

# Parks Victoria wary of unauthorised bike trails

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*Park Victoria are worried about illegal mountain bike trails. Picture: SUPPLIED.*

By Parker McKenzie

An increase in illegal mountain bike trails in the Dandenong Ranges National Park has left authorities wary of potential damage to the area.

Parks Victoria is worried recent unauthorised construction and use of mountain bike trails could damage natural habitats and culturally important Indigenous sites throughout the national park.

Area Chief Ranger for the Dandenong Ranges National Park Matt Hoogland said while the park is a great place for mountain biking, the increasing number of unauthorised trails is worrying.

“Plants and animals in the national park are under pressure and we need to protect and value their habitat,” he said.

“Parks Victoria is working with the local community, mountain biking groups and Victoria Police to tackle the issue.”

Parks Victoria recently fined a man \$1817 for constructing and using a bike trail near Ferntree Gully. During the construction he destroyed protected vegetation, as well as signage and barriers installed by Parks Victoria.

Park rangers also recently discovered an illegal trail being constructed close to a registered Indigenous cultural site in Olinda.



Mr Hoogland said there is more than 14 kilometres of legal mountain biking trails in the National Park and more than 100km of vehicle tracks which can also be used for biking.

“We’re continuing to explore opportunities to expand the formal network, alongside the Yarra Ranges Mountain Biking Group,” he said.

“We recommend getting in touch with them if you are keen to explore the trails of the National Park.”

Parks Victoria said there is over 30km of illegally constructed trail throughout the Dandenong Ranges National Park, with every 1km of trail built destroying a quarter of an acre of habitat.

The June storms left several designated mountain bike tracks closed due to damage from fallen trees. The status of these trails can be monitored at [www.parks.vic.gov.au/places-to-see/parks/dandenong-ranges-national-park](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au/places-to-see/parks/dandenong-ranges-national-park).

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