

imagine

namadgi



Expand your horizons

Granite Tors Walking Track, 8 km return—track notes

A steep walk through tall forest and granite boulders to views of the Orroral Valley from the former geodetic observatory.

How to get there

Granite Tors Walk is approximately 57 km south from the centre of Canberra, (34 km from the southern suburbs of Canberra). Drive past Tharwa, take the Naas Road which turns into the Boboyan Road. Turn onto the Orroral Road and drive to the end. You can access the walk from the picnic area at the former Orroral Tracking station site. Walk up the valley past the toilets to the Orroral management trail/Cotter Hut Road. Cross the management trail and follow the track marker to Granite Tors.

Map reference: Rendezvous Creek, 1:25,000

Description

Degree of difficulty: medium to hard

Distance: 8 km, 3 hours return

Elevation: 930m to 1327m above sea level—a climb of around 400m

Terrain: there are some steep sections.

Track surface: a narrow walking track with loose, rocky, sandy surfaces and some rock steps.

Facilities: The nearest toilets are at the former Orroral Tracking Station picnic area. There are also picnic tables and interpretive signs.

The Granite Tors track starts from the Cotter Hut Road/Orroral management trail, initially passing through Snow Gum, Black Sallee, tea tree and Snowgrass. As you climb, the forest changes to Ribbon Gum, Mountain Gum, Candle Bark and Broad-leaved Peppermint.



Orroral Valley (above) and granite boulders (below) from the end of the track.



Understorey plants include Dogwood *Cassinia longifolia*, Silver Wattle *Acacia dealbata*, Broad-leaf Hickory Wattle *Acacia falciformis*, Dwarf Cherry *Exocarpos stricta*, Alpine Rice-flower *Pimelia alpina*, Grey Guinea Flower *Hibbertia obtusifolia*, Daphne Heath *Brachyloma daphnoides*, Common Fringe Lily *Thysanotus tuberosus*, Twining Glycine *Glycine clandestine*, Trigger plant *Stylidium graminifolium*, Dusky Scurf-pea *Psoralea adscendens*, Gorse leaf Bitter Pea *Daviesia ulicifolia*, Derwent Speedwell *Derwentia derwentia* and Ovens Everlasting Daisy *Ozothamnus stirlingii*.

The track changes direction at about the half way mark and follows James Creek. Near the end of the track, there is a thick shrub layer of Narrow-leaf Bitter Pea *Davesia mimosiodes*. Drumstick heath *Epacris brevifolia* grows in wetter areas. Enjoy the impressive view of the Orroral Valley from the lookout. Return via a track leading off from the building.

It passes some massive granite boulders along the ridgeline, some of which appear to be balancing precariously. There are also some opportunities for more views through the boulders down to the valley. The track eventually joins up with the main track again.

What's special about this walk?

The impressive granite boulders, the wildflowers in spring and summer and the expansive views.

What will I see and learn?

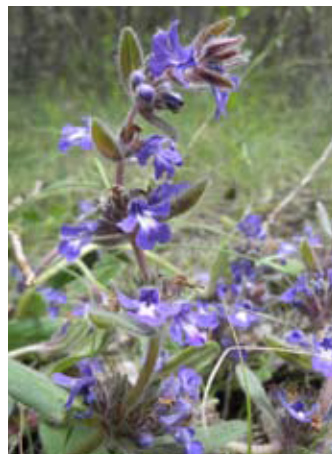
You may notice changes in the vegetation as you climb higher. Black Sallees are common at lower elevations where cold air drainage into frost hollows makes it difficult for other tree species to survive. Colourful wildflowers adorn the track in spring and summer. A magnificent view awaits at the end.

Cultural Heritage

The domed circular building at the end of the walking track was built in 1974 as part of a treaty for co-operation in science. A 10 metre telescope and laser were installed in the building. Laser pulses were fired to the moon and bounced back again via retroreflector mirrors placed on the moon's surface by Apollo astronauts. The time it took for the lasers to reflect there and back provided information about the motion of the moon, the rotational wobbles of the earth, continental drift and the theory of relativity. Improvements in 1981 enabled the facility to track man-made satellites (which became its primary function). Tracking ceased in 1998 when facilities were moved to Mount Stromlo.

Please Remember

- All native plants, animals and their habitats are protected.
- Stay safe—carry food, water, wet weather gear, map and compass. Wear sturdy footwear. Tell someone where you are going. Fill in the bushwalking register at the start of the walk.
- Leave no trace—take your rubbish home.
- Please do not remove or interfere with cultural artefacts.

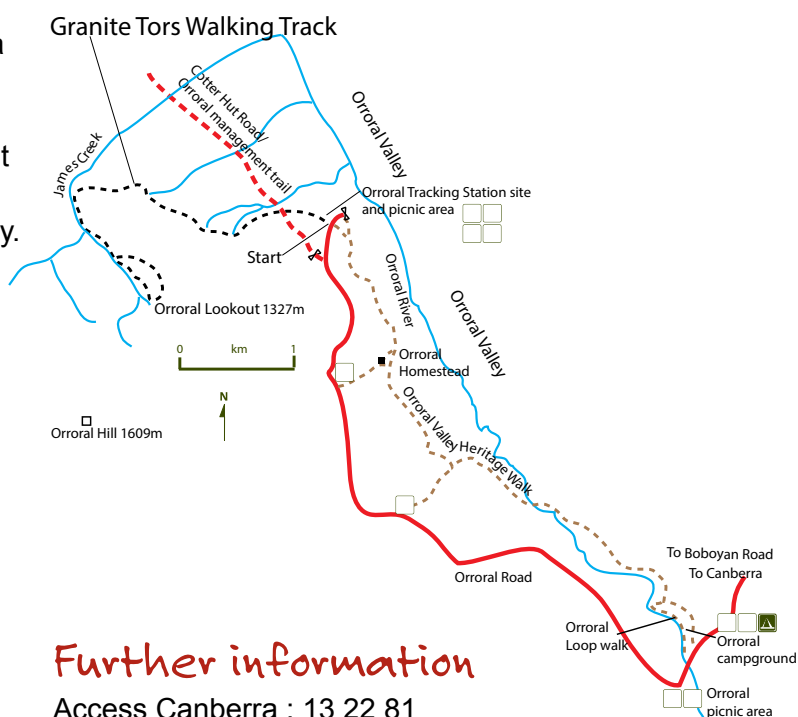


Austral Bugle (left) and Drumstick Heath (right)



Alpine Rice Flower (above left) Fringe Lily (above right), Dogwood (left)

At the lookout, stay behind the barrier as there is a steep drop beyond.



Further information

Access Canberra : 13 22 81

Namadgi Visitor Centre: 6237 5307

www.parks.act.gov.au

The *Namadgi Map and Guide* is available for sale at the Namadgi Visitor Centre.