



Victoria's old growth forests are being destroyed



This is your last opportunity to save

East Gippsland's Valley of the Giants





Regeneration burn: diverse wet forests are destroyed, to be replaced by even-aged tree farms.

Please help protect Victoria's last significant stands of old growth forest!

East Gippsland's Valley of the Giants contains some of the finest remaining old growth forest left in Victoria. Prior to the 2006 election, the State Government promised to immediately protect the last significant stands of Victoria's old growth forests currently available for logging. It also promised to invest in an "Old Growth Walk" near Goongerah.

Volunteers created a walk through the Valley of the Giants so that the public could appreciate the massive trees found in this multi-aged forest.

Since the government's promise in 2006, VicForests has logged many hundreds of hectares of prime old growth forest. It provocatively located three clearfelling coupes (areas proposed for logging) in the Valley of the Giants in early 2007. Logging started recently in the first of these coupes, cynically called "The Walk" by VicForests.

Significance

East Gippsland's forests are of world significance. English botanist David Bellamy described them as "the most diverse range of temperate forest ecosystems on earth". They contain rainforests, pristine rivers, waterfalls, rare plants and animals. They are important for wildlife conservation, and are the last stronghold for threatened and endangered species such as the large forest owls, Spotted-tailed Quoll and the Long-footed Potoroo.

As the climate changes these old growth forests will also play increasingly important roles as carbon sinks and habitat sanctuaries for many of



Walking with giants: a threatened giant eucalypt in the Valley of the Giants, Brown Mountain.

our threatened plants and animals. The best way to protect these forests is by giving them national park status.

Impacts of logging

East Gippsland's forests are being progressively destroyed by the export woodchip industry. Eighty-five per cent of our native forests end up as woodchips, sawdust and waste. This taxpayer-subsidised industry:

- » Converts biodiverse forests into intensively managed commercial regrowth.
- » Destroys rainforests by removing important buffers.
- » Causes siltation of streams.

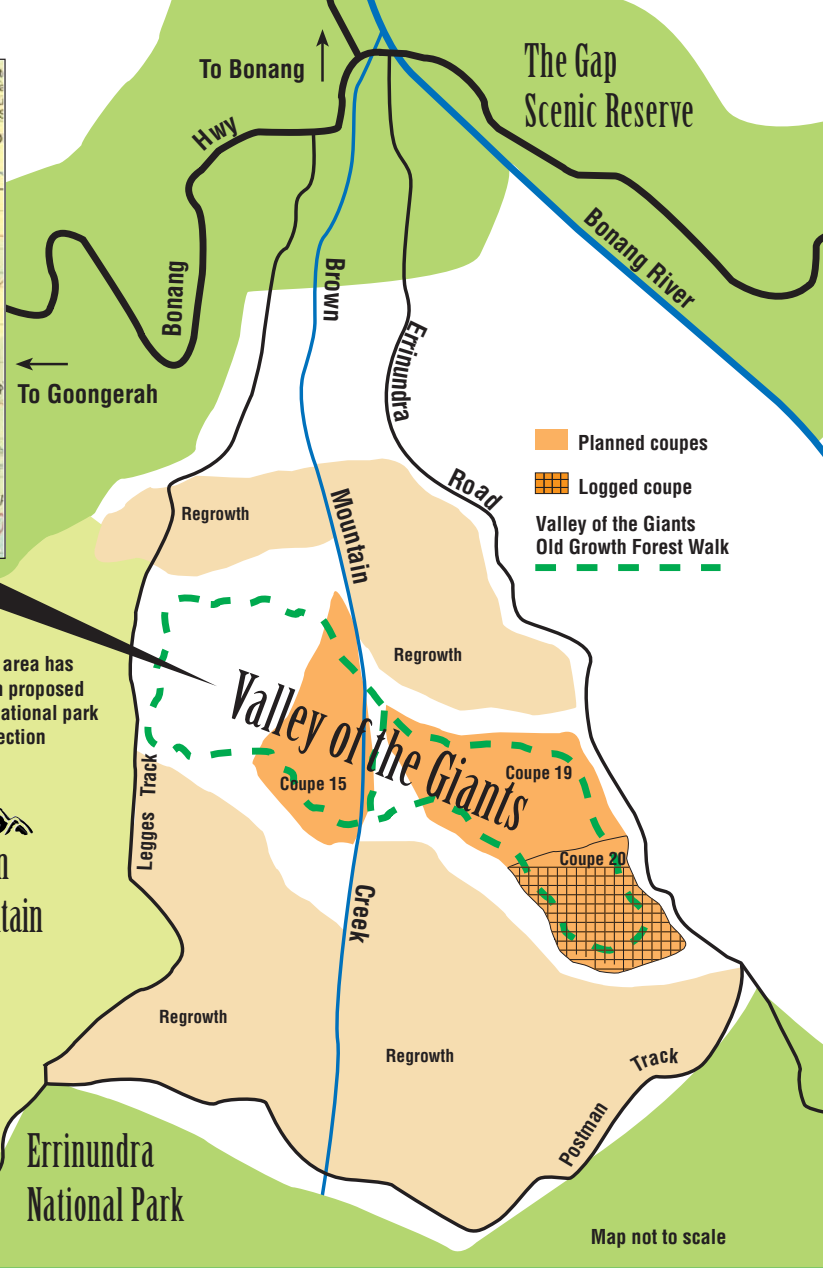
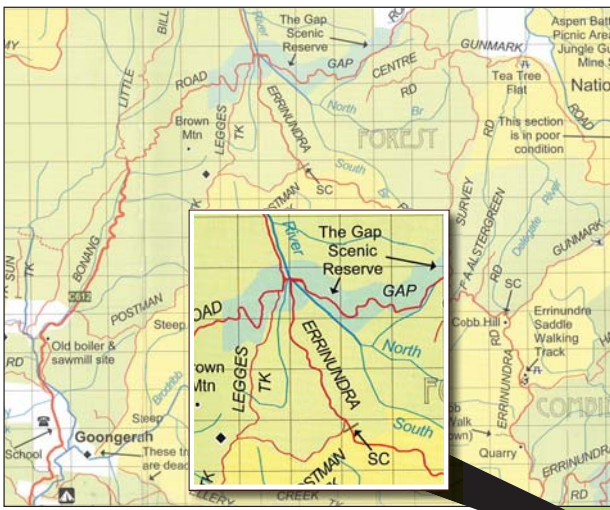
- » Kills our native animals and obliterates their habitats.
- » Opens up and dries out forests, increasing their susceptibility to fire.
- » Accelerates the spread of feral animals and weeds.
- » Reduces the quality and quantity of water produced by forests.
- » Makes a major contribution to global warming – large volumes of carbon dioxide are released throughout Victoria each year due to regeneration burns. The burns that follow clearfelling eliminate fire-sensitive and rainforest species.

Clearfelling essentially transforms diverse natural forests into industrial tree farms for private profit. This is occurring on public land to publicly-owned forests. The regrowth crops are logged within 20-30 years for woodchip exports.

In 2004, VicForests was established primarily to ensure logging public forests returned a profit. Since that time it has made a loss every year and can only claim profitability by including the many subsidies and grants it has received every year. As a result logging in Victorian forests is still not economically viable without a significant subsidy from Victorian taxpayers.

Take action now!

The situation is critical. Turn to the back page of this brochure to find out how you can help save East Gippsland's magnificent Valley of the Giants.



Labor's election promises:

1. Labor will immediately protect ... the last significant stands of Victoria's old growth forest currently available for logging under the National Parks Act.
2. Create a new tourism opportunity the Great Short Walks of East Gippsland (including) Old Growth Walk – Goongerah.



This area has been proposed for national park protection



Errinundra National Park

Map not to scale

Valley of the Giants Old Growth Forest Walk

Where is the walk?

The Valley of the Giants Old Growth Forest Walk is a one hour drive from Orbost. It is accessible from the Bonang Highway and just a short distance from the settlement of Goongerah. The entire walk is approximately six kilometres and has been broken into two loops to accommodate either a short or longer walk.

Partially logged and proposed coupes

There are three areas proposed for logging within the marked Old Growth Forest Walk. The first coupe, number 20, has been almost completely logged. However, the integrity of the walk can still be maintained if the rest remains unlogged and the two further coupes are permanently removed from logging plans.

Tourism benefits

The stand of old growth is between the Gap Scenic Reserve and the Errinundra National Park and provides an excellent example of old growth forest. The walk is also an important corridor between the Gap Reserve and the Errinundra National Park. It has the potential to increase appreciation of these spectacular forests and generate significant revenue similar to "The Otway Fly", which currently turns over \$3.6 million annually. Other similar walks around the country include Tasmania's Tahune Airwalk and Western Australia's "Valley of the Giants" walk in Walpole. Both walks return approximately \$2 million annually.





Help protect East Gippsland's Valley of the Giants before it's too late

Your voice is urgently needed to help protect East Gippsland's magnificent Valley of the Giants and save some of Victoria's finest remaining old growth forest from logging.

Tell the politicians you care

Write letters and emails to your local State politician and the Victorian Treasurer John Lenders, who is responsible for VicForests. Letters don't have to be long, two or three paragraphs is fine.

Introduce yourself and express your views strongly as to why it is important to you that these forests are protected. These are your forests. They do not belong to the woodchip or logging companies.

Tell the Treasurer and your local MP that you want these forests protected. Create a sense of urgency, and let them know that you expect a reply. Tell them you believe this continuing destruction must end because it doesn't make environmental or economic sense.

Lastly, tell the Treasurer and your local MP that you

expect the State Government to keep its promise to immediately protect the last significant stands of Victoria's old growth forest currently available for logging.

Write to:

1. Your local MP: to find out who your local politician is, please visit <http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/handbook/menupage.cfm?menuId=2>.

2. Minister for Treasury and Finance, John Lenders:
Level 1, 2 Treasury Pl, East Melbourne, VIC, 3002.

Email: john.lenders@parliament.vic.gov.au.
Tel: 9651 5000.

3. Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Gavin Jennings:
Level 22, 50 Lonsdale St, Melbourne, VIC, 3000.
Email: gavin.jennings@parliament.vic.gov.au.
Tel: 9096 8830.



The Victorian National Parks Association is Victoria's leading nature conservation organisation. VNPA exists to promote the protection and enjoyment of Victoria's unique natural environment and wildlife. An independent, member-based, non-profit organisation, we seek to protect Victorian nature through national parks, conservation, land reserves and better protection and management of the landscape. For more information visit our website at www.vnpa.org.au or phone 03 9347 5188.