

BUSHWALKS AT YOUR DOOR

A SELECTION OF WALKS ON THE CLIFFS AND IN THE VALLEYS AT WENTWORTH FALLS AND THE VALLEY OF THE WATERS

SHORT CUT TRACK.

Time: 20 minutes – one way.
Grade: Easy.
Features: Hanging Swamp.

Directions: Begin at the Conservation Hut. Go down 20-30 steps and turn left.

This track is a pleasant walk that connects the Valley of the Waters area with Wentworth Falls picnic area. A short detour to the right in the middle of the walk can take walkers to the spectacular Breakfast Point Lookout.

OVERCLIFF-UNDERCLIFF TRACK.

Time: 2 hours – circuit.
Grade: Easy.
Features: Hanging swamp.
Spectacular views.

Directions: Begin at the Valley of the Waters.

From the Conservation Hut, take the main track down to the second intersection and turn left. The track winds down through heath and shrublands, past a near vertical hanging swamp. Swamps such as these are important for local plant and animal communities, as they are like sponges, slowly releasing moisture, even over prolonged dry periods. Breakfast Point Lookout is about half way along this track, with views across Kings Tableland to the east (left) and Inspiration Point and Sublime Point to the west (right). The broken plateau in the distance to the south are the Blue Breaks, a magnificent wilderness area of the Blue Mountains National Park.

Further down the track, a short diversion, (about 20 minutes return), takes the walker to Den Fenella, an enchanting rainforest glen. Back on the main track, cross the creek, turn right and continue to the Undercliff Track. Points of interest are the over-hanging cliffs and the ever-changing vegetation. In areas that are moist from swamps, you will see coral fern, mosses, trailing dragonstail and numerous delicate flowering heathes. Where the cliff edge is exposed, low-growing eucalypts called mallee cling to the rocks. To the left is a short detour to Princes Rock Lookout; and just beyond this is a spot where the whole of Wentworth Falls can be seen. Return to the track and proceed to Fletcher's Lookout, with another view of the Falls. From this point, follow the track to the Wentworth Falls picnic area and return to the Conservation Hut via the Shortcut Track.

WEEPING ROCK.

Time: 1 hour return.
Grade: Easy.
Features: Waterfall.

Directions: Begin at the picnic area or the Lookout at the end of Sir Henry Burrell Drive.

This is a popular spot with photographers. In the past a small weir, the remains of which can still be seen, controlled the flow of water over this waterfall. Follow the track to the intersection above Wentworth Falls, turn left and follow the creek upstream. A plaque dedicated to Charles Darwin, who visited the area in 1836, can be seen on a rock above the track.

DEN FENELLA TRACK.

Time: One and a half-hours return.
Grade: Medium.
Features: Rainforest.

Directions: Begin at Wentworth Fall picnic area.

Start at the Western end of the car park and walk past a climbing frame and an old picnic shelter on the edge of the bush. Follow the track from the cliff top, down to the creek and turn left after the small footbridge. Notice the change in vegetation from low heath to shrubland and swamp. Cross the second bridge and you will see a waterfall cascading down into the Jamison Valley. The track ends at a small lookout perched on the very edge of the cliff face. Return by the same route.

PRINCES ROCK.

Time: 30 minutes return.
Grade: Easy but there are some steps in this walk.
Features: Excellent views, historic stonework.

Directions: Begin at Wentworth Falls picnic area.

Peter Mulheran built this lookout, with its distinctive parapet style stonework, in the 1890's. Points of interest along the way are the old drinking fountains, which were a feature of many of the early walking tracks in the area. The water is no longer safe to drink.

This lookout is perched 350 metres above the valley floor. From here you can see Kings Tableland to the left and Mount Solitary to the right.

ROCKET POINT LOOKOUT.

Time: One hour return.
Grade: Medium.
Features: Heathland.
Wind eroded rocks.
A spectacular lookout with a view of the Falls from above.

Directions: Take the main track from the northern end of the picnic area or the lookout at the end of Sir Henry Burrell Drive to the Falls and use the stepping stones to cross the stream on top of the Falls at Queen's Cascade.

Take particular care when crossing the Falls and if the water is above the stepping stones, do not cross. Do not climb over the safety cable as fatal accidents have occurred here. Rocket Point Lookout is believed to have been named after a practice used an early trustee member, George Murray, to give other walkers in the area bearings to follow the following day. It is believed that he regularly signalled family members on Mount Solitary and in the Jamison Valley, by sending up flares from this point.

There is a short loop from the lookout that will enable you to explore heathland. Return by the same route.

THE NATURE TRACK.

Time: Two hours return.
Grade: Easy.
Features: Variety of vegetation.
Hanging swamp.
Birdlife.
Rock platform lookout.

Directions: Begin at the Conservation Hut.

Take the main track into the Valley of the Waters to Queen Victoria and Empress Lookouts. Proceed down the metal steps and continue to the next intersection in the track, turn right and follow the track across the bridge in the rainforest glen. After Edinburgh Castle Rock, the track exits onto West Street or you can turn right at this point and return to the Conservation Hut along the Pipeline Track. This is a convenient route, but is perhaps the least exciting section of track in the area as it follows the route that construction teams used to install the sewer pipelines to the area. The track environs are degraded but are being re-generated. A separate leaflet for this walk is available for sale at the Conservation Hut. This leaflet will guide you along the numbered signposts on the walk and highlight the points of interest as you progress along the track.

DARWINS WALK.

Time: 2 hours return.
Grade: Easy.
Features: Hanging swamp.
Birdlife.

Directions: Begin from Wilson Park, Falls Road, (in the village).

This walk is actually outside the boundaries of the Blue Mountains National Park but has some interesting features and has easy access. This track follows the route taken by early tourists to the area, including Charles Darwin, who visited Wentworth Falls in 1836.

Sadly, the creek is heavily silted up and the water is polluted. Weeds are a problem in the upper reaches of the creek. Nevertheless, it is still possible to enjoy the cool running waters, the hanging swamps on the hillsides and the variety of birdlife inhabiting the banksias and other flowering plants. Darwin's Walk meets up with the Weeping Rock Track. At this intersection, turn right and it is a short walk back to Wentworth Falls picnic area. Return to Wilson's Park along Falls Road.

NATIONAL PASS.

Time: Three hour circuit.
Grade: Hard.
Features: Spectacular scenery.

Directions: Begin at the Conservation Hut and follow the main track down into the Valley of the Waters to Empress Lookout.

Continue down the metal stairs and turn left at the intersection with the Nature Track. This walk takes advantage of the layer of red claystones that is a feature of the high cliffs in the Blue Mountains. You will see a great variety of vegetation, from dry scrubby-looking mallee to dense ferns of the rainforest areas. Listen for the distinctive sounds of the whipbird and the lyrebird and watch for rock warblers, honeyeaters and scrubwrens.

After passing the intersection with the Nature Track, cross the creek below Empress Falls and re-cross the creek again above Lodore Falls. At the intersection with Wentworth Pass, continue straight ahead, with the cliffs on your left. A ledge takes you under the spray of Den Fenella waterfall.

At Slack's Stairs, do not go down but continue on to Wentworth Falls. As you climb the stairs carved into the cliff face, you will have an excellent view of the National Pass Track winding back along the cliff face. Notice the mass of fine spray, which covers the cliffs. This mist provides the moist environment needed by a rare dwarf conifer, *Microstrobos fitzgeraldii*. There are very specimens of this plant remaining. Continue up the carved stairs and cross the top of the Falls, carefully, on the stepping stones at Queen's Cascades. Walk up to the car park in Wentworth Falls picnic area and return to the Conservation Hut via the Shortcut Track.

WENTWORTH PASS.

Time: 4 ½ to 5 hour circuit
Grade: Hard.
Features: Spectacular scenery.
Slack's stairs.

Directions: Begin at the Conservation Hut and follow the main track down into the Valley of the Waters to Empress Lookout.

At the intersection of the National Pass and Wentworth Pass, turn right and cross the creek above Flat Rock Falls. With the creek on your left, follow the track into the valley and cross the creek again below Red Rock Falls. After the Vera Falls turn-off, the track follows the cliff line to Jamison Creek. It then doubles back to the bottom of Slack's Stairs. (Isaac Slack was an early Park Trustee). Climb the stairs and join the National Pass to return to the Wentworth Falls Picnic Area.

VERA FALLS.

For experienced walkers only.

Time: Four to five hours return.
Grade: Hard. Requires map reading skills.
Features: Superb rainforest.
Waterfalls.

Directions: Follow the Wentworth Pass track just past the creek crossing below Red Rock Falls.

Fallen trees and vines may obstruct this track. The track to the top of Vera Falls is steep and slippery. Extreme care should be taken when negotiating this part of the track. There are several routes to the bottom of the Falls but all are steep and slippery. On the return journey, take care to avoid the Roberts Pass turn-off, which turns off to the left about half way back to the Red Rock Falls.

ENJOY YOUR WALK!