

19. Greens Pinch and Hamilton Creek Reserves



Greens Pinch Reserve is on high ridgelines around the valley of Hamilton Creek north of Kilmore. The ridgelines have open grasslands and young bushlands and the creekline is a deeply incised gully with the original creek flats also growing into bushland. Several roads lead into the Reserves and a network of walking tracks. The reserves have great views and an evolving diversity of plants and animals. Access is from Kelly's Lane or the Broadford Kilmore Road.

These reserves are 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

Three access roads run off the Broadford Kilmore Road (see map):

Branigan Drive: Mountford Crescent branches right off Branigan Drive after 200m with laneway access to Hamilton Creek. Branigan Drive continues to the top of the eastern ridge (to a long laneway south along the ridge) and down where it ends at the start of a steeper laneway up into the south-east bushland area.

Meade Court ends with a laneway through to the headwaters of Hamilton Creek and the south-east bushlands.

Kellys Lane runs through to Union Street in Kilmore. At 750m, a gate and track on the left lead past a small dam up to the grasslands on the western ridge.

Note: Parking is limited at all the laneway entrances to the Reserves.

Walking Tracks

South-eastern bushlands: From the end of the Meade Court, a track runs 150m down the laneway and across a wide swale, the main channel of Hamilton Creek (it would be wet after rain). From here, the track climbs another 250m to the eastern ridgeline track with some great views of Mount Piper and Mount Hickey in the Tallarook Ranges and the nearby Bald Hills (with basalt quarries).

To the south, the ridgeline track continues gently another 140m to the edge of open grasslands across the south end of the Reserve. From here, there is no defined track across to the western ridge. A route beside the fence crosses two more ridges before dropping steeply down to the head of Hamilton Creek then up to the track and the top of the western ridge. An eroding gravel track runs back down 380m to the track junction but is not easy walking.

To the left the ridgeline track runs through the bushlands 170m to a steep track running another 150m back to Hamilton Creek and the track junction to Meade Court. The east ridge track continues another 50m to a gate. From here a track runs 150m down the slope to the end of Branigan Drive and the ridgeline track continues 580m to the top of the ridge on Branigan Drive. A 730m walk along Branigan Drive would link the ends of these two tracks.

Hamilton Creek: An easy walk along the gentle lower slopes on the eastern side of Hamilton Creek. From the track junction 150m past the end of Meade Court, the track runs left around the erosion heads of Hamilton Creek. After 450m, the track meets a 60m laneway access off Mountford Crescent and continues through slashed grasslands and maturing bushland regeneration another 740m to the start of Branigan Drive. Do not venture close to the creekline the banks are steep and crumbling.

Western grasslands: There are two access routes. From the track junction below Meade Court, climb up 380m of rough, steep and eroding track to the western ridgeline. The easier access is off Kelly's Lane 750m off the Broadford Kilmore Road. The track passes through a gate and around a small dam before climbing 300m to the ridgeline. From here, the route follows gentle rises and falls across the slashed grasslands with scattered trees and good views of the surrounding country. The northern end of the ridge overlooks the road cutting through Greens Pinch on the Broadford Kilmore Road with some of the best natural grassy woodland vegetation in the Reserve. The length of the ridge is about 1000m.



Warning 1: Steep tracks are rough with eroded channels, loose rocks and steep grasslands may be rocky and slippery, particularly when descending.

Warning 2: Most of Hamilton Creek is deeply eroded with up to 8m cliffs of loose rock dangerous for anyone on the edge of the cliffs or in the bottom of the creek.



All tracks are rough, but the walk along Hamilton Creek provides the best gradients for assisted mobility.



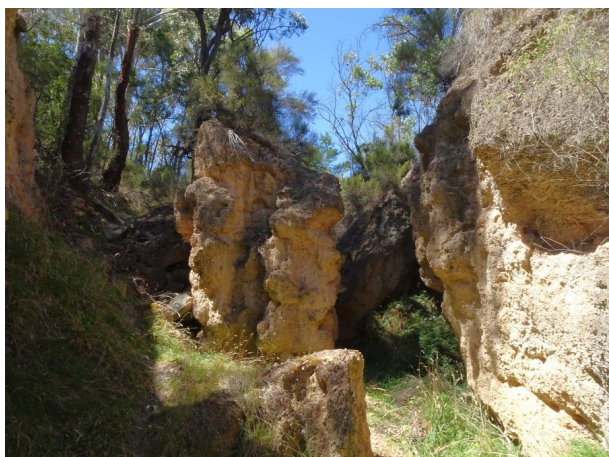
The Reserves have no toilets.



No cars or motor bikes are allowed in the Reserve.

Landform and Geology

The Greens Pinch estate is on the deeply dissected hills of Kilmore Siltstone laid down beneath seas 420-427 million years ago. These sediments have been eroded and uplifted over the millennia, and now form undulating ridgelines between the creeklines north of Kilmore.



Hamilton Creek runs from slopes of Barasse Hill south of the Reserve and through the estate. The creekline is deeply eroded, with up to eight metre washouts showing a profile of gravels, sands and silts (colluvium) that have washed down from the hills and accumulated over millions of years. The deep gully ends where it reaches a bar of bedrock 80m downstream from the main track junction off Meade Court.

Erosion works in the late 1990s included placement of rocks in the waterway allowing water to cascade without cutting further down into the stream bed, and on battered slopes where smaller waterways enter the creek. Plantings since the 1960's have helped stabilise many areas

particularly downstream. The rest of the steep eroded gully is very slowly weathering and collapsing to gentler slopes although this process will take decades or more. The gully heads are protected by deep swards of Weeping Grass.

The area is a high recharge site, with ground water carrying salt into Hamilton's Creek and ultimately the Goulburn River. Direct seeding with native species in the south-eastern bushlands during 2004/5 were an attempt to reduce recharge of salty aquifers feeding into the creek.

Vegetation

The high ridgelines in the Reserve were [Grassy Dry Forest](#) possibly with dry [Herb-rich Foothill Forest](#) in more sheltered locations and [Valley Grassy Forest](#) along the old creek terraces.



Most of the land was cleared for farming, increasing the speed of runoff and removing the vegetation protecting soils in the gullies. Only twenty-four large older trees remain in the whole Reserve but many grassland species have survived. Kilmore Young Farmers planted trees and understorey in the 1960s to reduce the erosion and capture gravel and silt along the lower creek. Later plantings have supplemented earth works further upstream. In 2004/5, the south-east ridge was direct seeded to reduce recharge of ground water aquifers carrying salt.

South-eastern bushlands: This area has ten large Yellow Box, Grey Box and Long-leafed Box. The 2004/5 plantings and germinations from the original plantings are now creating a dense bushland of eucalypts, wattles, hop bush, she-oaks and other species spreading into the grasslands. The ground is dominated by dense swards of Weeping Grass with other native grasses that are controlling introduced species.

Southern and western grasslands: The diversity of grasses is good. Weeping Grass, Wallaby Grass, Kangaroo Grass and Spear Grass are the main species across most of these grassland areas. The slopes at the south end are very weedy but the western grasslands are generally healthy with a lovely diversity herbs and low woody plants at the northern end. The removal of grazing has allowed the recovery of the native grasses but the regular slashing may be suppressing the establishment of a wider diversity of plants over the western ridge.

Hamilton Creek: Upstream sections have been revegetated with a variety of local species including Messmate, Manna Gums and River Red Gums. Plantings have included many shrubs such as Blackwoods, Rough-barked Honey-myrtle and River Bottlebrush, with invasion of Sifton Bush. The ground cover is mostly Weeping Grass with some introduced species in these moister

sites. Downstream, the species selection is less local with Blue Gums and Buxton Gum, an understorey including Ovens Wattle and White Sallow Wattle, but still with a dense layer of Weeping Grass.

Plant lists are in preparation.

Wildlife

The Reserves and some adjoining gardens provide a diversity of habitats although the scarcity of large old trees with hollows will reduce the diversity of species using the Reserves. Over 50 birds have been recorded and more species are likely to be added to the lists, including the raptors that use the higher hills and open grasslands.

Several of the bird species are wetland species and seven frog species have also been recorded, indicating the presence of dams with good wetland habitats. The grasslands bring in mobs of kangaroos and the dense vegetation in the forested areas are valuable for Black Wallabies. The diversity of species will increase as the habitat grows and evolves.

Species lists are in preparation.

Aboriginal history

This area is on the lands of the Taungurung people. Most traces of their occupation have probably been lost following the harsh use of the land. As the land and the creek slowly return to a healthier environment, we can start to imagine the lives of the First People in the valley of Hamilton Creek.

History after colonisation

Charles Bonney blazed the main route between Sydney and Melbourne, arriving in what became Kilmore in March 1837. This started the take-over of the land by graziers and the road north of Kilmore became known early on as Greens Pinch. Over the next one hundred or more years, the land was heavily cleared and grazed leading to the large erosion gully up Hamilton Creek.

This was well recognised locally and in the 1960s Kilmore Young Farmers planted trees and understorey to control the erosion on the lower parts of the creek. Those plantings are now a rich forest.

In the 1990s, the land was subdivided as a rural living zone with properties around one hectare and the most of the two ridgelines and the creekline were transferred to Mitchell Shire Council as public open space. In the late 1990s, the Upper Goulburn Waterways Authority (now Goulburn Broken CMA) battered slopes, added rocks to slopes and revegetated along the erosion gully. Fencing and weed control on the ridges culminated in 2005/6 when the slopes were direct seeded using salinity funding from the Goulburn Broken CMA, leaving other areas as open slashed grasslands.

Management

The Reserves are owned and managed by Mitchell Shire Council.

Further information

Mitchell Shire Council: <https://www.mitchellshire.vic.gov.au/our-region/parks-and-playgrounds/greens-pinch-reserve-kilmore>

Goulburn Broken CMA Revegetation Guide: information on different ecological vegetation communities, plant communities and plants in the Sugarloaf zone at <https://www.gbcma.vic.gov.au/revegetation/zones/sugarloaf>

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 Greens Pinch and Hamilton Creek, please contact us at <https://www.beam.org.au/contact>



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