



Brandy Creek Mine to Cobungra River



13km one way (4 hours), Grade 3 Walking Track

A lovely natural environment and rich gold history are the twin rewards offered by this interesting walk. Within the Alpine National Park, it follows a disused vehicle track, past the remnants of the long-abandoned Brandy Creek gold mine and down to the delightful flats of the Cobungra River. The Cobungra rises below Mt. Hotham and flows into the Mitta Mitta (a tributary of the Murray River) near Anglers Rest.

Start from the Cobungra Ditch South trail head, reached 5.5 km along the Great Alpine Road from Dinner Plain Village heading towards Mt. Hotham. After 500 metres, the track reaches a junction. To the left is the Cobungra Ditch Walking Track. Straight ahead is the Brandy Creek Mine to Cobungra River track. One hundred metres to the right of the track, the extensive works of what was once the sluicing pit of the Brandy Creek Gold Mine can be viewed from above. Continue the descent to the Cobungra River through light Snow Gum woodlands and fields of native daisies and alpine grasses to the river flats – a great place for a picnic lunch and a swim on a hot day. Return by the same route.

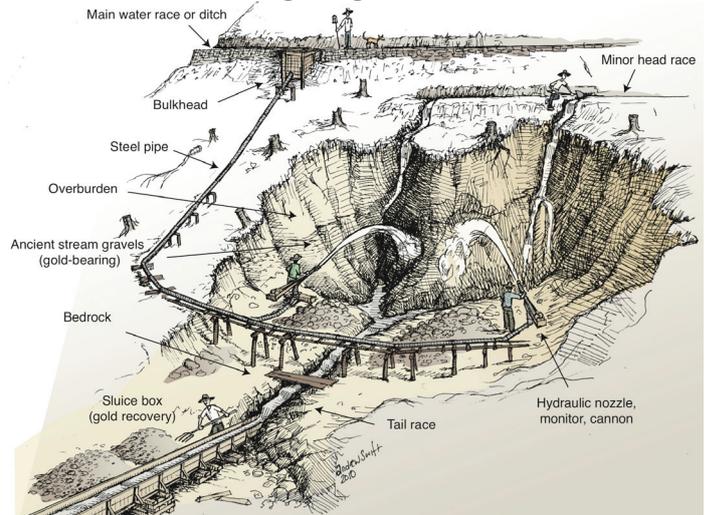


Everlasting Daisy - Image courtesy Parks Victoria

Gold History

Ancient river systems, buried for millions of years beneath the basalt cap of the High Plains, were worked for gold deposits from the 1860s. This ancient gold-bearing river system extended from Mt. Fainter and the Bogong High Plains in the north to the Dargo High Plains in the south. Exploration of this region of the Alps was largely mining-led, by both parties of prospectors and government exploration parties.

With discoveries of gold in Omeo and on the Upper Ovens from 1852, more adventurous prospectors would have taken the shortest possible route over Mt. Hotham. It is likely that many of these initial prospectors and miners followed ancient routes used by Aboriginal people over the Great Dividing Range.



Hydraulic Sluicing - Illustration Andrew Swift

Brandy Creek Mine

The Brandy Creek deep lead deposits were first worked in the late 1860s with the principal workings known as White's Claim. Over the years, the claim changed hands several times and adjacent claims were taken up. One of the richest was the Italian's claim - one clean-up alone in February 1884 was reputed to have produced 900 ounces of gold. Operations on the Brandy Creek lead peaked in the 1880s when the majority of the hillside claims were taken over by the Cobungra Gold Mining Company (GMCo). Although the Cobungra GMCo invested heavily in the mine with the construction of the long Ditch and all the latest mining appliances, their success appears to have been limited. During the early 1900s the mine was worked intermittently with the last significant efforts to mine the lead during the 1920s and early 1930s. Several attempts to rework the mine in subsequent years were unsuccessful. The main pit is a remnant of the hydraulic sluicing operations; however the lead was also worked by surface or ground sluicing and tunnelling. Total gold production from the Brandy Creek deep lead was not officially recorded, however the following account gives a fair estimate:

"During its entire career of working, this placer [alluvial claim] has worked an area of about 20 acres, yielded some 25,000 to 30,000 ounces of gold at depths ranging from surface to 100 feet." Alpine Observer, 8th December 1899.

Be Prepared

The best months for walking in the alpine environment are from November through to April, however, weather conditions can change rapidly, and snowfalls and blizzards can occur at any time of the year. (*The Bushwalking Season is from the November Melbourne Cup Weekend to mid May.*)

Be prepared with:

- Wind and waterproof jackets
- Warm clothing – hat, gloves, sunglasses, and strong footwear
- Food and water
- First aid kit and sunscreen
- Map and compass
- Check the weather forecast before departing
- Let someone know where you are going
- Mobile phone (reception in some areas)

Caution

Bushfires have damaged snowgums, which are now regenerating but dead branches are shedding with the new growth. High wind days may result in falling limbs and branches. It is not recommended to use the track on windy days. Please be aware that snakes are active during warm months.



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| Grade of Walk: | Grade 3, as per <i>The Australian Walking Track Grading System</i> |
| Distance: | 3km one way |
| Time: | 1.5 hours one way |
| Gradient: | Mostly level with steep sections on approach to the river |
| Quality of Path: | Mostly formed track, with some obstacles |
| Steps: | Occasional steps |
| Experience required: | Some bushwalking experience recommended |

For more information on Dinner Plains Tracks & Trails, visit www.visitdinnerplain.com.au.

