



*"Think globally act locally" - M McLuhan.*

# **FoCC submission on the development of a Woowookarung Regional Park Master Plan**

**Prepared by the  
Friends of the Canadian Corridor Incorporated.**

**August 2017**

## **Discussion Paper on the development of a Woowookarung Regional Park Master Plan**

The establishment of Woowookarung Regional Park within the City of Ballarat offers the community the unique opportunity to have input into the development of a Master Plan for this new park. The park offers community users a range of potential activities from passive recreation to educational opportunities to interactions with flora and fauna to more physical pursuits such as orienteering and mountain biking. The Park also offers the community a place for interaction with the natural environment, with research indicating that this can be an important factor in a communities mental health well being, the Woowookarung Regional Park presents a range of possibilities

### **Key areas to be considered in the development of a Master Plan for Woowookarung are summarised as follows:-**

#### **Identification and management of conservation and activity areas**

High priority should be given to the identification of areas that should be reserved for preservation of species and passive recreation. See map 14

The former plantation areas need to be actively managed to ensure appropriate revegetation, control of invasive species and to shape park experiences. The replanting/revegetation of ex plantation land, with emphasis on the connection of remnant forest should be seen as a further priority. The management of regrowth areas should include management of vegetation to maintain sight lines and views.

Areas for rehabilitation should also be identified, rehabilitated over time and protected.

High level management techniques such as mosaic burning and silviculture should be investigated to assist in the rehabilitation of former plantations.

Areas in which Cinnamon Fungus has been identified should be quarantined and designated as “no go” regions. Strategies for the containment of Cinnamon Fungus need to be developed and implemented. An education process, for all park users, regarding this threat needs to be considered.

Areas of active recreation such as competitive mountain biking and orienteering should be limited to specific areas within the park. Non-competitive cycling should be limited to specified trails.

Parks Victoria and DWELP fire managers, have identified the top or northern section of the forest as a high-risk fire zone and as such requires careful management, with regular fuel reduction burning. The south-western flank of the park around Recreation Rd and Olympic Ave needs to have regular fuel reduction burning for asset protection. Other areas will require fuel load reduction burning at regular intervals, although not to the same extent as the two previously discussed zones.

The FoCC would encourage the managers responsible for fuel reduction to fully consider the usage of traditional indigenous burning strategies, as proposed by the Wadawurrung.

The use of contractors to remove dumped rubbish should also continue. Strategies to deter rubbish dumping should also be considered.

#### **Naming of features**

Due consideration needs to be given to the identification, documentation and naming of features within the park. These should include significant waterways, hills, historical areas and associated features.

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It is recommended that the Master Plan investigate the use of Wadawurrung names for some features within the park.

### Historical Features

The park contains a range of historically interesting features. The Master Plan should document and prepare a conservation strategy for each site.

This should include

- Mine sites ( both capped and uncapped)
- Cremorne rifle range
- Gorge sluicing works and dams
- Sawpit Gully sluicing works and associated features
- Water races
- The relationship of the park to adjacent properties such as Pax Hill camp and Ryans Wood yard

### Visitor Access

Identification of entry points to the park along with associated access to features within the park should be specified. This should include both vehicular and pedestrian access.

Appropriate parking locations should be identified and managed.

Feature trails should be documented, appropriately constructed, clearly sign posted and publicized.

Documentation of trails and walks needs careful planning. For proposed tracks and trails see map 12

### Road and tracks.

Major road developments should be included in the plan. As a priority, the future development of Recreation Road must be included in the Master Plan.

The potential closure or upgrading of gazetted roads including Clayton St, Olympic Ave, Bailey Road and others should be considered. Closure of tracks within the park to protect areas from vehicular incursions should occur over time. See Map 15

A scheduled maintenance plan needs to be developed in partnership with Vic Roads and the City of Ballarat. The responsibility for the road system bordering and within the Park needs to be clearly identified

### Creeks and Waterways

As a feature of the park the various creeks and waterways should be identified and named.

A detailed plan for the restoration of these watercourses should be documented, funded and implemented as a priority within the plan.

Where identified as appropriate the construction of wetland areas should be also prioritised.

A formalised water monitoring program should be considered. The implementation of programs such as Waterwatch could provide valuable long-term data for managers into the future. Water monitoring could be conducted on a regular basis by appropriately resourced community groups, schools or University groups. As the Park is at the headwaters of the Leigh Barwon system the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority should be encouraged to support this work

## **Easements**

Relevant authorities with easements through the park will be responsible for their maintenance and protection. This could include track closures, reparation and rehabilitation of degraded areas.

Major areas of focus will include Central Highlands Water easements approximate to Wilson St, Recreation Rd and Olympic Ave.

SP AusNet easements throughout the park should be closed to general vehicular traffic allowing only for maintenance access.

## **Weeds and Pests**

A comprehensive strategy for the management of invasive species, both flora and fauna should be included in the Master Plan. This should include:-

- Weed control plan
- Feral animal control
- and the management of domestic animals

## **Tourism and Economic opportunities**

The Master Plan should consider the development of a publicity and tourism plan that highlights park features and visitor opportunities.

These opportunities include

- Walking, Jogging, Orienteering, Geocaching
- MTB / cycle riding
- Native fauna and flora observation
- Night Sky observation
- Picnicking
- Exercise circuits including well-being trails and sites

## **Key infrastructure features of the park**

A number of feature areas will be developed to highlight and enhance the visitor experience within the park. Key locations such as the Lookout, the Amphitheatre, the Gorge, the Picnic area and the Wetland lend themselves to development of infrastructure that supports the visitor experience.

Key areas to consider,

- Lookout
- Picnic Ground
- Amphitheatre
- Gorge
- Passive Contemplation area (Open air space)

These features should be linked by or to a main trail that could be identified as a feature in itself, of the park experience. See map 10 and 12

Facilities located at these features could include suitable parking, toilets, BBQs, information boards and other relevant items. The design of these areas would be made in consultation with Parks Victoria the FoCC, user groups and Site Office landscape architects.

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Other features could be constructed within the park including bridges or crossings to both protect the environment e.g. trails across creek lines or to enhance the visitor experience e.g. bridge across the Gorge as part of the Great Dividing Trail. See map 12

Appropriately sited and constructed MTB trails should also be a component of the Master Plan.

The Master Plan will provide the underpinnings for the creation and ongoing development of Woowookarung Regional Park. In developing the plan, we would strongly recommend that due consideration be made to existing planning documents from other stakeholder organisations.

The Master Plan should align with the following stakeholder plans

**City of Ballarat**

- Today Tomorrow Together: The Ballarat Strategy
- Canadian Valley Outline Development Plan - C95
- City of Ballarat Bicycle plan
- Ballarat Planning scheme – Koala Plan – C137
- Ballarat East Planning Strategy (draft)

**Corangamite Catchment Management Authority**

- Canadian Creek Tributaries flood study

**Central Highlands Water**

**VicRoads**

## FoCC visitor hubs, trail facilities, vegetation and open space details

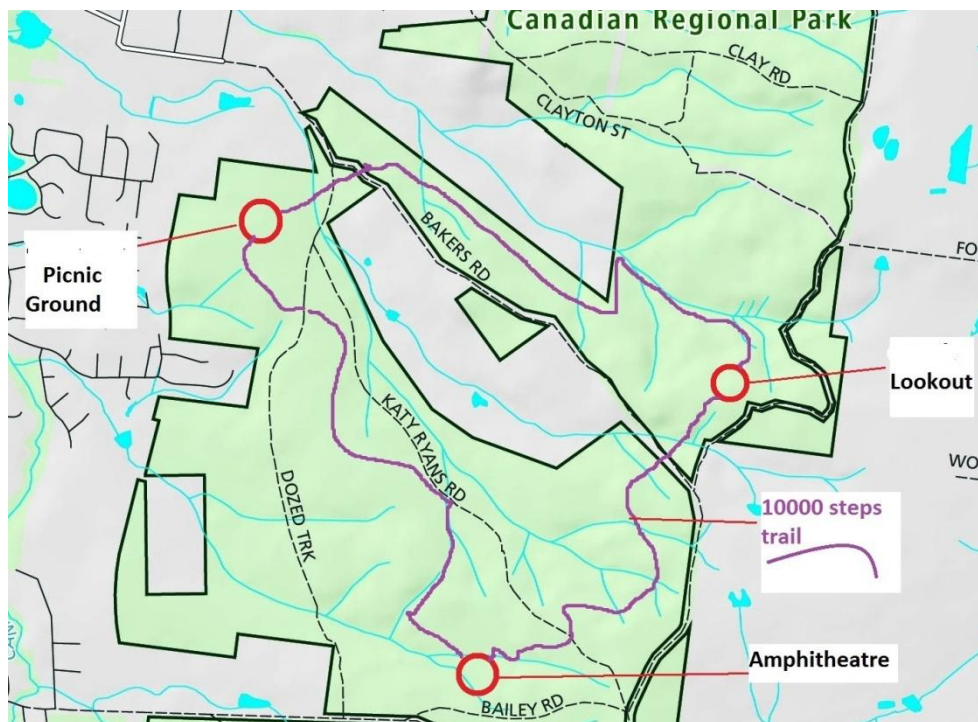
People have enjoyed the ambience of the Canadian Forest for many years. The forest and park contains many visited trails and features, some are in a raw or wild condition whilst others are in a more developed state. With the declaration of the Woowookarung Regional Park the opportunity exists to create a number of visitor hubs, dedicated exercise, walking and or cycle trails, indigenous nature and all abilities trails, historical trails, sites for events and general recreation facilities.

### Visitor hubs

Three visitor hubs as shown on the map below could create the entry points for visitors to the park. Each hub has a different focus within the park. A first class 10000 steps exercise, walking and nature viewing circuit could connect the three hubs.

1. Picnic ground hub
2. Amphitheatre hub
3. Lookout hub

### Location map



Map 1

### The Picnic Ground

The Picnic Ground may be located between the Greenhaven Court subdivision and the intersection of Katy Ryans Rd and Dozed Track. Car access to the Picnic Ground is possible off the intersection of Katy Ryans Rd and Dozed Track. A central vehicle and bus accessible loop would provide turnaround and parking. This picnic ground should have a Wadawurrung name.

The picnic area could be laid out to provide a number of picnic areas with a bush focus as per the drawing below. Facilities could include tables, BBQ's and toilets.

The Picnic Ground may be the formal entrance point to the Woowookarung Regional Park. The design of the Picnic Ground provides sufficient sites to allow multiple visitors to enjoy the ambience of the flatland bush area, adjacent remnant forest and seasonable wildflowers.

- A Wadawurrung interpretative trail including native plants and uses, as well as a symbolic distance based time line beginning at present, recent events in the parks locality, early european settlement, geological including volcanic history and indigenous settlement.
- An easy access or wheelchair accessible trail is also a possibility (disability).

#### Connections

- By vehicle via a formed track to the intersection Katy Ryans and Dozed Track
- By walking/cycle track access from Greenhaven Court and the walking /exercise circuit via the lookout and Amphitheatre.



Map 2



Map 3



## The Amphitheatre

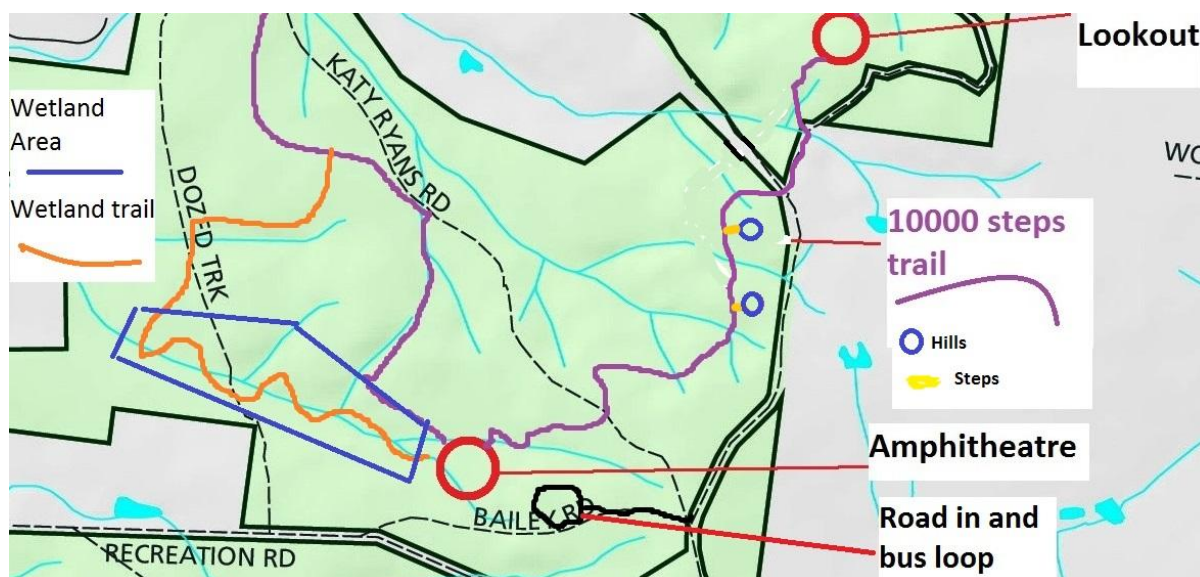
The Amphitheatre is situated north of Baileys Rd and forms a natural amphitheatre. Vehicle access to the Amphitheatre could be via the eastern end of Baileys Rd off Boundary Rd, Yankee Flat. Vehicle and bus accessible parking area could be provided on the east side of the amphitheatre.

The Amphitheatre area could be laid out to provide some bush picnic tables and areas as per the map 4 below. The Amphitheatre provides outward views to the Mt Clear and South Ballarat landscape as well as a good sense of the extent of the Woowookarung Regional Park. The Amphitheatre is also a possible site for hosting arts and cultural events.

On the 10000 steps trail to the Lookout, just north of the Amphitheatre, adjacent to the trail are two hills as shown in Map 4. The southern hill has an ironstone and conglomerate outcrop on top and the northern hill has a grated mineshaft on top. Short mine adits are located on the southern flank of each hill. The trail runs on the western side of the hills and access to each hill could be by way of a set of steps running from the trail to the summit. The steps may form part of the exercise trail.

### Connections

- By vehicle via Baileys Rd from Boundary Rd.
- By walking/cycle track access from the Lookout and the walking circuit to the Picnic Ground.
- Steps from the trail to each of the two hills.
- By formed cycle tracks linking north to south and to Mt Clear.
- By the Great Dividing Trail (Goldfields Track)
- By connection to the wetland trail



Map 4

## Lookout

The Lookout is on Bakers Rd near the intersection of Boundary Rd. Bakers Rd west of the lookout would be closed and parking could be accessed by the remaining stub of Bakers Rd from Boundary Rd. The Lookout could have a Wadawurrung name.



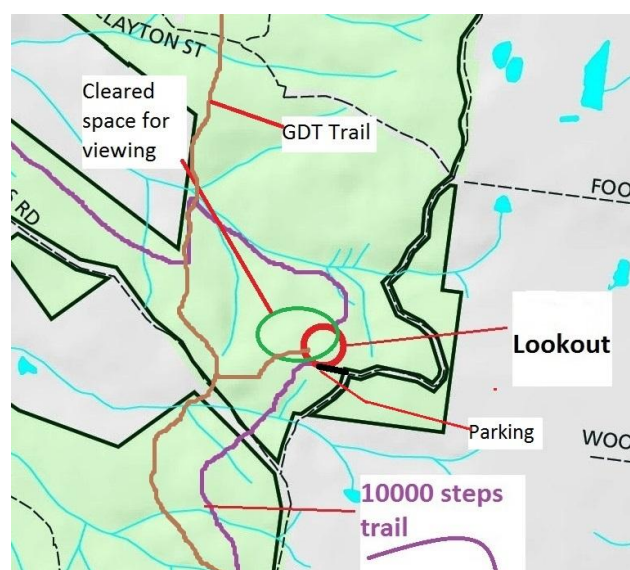
The Lookout could be landscaped with a small Mullock mound in order to enhance the viewing opportunity. Facilities could include seats and a picnic table. The Lookout provides a place where visitors are able to get a sense of the location of the park, in relation to the City of Ballarat, the north to south Corridor and the rolling hilly nature of the land. The Lookout provides the best night view of Ballarat in the district.



The provision of cleared open space area around the north face of the lookout would enhance the viewing as well as providing grazing space for fauna.

#### Connections

- By vehicle via a formed track to the intersection of Bakers Rd and Boundary Rd
- By walking/cycle track access from the Amphitheatre and Picnic Ground.
- By formed cycle track linking north to south
- By the Great Dividing Trail (Goldfields Track)



Map 5

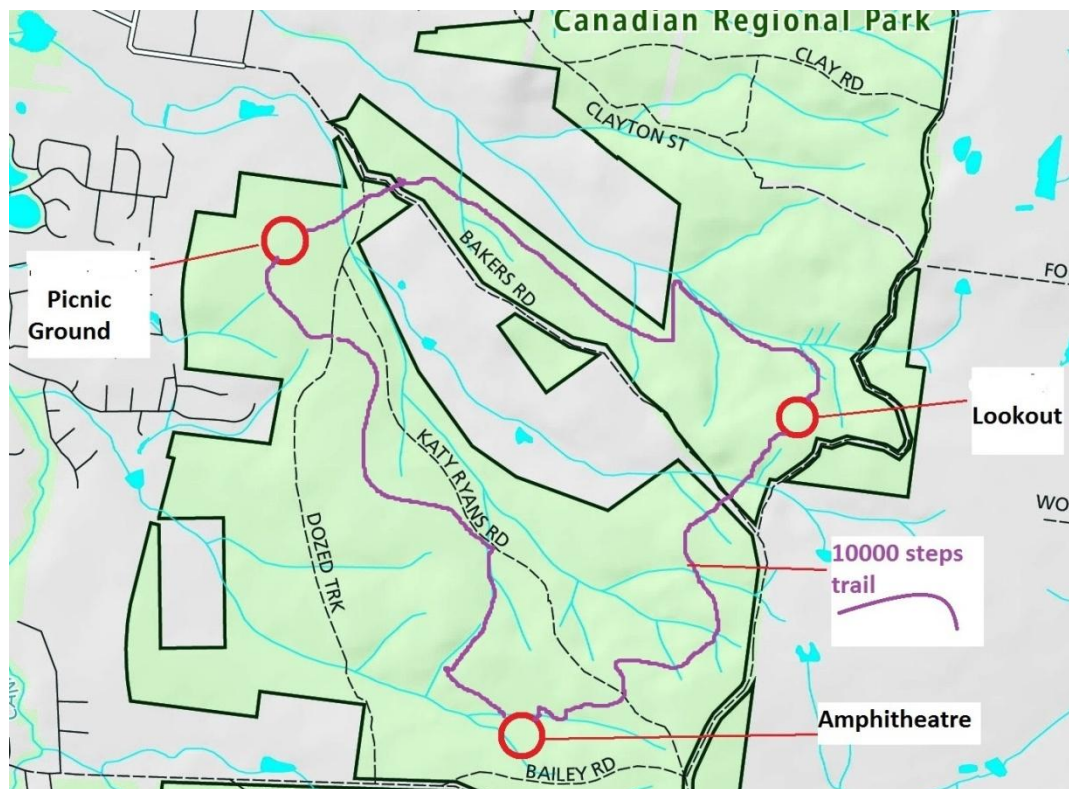
## The 10000 steps discovery trail



The purpose of the 10000 steps trail is provide a multiple use foot trail connecting the Picnic Ground, the Amphitheatre and the Lookout

The trail is designed to provide a range of terrain experiences. The terrain is undulating, providing uphill and downhill sections with some sections containing exercise steps. Future development may allow some exercise stations such as the hill steps to be placed in appropriate places. The trail is designed for quiet forest walking as well as joggers, runners and walkers to complete a measured circuit

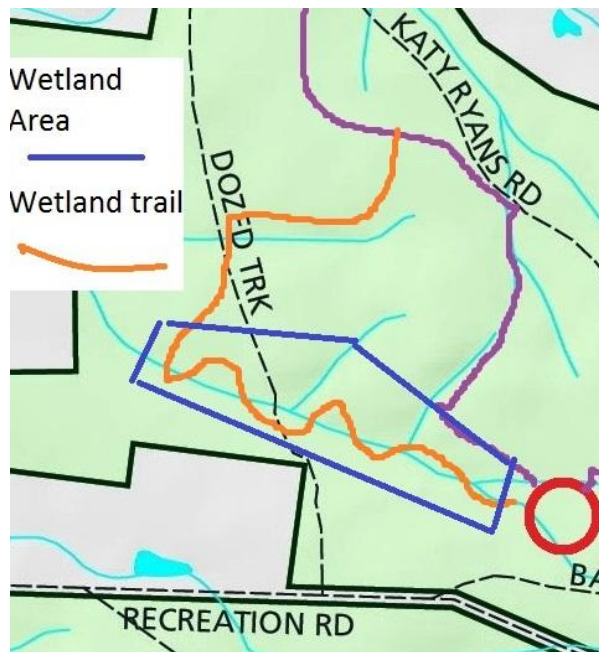
The trail location takes participants through a variety of different nature experiences ranging from wildflower areas, grassy valleys to hilly dry heathland and past mining relics.



Map 6

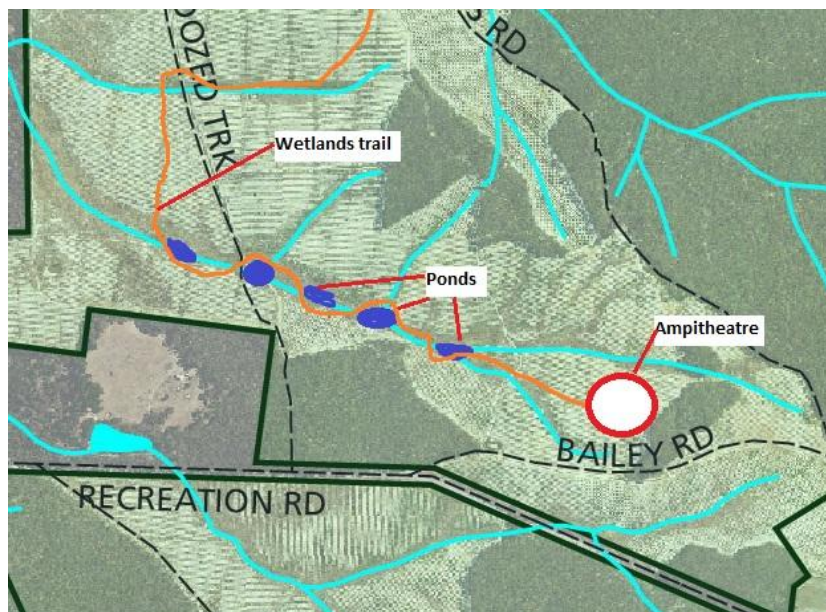
## Wetlands

The construction of wetlands on the creekline below the Amphitheatre could create more diverse flora and fauna area within the central area of the Park. The wetlands could incorporate part of the 10000 steps walking track by routing the trail through it or a separate trail interconnected to the 10000 steps trail could be created. See map 7.



Map 7

#### Ideas map for wetlands



Map 8

#### Park Access in Mt Clear

Most of the Park has access from the roads surrounding the Park. Residents of Haymes Rd precinct do not have an easy walkable access to the park even though some residences are as close as 100 metres from the Park. An intention to provide access to these residents should be placed in the Masterplan so that when a planning or development opportunity occurs, then an easement can be created and a walking/cycling access track provided. Early consultation with the two or three potential property owners may provide the opportunity earlier than expected.



Map 9 below shows the two current access points, one via Recreation Rd in the south and the other in the north via Lavery Av.

The Canadian Creek Cycle trail connects to the northern end of Haymes Rd and the proposed access track would enhance cycle access to the Park.



Map 9

## The Gorge

The Gorge is a special area in the Park. The vegetation is in very good condition. Currently the Central Highlands Water (CHW) water pipe easement across the gorge is an eyesore, but it has the potential to be rehabilitated. There is open vehicle access to the Park along Green Hill Rd and an access track along the north side of the Gorge plus some gorse and blackberry infestations. These vehicle access points should be closed.



*The Gorge looking downstream*

### **Crossing the Gorge**

Crossing the Gorge by a constructed bridge designed for cyclists and walkers would open up the area to appropriate visitation and recreational use.

A forty (40) meter bridge across the Gorge would allow the Great Dividing Trail (Goldfields Track) and other trails to cross the Gorge in a regulated and safe way. The bridge could be constructed using similar methods to the bridge at Hepburn Springs constructed in 2011 (shown below). Routing of cycle and walking trails into and out of the gorge would guide access. Fencing and the provision of controlled access points along Greenhill Rd would reduce and/or remove unauthorised motor vehicle and motor bike entrance. The rehabilitation of the CHW easement across the gorge should be part of the restoration of the Gorge's natural features.



Hepburn Bridge - design and image P Darveniza 2014



A side walking track to the Ballarat's closest waterfall, the "Cascades" would enhance the visitor experience.



*The Cascades looking down 2016*

### **Forest bathing and quiet exercise areas**

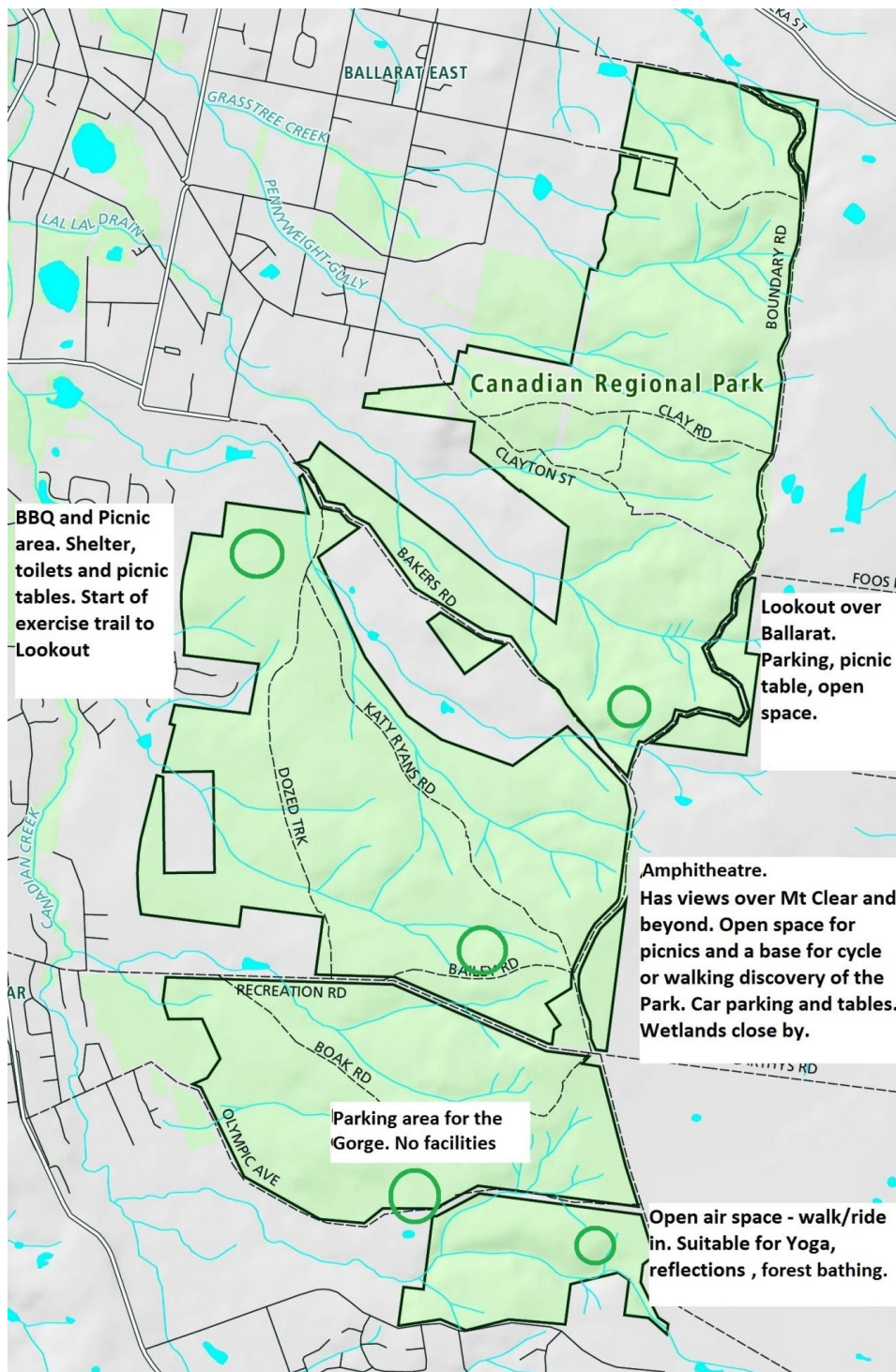
The notion of forest bathing is quite recent and is complementary to quiet exercise places .

There is an opening in the southern forested part of the Park which could host both notions. With appropriate track closures a designated quiet exercise area could be created. The site is shown on Map 10 below



## Woowookarung Regional Park Picnic and Parking areas.

Note BBQ and picnic and ampitheatre parking areas suitable for school size bus drop offs.

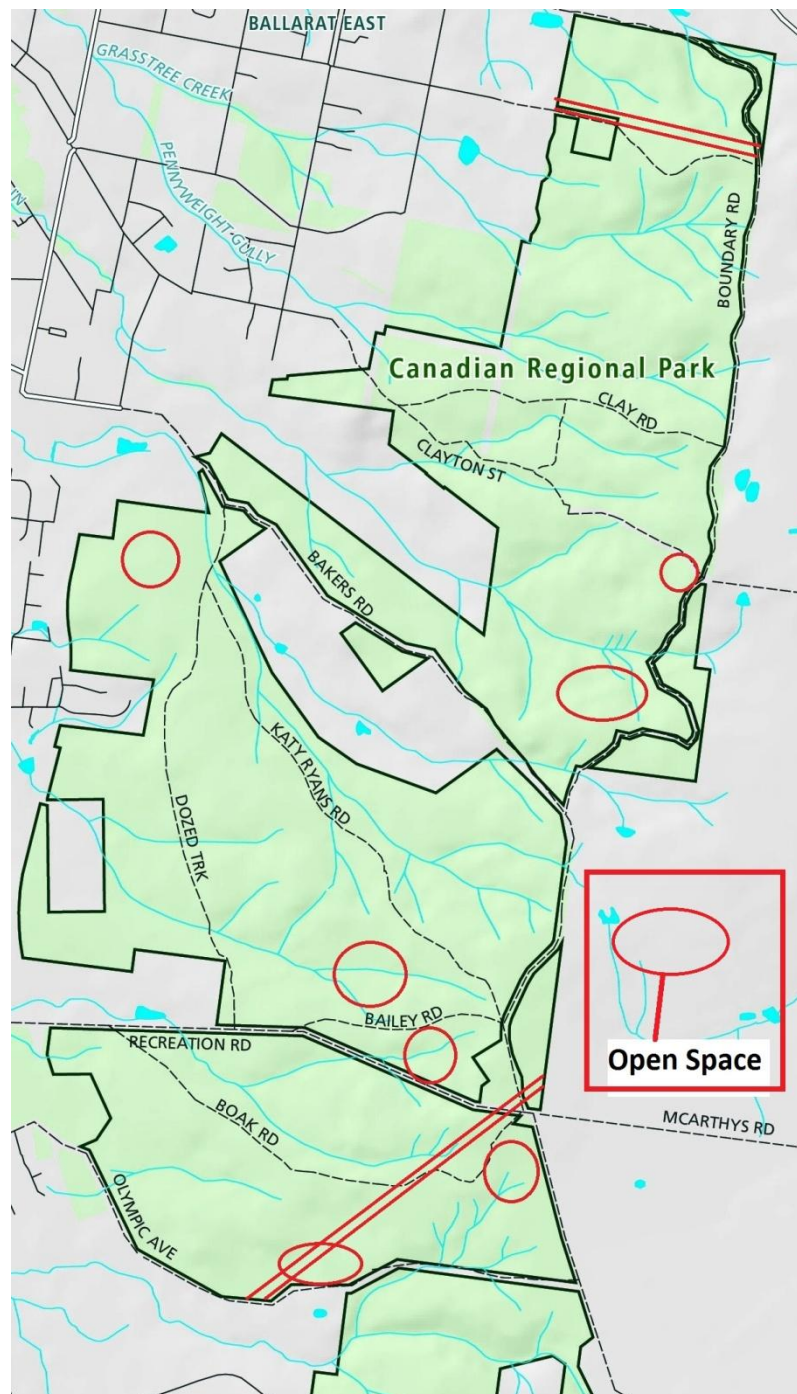


Map 10

## Open space

The provision of open space within the Park may be important for the provision of grazing areas for kangaroos and wallabies, for providing wildflower habitat and to allow Park visitors to see out from the Parks many vista points as well as to be able to see the rolling undulating nature of the Parks land. Open space may also provides fire management control lines.

There are power line easements and water pipe easements across the Park which provide linear open spaces. Roadside verges along Katy Ryans Rd and Dozed Track also provide linear open space. Open space would be beneficial around the visitor hubs to allow park like visitor space and access for vistas from the visitor hubs.




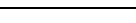
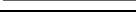




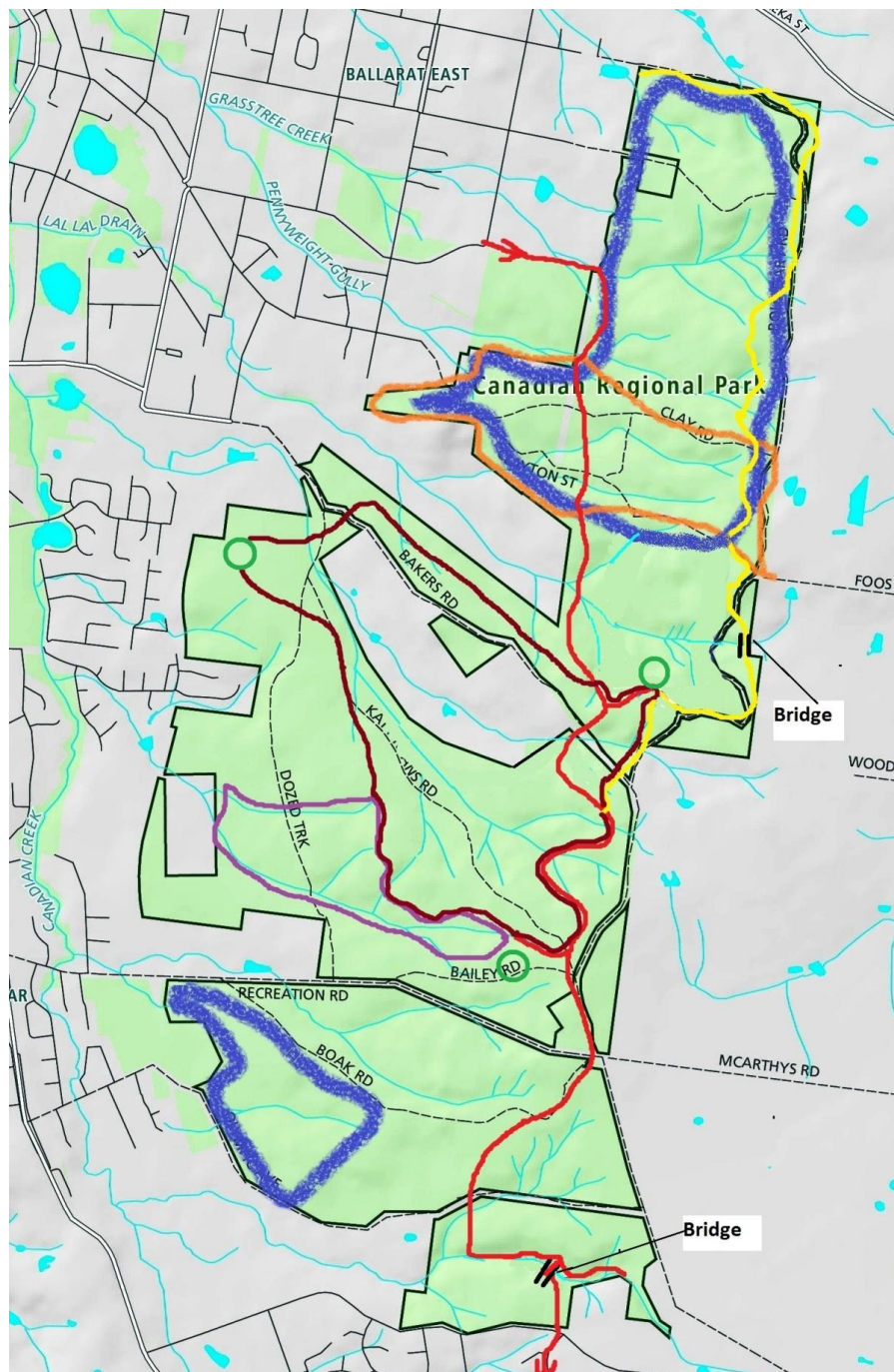
Map 11

The open space areas could be managed by a combination of slashing to create the grassland and traditional cool burning to create an indigenous grassland.



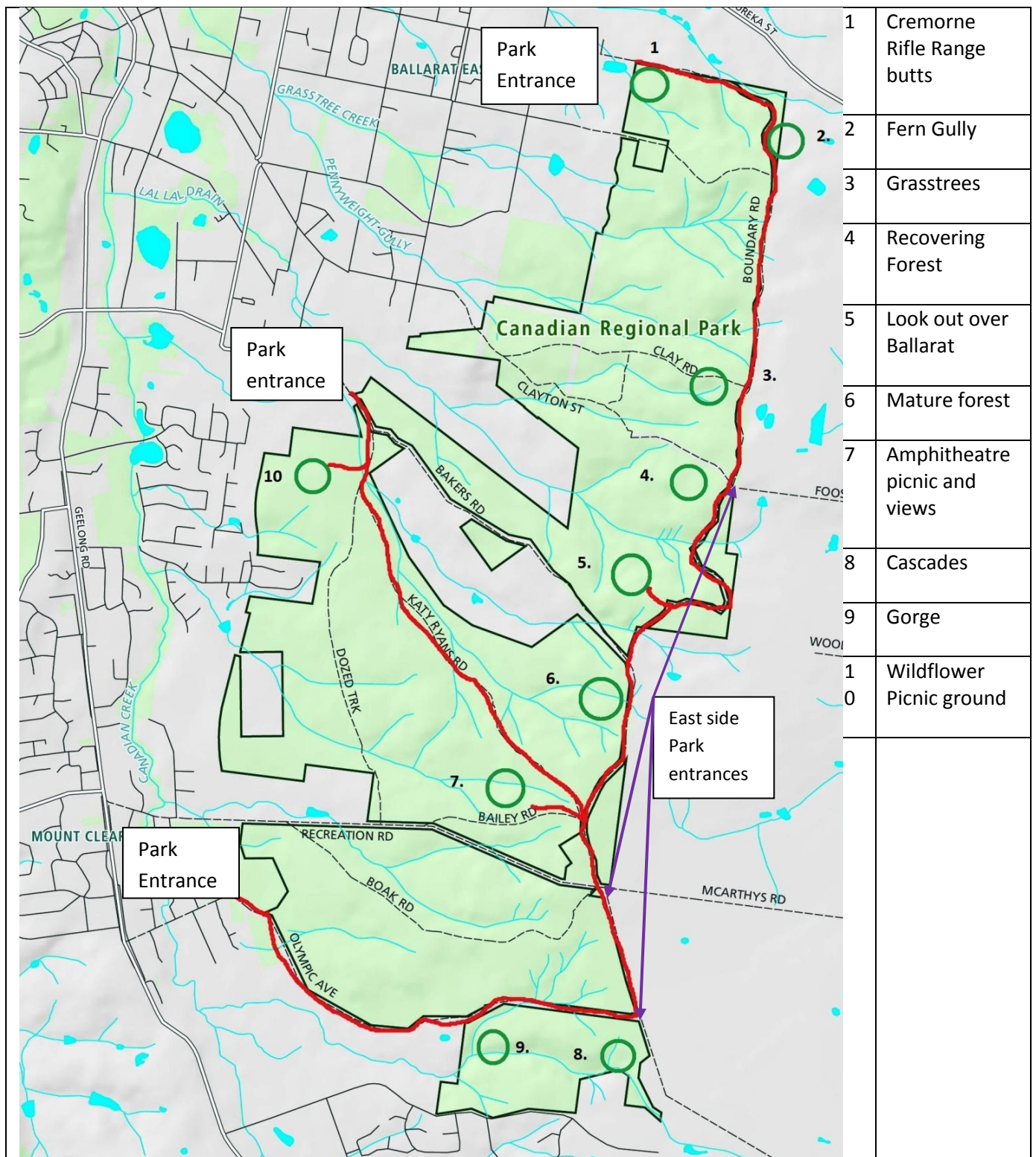
## Woowookarung Regional Park Recreation Zones

	Skyline walk – joins Great Divide Trail near Boundary Rd
	Great Divide Trail
	Wet lands trail
	Horse trail
	Exercise walk from picnic ground to Lookout – 10000 steps
	Mountain Bike Cross Country trail area in North – competition in the South - Connecting tracks across park as well as roads.
	Lookout, Picnic and or BBQ sites



Map 12








## Woowookarung Regional Park Car Tour and access from Ballarat -2017

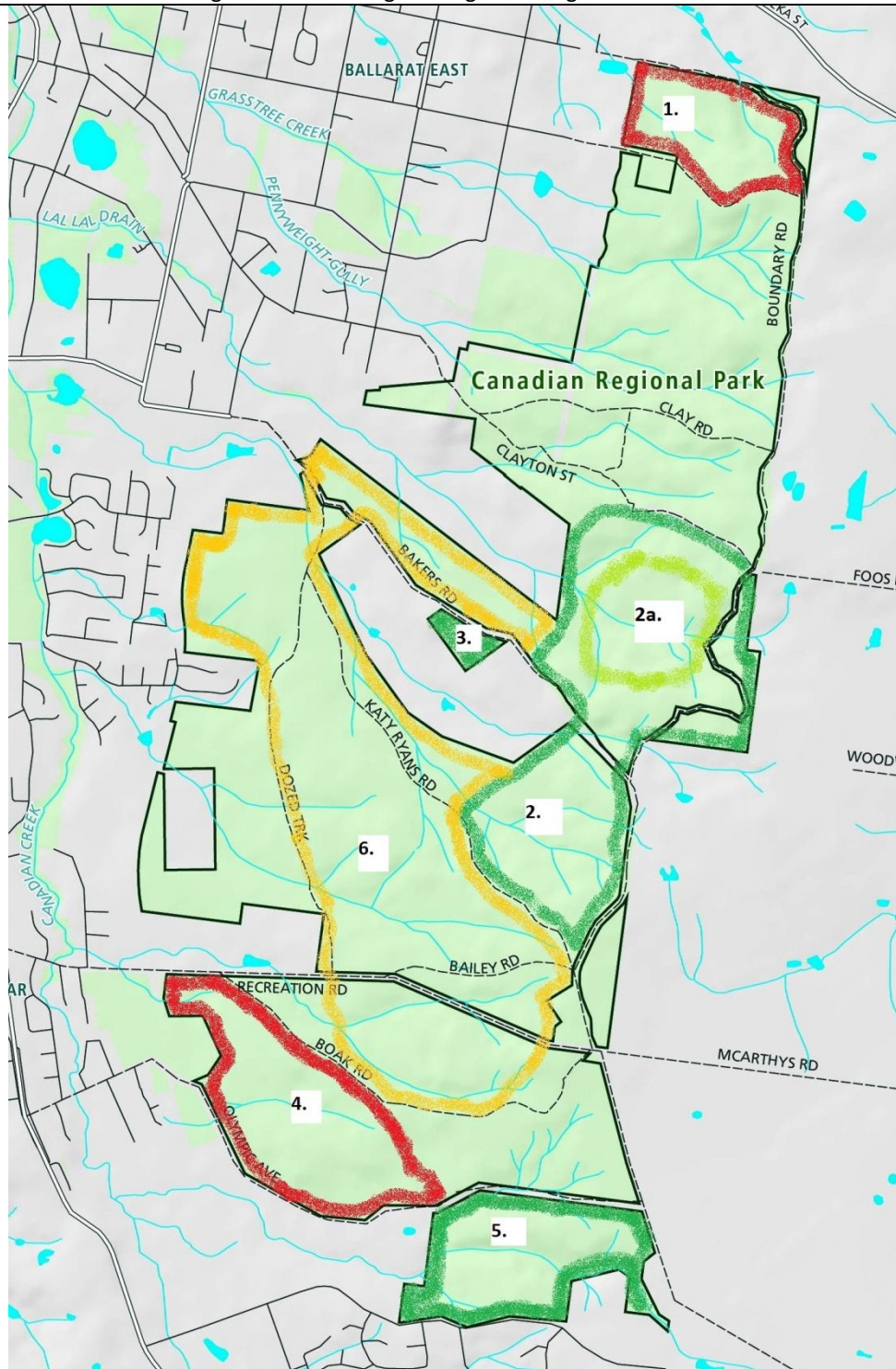


Map 13






## Woowookarung Regional Park Fire and vegetation protection areas

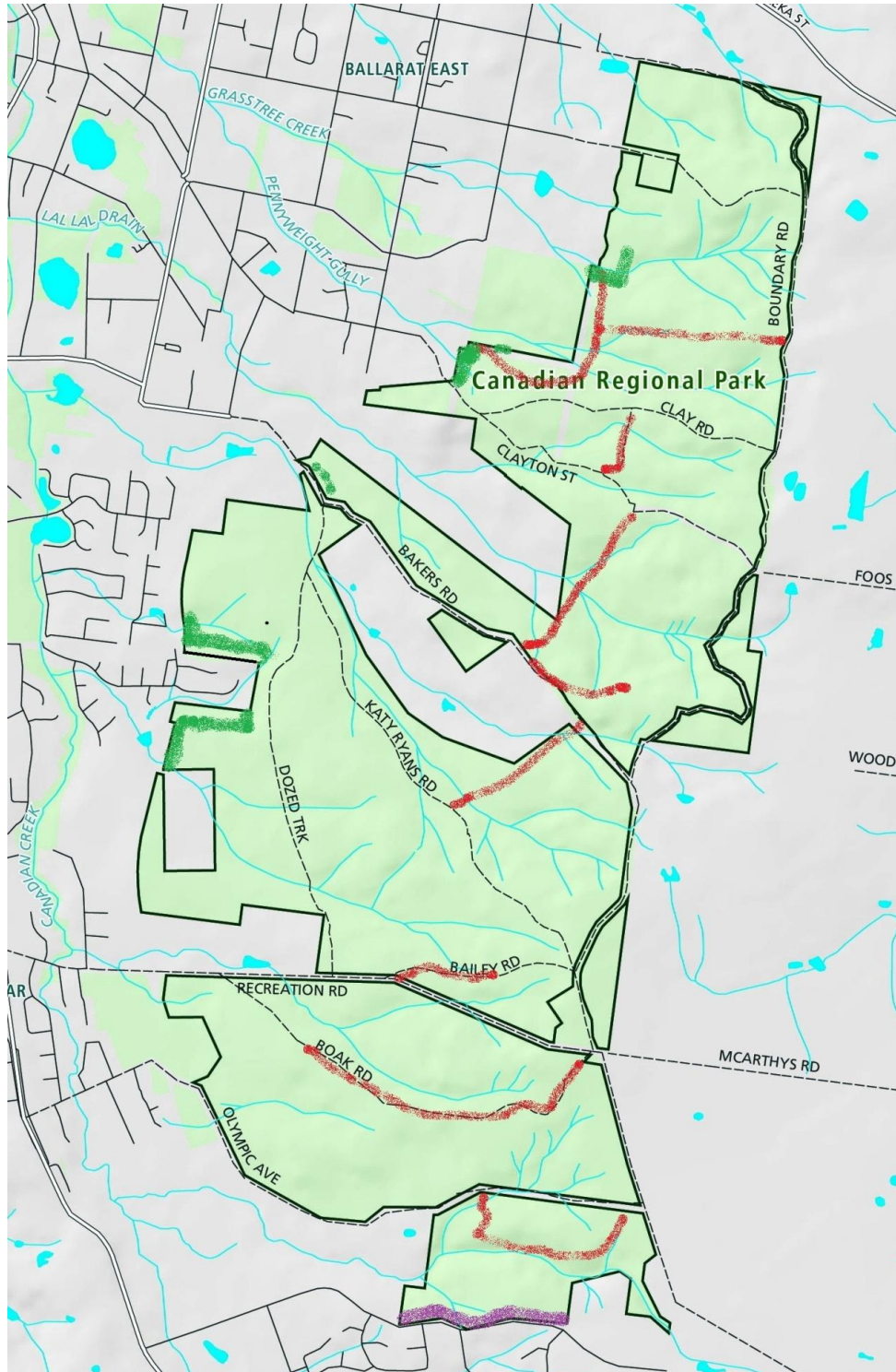
1.		Fire protection area – scheduled to be burnt of a regular basis
2.		High quality forest block including grassy valley area – Area is relatively undisturbed due to proximity to rifle range except for ex plantation area 2a. The Lal Lal Drain flows through it and is a prime area for revegetation including tree ferns which were once prolific to the waterway.
2a.		
3.		Isolated stand of forest relatively undisturbed.
4.		Fire protection area – scheduled to be burnt of a regular basis
5.		High quality forest block. Was part of water reserve which may have reduced disturbance
6.		Active silviculture management of existing and regrowth vegetation areas



Map 14

## Woowookarung Restricted access roads and tracks

	Restricted or closed vehicle access roads and tracks
	Closed vehicle access to Park at Pax Hill and restricted access at Greenhaven Crt (see map 16 below).
	Restricted vehicle access to Park along Green Hill Rd






Map 15



## Restricted access to to Greenhaven Court external area

Greenhaven Court is an abutment into the Park. It currently has open access involving multiple tracks around the perimeter of the estate. The map below has two tracks along the North and South boundary ending at the eastern end of the estate. These two tracks provide a buffer area around the perimeter fencing, whilst maintaining access to existing entry points (Note – current private entry points such as gateways and openings do not have legal right to access ). Coupled with appropriate signage, appropriate planted vegetation and where necessary physical barriers such as a koala friendly wire fencing, any community angst over access may be averted.

	Track – local access only
	Vegetation and or wire fencing
	Walking track – to picnic area, wetland and Dozed Track



Map 16

Prepared by the FoCC August 25th 2017

## Attachments

1. FoCC 2014 July Imagine Brochure
2. FoCC 2014 Environmental, Social & Civic, Economic benefits
3. FoCC 2014 Canadian Forest policy re COB
4. FoCC 2017 A short story of the Canadian Corridor.