



## Big Hill Mountain Bike Park

### Trail Audit 2019

The Mt Beauty trail network, known as Big Hill Mountain Bike Park, was established at the inception of mountain biking in Australia and is one of the most iconic mountain bike parks in Australia. Unlike many other places, the trails in Mt Beauty have been built by hand, not a machine. It is the hand-cut, natural and raw nature of the trails that make Mt Beauty trails unique and is a significant point of difference to other mountain bike parks in the region.

The Big Hill Mountain Bike Park is an important part of the town and local community, providing an important opportunity for nature based recreation, fitness and social activities. It also provides a significant economic contribution to the town, bringing riders from outside the region to ride, compete or spectate at events.

The trails are maintained by the Mt Beauty-based cycling club, Team Mt Beauty Incorporated.

#### **Location**

The Big Hill Mountain Bike Park is located within Mt Beauty, approximately 500m from the town centre. The main trailhead is located within easy riding distance of the town with users both riding and driving to the trail network. Plenty of parking is available at the trailhead. A secondary minor trailhead, Shady Gully, is located approximately 2km up the Bogong High Plains Road and provides easier access to trails for beginners. The trails can also be shuttled by 2WD vehicles using existing gravel roads. Private operators also operate commercial shuttle businesses using the Mt Beauty trails.

The park is complemented by nearby mountain bike locations in the North East - Bright, Yackandandah, Beechworth and Falls Creek.

## The Site

Trails are built on the geological feature called Mt Beauty, with the highest point 660m elevation. The main trailhead is at 380m elevation, giving a total fall of 280m.

The majority of the area has been heavily modified by the construction and operation of the Kiewa Hydroelectric scheme and associated high transmission powerlines. Vehicles tracks, aqueducts and other equipment associated with the hydroelectric scheme crisscross the area. Powerlines and high transmission lines are a significant feature characteristic of the hill, with wide easements cleared of vegetation below the powerlines. Ongoing maintenance of these assets results in periodic grading of roads, maintenance of vegetation in the easements and, recently, construction of new access tracks.

## Land tenure

The underlying land tenure of the trail network is complex (see attachment 1). The main carpark and trailhead infrastructure is located on Alpine Shire managed land. The majority of trails are located on both freehold land owned by AGL Hydro and Crown land managed by DELWP. There is no clear boundary definition between land tenures. Team Mt Beauty have a current license agreement with AGL Hydro to use the AGL land for mountain biking.

## The trails

There are over 50km of trails in a relatively small area, resulting in a maze of tracks. The original trails at the park were established during the 1990s. Mt Beauty trails have a unique style and are known and loved for their 'old school' hand cut nature. The trails are generally steep and often narrow and off-camber. The park has both cross-country trails and downhill trails.

The trails are maintained by the Mt Beauty-based cycling club, Team Mt Beauty Incorporated. The club regularly maintains the trails and holds working bees. Maintenance generally includes track clearing, grass mowing, brushcutting, drain clearing and drainage improvements.

The club has also mapped and marked three different recommended routes on Trailforks to give an introduction to the trails for visitors to the area:

- Blue loop – approximately 7km and suits intermediate riders
- Red loop – approximately 9km and suits experienced riders
- Yellow loop - approximately 9km and suits experienced riders

The club has also invested a great deal of effort in installing trail signage at intersections as well as trail maps at strategic locations.

The complete list of trails in the Big Hills Mountain Bike Park is attached and mapped using Trailforks.

The area also links with a large network of fire trails/service roads, many of which are valuable to mountain bike riders for linking trails and longer distance rides.

## Usage

The trails receive significant usage from both local riders and visitors. Team Mt Beauty has 186 number of members.

As the trails are located close to town, the trails are also regularly used by trail runners and walkers. No issues have occurred between walkers and riders and Team Mt Beauty is happy for trails to be also used by walkers and runners.

Occasional use by horse riders in the past resulted in damage to the trails and Team Mt Beauty have stipulated that horses are not permitted on singletracks, communicating directly with local riders, and no problems have occurred recently.

## Events

Team Mt Beauty regularly run events using the mountain bike trails, drawing competitors from Australia wide, and providing a significant economic contribution to the town. Regular events include state-level downhill, gravity enduro, cross-country and cyclocross mountain bike races.

## Trail audit

The audit has focused on mapping the complete network of trails, identifying the underlying land tenure, assigning a trail difficulty grading and focusing on high level user safety. The audit process was conducted with a 'high level' approach due to the volume of trail to be covered.

Like many outdoor recreation activities, mountain biking carries some risks that are generally expected by users. The risk assessment was undertaken in the context of unexpected hazards within the context of the particular track and the nature of the style of riding in Mt Beauty.

### *Value to network*

The value to network rating is based on a number of principles - with the highest value trails those that form part of the key network, part of the marked routes or race routes, provide the renowned Mt Beauty experience, or historic trails.

### *Sustainability*

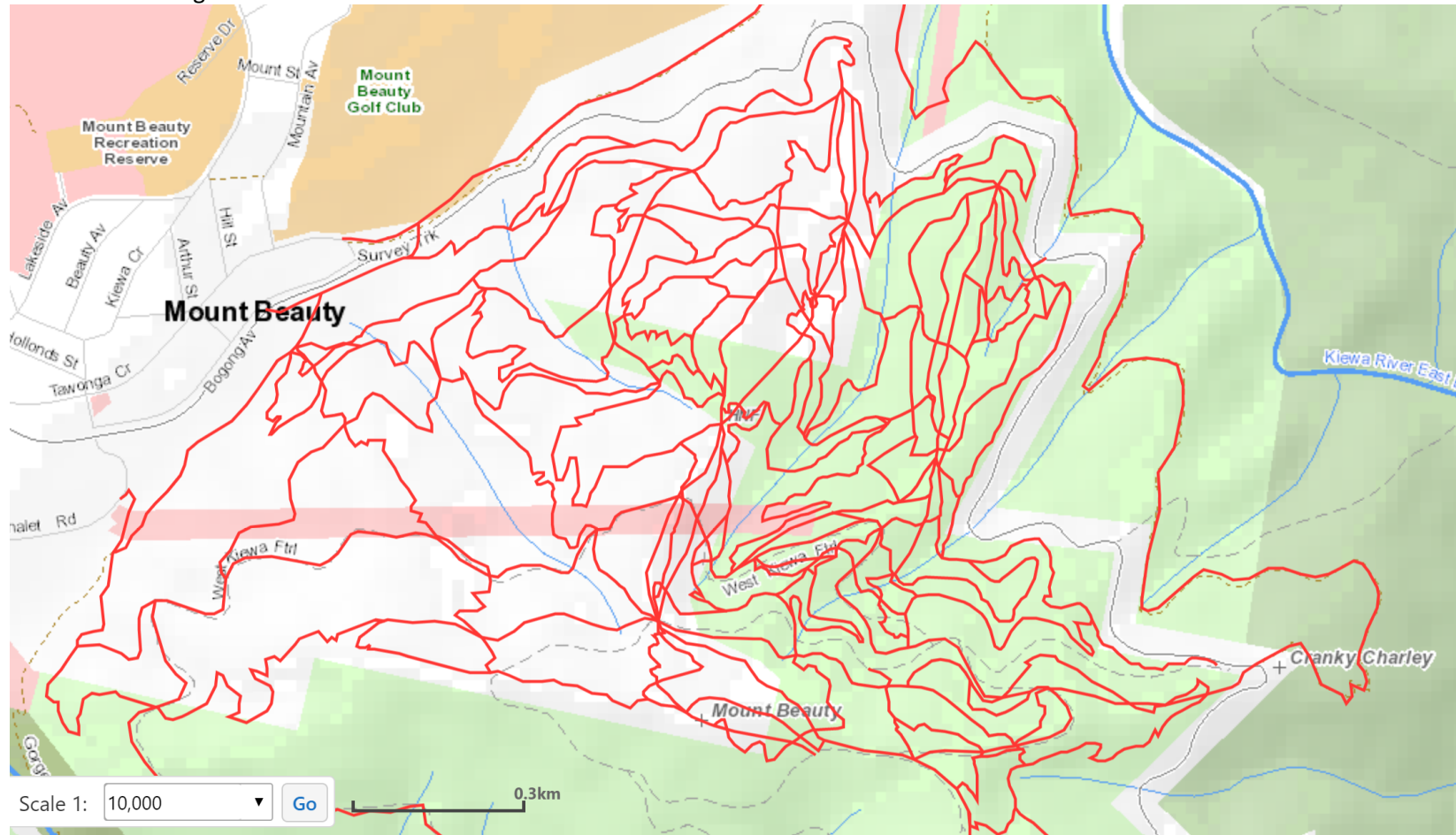
The sustainability rating has been assessed using knowledge and information from key club members who have ridden and maintained the trails in all seasons for many years.

Trail dynamics and flow have been assessed anecdotally, using club member's extensive experience in managing, constructing and riding and constructing mountain bike trails.

### *Trail difficulty*

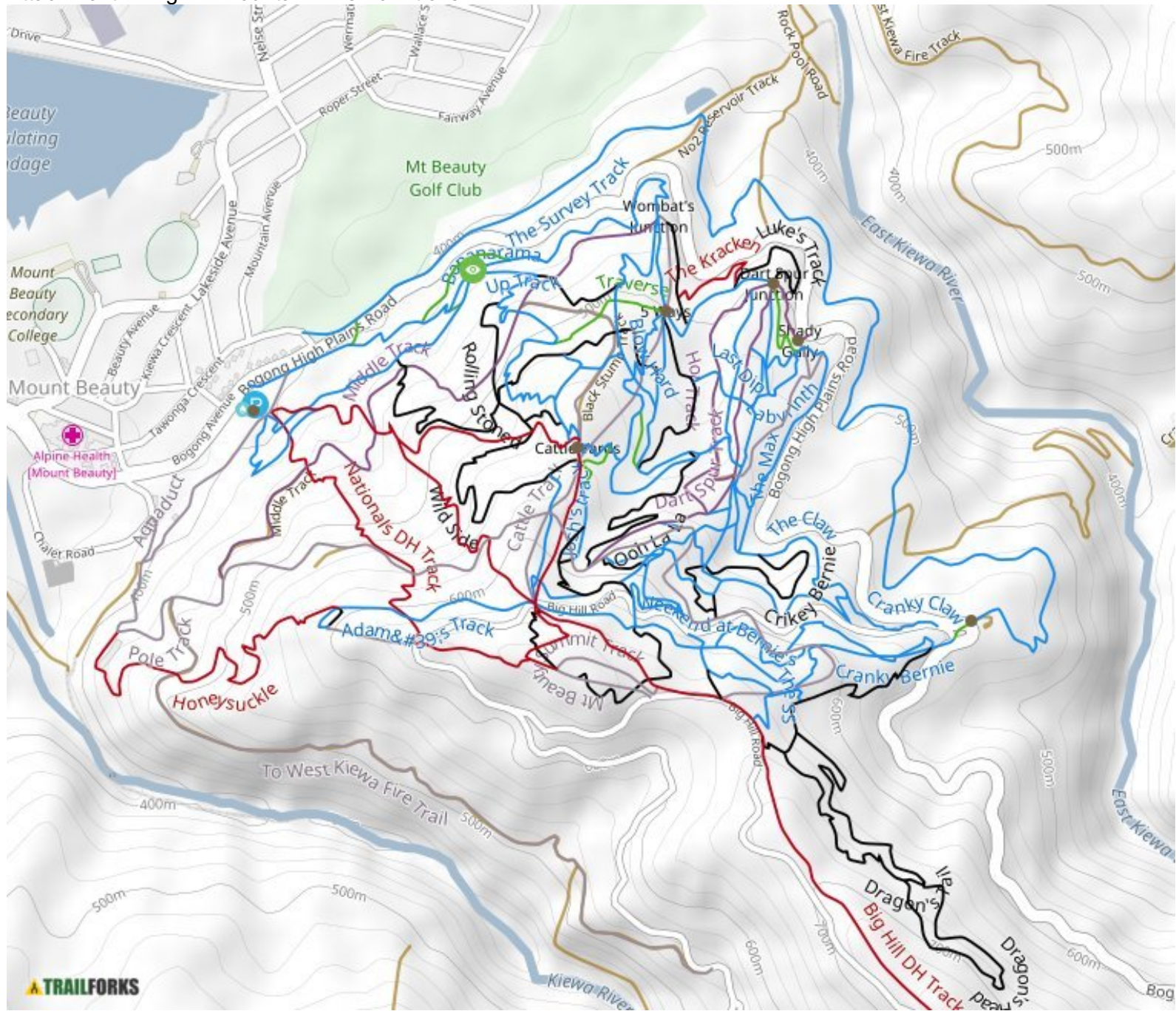
Trail difficulty grading has been assessed using the IMBA Trail Difficulty Rating System Australian edition 2014 (Appendix one). However, most trails in Mt Beauty are narrower than the rating width. The trail ratings are available on Trailforks and trail map signage to ensure riders are aware of the trail difficulty as there are few green trails for beginners. Trail grading could be added to trail signs.

Attachment 1: Big Hill Mountain Bike Park land tenure



Light green = DELWP managed Crown land  
White = AGL  
Pink = ?? transmission lines/pipeline easement?  
Dark green = Parks Victoria managed Alpine National Park

Attachment 2: Big Hill Mountain Bike Park trails



## OVERVIEW OF THE RATINGS SYSTEM

Criteria	Overview
<b>Value to network rating</b>	<p>Trails have been assigned a rating out of five to assess the trails value to the greater Mt Beauty trail network. A summary of values can be found below;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Very limited value</b> to the current trail network: Closure and rehabilitation is recommended.</li> <li>2. <b>Limited value</b> to the current trail network: Closure and rehabilitation may be warranted.</li> <li>3. <b>Moderate value</b> to the current trail network: Trail possesses some value to the current network; potential upgrade is worthy of exploration.</li> <li>4. <b>High value</b> to the current trail network: The trail is of significant value to the current network and should be retained and potentially upgraded.</li> <li>5. <b>Very high value</b> to current trail network: This trail is of the highest importance to the current trail network, providing a high-quality experience and/or a strategically important network connection that is essential to the greater Yackandandah trail network.</li> </ol>
<b>Sustainability rating</b>	<p>Trails have been assigned a rating out of five to assess overall trail sustainability. These ratings are assessing the trails as they were found at the time of assessment and may not reflect current trail conditions;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Very poor levels of sustainability:</b> This trail offers very poor sustainability even in the short term. Trail alignments are poor, as is trail construction technique.</li> <li>2. <b>Poor levels of sustainability:</b> This trails offers poor sustainability in the short-mid term. Trail alignments and/or construction techniques are not conducive to a sustainable trail.</li> <li>3. <b>Average levels of sustainability:</b> This trail offers sub-optimal levels of sustainability, but will offer reasonable levels of mid-longer term sustainability. Some sections are poorly aligned and/or poorly constructed.</li> <li>4. <b>Good levels of sustainability:</b> This trail offers good levels of long-term sustainability. The trail will require minimal input in the long term.</li> <li>5. <b>Excellent levels of sustainability:</b> The trail is aligned and constructed to a best practice standard for the majority of its length. The trail will offer best-case levels of sustainability in the long term.</li> </ol>
<b>IMBA trail difficulty rating system (TDRS) grading</b>	<p>Trails have been assessed against the IMBA Australia Trail Difficulty Rating System.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>White circle (easiest):</b> ≥1800mm tread, smooth surface, ≤5% average grade (10% max grade), level fall zone, no obstacles.</li> <li>2. <b>Green circle (easy/beginner):</b> ≥900mm tread, mostly firm surface, ≤5% average grade (15% max grade), ≤10% slope fall zone, unavoidable obstacles to 50mm, unavoidable bridges ≥900mm.</li> <li>3. <b>Blue square (intermediate/more difficult):</b> ≥600mm tread, mostly firm surface, ≤10% average grade (≥15% max grade), ≤20% slope fall zone, unavoidable obstacles to 200mm, unavoidable bridges ≥600mm, technical trail features ≤ 600mm high.</li> <li>4. <b>Black diamond (very difficult/advanced):</b> ≥300mm tread, widely variable surface, ≤15% average grade (≥15% max grade), steep slope fall zone, unavoidable obstacles ≤380mm, unavoidable bridges ≥600mm, technical trail features ≤1200mm high, short sections may exceed criteria.</li> <li>5. <b>Double black diamond (extremely difficult):</b> ≥150mm tread, widely variable surface and unpredictable, ≤20% average grade (≥15% max grade), steep slope fall zone, unavoidable obstacles ≥380mm, unavoidable bridges ≤500m, technical trail features ≥1200mm high, many sections may exceed criteria.</li> </ol>

PRIORITY	OVERVIEW
<b>Priority one</b>	Issue should be rectified immediately to ensure rider safety. Trail/s should be closed until issue is addressed. Failure to address the issue may result in a severe risk to user safety and/or sustainability.
<b>Priority two</b>	Issue should be addressed within one month, or prior to an official trail opening. Failure to address the issue poses a moderate safety risk.
<b>Priority three</b>	Issue is noted as a recommendation only, and should be addressed in due course to ensure optimal trail quality, rider safety and sustainability.

Trail type	Trail number	Track Name	Difficulty	Value to network	Sustainability	Direction	Land manager	Distance (metres)	Grade	Notes	Issues/suggested works
Downhill		99 Nats (DH1)	Black Diamond	5	4	Downhill Only	AGL	221	-13.92	Downhill track from Mt Beauty summit to Big Hill Road	
Downhill	50	Big Hill DH Track	Double Black Diamond	5	5	Downhill Only	AGL and DELWP	5293	-12.32	Downhill track commencing at Bench Five.	
Downhill	52	Nationals DH Track	Double Black Diamond	5	5	Downhill Only	AGL	1237	-20.98		"Caution road crossing ahead" sign
Downhill	51	Short Course DH Track (DH2)	Double Black Diamond	5	5	Downhill Only	AGL	1038	-18.41		
Link		Bananarama-Downhill link track	Blue	5	4	Uphill Primary	AGL	69	15.882	Part of the marked Blue Route - links Bananarama to the end of the Big Hill Downhill.	
Link	Link	Blow 1995	Blue	3	4	Uphill Primary	AGL	120	5.571	Link between Blowhard and 1995	
Link	Link	Cranky Claw	Blue	3	3	Both Directions	DEWLP and road reserve	278	2.378	Link into The Claw from Cranky Charlie	Lead in from road needs some work to improve sustainability
Link	Link	Downhill race shuttle access	Green	5	4	Both Directions	Road reserve	73	-13.48		
Link	Link	Last Dip	Blue	5	3	Downhill Primary	DELWP	206	-6.906	Used in Enduro race	
Link	Link	Nirvana Link Track	Green	4	5	Both Directions	DELWP	143	-6.935		
Link	Link	Pole Track Short Cut	Blue	3	4	Uphill Primary	DELWP	60	0.678		
Link	25b	The Claw (B Line)	Blue	5	4	Downhill Primary	DELWP	115	-8.82	Alternative finish to the Claw	
Link	Link	The Claw Link Track	Blue	4	4	Both Directions	DELWP	68	-0.229	Link track between The Claw and Crikey Bernie	
Link	Link	Up and Bananarama Link Track	Green	5	4	Both Directions	AGL	40	-14.54	Link between Up Track and Bananarama	
Road	Road	Access Track	Secondary Access Road/Trail	4	5	Both Directions		231	-12.58	Powerline access track and used as access to Adam's Track and Honeysuckle	
Road	Road	Aquaduct	Secondary Access Road/Trail	5	5	Both Directions	AGL	615	-0.382	Aquaduct track	
Road	Road	Black Stump Track	Secondary Access Road/Trail	4	4	Both Directions		568	-13.13		
Road	Road	Cattle Track	Secondary Access Road/Trail	5	3	Both Directions	AGL and DELWP	1092	15.191	Old 4WD and cattle access track	
Road	Road	Dart 4Wd Track	Secondary Access Road/Trail					411	8.981		
Road	Road	Dart Spur Track	Access Road/Trail	5	3	Uphill Primary	DELWP	943	10.298	4WD track	
Road	Road	Hot Track	Access Road/Trail	5	5	Uphill Primary		636	7.279	Actually part of Line Track but this section known locally as Hot Track. Key link between tracks.	
Road	Road	Line Track	Access Road/Trail	5	5	Both Directions		386	8.171		
Road	Road	Middle Track	Access Road/Trail	5	4	Both Directions	AGL	1834	0.322	Middle Track is an old 4WD track which traverses the hill. Short sections are used to link trails.	
Road	Road	Mt Beauty Summit Track	Secondary Access Road/Trail	5	5	Both Directions		535	-0.056		
Road	Road	Pole Track	Secondary Access Road/Trail	5	5	Both directions	AGL and DELWP	3249	8.157		
Road	Road	Reservoir Fire Track	Secondary Access Road/Trail	5	5	Uphill Primary		2122	5.31		
Singletrack	7	1995	Blue	4	4	Downhill Primary	AGL	167	-11.65		
Singletrack	37	Cranky Charlie Loop Lower	Blue	5	3	Both Directions	DELWP	571	7.894		
Singletrack	37	Cranky Charlie Loop Upper	Black Diamond	5	4	Downhill Only	DELWP	698	-12.98	Usual downhill part of Cranky Charlie loop	Needs a road ahead sign at the end. Needs a triple arrow sign at drop at end
Singletrack	19	3rd Parallel Track	Blue	5	4	Downhill Primary	DELWP	401	-9.376	Key trail in the network and Shady Gully/Dart Spur area, used by beginners accessing the trails from Shady Gully. Wooden bridge approximately 50cm above ground.	Keep monitoring the condition of the log
Singletrack	39	Adam's Track	Blue	5	4	Both Directions	AGL	617	-6.173		



Trail type	Trail number	Track Name	Difficulty	Value to network	Sustainability	Direction	Land manager	Distance (metres)	Grade	Notes	Issues/suggested works
Singletrack	5	Bananarama	Blue	5	3	Downhill Primary	AGL and DELWP	1912	-8.254	A key part of the marked 'blue route'. Popular and easiest way back to the trailhead.	Replace or maintain the triple arrow sign on the rock garden
Singletrack	1a	Big Easy Up	Blue	5	5	Uphill only	AGL and DELWP	888	3.571	Machine built up track - continuation of the Up Track. Easiest climbing single track. Uphill only.	
Singletrack	4	Blair Witch	Black Diamond	4	3	Downhill Primary	AGL	257	-12.6		
Singletrack	8	Blow Hard	Blue	3	4	Uphill Primary	AGL	290	8.474		
Singletrack	24	Bomb Crater	Black Diamond	3	2	Downhill Primary	DELWP	63	-24.2	A and B lines	
Singletrack	34	Cranky Bernie	Blue	4	3	Both Directions	DELWP	505	-13.04		Sign the drop at the end of the track with down arrows. Install 'road crossing ahead' sign.
Singletrack	23	Crikey Bernie	Black Diamond	3	4	Downhill Primary	DELWP	754	-4.332		Relocate trail sign
Singletrack	29	Death Drop	Black Diamond	2	4	Downhill Primary	DELWP	136	-4.671		
Singletrack	54	Dragon's Head	Black Diamond	5	4	Downhill Primary	DELWP				
Singletrack	38	Dragon's Tail	Double Black Diamond	4	3	Downhill Primary	DELWP	1375	-1.381		
Singletrack	28	el Presidente	Black Diamond	5	4	Downhill Only	AGL and DELWP	640	-7.969		
Singletrack	13	Fudge It	Black Diamond	4	4	Both Directions	AGL	268	13.583		
Singletrack	30	Greg's Detour	Blue	4	4	Both Directions	AGL and DELWP	228	-6.086		
Singletrack	12	Gully Track	Blue	4	4	Both Directions	AGL and DELWP	369	-1.247	Key part of marked 'blue route'	
Singletrack	11	Harry's Track	Blue	5	4	Both Directions	AGL and DELWP	744	-4.894	Key part of marked 'blue route'	
Singletrack	40	Honeysuckle	Double Black Diamond	5	3	Downhill Only	AGL and DELWP	1188	-13.84		
Singletrack	55	Horse Trail	Black Diamond	3	2	Downhill Primary	DELWP	328	-15.48	Original singletrack in the area. Previously used by horseriders.	Multi use track (Sometimes still used by horse riders)
Singletrack	26	Jarrah's Berms	Green	3	4	Downhill Primary	AGL and DELWP	178	-9.772	Easiest trail down from the Cattleyards	
Singletrack		Josh's track	Blue	3	2	Downhill Primary	AGL	310	-17.21		
Singletrack	35	Jumping Jacks	Black Diamond	5	4	Downhill Primary	DELWP	243	-7.309	Jumps track with B lines.	"Caution road crossing ahead" sign
Singletrack	17	Labyrinth	Blue	4	4	Both Directions	DELWP	400	3.352	Key trail in the network and Shady Gully/Dart Spur area, used by beginners accessing the trails from Shady Gully.	
Singletrack	17b	Labyrinth alternative	Blue	4	4	Downhill Primary	DELWP	38	-3.837		
Singletrack	33	Long Weekend at Bernies	Blue	4	4	Uphill Primary	DELWP	330	4.897		
Singletrack	15	Luke's Track	Blue	4	4	Both Directions	DELWP	416	1.298	High value as one of the original tracks	Section above the road - caution sign?
Singletrack	20	Mc's Track	Blue	5	4	Downhill Primary	DELWP	544	-8.896	Jumps track with B lines. To be renamed Mc'sTrack	Some work planned on the jumps
Singletrack	43	Nirvana	Green	4	4	Both Directions	DELWP	188	-6.235		
Singletrack	31	Ooh La La	Black Diamond	5	3	Downhill Only	DELWP	709	-9.001		Sections require some work to improve watershed and repair ruts
Singletrack	22	Power Up	Blue	5	4	Uphill Primary	DELWP	65	9.332	Recent realignment has resolved drainage and erosion issues on the track. Old section rehabilitating.	
Singletrack	10	Rachel's Way	Black Diamond	4	3	Downhill Primary	AGL and DELWP	1246	-7.061		
Singletrack	45	Rolling Stoned	Black Diamond	5	4	Downhill Only	AGL and DELWP	520	-15.15		
Singletrack	21	Secret Track	Blue	5	4	Both Directions	DELWP	808	-3.402	High value as one of the original tracks. A key trail in the Shady Gully/Dart Spur area, used by beginners accessing the trails from Shady Gully. An easy blue rated trail.	
Singletrack	18	Sesame Street	Green	5	5	Both Directions	DELWP	267	5.851	One of few green rated trails and a key trail in the Shady Gully/Dart Spur area, used by beginners accessing the trails from Shady Gully.	
Singletrack		Snake Gully Log Ride	Black Diamond	4	4	Downhill Primary	AGL	165	-7.287	Alternative finish	
Singletrack	25	The Claw	Blue	5	4	Downhill Primary	DELWP	1400	-4.121	Popular easy 'black' trail or hard 'blue'	

Trail type	Trail number	Track Name	Difficulty	Value to network	Sustainability	Direction	Land manager	Distance (metres)	Grade	Notes	Issues/suggested works
Singletrack	9	The Dippers	Black Diamond	5	3	Downhill Primary	AGL	505	-7.907	Crosses the gully twice with steep down and up	
Singletrack	14	The Kracken	Double Black Diamond	3	3	Downhill Primary	DELWP	293	-2.215		
Singletrack	29b	The Quarry	Blue	3	4	Both Directions	DELWP	149	1.228	Blue track alternative to Death Drop	
Singletrack	36	The SS	Blue	4	2	Downhill Only	DELWP	349	-3.87	When road is graded, drainage into the SSs can be a problem.	Needs ""Caution road crossing ahead" sign.
Singletrack	44	The Survey Track	Blue	5	4	Both Directions	DELWP, Parks Victoria and Alpine Shire	4186	3.92	The Survey Track is a two way shared walking and mountain bike track that commences opposite the Mount Beauty Golf Course, approximately 100m from the mountain bike park trailhead carpark, and currently follows below the BHP Road to Cranky Charlie. Historically the SEC survey track went to Bogong Village and the club would like to see this old route re-opened. The only mountain bike trail on the eastern side of the road. Popular with both walkers and cyclists.	
Singletrack	6	Traverse	Green	5	4	Both Directions	AGL	327	3.688	Key link from 5 ways. Width is narrower than a green track.	
Singletrack	53	Tupacs Back	Black Diamond	5	5	Downhill Primary	AGL and DELWP	270	-7.52	Jumps - no B lines	
Singletrack	1	Up Track	Blue	5	4	Uphill Primary	AGL	1756	6.521	Key trail as provides the main access up into the park and the start of the marked 'Blue Loop'. A and B lines are signed.	
Singletrack	1b	Up Track B line	Green	5	5	Uphill Primary	AGL	317	6.218	Machine built up track - B line to the Up Track	
Singletrack	28a	Vice Pres	Black Diamond	5	4	Downhill Only	AGL and DELWP	79	-21.4		
Singletrack	32	Weekend at Bernie's	Blue	5	4	Downhill Primary	AGL and DELWP	730	-0.945	High value as one of original tracks	
Singletrack	27	Where am I?	Blue	3	4	Both Directions	DELWP	978	-8.766		Needs new trail head signs at the bottom (Bushing Tree) and at Pole Track crossing