

Parsons Track – Track Notes & Directions

Parsons Track starts at Caveside, 10 minutes south of Mole Creek. Like so many walk tracks in the area, it was not created for the enjoyment of bushwalkers but has been developed and redeveloped over several generations by the families of early settlers, along with mountain huts constructed as shelters for hunters, trappers and snarers, and timber getters.

The strong attachment of current members of those families and others is the reason they are maintained to this day and, in the case of Parsons Track, have the benefit of signage at the various points of interest.

The start of the track

The Parsons Track walk starts at Parsons Road, where there is a signed carparking area. The track, at this point, follows an old 4WD track but it is strongly recommended that vehicles be left in the parking area, as fallen trees, washaways, etc render the track undriveable and there are no turning places.

The first sign you will come to along the track marks an old skidway, used for loading logs for transport down the mountain. There were many such skidways in years gone by, but this one is still clearly visible and you can see how it functioned. On a fine day, if you rest a while at this spot, you may be lucky enough to attract the curious attention of a pair of wedgetail eagles which call the area home.

Hills Logging Hut (2.5 hours return)

This hut was named for Bruce Hill, who logged the area for a dozen or so years in the 1960s. The hut fell into disrepair until restoration by the Deloraine Walking Club in the early 70s.

Norms Spring and Loftys Lookout (3 hours return)

Norms Spring was named for Clarrie (Norm) How, who encouraged younger family members, when leading them up the track, to drink from this spring, insisting that it would ensure good luck for the day. 50 metres further on you arrive at Loftys Lookout, named for Clarrie's brother Keith (Lofty) How, a point which offers a great view over the How farm, now owned by Keith's son Kelvin.

The old 4WD track continues for a further 1 km and then there is a signpost indicating 'Parsons Track', which passes the last of the old log skidways, the area above this point having never been logged. Here, at the start of the walk track, there are several King Billy Pines, planted 30 years ago by Charlie Crowden, which, at the time of writing (2009), are 7 - 8 feet tall.

There is a serious climb from here, known as the Little Grunter, followed by around 800 metres of myrtle flats, followed in turn by myrtle forest.

Haberles Hut (5 hours return)

Haberles Hut was built around 1931 by Bill Haberle and his sons Gordon and Bill during the Great Depression and used when snaring and trapping in the area. The hut fell into disrepair and was restored by the Deloraine Walking Club under the leadership of Charles Crowden over a 17 month period from June 1981 until October 1982.

Haberles Hut is well hidden from the main track and is reached via a 100 metre side track, which is signposted. After visiting the hut, you can return to the track and continue left to the start of a long, steady climb known as the Big Grunter.

Sandstone Rock and Parsons Spring (7 hours return)

Eventually you will come to a sign to Sandstone Rock, a huge rock which is visible below the top of the Tiers from Mole Creek, into the face of which which local residents and visitors have carved their names for some 150 years. There are wonderful views from this point to the north, as far as Port Sorell and the ocean on a clear day. A little further along is the final sign on the track, to Parsons Spring, which feeds into a small pool under a huge rock.

In this pool you may see the tiny mountain shrimp (*Anaspides tasmaniae*) only found in the cold waters of the Tasmanian highlands. Fossil crustaceans, very similar to *Anaspides*, have been found in rocks at least 250 million years old and, for this reason, *Anaspides* is sometimes called a 'living fossil.' Scientists believe that the ancestor of today's modern crustaceans may have closely resembled *Anaspides*.

The plateau

A further 600 metres climb will take you to the Central Plateau World Heritage Conservation Area, a plateau which when the Richea is in flower in summer is a sea of colour; this plant is known also as kerosene bush because of its high flammability. Looking to the right, you will see a large rock; if you climb this rock, on a clear day, you will see across Lake Balmoral to the Walls of Jerusalem, Mount Ossa and Cradle Mountain, as well as north to Port Sorell. And, if you sit quietly for a while, this is another place where the resident wedgetail eagles may come to check you out.

From this point, having reached the plateau, experienced bushwalkers may take the old track which leads to Lake Mackenzie (2.5 hours return), however this is not for the unprepared. Whilst the weather on the track, as it makes its way up the face of the mountains, requires respect, on the exposed plateau weather conditions are harsh and can become deadly in minutes; survival skills and equipment are essential.

How to get there

Take Caveside Road (C169) south from Mole Creek village for about 7 km, turn right into Pool Road, left into Fernleigh Road and right into Parsons Road. The carpark and start of Parsons Track are signposted.