

MTB3113 Warrandyte trail explorer

WARRANDYTE MOUNTAIN Bike Club (MTB3113) members JOZICA KUTIN, NATALIE PAPEZ and KARINA VITIRITTI have collected feedback from the Warrandyte MTB3113 community and have compiled a series of trail rides in and around the Warrandyte area. This is the fifth ride in the series.

These trails, printed in the *Warrandyte Diary*, will eventually be turned into a book of local mountain biking trails.

Sugarloaf Reservoir — Pink Route 33.4km

Total distance: 33.4km
Elevation gain: 791m
Maximum elevation: 225m
Surfaces: Single tracks, sealed paths, sealed roads, unsealed roads.
Rating: Hard: This route has a bit of road riding and some hills.
Facilities: At the trailhead you'll find cafes, restaurants, pub, bakeries, toilets, BBQs and playgrounds.
 Enroute you'll find toilets, picnic facilities, BBQs, and the café at Watsons Creek.

This ride takes you through North Warrandyte (yes, we're crossing the bridge), the Maroondah Aqueduct Trail in Kangaroo Ground, and the Sugarloaf Reservoir in Christmas Hills, then back home via Watsons Creek.
 The start of the ride is at the Whipstick Gully Gospel Chapel car park (the MTB3113 Trailhead).

10km: Map Point 1
 Whipstick Gully Gospel Chapel

Carpark — MTB3113 Trailhead

Set off northeast through the carpark down the concrete path that runs behind the Gospel Chapel building to the riverside path.
 Watch out for children, dogs, runners, tourists and every person you know in Warrandyte.
 Our mapping ride just happened to be on the weekend the river flooded — so it was busy — people, water and mud everywhere.
 At about 600m you'll pass under the Warrandyte Bridge.

600m: Map Point 2 Warrandyte Bridge — North Warrandyte

Ride up the driveway to the main road but stick to the footpath and cross the bridge at the zebra crossing.
 Ride along the very wide footpath on the downstream side of the bridge to the traffic lights.

Cross at the lights, pass under Deborah Halpern's mosaic sculpture *Queen of the Shire* and ride the footpath up Kangaroo Ground-Warrandyte Road until the service lane (you'll see a sign for house numbers 17-27).

At about 1.2km take this service road and at the fork veer right (no# 31).
 Now follow the postie track or take the sealed footpath to Aton Street.

1.9km: Map Point 3 Aton Street

Cross the busy Kangaroo Ground-Warrandyte Road to Osborne Road.
 Don't get too excited zooming down Osborne Road as you have to turn at the first left down Hamilton Road.

Follow the sealed Hamilton Road down and around, and a sharp hairpin right onto Koornong Crescent, entering the Warrandyte State Park.

2.7km: Map Point 4 Koornong Crescent — Warrandyte State Park

At the fork veer right (dirt road) and

head through the park access gate — which, when we went through, was actually open!

If you miss this turnout, you'll end up riding uphill the rest of Koornong Crescent.

This dirt road leads to a carpark, ride across the carpark to another gate at about 2.8km.

After a short downhill at 3.6km, you'll see a single track going down into the bushes to your right.

At this point, if you look across the river, that's Blue Tongue Bend on the opposite side (see the Purple — Winter Solstice Route).

This is the Pigeon Bank Track — but there's no sign at the other end.

3.9km: Map Point 5 Pigeon Bank — Menzies Road

I hope you're ready for it — time for climbing Menzies Road — there's single track to be found on some sections of Menzies Road or you can ride the bitumen.

At the top of one of those hills (at about 5.1km) outside house 230, look east and you'll see the galvanised iron shed at Stane Brae (again see the Winter Solstice Ride).

Passing the infamous Bouchiers Road, you'll eventually get to the end of Menzies Road — you've reached its highest point and you'll be at Henley Road.

7.6km: Map Point 6 Henley Road — Maroondah Aqueduct Road

Turn left onto Henley Road but keep an eye out for the horse crossing sign, then at 7.9km, on your right you'll see a gate and the entrance to the Aqueduct Trail.

The aqueduct was built in the late 1800s and opened in 1891.

Squiggle your way down and follow the trail — there's an actual aqueduct on your right, cross the carpark at Nicholas Lane — you'll see the red-

brick bridge on your right.
 Continue along, noting the *Pinus radiata* and the *Lactarius deliciosus* growing underneath — if the weather and season is right.

Continue to the end of the trail where you'll find a gate.

Head around the gate and left onto Calwell Road.

10.9km: Map Point 7 Calwell Road

Follow the gravel Calwell Road veering right (don't be tempted to go left at Westering Road) because you are going up that hill.

Yeah, straight up.
 Keep an eye out on your right for a gate (Melbourne Water).

11.9km: Map Point 8 Melbourne Water Restricted Area

At the top of that climb, you'll be glad to see the gate on your right (as there's another hill ahead).

Take the single track to the left of the gate through a pine forest which opens up to a fire trail.

Again, if you have your mushrooming knife handy, you might be in luck.

12.9km: Map Point 9 Kinglake Conservation Nature Reserve

You'll come to another Melbourne Water gate so take the single track to the left of this gate passing the sign (KCNR).

Wiggle your way through the gate and follow some single track, then a nice flat open area, then, more climbing reaching the peak at about 14.1km.

There one more steep climb and as you ride down, you'll see a gate ahead, go right to the single track which takes you to the entrance of the treatment plant.

14.8km: Map Point 10 Winneke Water Treatment Plant

Follow the bitumen road along to the dam wall cross the road (Simpson Road) and ride the footpath along the dam wall.

Great time to take a photo — just like we did.

Sugarloaf Reservoir was completed in 1981 and can hold 96 gegalitres. The water must be sweet.

You can take all manner of routes around the reservoir but we're keeping it simple.

Continue along the dam wall, drop onto the road then past a carpark (Sugarloaf Western Lookout and Carpark) with an information board.

Ride along Simpson Road to the next picnic ground — turn off is on your right.

17.3km: Map Point 11 Ridge Picnic Area Road

Here you'll find toilets, BBQs, covered picnic tables and parking.

The road loops around back onto Simpson Road.

Turn right and ride through the reservoir entrance gates.

On your left is Ridge Road (18km, unsealed) and you'll see a single track to the right at the start of the road and a concrete power pole.

At about 18.6km you've hit the highest elevation of the ride: 225 metres.

Walk around the serious heavy steel gate, and ride around the second one — then you have some really nice single track ahead of you — the Famous segment — which follows Ridge Road.

Even after all the flooding rains, Famous is bathed in afternoon sun so its dry and flowy with some log drop offs thrown in.

A sweet little single track from Sugarloaf, one of the highlights of this route.

21.6km: Map Point 12 Eltham-Yarra Glen Road

Two guesses where this road goes but the single track throws you out here and 200m left is the Watsons Creek Antiques and Café.

Ride along the shoulder and cross to the café — a bit of a dangerous crossing here.

The café is now The Dark Horse Café Wine and Produce — but that's us, your MTB dark horses.

No antiques anywhere... but some



lovely artwork to be found at Gallery Six7Five.

Usual fare and facilities at the café, coffee almost compulsory at this stage.

After coffee, cross back over Eltham-Yarra Glen Road, and head west briefly.

At Bills Track head up the gravel path that runs parallel to Eltham-Yarra Glen Road — keeping you safe from the speeding traffic.

The single track takes you to Nicholas Lane.

22.9km: Map Point 13 Nicholas Lane

Turn left up Nicholas Lane — its bitumen, lock out your suspension for a steady 1km of climbing.

24.9km: Map Point 14 Nicholas Lane Bridge

Remember the red-brick bridge? Well you're back here at the intersection with the Aqueduct Trail.

But this time we're crossing the bridge — through the gates on either side — and then climb all the way up to Henley Road.

25.4km: Map Point 15 Henley Road

Turn right onto Henley Road and continue along to the top of Menzies Road at 25.9km.

Turn left onto Menzies Road and now you are retracing your tracks back to Warrandyte.

25.9km: Map Point 6 (return) Menzies Road

There's single track along sections of Menzies Road but nah, tuck in and zoom down, down, down, with a few little ups to Pigeon Bank single track. That went fast.

29.5km: Map Point 5 (return) Pigeon Bank

Single track from here to the fire road, continue left through the little carpark and out the park gate.

30.7km: Map Point 4 (return) Koornong Crescent Park Gate

Get ready to climb back up this road. Climb back up until you reach KG Road, and cross to the postie track, once again.

31.5km: Map Point 3 (return) Aton Street

After you cross KG Rd, take the single postie track (left) and sealed footpath and head all the way down to Warrandyte Bridge — shooting through the service lane on your way.

32.6km: Map Point 2 (return) Cross at the traffic lights and stop on the bridge for another photo opportunity.

Then, it's down into the carpark and along the river, past the historical society, and back to the trailhead.

33.4km: Map Point 1 (return) Whipstick Gully Gospel Chapel Carpark — MTB3113 Trailhead

Time for something sweet, or something savoury — but something nonetheless to fill your reservoirs.

Next month: Gravel Grinding North Warrandyte and Eltham.

