



News of Western Australia's Long Distance Off-Road Cycling Trail

Trail overview

The Munda Biddi (meaning path through the forest in the Nyoongar Aboriginal language) is Western Australia's first long distance off-road cycle trail. Once completed the trail will span almost 900km from the Perth Hills to the south coast town of Albany, using a network of quiet bush tracks and old rail formations. It will link cyclists with many charming towns and pass through national parks and State forest in Australia's South-West.

Maps and distances

Map 1 and Map 2 are introductory maps to the trail.

During the next six months, before the Collie opening, improvements to these maps will be made. The Tracks and Trails project team welcomes any feedback that will help us improve the maps and trail facilities. On completion of Stage 1 of the trail to Collie, a guidebook and a 3-map set will be available for purchase in bookshops and a range of cycling and outdoor equipment stores.

The first section open to cyclists is from Mundaring to Dwellingup (182km). Stage 1 to Collie is expected to be complete in spring 2003.

The time it takes to complete this section will vary according to your fitness level, cycling experience and whether you are carrying camping equipment and food supplies. It is recommended that cyclists allow between 3-5 days to ride the first section of the trail. Experienced cyclists may choose to ride it in a shorter period, or alternatively you may wish to split the distance up into a series of day trips. It is strongly recommended that inexperienced cyclists do a series of day trips to test their fitness levels in preparation for an overnight or multi-day ride.

While many bikes have odometers, some may be calibrated differently. The distance tables are only a guide and should not be solely relied upon when using odometers. Ensure that you know how to read your map and the terrain profiles.

Trail users

The Munda Biddi Trail has been designed primarily for bicycles, although walkers are welcome. Horses, motorcycles and vehicles are not permitted to use the trail under the by-laws of the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act.

These by-laws restrict access in drinking water catchment areas. The use of support vehicles is encouraged, however we ask you use the designated access points highlighted on the trail maps.

Directional marking



The trail route is marked with small triangular aluminium markers showing a reflective yellow Munda Biddi symbol on a blue background. You will also find these markers on yellow posts along the trail (approx. 1km apart). They are placed vertically to indicate that the trail continues straight ahead, or horizontally to indicate the direction of a turn.

Facilities

The campsites are situated a comfortable day's ride apart (approx. 35-40km). There are three purpose-built Munda Biddi campsites (marked in green) in the first section to Dwellingup, with an additional three forest-based campsites (see Where to Stay on the Trail).

IMPORTANT NOTE: While the trail is now open to cyclists, work will still be carried out during the next six months to fully complete the trail, campsites and signage. We appreciate your patience during this time.

The Carinyah campsite is still being constructed and will be completed early 2003. Several tent sites, a bush toilet and picnic table will be available in the interim. Cyclists will need to carry a tent and enough water supplies for the first two days of riding.

Gradients and surface conditions

The trail uses a network of bush tracks, firebreaks and old railway lines. The majority of the trail is on gently undulating ground, except where the trail enters and exists river valleys. The surface is predominantly compacted laterite (pea gravel) soils, however in some areas the surface may consist of loose gravel and can be slippery. If you are not experienced in riding on these surfaces, it is recommended that you practice with some day rides (also with carrying panniers or using buggies) before embarking on a multi-day ride. If you are not confident riding down steep descents, it is recommended that you dismount your bicycle and walk it down.



Where to stay on the Trail

Camping out under the stars

Currently between Mundaring and Dwellingup there are two purpose-built campsites approximately 35-40km apart, between towns. Each campsite contains a self-composting toilet, a camp shelter (that sleeps 20-25 people), 2 water tanks, a bike storage shelter and several picnic tables.



PLEASE NOTE:

The purpose-built campsites have been designated for fuel stoves only. Cyclists will need to carry a fuel stove or choose an alternative method of cooking to traditional open fires.

Other forest campsites

In addition to the shelters on the trail, a number of vehicle-based forest campsites with facilities are accessible nearby. Camping fees may be applicable for some sites. Campfires are permitted in these sites (in the designated fire rings), but not in very high or extreme fire danger months (November-March).

Code of the campsite

- There is no vehicle access into the purpose-built campsites except in case of an emergency.
- While the Munda Biddi campsites are free, there is no booking system for the shelters and space is on a first-come first-served basis. Always carry a tent.
- Groups of 10 or more are asked not to occupy the shelter before 6pm. Organised groups are asked to use the forest-based campsites - Gooralong, Whittaker's Mill and Marrinup.
- Leave the campsite in good condition. Use the brush and rake provided to keep the shelter tidy.
- All rubbish needs to be taken out with you.
- Please respect the environment and other cyclists by using the bike storage shelters provided. Parking and riding bikes in the sleeping and eating areas are a hazard to people moving around and can degrade surrounding bushland.
- Use the water in the tanks sparingly – other cyclists rely on it too.

Other accommodation sources

Alternative accommodation can be found in the towns along the trail. Contact the local tourist centre for more information (see Contacts).

Preparing to ride

Bicycles, carriers and tools

While a mountain bike is ideal for the trail, other bicycles, often referred to as hybrids are also suitable if they are fitted with wide off-road tyres. There is now a wide selection of carriers available for bikes, including panniers. Contact your local bike store for further advice about choosing suitable equipment for off-road touring.

Make sure that you have your bike serviced and carry a comprehensive repair kit on your rides. The kit should include a spare tube, pump, puncture repair kit, tyre levers and tool set.

Wearing a helmet

A helmet is essential for your own safety.

It may save your life. Wearing a helmet is also a legal requirement in Western Australia. Invest in a good quality helmet, ensure that it fits correctly and that the straps are adjusted for a snug fit. Your local bike shop can assist you in choosing the most appropriate helmet.

Dehydration and water

A lack of water can lead to serious health problems. Symptoms of heat exhaustion and dehydration include feeling hot, faint, giddy, thirsty, nauseous, cramping and headaches. You should aim to drink one 500-750mls every couple of hours. Remember to keep drinking after the day's ride to replenish fluid. If you do become dehydrated, rest in a shady place. Cool the skin with a damp sponge and drink cool water slowly. In the summer months your water consumption should be at least 500ml per hour. Never rely entirely on the rainwater tanks in the campsites, carry sufficient water for your journey.

Watercourses, streams and rivers are shown on the map. However, many water sources cannot be depended on for drinking water. Please ensure that you carry adequate water supplies. The purity of water from any source cannot be guaranteed. Riders are responsible for treating water. Options include boiling, mechanical filtration and using purification tablets.

Pests in the bush

Common pests to cyclists in the bush are ticks, mosquitos and march flies. It is recommended that you regularly apply insect repellent to avoid being bitten.

If you find a tick in your skin, the best way to remove it is to smother it with cream or Vaseline and then carefully remove it with a pair of tweezers. Avoid leaving the head in because this may lead to an itchy lump or infection.

While snakes are common they are rarely seen and will only strike if cornered. If you see a snake or goanna sunning itself on the trail, approach with caution. Quite often the snake will feel surface vibrations and move away before you even recognise it's there.



Safety and personal responsibility

- Code of cycling off-road -

Plan ahead

- Be sure that you have the correct maps before you set out and that you understand how to use them.
- Ensure that someone knows your itinerary. Be sure to let them know where you are going, and when you have arrived at your destination.
- Keep your bike in good working order.
- Carry adequate food, water and spare parts for your ride. Be aware of the weather conditions and carry/wear suitable clothing.
- Do not expect to rely on your mobile phone. Much of the trail passes through areas that have unreliable coverage.

Leave no trace

- Take all rubbish home. 'Pack it in and Pack it out'.
- Take only memories leave only tyre prints.
- Help protect our water supply, use the toilets on the trail.
- Camp only in the designated sites along the trail.

Cycle safely

- Wear a helmet and bright, (flescent/reflective) visible clothing.
- Always carry a first aid kit – even on short rides.
- Ride to the conditions of the trail.

- Where the trail joins or crosses main roads, please obey normal road traffic rules.
- Avoid cycling alone.
- Use good bike lights and front and rear safety lights if riding at night.
- Understand your physical limitations and always ride at a safe speed.
- Dismount before descending steep hills.

Ride with respect

- Stay on the trail and avoid sensitive natural areas.
- Ride in the middle of the trail and avoid cutting corners, braking or skidding to minimise widening and erosion.
- Prevent the spread of the Dieback fungus, keep your tyres clean.

Share the trail

- Be courteous to other trail users.
- Keep left wherever possible.
- Approach other trails users with caution, ring your bell at least 30m before passing.

REMEMBER to sign the trail logbook at each campsite giving your name, date, where you have come from and where you are going. If you are using a "trail name", ensure that your contact at home knows it.

REMEMBER your safety is our concern, but your responsibility!

First aid

Cycling can be a bruising pastime. Be prepared – do a first aid course and always carry a comprehensive first aid kit.

Look, lock and leave!

There are a number of vehicle access points along the trail, and some access points are in high theft areas. If you do leave your vehicle unattended at an access point, lock it completely and do not leave any valuables inside.

The best times to cycle in the bush

Autumn, spring and parts of winter are the best times to cycle the trail. Spring in the jarrah forest is a true delight with the wildflowers in bloom. It is recommended that beginner cyclists avoid riding during the hot summer months from around December to March. Remember to always carry warm clothing when camping out because evening temperatures can drop rapidly.

Environment

Caring for your drinking water catchments

Most of the trail between Mundaring and Dwellingup lies within Perth's drinking water supply catchments. Responsible behaviour from cyclists is important to maintain the purity of our drinking water. Please follow the following advice regarding sanitation and pollution.

- **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Camping outside the designated campsites in water catchments is not permitted. People found wild camping outside of the designated areas are subject to prosecution under the by-laws of the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act.
- A self-composting toilet is provided at each campsite. Please use these facilities. If this is not possible, human waste should be buried 150mm deep and at least 100 metres from any stream, river or water source.
- Wash your dishes and yourself well away from any water source. Wherever possible, try not to use soaps or detergents.
- Sunscreen and insect repellent can easily wash off your face and hands into streams and pools – try not to pollute these watercourses with chemicals.
- All rubbish needs to be carried out with you and disposed of in bins.
- To protect drinking water supplies, the following users and activities are not permitted in catchment areas or to have contact with water bodies: horses, trailbikes, dogs, marroning, fishing, shooting and hunting. Water corporation rangers carry out surveillance in these catchment areas. Please report pollution to freecall 1800 626 636.



Environment

A northern snapshot

The Nyoongar people once inhabited these lands, creating their own munda biddi's as they searched for food, water and shelter. In the northernmost section of the trail, cyclists will experience the rugged beauty of the Perth Hills as the trail follows the western edge of the Darling Scarp. In forest predominated by jarrah, the trail winds its way through river valleys, such as the Helena, Serpentine, Canning and South Dandalup, en-route to Dwellingup.

The jarrah forest is also home to many native animals including the western brush wallaby, brushtail possum, the western grey kangaroo and the emu.

Along the way, there are reminders of the timber-cutting era such as old timber bridges and forest mill towns, such as Balmoral, Whittakers and Marrinup. The old timber towns of Jarrahdale and Dwellingup are steeped in forest history and still display remains of that bygone era. Many of the old rail formations that cyclists will use were created to connect the forest camps to the large mill towns. Today these towns host the new resource industry of bauxite mining.

Fires - wild and prescribed

The Department of Conservation and Land Management conducts a program of controlled fuel reduction burns in the cooler months, usually after the opening rains of autumn or at the end of the rains in spring. Should a burn be likely to impact the Trail, signs will be erected early to warn cyclists. A controller will check the Trail before the fire is lit. Should a wildfire occur in your proximity, don't panic. Quickly make your way away from the fire. Very few forest fires travel faster than cycling pace.

Dieback

Dieback, the destructive root disease caused by the microbe *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, can cause enormous destruction to native vegetation and plant communities. On Crown Land managed by CALM, Disease Risk Areas (DRAs) have been designated which contain significant areas that are still free of the pathogen. Motor vehicles, trail bikes, mountain bikes and horses are not permitted to enter Disease Risk Areas without a written permit from a CALM Officer. These are only issued in exceptional circumstances. While the entire trail lies outside DRA areas, cyclists are requested to take care not to spread contaminated soils by brushing down their wheels and shoes at the start of each ride.

Dogs and other domestic animals

Dogs and most domestic pets are not permitted in national parks, conservation parks, nature reserves and water catchments. Owners should also be aware that many areas are baited with 1080, which is fatal for domestic animals if swallowed.

Project partners

The Munda Biddi Trail would not have become a reality without the generous support and contributions from our Trail Partners and other supporters: Alcoa,



Lotteries Commission, Department of Justice, Peel and South West Development Commissions, Local Shires - Mundaring, Kalamunda Armadale, Serpentine-Jarrahdale, Waroona, Harvey and Collie, Water Corporation and the Waters and Rivers Commission.

Maintaining the Trail

The majority of the trail is on conservation estate, managed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management. A network of Regional and District offices manage the general day-to-day operations of the trail, while overall coordination is the responsibility of the Department's Munda Biddi Trail Coordinator, based at its Kensington headquarters (see Contacts).

Friends of the Munda Biddi Trail

The Munda Biddi Trail Foundation has been established to be the community focus for the trail. Members have been active in campsite construction and development of the trail. As the trail progresses, the Foundation role will grow. Please contact the Foundation (see Contacts) if you would like to be involved or to support the organisation.

Useful Contacts

Department of Conservation and Land Management

Tracks and Trails Unit, Phone: (08) 9334 0265
Email: mundabiddi@calm.wa.gov.au
Website: www.naturebase.net.au

Perth Hills District - Mundaring Office
Phone: (08) 9295 1955

Dwellingup Office Phone: (08) 9538 1078

The Munda Biddi Trail Foundation
Phone: 0422 112 229
E-mail: foundation@mundabiddi.org.au
Website: www.mundabiddi.org.au

Tourist Centres

Mundaring Tourism Association
Phone: (08) 9295 0202
E-mail: info@mundaringtourism.com.au

Peel Regional Tourism Association
Phone: (08) 9550 3998 Website: www.peeltour.net.au

Dwellingup History and Visitor Information Centre
Phone: (08) 9538 1108 E-mail: dhvic@wn.com.au

