

EXPLORE EXPLORE

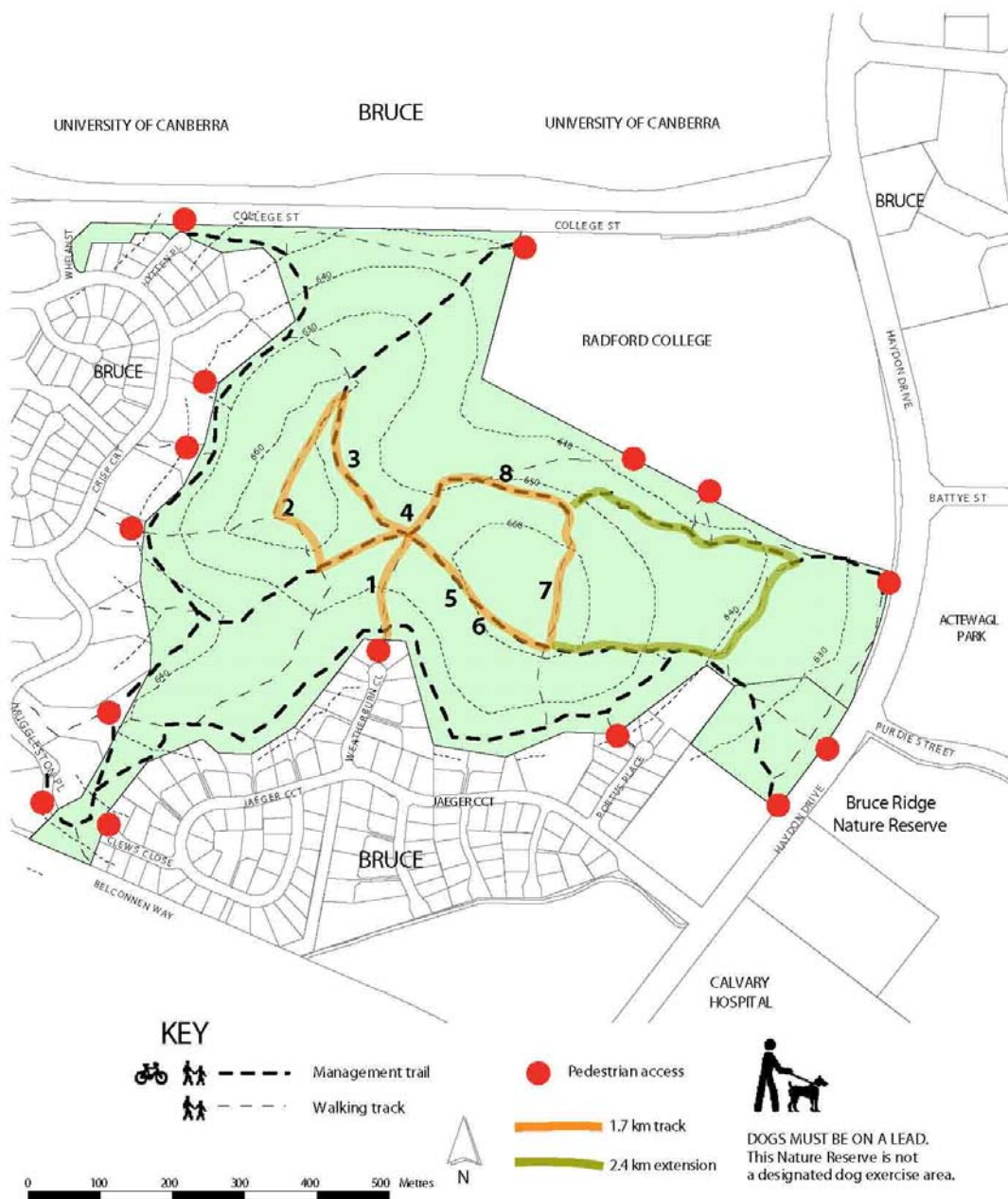
FEATURE WALK Explore The City

DECEMBER 2008

Name of Activity: Gossan Hill Nature Reserve

Length: 1.7 km (see orange trail on map) but can be extended to 2.4 km using the track marked in green.

Approximate Time: 30 mins for the 1.7 km trail



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Grade: Easy. The walk is on management trails and walking tracks but has some uneven ground and moderately steep sections.

The Walk: This self-guide walk starts and finishes at Weatherburn Close entrance in Bruce.

1. Walk up the hill from Weatherburn Close. On the left is a diverse wildflower spot with native species such as waxlip orchids and donkey orchids.
2. Turn left and follow the track to the top of the hill. From the hilltop are views across Belconnen to the Brindabellas. Remains of an old fence are testament to the area's farming history.
3. Turning right down the hill, the track heads north; take the first right turn. The understory to the left is dominated by the shrub *Cassinia* (also known as dogwood or cauliflower bush) common in disturbed land and conspicuous with its tiny white flowers in summer. Red stringybark woodland with red-anther wallaby grass tussocks underneath can be seen here.
4. At the crossroads, a large brittle gum stands alone among broadleaved peppermint. Fallen timber provides shelter for reptiles such as bluetongue lizards, shinglebacks and skinks. You may see parrots drinking nectar from the brittle gum blossoms. At night possums also feed on the nectar of these flowers. In summer, you may see the anther flax-lily; it has blue petals with bright yellow anthers and glossy purple-blue berries. Carry on about 30 m up the path from site.
5. On the way, the marks of fires can be seen on the tree trunks. At site 5, cherry ballarts line the path. These provide shelter for birds such as boobook owls. Native sarsparilla will have finished flowering but its seed pods are attractive.
6. If you look carefully through the trees to your right you can see Black Mountain Tower and treeless Mount Painter with its trig point.
7. As in many parts of Gossan Hill, marks of a fire can be seen on the trees here.
8. Views across Radford College and Canberra University to One Tree Hill and New South Wales can be enjoyed.

Services: The closest public toilets are at Bowman St Jamison Centre and Emu Bank near the skatepark on Lake Ginninderra.

What will I discover?

Gossan Hill derives its name from a geological feature. 'Gossan' is a Cornish word used to describe the iron-bearing outcrops of reddish soils and rocks. These coloured soils, or ochres, were used by Aboriginal people as a ceremonial pigment. A band of gossan exists on the northern slope of Gossan Hill. It is one of the few examples of its type in the ACT.

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What will I learn?

Gossan Hill was once partially cleared for grazing. Most of the reserve has regenerated with a shrubby understorey, with the exception of the lower northern and western slopes where only a scattered cover of trees and shrubs exist. Supplementary landscape plantings have been carried out on the lower northern slopes. The dominant vegetation is open red stringybark forest, with smaller occurrences of brittle gum and broad-leaved peppermint gum forming open woodland. There is also a small, pure stand of yellow box and Blakely's red gum. The mid layer or sub-canopy consists of young eucalypts, cherry ballart and tall wattles such as silver wattle, and red-leaf wattle.

What do I need to take?

Ensure you wear sturdy, comfortable shoes. Dogs are allowed on a lead.

Other walks/activities links

For further information on Gossan Hill go to

http://www.tams.act.gov.au/play/parks_forests_and_reserves/recreation_in_act_parks_forests_and_bushlands/canberra_nature_park/canberra_nature_parks_maps

For Further information on Canberra's native bird life go to:

<http://canberrabirds.org.au/>

How to get there

The start of the walk is from Weatherburn Close in Bruce.

Native sarsaparilla

