

## 34. Tooborac State Forest



**Tooborac State Forest** is a dry forest reserve on the Seymour Tooborac Road. The high ridgeline is a challenge for walkers but it's worth the climb from the Box Ironbark Forests up to the heathy and grassy dry forests along the forested ridges. The Forest has many wildflowers from winter into summer. Roads make navigation easy but some have steep pinches. Tooborac State Forest is on the Seymour Tooborac Road near Tooborac.

*This forest is on the land of the Taungurung People. We acknowledge their Elders past and present and emerging, and their care of Country over many millennia. We ask that all people respect this ancient heritage and care for the land we now share.*

## Directions

Tooborac State Forest is on the Seymour Tooborac Road. The Forest has five possible entrances off this road. Of these, the westerly Entrance 4 provides the easiest access and parking areas.

Distances along the road from Puckapunyal and Tooborac are in columns 1 and 2 below.

0 km	25.8 km	Start odometer to zero at the Puckapunyal turnoff on the Seymour Tooborac Road.
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The road passes **Tooborac Nature Conservation Reserve**. For more information on the drive, refer to the notes for *Natural Treasures No 33 Tooborac Nature Conservation Reserve*.

### **Tooborac State Forest**

20.3 km	5.5 km	<i>Entry 1:</i> pullover area and sign. The first part of North Track is generally passable but may have washouts impassable for low vehicles. The track curves around a corner in the fence, to a parking space at the junction with East Track that runs south near the boundary (see Walking Tracks). North Track continues west may be rough and steep. It links to Ridge Track which is even steeper.
21.2 km	4.6 km	<i>Entry 2:</i> with signs and a fenced revegetation area. Passable for a short distance, then rough and steep.
22.1 km	3.7 km	<i>Entry 3:</i> with signs and fenced revegetation area, adjacent to a gully. Passable with parking space 50 m from the road, then may be rough. Good wildflower area.
23.2 km	2.6 km	<i>Entry 4 and 5:</i> Entry 4 (on left) is good entry point to West Track. Parking space near a dam after 150m. Entry 5 to North-west loop starts on the right side of the entrance but this is a rougher track. For vehicles coming from Tooborac, these entrances are about 80m after the "Tooborac State Forest" sign.
25.8 km	0 km	Northern Highway junction.

**Note:** Roads within the Forest are rough gravel and most are very steep particularly the ascents onto Ridge Track. None of the tracks have signposts. Track names used in this Reserve Note are for convenience in describing routes and are not official names.

## Walking Tracks

Tooborac State Forest has many walks from easy to hard.



**Ridgeline loop** (6.2 km, hard, clockwise). From the parking area on *West Track* (Entrance 4), walk 150m and turn left into *North Track* (not signposted). This continues past tracks to Entrances 3 and 2 with some steepish sections to the intersection with *Ridge Track* (2.26 km). *Ridge Track* climbs steeply to the ridgeline and dry forest dominated by Red Box (blue-green leaves, photo) and then follows a more comfortable route along the undulating ridgeline. At 3.81 km, the track drops steeply off the ridge

to the west and follows a gully to a more open flat area at the start of *West Track* (4.84 km). The return walk is undulating with some creekline crossings that may be wet.

The walk can be shortened by following the link tracks but all still require the climb onto the ridgeline.

The walk can be extended through to Tooborac Hill which is on private land. Either continue along the high ground from the end of *Ridge Track* or climb to the ridge the extension of *West Track*. The boundary of the Forest may be marked by old fencing with private land to the south that should be respected. The route to Tooborac Hill is not obvious or marked and navigational skills are needed. See a 10.2 km route at [Alltrails](#).

**West Track** (1.36 km one way): An easy walk from Entrance 2 follows the western boundary to where the tracks branch and start to climb.

**East Track** (1.45 km one way): Another easy walk starts at Entrance 1 and runs beside a lovely damp gully to a gate at the back of the Forest.

**Ironbark Track** (2.61 km): A bush track winds through box regrowth forests from the track junction near Entrance 1 to Entrance 2 (1.12 km) and then to Entrance 3 (another 890 m). This could be made into a loop with *North Track* (4.12 km). Route finding may be tricky.



Tracks may be impassable or closed at times determined by Forest Fire Management Victoria (Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action). Driving through the Forest is discouraged to protect the tracks and vegetation, to control illegal dumping and firewood collection and enhance the enjoyment of the Forest.

**Note:** Firewood collection is illegal in this Forest.



All tracks are rough and uneven and not suitable for all abilities.



Camping is available in the Forest. The best location is beside the dam near Entry 4 but no facilities are available. Fires can be lit subject to [Fire Restrictions and Regulations](#). Dogs are allowed but must be kept under control.



The Forest has no toilets.

## Landform and Geology

The eastern side of the State Forest has a high ridge of hard McIvor Sandstone 419 to 427million years old. This ridge merges to the south on private land with the high range of metamorphic rocks running from Tooborac Hill to Pyalong adjacent to the *Pyalong Granite*. The road entrances are around 300m above sea level, and the main ridgeline rises to 490m at the highest point in the south. The summit of Tooborac Hill is 570m.

Valleys in Tooborac State Forest drain east from the main ridgeline to Back Creek/Donkey Creek, and west and north into Major Creek. Major Creek follows a very tortuous route east through the Puckapunyal Military Area to join the Goulburn River near Mitchellstown.

## Vegetation



The vegetation across the north has a rim of mainly regrowth [Box Ironbark Forest](#). Ironbark Track crosses these lower north slopes through young Mugga Ironbark and Red Box. There are no old trees close to the road. Forest Fire Management Victoria has fenced off some damaged areas near entrance tracks 2 and 3 and these are recovering well.

The higher hills have [Heathy Dry Forest](#) over the exposed rocky hills and [Grassy Dry Forest](#) on more sheltered aspects. The vegetation is

typical of dry forest with Red Box and Red Stringybark, tussock grasses and lower shrubs. The dry forests are a rich place for heaths and other low shrubs (including large numbers of Cat's-claw Grevillea flowering from early winter).

The creek valleys on the east and west sides of the Forest have [Valley Grassy Forests](#) with many large old Yellow Box and Grey Box, patches of Silver Wattle and a diverse understorey of grasses and wildflowers (notably Clustered Everlasting and many orchids). Apart for the

ubiquitous Sifton Bush, shrubs are sparse. Valleys and adjoining drier slopes along Boundary Track 9 and Entry 3 are accessible places for seeing wildflowers.

In Spring, the diversity of ecosystems is reflected in a rich diversity of wildflowers including some threatened species. Plant lists are in preparation.

## Wildlife



Around 100 bird species have been recorded in the Tooborac State Forest and Tooborac Nature Conservation Reserve, This includes the Speckled Warbler (status Endangered) and Powerful Owl (Vulnerable). Emus have also been recorded, an uncommon but cornerstone species often seen under military protection in Puckapunyal.

Tuans (Brush-tailed Phascogales, Vulnerable) have also been recorded, along with Sugar Gliders, Brush-tailed possums. Kangaroos, wallabies and the wonderful Echidna are also seen in the Forest.

The presence of several tree hollow-dependent species indicates that there are still some good older growth trees in the forests. The two Tooborac forests added to the regrowth forests in Puckapunyal and many private bushland blocks make a very significant wildlife reserve in this region. Nulla Vale Pyalong West Landcare's Tooborac to Cobaw Forest Link begins in this Forest.

## Aboriginal history

The Forest is on the land of the Taungurung People.

## History after colonisation

From the 1840s, many parts of the district were taken for grazing but, by 1905, 30,500 acres remained as the Warrowitue State Forest. Tooborac SF and Tooborac NCR were the southern edges of this forest. The forests were harvested for firewood, timber and poles, particularly during about two decades from 1905 when the railway through Tooborac was linked to an extensive tramway network from Mclvor Siding and Major's Line by the Mclvor Timber and Firewood Company. Between 1939 and 1942 most of the forest and private land was incorporated into the

Puckapunyal leaving two Tooborac State Forests, one now re-designated as Tooborac Nature Conservation Reserve.

Use of the forest for timber and firewood collection is reflected in the absence of large old trees and the network of roads and old tracks. Firewood collection is now banned from this Forest.

Unlike the Tooborac NCR, this forest was not included in the ECC Box Ironbark Investigation and remains State Forest.

## Management

The Forest is Crown Land managed by Forest Fire Management Victoria.

This Crown Land is included in the [Land Use Activity Agreement](#), a part of the [Taungurung Recognition and Settlement Agreement](#).

## Further information

Forest Fire Management Victoria:

a useful history of forest use and management over the past 180 years at

[https://www.ffm.vic.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0012/26310/FS0072-Heathcote-and-Rushworth-State-Forests.pdf](https://www.ffm.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/26310/FS0072-Heathcote-and-Rushworth-State-Forests.pdf)

Forests Notes: Heathcote and Rushworth State Forests.

[https://www.ffm.vic.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0012/26310/FS0072-Heathcote-and-Rushworth-State-Forests.pdf](https://www.ffm.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/26310/FS0072-Heathcote-and-Rushworth-State-Forests.pdf)

Taungurung Land and Water Council at <https://taungurung.com.au/>. Taungurung Recognition and Settlement Agreement at <https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/your-rights/native-title/taungurung-recognition-and-settlement-agreement>.

Frank Stamford (2014). *The McIvor Timber and Firewood Company, Tooborac, Victoria*. Light Railway Research Society of Australia Inc., Melbourne.

Goulburn Broken CMA Revegetation Guide: information on different ecological vegetation communities, plant communities and plants in the Goldfields zone at

<https://www.gbcma.vic.gov.au/revegetation/zones/goldfields>

## Acknowledgements

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These notes are a work in progress. If you have any comments or additional information on the nature and ecological history of Tooborac State Forest, please contact us at

<https://www.beam.org.au/contact>



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