

Errinundra Plateau

Self-guided tour

This tour samples the best of our forests; old growth, the rainforests and great views (along with and the worst of government forest management) all in a jam-packed day's driving and walking. The climb up to Mt Ellery could be a separate day trip to fully explore it's summit.

5. Delegate catchment - This forest was once a magnificent expanse of old growth and rainforest that fed and filtered water into the Delegate River and its wetlands. It was one of the first areas logged in the 70s/80s. Intensively grown single species, industrial tree crops now stretch across the landscape. These are no longer forests but commercial plantation style plantings.

6. Gunmark Road - Although much of Gunmark Road appears to be green and leafy, it is a shadow of the once magnificent tall, rich old growth that towered above. Vast areas of clearfelled forest has regrown as thick wattle and young gum trees that supports very little original diversity, tree ferns, rainforest and the wildlife. The predominantly 20-40 year old regrowth is very different to 300-600 years old forests.

7. Errinundra Saddle Rainforest Walk - This is the show-piece of the Park. Information boards, picnic tables, toilets and rainforest interpretation boards are all here. An easy 30 minute walk takes you through a wonderland of 'dinosaur forests'. This was the site of Victoria's first forest blockade in 1984, which stopped the logging of rainforest. The action eventually led to the creation of the Errinundra National Park, including this rainforest, in 1988.

8. Hammonds Road/Spotmill Track - Once part of the largest expanse of rainforest on the plateau and part of the exact same rainforest stand which is protected inside the park at the board walk. The narrow government definition of rainforest allows rainforest to be cut down. A commercial crop of eucalypts is regrown,

which are mainly suited for woodchips for paper making.

9. Woolly Butt Hill or Mt Morris - At the junction of Errinundra and Greens Rd an easy 15-20 minute walk takes you through a beautiful stand of Alpine Ash. At the top is a rocky outcrop which overlooks the Brodribb Wilderness with breath-taking views to Mt Kosciusko, Mt Tingaringi, the Gelantipy Plateau and Mt Delegate.

10. Ellery Creek catchment - One of East Gippsland's few untouched old growth catchments which should have been included in the park in 1988. After a seven year long campaign, the catchment was formally gazetted into the park on 27th October 1998. It supports at least five threatened species of wildlife.

11. Mt Ellery - At 1,291m, this is the highest point on the Plateau. A short but steep 1 km climb takes you to its giant granite tors on the summit. A 1km sheer drop on the southern side falls to the Goolengook River catchment. Clear weather allows for excellent views to the Snowy Mts and coast. Misty weather creates a magical 'otherworld' feel to the mountain top. Mature Alpine Ash and a grassy understorey invites exploration around the boulders.

12. Warning - if you want to head back to Goongerah, keep a close eye out for *Kermond Road*. Turn right just after this. If you miss this sneaky turn, you'll end up half way to Orbost.

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1. Brown Mountain - An area listed as National Estate for its old growth qualities and rich forest habitat. But also a controversial area since the late 1980s when clearfell logging here began to destroy these values. Legge Rd was built to access and destroy the heart of these ancient forests. There is still some stands of the original forests remaining where rare native wildlife live. During the 2014 bushfires government workers deliberately cut down every large tree along the road, destroying this once cathedral-like drive. An informal walk into the old growth forest starts at 2.1km exactly from the Bonang Hwy. In dry weather, you can drive to the road junction. Giant old trees are throughout these forests as well as the rare Long-footed Potoroo, Powerful and Sooty Owls, Greater Gliders and many other threatened animals that rely on old growth forests and hollow trees. These forests and animals were saved by local environment group EEG, in a landmark Supreme Court case during 2009-10.

2. Result Ck Sassafras Rainforest - Following the Gap Road to Bendoc, you come to the cool-temperate rainforest which is dominated by the pointy-topped

Sassafras trees on your left. These are ancient trees dating back to Gondwanic times. Stop here and crush a leaf to release the strong scent of cinnamon, nutmeg and sarsaparilla. The road has exposed the rainforest to edge drying which has killed off some of the trees.

3. Giant tree walk - Not far past this patch of rainforest on the right, is a fascinating walk into the Darejo tree; East Gippsland's largest tree measuring 15 metres around its base. This was slated for clearfelling until locals surveying for rare wildlife discovered this giant shining gum.

4. Tea Tree Wetlands - The deep bed of sphagnum moss under this rare alpine wetland dates back thousands of years. It filters the water and acts as a giant sponge in dry summers, slowly releasing water into the lower streams. It is drying up and shrinking due to total upper catchment logging outside of the Park. The regrowth trees are sucking up most of the rainfall runoff, drying up the Delegate River and this site. Core pollen studies show there have been more disturbances to the vegetation here in the last 40 years, than since the last ice age (12,000 years ago).

