

Where can I go mountain bike riding?

Mountain bike riding is a popular recreational activity in forest and there are many areas of public land where mountain bike riders can enjoy Victoria's great outdoors.

Mountain bike riders are welcome to use most areas of State forest in Victoria (see map), with many thousands of kilometres of roads and tracks suitable for mountain bike riding. The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) is responsible for managing State forest.

Generally the majority of mountain bike riding opportunities are along existing State forest roads. Many of these roads wind through picturesque forest and receive little traffic. Specific information on tracks and trails in State forest can be obtained from the DSE office nearest to your riding destination.

Mountain bike riding is also allowed in some national parks and other reserves, where it does not pose a significant conflict with conservation and the use of these areas by other visitors. Due to some differences in regulations between these national, state, coastal and other parks, to avoid disappointment it is best to check with Parks Victoria.

Where can't I ride?

In State forest, mountain bikes are generally not permitted on walking tracks or off formed vehicular tracks. Walking tracks are managed for walkers and are not available for use by bicycles. Use of certain areas such as reference areas, operational logging coupes, and operational firewood coupes are also not encouraged.

These limitations are in place to protect significant and environmentally sensitive areas, for your safety, to minimise potential conflict with other users, and to prevent soil erosion. It is very important that riders cooperate with DSE staff to ensure compliance in these matters.

For restrictions on mountain bikes in national parks and reserves, contact Parks Victoria for further information.

When are permits required?

In State forest, permits are required for:

- events that are of a competitive nature or that may pose a risk to public safety
- commercial events (ie. entry fees apply, prizemoney involved)
- club or group activities involving more than 30 bikes

- any activity involving constructions or the marking of a course
- any activity requiring the total or near total exclusive use of DSE picnic or campgrounds

To apply for a permit, please contact DSE at least four weeks prior to the event for non-competitive events and at least 12 weeks prior to the event for competitive events.



The mountain bike code

To ensure safe riding with minimal environmental impact, please observe the following:

- Stay on the road or on designated mountain bike trails. Do not ride "off-road" or on tracks closed to bikes as you may damage the environment you have come to enjoy.
- If in doubt about availability of access or permit requirements, check with the responsible land manager.
- Respect the rights of other visitors. If passing others, announce your presence, and keep speeds down to avoid frightening them.
- If you meet horse riders, always give them right of way. Bicycles easily frighten some horses and a spooked horse is dangerous to you and its rider. Announce your presence by voice, dismount and talk as the horse and rider pass to reassure the animal. If necessary, move off the track to give the horse plenty of room.

- Ride in control at all times. When riding, be prepared for the unexpected. Timber trucks, 4WD's, hikers, horse riders and native animals may also be using your chosen track.
- Minimise your impact. Keep your party small (4-8 people), go off peak and avoid skidding. Skidding damages tracks by removing the harder surface layer. This can lead to erosion. Cutting corners also causes erosion. Don't cut corners, stay on the track.
- Stay away from wet muddy areas, as they are very prone to damage. The tracks you leave behind channel the water when it rains and this leads to erosion.
- Before leaving on a trip, check road conditions. Do not use roads and tracks when they are wet or likely to be damaged.
- Be safety conscious – plan your trip carefully, carry a first aid kit and always wear your helmet. Leave details of your proposed trip with a responsible person.
- Report fallen trees or limbs across roads to the nearest DSE office (for State forest) or Parks Victoria office (for parks and reserves).
- Leave no trace. Take all rubbish home.
- Take care with fire – observe all fire regulations and Total Fire Ban days.

Classifications

To assist riders in choosing a ride to suit their needs, tracks have been classified according to the rider 'skill level' and 'fitness level' required to do the ride.

Skill Level

- **Basic.** Transition from bike path and road riding to bush/unsealed track. Dirt roads and possibly sealed sections.
- **Moderate.** Good opportunity to gain confidence and experience. Relatively wide tracks such as fire trails, often gravel of mixed surfaces.
- **Intermediate.** Required confidence and intermediate technical skills. Single dirt based track of varying widths. Expect rocky surfaces and obstacles.
- **Advanced.** Requires advanced technical skills with the majority of the track single width. Track surface rocky, loose and slippery when wet. Walking may be required.

Fitness Level

- **Low.** Basic fitness required to ride flat and undulating surfaces for 1-2 hours.

- **Average.** Moderate endurance required to cope with hills and ride duration of at least 2 hours.
- **High.** Well developed riding fitness. Able to handle long mountain climbs over varying terrains for extended periods.
- **Endurance.** Highly trained, race fit or high endurance. Highly developed muscular and cardiovascular systems.

For more information

The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) is responsible for managing Victoria's State Forest. For further information and maps about where to go in State forest, contact DSE's Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

Parks Victoria Contacts

For further information about where to go in national parks and reserves, contact the Parks Victoria hotline on ☎ 131 963.

Visit DSE's website

<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au>
then select "Forestry".

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