

# CATCHMENT FOREST DRIVE AND WALKS

## DISCOVER THE RAINFOREST CATCHMENT...



### You can explore the catchment of Rocky Creek Dam in different ways.

From the main picnic area, you can do several short walks that take you through the Rainforest and Water Reserve that are very close to the dam. (These walks are described in *Info Sheet 13: Rous Rainforest & Water Reserve*). Alternatively you can explore the catchment further by taking the Catchment Forest Drive and Walks. (This information sheet describes the drive and some of the walks and lookouts along the way.)



The Nightcap, Gibbergunyah, Tungun Ranges and Rocky Creek Dam catchment are visible to the north.

At the edge of the Nightcap National Park, leave your vehicle in the parking area and continue along the management trail on foot into the lowland subtropical rainforest of the Big Scrub, crossing Rocky Creek. It is in this area of forest that the two Big Scrub walking tracks begin (Big Scrub Loop and Scrub Turkey Walk (Gadjaul Gurahr).

Soon after the management trail passes into the catchment area of Rocky Creek Dam, the vegetation changes to flooded gum regrowth forest (*Eucalyptus grandis*) growing on red soils (volcanic, basalt-derived). Further on this changes quite suddenly to blackbutt forest (*Eucalyptus pilularis*) where the gullies are filled with warm temperate rainforest growing on brown soils (volcanic, rhyolite derived). Other forest types along the Catchment Forest Drive and Walks include moist hardwood forests with bangalow palms (*Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*) and tallwood (*Eucalyptus microcoys*), brushbox (*Lophostemon confertus*), and subtropical rainforest.

*Walking tracks will take you deeper into the rainforest...*

### The Catchment Forest Drive

You can drive around the eastern edge of the catchment from the Rocky Creek Dam picnic area through some of the spectacular forests of the Nightcap Range. It is a 14km drive from the Dam to Minyon Falls. The drive is a narrow dirt road suitable for two-wheel drives in dry weather.

*Please remember that the road is shared with other users, including walkers and cyclists.*

Drive out of the picnic area and turn right into Gibbergunyah Range Road (it's the first gravel road on your right that you come to (unmarked). Just over the first small hill in the land cleared for cattle grazing, you will see a view of the largest remaining area of the original Big Scrub lowland subtropical rainforest.





**You can explore the roads and tracks that border the catchment from the Rocky Creek Dam picnic area through some of the spectacular forests of the Nightcap Range.**



Rummery Road Management Trail passes through heavily logged regrowth forest areas, and follows the contours from the western to the eastern side of the catchment. Tungun Road Management Trail crosses Rocky Creek and several smaller tributaries and meets with Peates Mountain Road Management Trail. At this point, you are at one of the highest points of the catchment (about 640m above sea level).

There is a lookout at the top of Peates Mountain (400m off the road) from which you can view Rocky Creek Dam and the surrounding catchment, Byron Bay and the coast to the east, and Wilsons Creek to the north-east. (Note that views are limited by forest regrowth.)

The picnic area at Rummery Park used to be an old logging camp. Logging occurred in the catchment area from the early 1900's until recently when the area was declared National Park. Intensive forestry operations in the Boggy Creek flats around Rummery Park have included the clear felling of the original eucalypt forest and rainforest and the establishment of forest areas dominated by flooded gum and blackbutt.

Turning left at Minyon Drive will take you to Minyon Falls (and Byron and Mullumbimby). Turning right will take you back into the Rocky Creek Dam catchment.

At the junction with Rummery Road Management Trail, it is still possible to catch a glimpse of Rocky Creek Dam from the road edge, and to picnic on the grass.

After leaving the forest, drive along the Catchment Forest Drive for another 1.3 km until you reach the Dorrroughby Road

intersection. Turn right to go back to Rocky Creek Dam (5.5 km) or on to Dunoon and Lismore. Alternatively, turn left to Mullumbimby, Byron Bay and Rosebank.

## Walking Tracks

The Catchment Forest Drive connects with a number of walking tracks of varying lengths (400m to 9km). These will take you deeper into the different types of forest and through rainforest gullies and along creeks. Some of the walks have views of the Rocky Creek Dam, lowland rainforest, waterfalls, Mt Warning and the escarpment of the Tweed Valley.

**Big Scrub Loop** (1.5 km) This walk is a unique opportunity to view and experience the largest remaining area of the Big Scrub lowland subtropical rainforest. Originally covering more than 75,000 ha, the Big Scrub was the largest continuous area of lowland sub-tropical rainforest in Australia. Only a few hundred hectares remain as upwards of 99.7% of the rainforest on these deep red soils was cleared for agriculture.

**Scrub Turkey Walk** (3km back to Rocky Creek Dam Picnic Area) *This track is also known as the Northern Boundary Trail.* This walk takes you through tall regrowth flooded gum (*Eucalyptus grandis*) and tallowwood (*Eucalyptus microcorys*) forest, magnificent 'old growth' eucalypt forest, and the lowland subtropical rainforest of the Big Scrub. The final kilometre of the walk passes through the Rous County Council rainforest regeneration area, and across the spillway and dam wall to the picnic area.







Some of these walks have views of Rocky Creek Dam, lowland rainforest, waterfalls, Mt Warning and the escarpment of the Tweed Valley.





## Remember that when you are exploring this area, you are inside the drinking water catchment and in a National Park.



**Nightcap Track** (6.5 km to edge of Tweed Valley escarpment – 13km return; another 10km to Mt Nardi one way). The track passes through the upland cool simple rainforests dominated by coachwood (*Ceratopetalum apetalum*) and water gum (*Tristanopsis collina*), the New England blackbutt (*Eucalyptus campanulata*) community, and finally the upland cool subtropical rainforests of the Nightcap Range, before emerging onto the cliffs and escarpment edge of the Tweed Valley. Here you will experience spectacular views to Mt Warning, the Border Ranges, Limpinwood NR, and Lamington NP. The Nightcap Track connects to the Mt Nardi walking trail and takes hikers west into the Nightcap Range, passing the headwaters of Terania Creek, climbing Mt Matheson and ending at Mt Nardi (near Nimbin).

**Peates Mountain Trail** (3km; 6km return). This track connects Peates Mountain (once the site of a forestry fire tower) with Rummery Park camping area. The trail passes through the spectacular brush box (*Lophostemon confertus*) and warm temperate rainforest community types before entering the blackbutt forest (*Eucalyptus pilularis*) closer to Rummery Park.

**Boggy Creek Trail** (4km; 8km return). This easy 45 minutes walk begins at Rummery Park and leads to Minyon Falls Picnic Area along beautiful Boggy Creek. The track starts in blackbutt plantation and passes a series of small waterfalls and pools along the quiet creek. It is also possible to take the alternative Eastern Boundary Trail to Minyon Falls Picnic Area. The track also takes 45 minutes but follows the ridge behind Rummery Park and includes some steep sections. Enjoy the views of Coopers Creek valley and Byron Bay from the ridge.

There are several walking tracks from the Minyon Falls picnic area, although these are outside the catchment of Rocky Creek Dam.

Brochures are available from National Parks detailing these walks, and you will also find information boards at the Rummery Park camping area and Minyon Falls picnic area.

**Rummery Road Walk** (2km to the Rocky Creek crossing). It is possible to walk past the locked gate down the management trail through spectacular moist hardwood and rainforest to the Rocky Creek crossing. (Walkers may continue on further along the Rummery Road Management Trail.).



Wompoo fruit dove (*Ptilinopus magnificus*)

## REGULATIONS

**Remember that when you are exploring this area, you are inside the drinking water catchment and in a National Park.**

This means that we ask you to:

- not swim, fish, boat or camp
- leave your pets at home
- be careful with fires and only use the fireplaces provided
- not interfere with native plants and animals
- take home all your rubbish
- drive and ride motor-bikes only on the roads provided; and
- walk only on formed tracks.

We also encourage people to follow the 'minimal impact bushwalking' code of conduct which includes:

- **walking tracks:**
  - stay on the track, even if it's muddy (walking around muddy sections makes the track, and the mud, wider)
  - don't cut corners
  - don't create new tracks
- **choose appropriate footwear** – heavy walking boots cause more damage than lightweight ones
- **keeping the group size below 20**, or below 8 people in wilderness areas
- **use toilets provided**, or in areas without toilets, bury solid waste and toilet paper at least 15cm deep and at least 100 metres from any water courses
- **don't feed animals** or leave food for them to find.



(Sources: Rob Kooyman (2003b) Discover the Rocky Creek Dam Catchment; Nightcap National Park brochure produced by NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service; Minimal Impact Bushwalking website)

**For further information contact:**

**Rous County Council**  
02 6623 3800 [www.rous.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rous.nsw.gov.au)

These information sheets were originally prepared for Rous County Council by Sustainable Futures Australia in liaison with Widjabul elders. © Rous County Council and Sustainable Futures Australia 2004. This is an educational project for the protection of water land, and for reconciliation.

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