HORSE RIDING TRAILS IN JOHN FORREST NATIONAL PARK

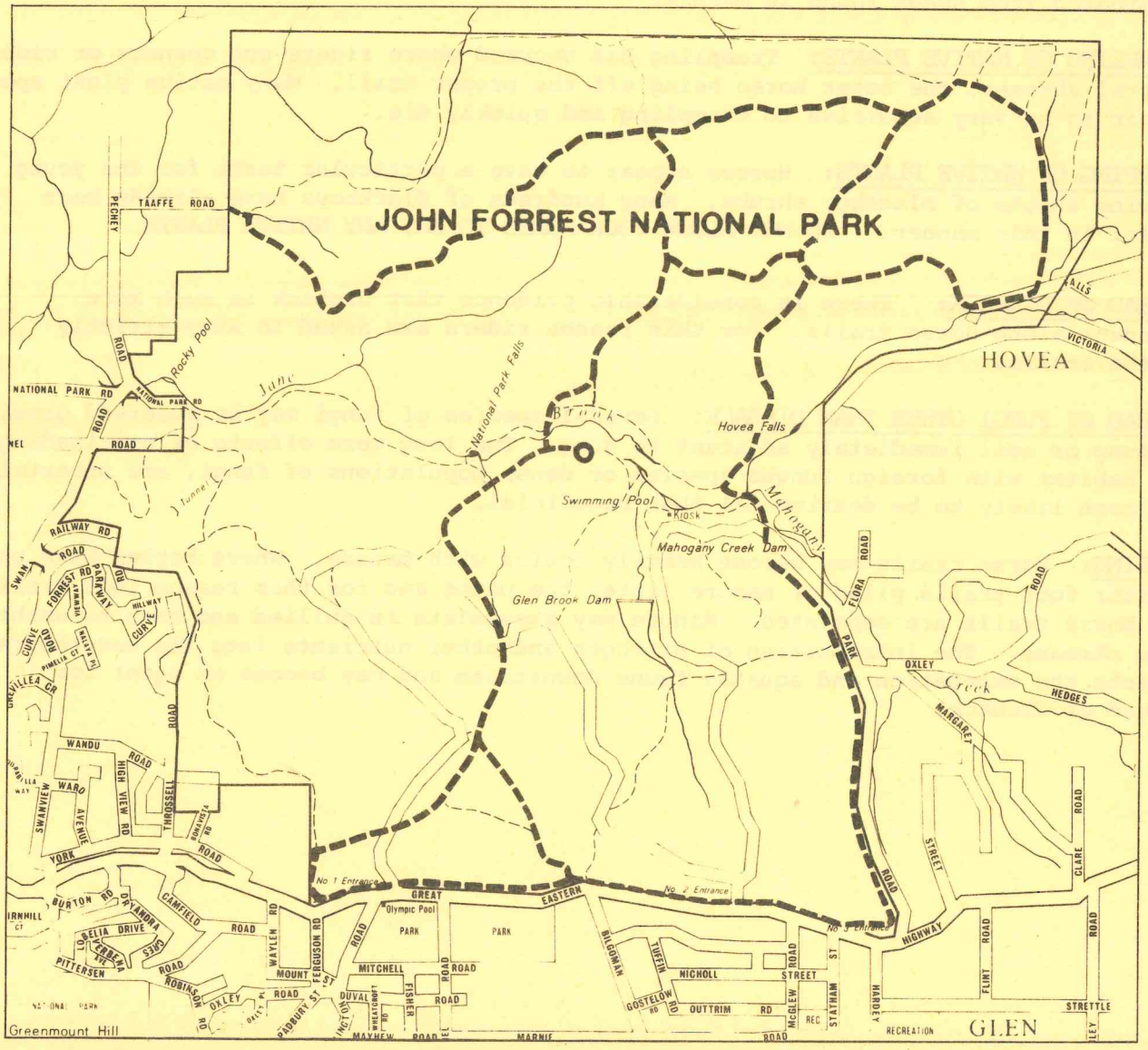
The map below shows currently approved horse riding trails in John Forrest National Park. Riders must remain on the trails and not take short cuts, trample vegetation or allow their horses to eat plants in the Park. Horse trails and walker's foot tracks have been separated as much as possible to avoid fouling footpaths and to prevent riders and pedestrains being injured by frightened horses. Careful consideration has been given to points of entry into the Park and are restricted to Taafee Road, Falls Road and on Great Eastern Highway between No. 1. and No. 3 entrance. The route of horse trails within the Park are shown on the map. Ongoing monitoring programmes will be used to establish the effect of horses on the environment and feasibility of alternative routes for the future.

REMEMBER - YOUR CAREFUL USE OF THE PARK WILL ENSURE THAT IT WILL REMAIN AVAILABLE FOR HORSE RIDERS' ENJOYMENT IN THE FUTURE.

AS FROM 1ST OCTOBER, 1981, HORSE RIDERS (EXCEPT RIDING SCHOOLS WHO PAY A SET FEE) ARE REQUIRED TO HOLD:-

A) AN ANNUAL PASS ($10) WHICH COVERS A WHOLE FAMILY AND AVAILABLE FROM THE NATIONAL PARKS AUTHORITY OR:-

B) A DAILY ENTRANCE TICKET ($2) AVAILABLE FROM THE PARK SUPERINTENDENT.



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ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS - Overleaf

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF HORSE TRAILS

By far the greatest environmental damage results from horses being allowed to leave recognised horse trails and to take "short cuts" through bushland. The following brief account of environmental effects of horses is presented for your information. Please be aware of the problems and help to alleviate them by staying on the trails and following signs. **REMEMBER: THIS IS YOUR NATIONAL PARK, PLEASE PROTECT IT.**

SOIL COMPACTION: There is evidence of soil compaction in areas where horses have spread out and not followed a definite trail. Compaction will lead to less adequate soil aeration and subsequent death of soil fauna and flora, many of which other animals and plants are dependent upon.

SOIL BREAKUP: In contrast to soil compaction, which mainly occurs in flat areas, soil breakup tends to occur on slopes, where the hoof action tends to break the soil into clods and push these backwards down the slope. The soil breakup leads to increased erosion.

EROSION: Where soil breakup is a major problem, the protective mat of algae, lichens and moss on the soil surface are destroyed and the surface becomes powdery in hot weather or compacts in wet weather. In summer the powdery soil becomes an agent for dust and dieback spread. In winter the compacted areas produce sheet runoff. Compaction and sheet erosion can result in deep gullys after only a few months.

WEED DISTRIBUTION: Weeds are visibly more abundant along horse trails; encouraged by the soil breakup, removal of competing vegetation, concentration of seeds in manure and the extra nitrogen available from the manure. Several species have been germinated from seeds found in manure.

TRAMPLING OF NATIVE PLANTS: Trampling has occured where riders cut corners or ride several abreast, the outer horse being off the proper trail. Many native plant species appear to be very sensitive to trampling and quickly die.

CROPPING OF NATIVE PLANTS: Horses appear to have a particular taste for the young growing shoots of Blackboy shrubs. Many hundreds of Blackboys have already been killed in this manner. DO NOT ALLOW YOUR HORSE TO EAT ANY NATIVE PLANTS.

SPREAD OF DIEBACK: There is considerable evidence that dieback is much more abundant along horse trails. For this reason riders are asked to stay strictly on the trails.

SPREAD OF FUNGI OTHER THAN DIEBACK: Several species of fungi may be observed growing on dung or soil immediately adjacent to dung. The long term effects of overloading the habitat with foreign fungus species or dense populations of fungi, are uncertain, but more likely to be detrimental than beneficial.

FOULING: Horse trails may become heavily fouled with manure. Where horses have used visitor foot trails piles of manure litter the paths and for this reason foot trails and horse trails are separated. Manure may accumulate in gullies and then be washed into streams. The introduction of nitrogen and other nutrients into the watercourses effects the vegetation and aquatic fauna downstream and may become an agent for spread of dieback.