logging track to the Alpine Walking Track (483490) at Mt Shillinglaw, continuing on the Alpine Walking Track to rejoin the Heyfield-Jamieson Road (484499) to Lazarini Spur Road (459519). The alternative was to plod up the Heyfield-Jamieson Road. Turn southwest on Lazarini Spur Road, leaving it (447498) to follow an old fire trail for 3 kms. Note the blazed trees, some of which could have been marked by McMillan's party. At 430478 leave the fire trail and follow a marked pack track to the Black River. Cross the river (421471) and walk up the spur to the start of a fire trail at 420467 and follow this to a knoll on the Champion Spur Track (424430). Walk SW down a spur towards Stander Creek and pick up a cut track at 410423. Cross the creek (396423) and take the steep climb up Abbott Link Track to Bald Hill (362376). A zigzag track (Jacob's Ladder) at the foot of Johnsons Hill makes the climb a little easier. Extra inspiration is given by the view of Woods Point shortly before Johnson Hill Track (379390) is reached.  
At Bald Hill the original track split and went to Jencho and Woods Point. Take the route to Woods Point by following a spur to meet Gooley Creek (358394) then walk down the creek to the Goulburn River. From here it is an easy 2 km walk along the river into Woods Point and the end of McMillan's Track.

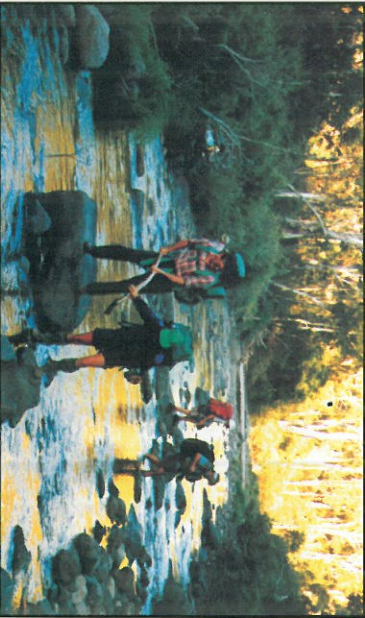
Section: Jeff Davis Spur—Playboy Creek  
Distance: 49 km, 2-3 days  
Access: Dargo High Plains Rd, Crooked River Rd  
Campsites: Naarum (094712)  
Talbotville (060679)  
Pioneer Racecourse (044678)  
Eaglevale (004642)  
Numerous campsites along the Womangatta and Moroka Rivers from Happy Valley (980658) to Playboy Creek (893593)

Section: Playboy Creek—Wellington River  
Distance: 38 km, 2 days  
Access: Tamboritha Rd, Moroka Rd  
Campsites: Wellington River (660475)  
nr Shaws Creek (7772566)  
water too

This section starts with a 900 metre ascent to the Moroka Rd. Follow the marked path up left side of Playboy Creek for 2 km to the saddle (888825) below Beths Peak. Leave Beths Peak (887495) for top of the Moroka Valley.  
Leaving the saddle, follow marked trail to the Wellington River. There is permanent water at Jo's Camp (855555) 150 m east of the trail on Clear Country Creek. Continue upwards to Moroka Rd. Turn west to Arbuckle Junction (808584). Go straight through the junction following the walking track to Mt Arbuckle. After admiring the view over Mt Reynard and Carey Creek, drop down to Shaws Creek and cross the plain to Kellys Hut. Head south, following Kelly's Lane passing McMichael's Hut to a small creek (772568). Follow an old logging road to Dingo Hill Track (744549) then to a bridge over Shaws Creek (738542). Take Dingo Hill Road towards Mt Tamboritha for about 2 km, then a logging road sharing the west (732539).



The walk down Jeff Davis Spur to the junction of Crooked River and Good Luck Creek gives excellent views of the Crooked River, 25-Mile and 30-Mile Creek valleys. From the junction (101714) McMillan cut the track over the Louisa Range and Wongungarra River. This route is not marked.  
The other route he used was to follow the Crooked River downstream to the twelfth crossing where a short detour (080688) can be made to the New Good Hope Mine. The track takes you to Talbotville, an old goldmining town deserted since 1947. The Talbotville cemetery is at the foot of the McMillan Road. Cross the divide to the Pioneer Racecourse on the Wongungarra River (045679) then follow the Station Track over the Cynthia Range (028664) and then a pack track down to the footbridge on the Womangatta River at Eaglevale.  
Follow the road to a pack track reached shortly before the junction of the Womangatta and Moroka Rivers (922673), then along the eastern side of the Moroka River. This section passes through the beautiful Moroka Glen area and gives outstanding views of Snowy Bluff. Wildflowers, including orchids, are in abundance, particularly in late October.  
Over the years there have been nine crossings of the Moroka River but, as McMillan only crossed it once, the track has been marked to do just this via a small peak at 898646. The one crossing (895622) is about 4 kms downstream from the one shown on McMillan's 1864 map but is the most suitable nowadays.  
After crossing the river, follow the track upstream to Moroka River Track (also called Doolans Track on some maps) and continue upstream on this old 4WD track to Playboy Creek and Higgins Yards (894594). The 1990 flood badly washed the 4WD track and some parts are missing.



## Timing

The total distance from Ormeo to Woods Point is 217 km. From the Victoria River Track (the start of the walk) it is 200 kms. Allow 12 to 14 days to complete the full distance.

The walk should not be attempted from June to October because of the likelihood of snow falls and the high level of several of the rivers to be crossed. The months from November to May are suitable for walking although it can be very hot between late December and early March.

## Supplies

There are general stores at Ormeo, Dargo, Jamieson and Woods Point. The store at Licola sells food and drinks.

## Access

The main access roads to each section of the track are listed in the track notes in this brochure. All these roads are suitable for most vehicles from November to May. Several of these roads and other 4WD tracks in the area are closed from early June to at least early November each year. For further information on road closures contact Parks Victoria offices.

## Bush Code

Make sure you read the VicWalk "Walksafe" booklet. Make these commonsense guidelines second nature in the bush:-

- ◆ Keep to walking tracks — don't cut corners
- ◆ Carry out what you carry in
- ◆ Use existing campsites whenever possible
- ◆ Use soap well away from a watercourse
- ◆ Use a fuel stove in preference to lighting a fire
- ◆ Where toilets aren't provided bury your waste completely
- ◆ Leave your campsite clean and tidy
- ◆ Take nothing but photographs, leave nothing but footprints
- ◆ Where the track passes through a National Park remember no dogs, cats or firearms

## Fire

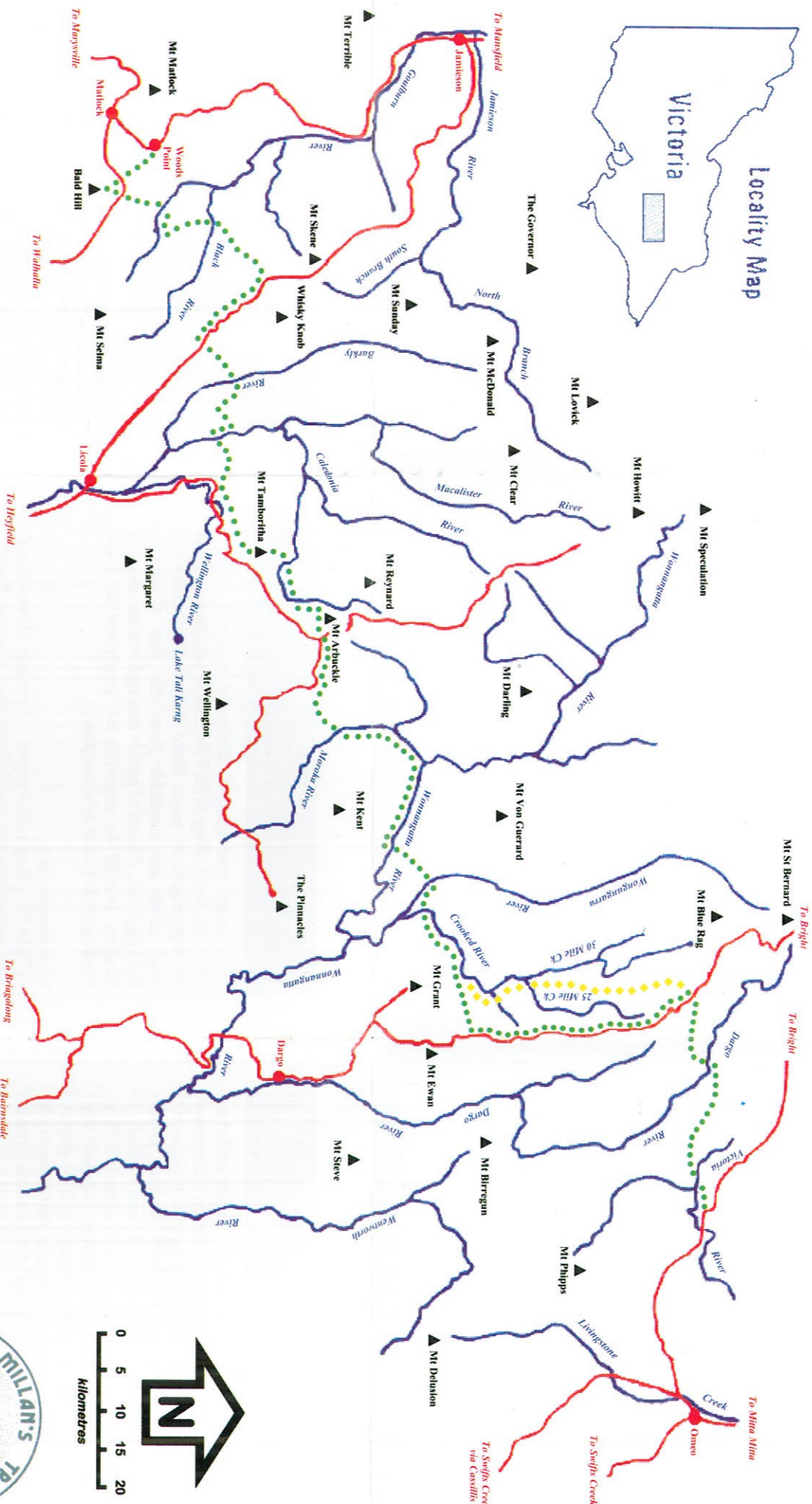
From November to late April uncontrolled fire is a constant threat. Take the greatest care with fire at all times and abide by these regulations:-

- ◆ Where possible, light a fire on a spot already used
- ◆ Ensure that all combustible material is cleared within a radius of 3 metres and remove overhanging branches
- ◆ Use only dead fallen branches as firewood
- ◆ Keep the fire as small as possible and never leave it unattended
- ◆ Thoroughly extinguish the fire before you leave
- ◆ ALL CAMPFIRES AND STOVES ARE PROHIBITED ON DAYS OF TOTAL FIRE BAN

## Safety

Tell a responsible person where you are going and when you will be back also let them know when you do return. Preferably, use the intentions form "Let Someone Know Before You Go" available from Parks Victoria offices.

- ◆ For safety, the minimum number of people in a group is four
- ◆ Carry a tent on overnight walks; don't rely on huts
- ◆ Check that you have this equipment before setting out:- parka, warm and protective clothing, map, compass, waterproof matches, firelighter, whistle, torch, watch, first aid kit, note book, pen, water, energy producing food (in addition to basic rations).
- ◆ Plan emergency exits to use if the original walk becomes impossible or if the weather seriously deteriorates
- ◆ Do not attempt to cross a flooded river. Wait for the water level to fall, then cross in pairs or as a group
- ◆ Make sure you know what to do if trapped in a bushfire — obtain the special DSE leaflet



**Parks**  
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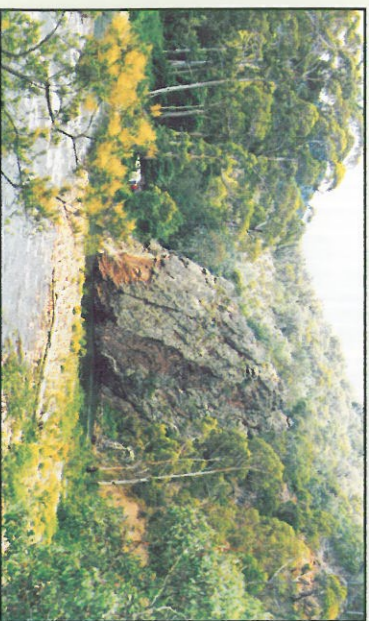
## Some Extracts from McMillan's Log

### The Challenge

"...Everyone glad to see that this unknown forest land of Gippsland was at last to be penetrated into and thankful that I was to be the party that was to receive that honour, being the first European that first broke ground in this far famed land...."

### Food

".... I am sorry to say (the sheep) are not so good as I expected, one of them was slaughtered on Saturday only weighed 30 lb. Save me from my friends, I will not trust a highland drover again."



### Maps

"Mr Jones made his appearance... It is very lucky that I have such a clever young man in the party. His map of his part of the country cannot be disputed by all the government surveyors, for there was not one of them broke the soil where I am this moment within a couple of miles of Mt. Featherop which is 10 miles out on the Government map."

### Gold

"Remained in camp. Some of the men found a quartz reef which appears to be very rich - caused a great sensation - most of the men leaving."

### Hard Work

".... Then followed the little river on Wellington down to the Macalister... had to cross it 14 times as the range comes in so abruptly - arrived back at camp at about half past nine pm - rather a difficult and dangerous journey yet. 'Providence was kind to us in bringing us safe out of so many breakneck places.'"

