

Forest Recreation

by Divisional Forest Officer
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The appreciation of forests and silvan solitude for recreation is a product of civilization. Man generally does not recognise the value of these areas until he is separated from them—until he is civilized and lives in a dynamic and complex society.

Primitive man, living deep in the forest and fearing its mysteries, had little regard for an environment which constantly endangered his life. Later, he was aware of the solitude and beauty of forests and the freedom of natural bushland, but this awareness was blunted by their overwhelming abundance. He feared the solitude in which a simple error of judgement could—and still can—mean the difference between life and death.

Now, confined by a highly complex civilization, people are developing a deeper appreciation of forests and landscapes seldom disturbed by man.

Multiple Use of Forests

Basically there are four broadly different uses made of State Forests in Western Australia. The productive use of forests for timber and wood-based products, and the role they play in protecting catchments and yielding water for domestic, industrial and irrigation purposes are well known. Their role in conservation of flora and fauna is accepted. Perhaps not so widely appreciated is the extent to which forest lands are used for outdoor recreation.

Recreational use of forest areas takes on many forms. Passive recreation activities include picnicing, walking, nature observation, driving for pleasure and general sightseeing. More active forms of recreation include hiking, rock climbing, horse riding and canoeing. Water-skiing, swimming, sailing and fishing in forest surroundings become a very pleasant experience where the water supply authorities allow public access



Signs like this are planned for all Forests Department picnic areas.

to reservoirs. This access is usually permitted where the water is used for irrigation purposes only.

Much of the forest area within two hours' drive of Perth is within domestic water catchments, which prohibits overnight camping. Whether or not a picnic spot is in these catchment areas, visitors are urged to avoid littering the forest and encouraged to use litter bins and facilities where provided.

For those favouring a mechanical component in their recreation, car trials and motor cycle trail riding are very popular.

The findings of a comprehensive U.S.A. study on outdoor recreation

Rock climbing on the east face of Mt. Cook.





Walking along nature trail, Sullivan Rock (above).



Hiking, Mt. Cook area (above and below). Mts. Vincent, Cuthbert and Randall on horizon.



Boulder Rock overlooking jarrah forest to the south (above).

Wandoo woodland east of Christmas Tree Well (below).



Turnoff to Gleneagle picnic grounds, Albany Highway (below).



Family picnic, Boulder Rock (below).



—which in many cases is directly applicable to Australian conditions —showed that 90 per cent of all outdoor recreation took place during one-day visits to areas which were within approximately two hours' driving time from the main centres of population. This means that although there may be more attractive areas for recreation outside these limits, it is the areas close to main population centres which are likely to receive the most visitors and hence the greatest amount of recreational use.

The remainder of this article looks briefly at some recreational activities in forest areas close to W.A.'s main population centre—Perth.

Darling Range recreation

Generally, the easiest forms of recreation are the most popular. One of the easiest, and one which appeals to people of all ages, is picnicing. As a result of surveys conducted by the Forests Department in 1969 and 1970, it is estimated that on each Sunday during autumn and spring approximately 2,000 people

go picnicing in forest areas within 35 miles of Perth.

Some prefer an undeveloped spot within the forest, while many prefer a site where limited facilities such as barbecues, rustic tables and perhaps a walking trail are provided. Sites where some of these facilities are already (or soon will be) provided include: Gleneagle and Sullivan Rock (33-mile and 41-mile pgs, Albany Highway), and Lesley and Christmas Tree Well (27-mile and 45-mile pgs, Brookton Highway). At all of these places there is an opportunity to participate in other activities such as nature walks and animal or bird observation. Where walking trails have been constructed, stopping points along the trail are chosen where wildflowers and shrubs are labelled for the information of the visitor.

Numerous bitumen and hard surfaced gravel roads run through State Forest, providing opportunities to select a scenic route.

Some of the more popular are the roads to Mt. Dale, Mt. Gungin and Mt. Solus. These are among the highest points in the Darling Range

The map (right) shows approximate boundaries of State Forest, and the location of developed picnic spots within easy reach of Perth.

and give an excellent view of the surrounding hills and forests.

From Eagle Hill, east of Gleneagle, southwards to Mt. Cooke, a 12-mile chain of granite peaks and outcrops provide excellent opportunities for hiking. The highest peak in the chain is Mt. Cooke—1,910 ft.—which can be climbed fairly easily from its northern end. On the eastern face of Mt. Cooke, some rather sheer granite faces provide aspects which appeal to rock climbing enthusiasts.

Water-based forest recreation activities are restricted to streams and reservoirs where water is not intended for human consumption. As the majority of streams and reservoirs close to Perth are earmarked for drinking water supplies, the nearest reservoirs open to recreation are the Waroona and Logue Brook dams—both of which lie within State Forest east of Waroona.

These two reservoirs and the Murray River, near Dwellingup—which, in season, is very popular with canoeists—all receive a large amount of recreational use. All are within two hours' driving from Perth.



Kayaking in forest streams is a pleasant experience (left).

Information sign at Lesley picnic grounds (below). Similar signs are also installed at some other locations.





MUNDARING

**Pimela
Mycumbene**

**Farrell Grove
The Dell**

KALAMUNDA

BICKLEY

**PICKERING
BROOK**

**CANNING
MILLS**

CARINYAH

**Boulder
Rock**

Lesley

ARMADALE

MOUNT CURTIS

BYFORD

**NETTLETON
ROAD**

Gleneagle

DALE FOREST

**Christmas Tree
Wall**

GLENEAGLE FOREST

EAGLE HILL

**JOHNSON
ROAD**

JARRAHDALE

**BALMORAL
ROAD**

Sullivan Rock

**KINGSBURY
DRIVE**

**KARNET
ROAD**

**SERPENTINE
DAM**

MT. SOLUS

GREAT SOUTHERN HIGHWAY

WESTERN HIGHWAY

SOUTH



LEGEND

Bitumen Road		Picnic Ground	
Gravel Road		Pine Plantation	
Forestry Tower		State Forest	

SCALE OF MILES



Barbecue at Gleneagle picnic grounds