

How to get there

From Hobart, travel through New Norfolk and on to Maydena via Bushy Park, Westerway and past Mt Field National Park. When you reach Maydena (90 km from Hobart, last petrol) set your odometer to zero.

Continue through Maydena on the Gordon River Road. You will soon pass a sign indicating the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

Crossing the Humboldt Divide you will be greeted by a vista of bare, jagged mountains looming above a valley of primeval forests. These are the threatened forests of the Upper Florentine.

Walks from Timbs Track carpark

(21 km from Maydena)

Keep driving along Gordon River Road until you re-enter forest. On the right, 3.3 km from the Thumbs Lookout, is a signposted car park and the start of Timbs Track. The track, although very clear and well maintained, does have some muddy patches and there is no reliable water supply unless you are planning on walking as far as the Florentine River (approx. 1.5 hrs plus).

Timbs Track provides access to visitor points 4 to 7 described here.

1. Timbs Track

From the car park, walk along Timbs Track and enter the mixed wet forests of the Upper Florentine Valley. Follow Timbs Track through a primeval forest of giant stringybarks with a rainforest understorey of ancient myrtles and sassafras.

Timbs Track continues to the Tiger Valley Lookout and on to the Florentine River. As you walk along

the track you will experience changing geology and ecology as you move from mixed wet forests and rainforest up onto a low quartzite ridge and into buttongrass and heathland. In spring and summer the wildflowers here are spectacular.

Along the way you will pass the following two side trip options.

2. Twisted Sister (approx. 15 mins return from Timbs Track)

After about five minutes walk along Timbs Track, you will see pink tape and a sign on your left. This indicates a track (approx ten minutes or 250 m) that runs through the forest and makes a loop around the base of a giant tree called Twisted Sister. The reason for the name will become obvious when you find the tree!

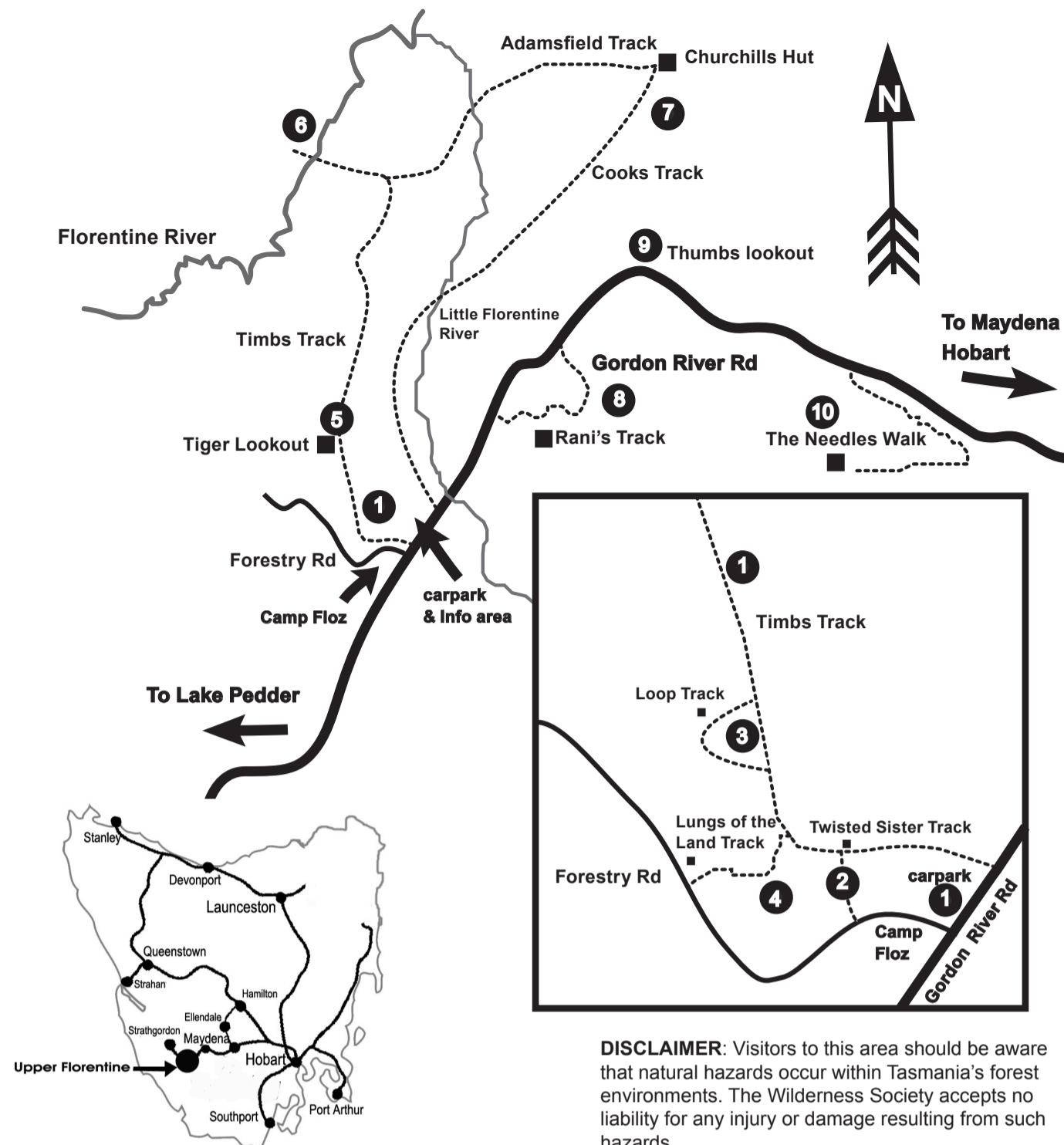
3. Lungs of the Land Track (25 min return from Timbs Track)

This track joins the Timbs track with the logging road via a meandering 25 minute walk.

It was named after a banner on the tree that hosted the original protest tree sit and a message about the relationship between forests and climate change that our political decision makers need to understand.

4. Coupe Loop (50 minutes return from carpark)

A further ten minutes along Timbs Track, you will see another track marked with pink tape. This is a loop track which curls back onto Timbs Track after making its way through forest typical of the area—full of towering eucalypts, giant myrtles and fantastic tree ferns.



DISCLAIMER: Visitors to this area should be aware that natural hazards occur within Tasmania's forest environments. The Wilderness Society accepts no liability for any injury or damage resulting from such hazards.

5. Tiger Valley Lookout (1 hour from carpark)

The Tiger Valley Lookout was built by volunteers concerned about the proposed logging of the Upper Florentine. The wood was milled from a eucalypt log left as waste from forestry operations in the Florentine.

From the Tiger Valley Lookout you can see the surrounding peaks, including the Thumbs, Mount Wright, Tiger Range, Mount Field West, Tim Shea, the Needles, Mount Mueller and the Sawback Range.

6. Florentine River (40 mins from the lookout)

From the lookout, you can walk on to the Florentine River. At the river there are a couple of decaying huts, and a clear mossy area (perfect for a picnic).

7. Churchill's Hut (6 hrs return or loop from Timbs Track carpark)

Take Timbs Track and then follow Adamsfield Track

Visit the historic 'Churchills Hut', the site where the last living Tasmanian Tiger, (Thylacine) was held after capture.

The last living thylacines were caught in this area. Thylacines were systematically hunted down, ostensibly to protect livestock, then for bounties, and finally once numbers were at a critical low, trapped live for zoo's in Australia and overseas, resulting in the genocide of the species.

From the hut you can backtrack or return to Gordon River Road via Cooks Track. Leave Adamsfield Track at the Hut and make your way to the logging road, walking through the remains of coupe FO42F. Follow the logging road and take the first right hand road, heading south (and downhill) to Cooks Track. Note: this is a full days walk as a 12km loop, from the carpark to Churchill's Hut and back via Cooks Track.

Walks from Gordon River Rd

8. Rani's Track (3hrs return)

This walk follows a ridge of oldgrowth *Eucalyptus Regnans*, the tallest flowering hardwood plant in the world. Visit "Rani" a giant *E. Regnans* with a girth of 16.5 metres. Walk through a fern gully, moss-laden sassafras trees and cross a creek before rejoining Gordon River Rd.

9. Thumbs Lookout (17.7 km from Maydena)

Just down the hill from the Humboldt Divide, park on the right hand side of the road and follow the short rock-lined pathway to the Thumbs Lookout. From here you get an overview of the threatened forests of the Upper Florentine Valley, and the surrounding alpine peaks, including the spectacular Thumbs Range.

10. The Needles (3 hrs return)

Walk sign posted from carpark below Tim Shea

A 360 degree panoramic view of the Upper Florentine and surrounding valleys, as well as the devastation caused by commercial logging in the coupes underlying the horizon. Scramble across rocky outcrops to various pinnacles where the flora grips to the exposed bedrock and holds within it a unique ecosystem.

The Upper Florentine Valley lies 80 km west of Hobart (100 km by road) in the rugged and western part of the state. It is an intrinsic part of Tasmania's South-West wilderness—one of the greatest temperate wilderness areas on Earth. The upper reaches of the Florentine are surrounded by the spectacular mountains of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. The valley floor is home to giant trees, rainforest and moorlands as well as outcropping limestone. This limestone is riddled with caves containing ancient Aboriginal heritage as well as the bones of extinct mega-marsupials.

The area also contains a rich European heritage. The Timbs Track joins the Adamsheld Track to the take you along a former packhorse trail to the now deserted mining settlement of Adamsheld and the remote homestead of Gordonvale. There are a number of historical huts in the Upper Florentine. Churchill's Hut is an excellent example of an old snarer's hut.

Today, the Upper Florentine is visited by thousands of people on their way to Lake Pedder. From the Gordon River Road, people can walk through a spectacular part of the Upper Florentine en route to well-known peaks and lakes within the World Heritage Area. Lookouts on the road provide impressive views across a landscape of jagged quartzite mountains and thick forests.

The Upper Florentine remains threatened with logging and woodchipping. Unless it is protected, road works will push deeper into the untouched areas of the valley and clearfelling operations would continue.

The Upper Florentine

UPPER FLORENTINE

Self-Drive and Walking Guide

Updated December 2010



THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY
Printed on 100% recycled paper

Over recent years, logging has destroyed over a hundred hectares of oldgrowth forest in 3 separate coupes, with over 85% of the wood carted away directly to the woodchip mills. Roads have been pushed into pristine areas at taxpayer expense, and more are planned to open up new areas for clearfelling.

A solution is achievable

For decades, environmentalists have been trying to protect Tasmania's stunning, ancient forests from destruction, and timber workers have been trying to protect their identity. This unresolved dispute has led to protests, arrests and, sadly, ongoing logging in our high conservation-value native forests.

But with the Tasmanian timber industry in collapse, a way forward is here. A Statement of Principles has been agreed between conservation groups, timber communities, forest unions and the industry that gives Tasmania a unique opportunity to create a sustainable timber industry, protect its remaining native forests and resolve the conflict over logging.

The benefits for the whole of Tasmania are huge, including:

- world class forests like the Tarkine Rainforest, Great Western Tiers, Styx, Blue Tier and the Upper Florentine Valley will be formally protected
- detailed planning and consultation for the timber industry to transition out of native forests will occur over the next 12 months – protecting and developing timber jobs that are sustainable
- Tasmania's image as a clean, green state will be preserved, in a major boost for Tasmania's forests, some of the most 'carbon-dense' in the world.

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How you can help

- **Sign up** for email updates via our website, facebook and Twitter. Visit www.wilderness.org.au/tasmania for more details.
- **Shop** at The Wilderness Society Shop at Salamanca. Profits go to the campaign to protect Tasmania's forests.
- **Sign on** your support for the Statement of Principles at www.wilderness.org.au/forestfuture
- **Write a letter** to the Prime Minister urging her to protect threatened oldgrowth forests in Tasmania, including the Florentine Valley. Arrange for your family and friends to write letters.
- **Come along** to a Wednesday Campaign meeting. They are every week at 1:00pm.
- **Join** The Wilderness Society or make a tax-deductible donation to the Tasmanian Forest Campaign. Freecall 1800 030 641 or visit www.wilderness.org.au/join
- **Write letters** to the editors of Tasmanian and interstate newspapers.

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Forests and climate change

Ancient forests in the Styx, Florentine, and Weld valleys keep millions of tonnes of dangerous carbon safely stored in the trees and soil. When these forests are logged, much of that carbon is released into the atmosphere, contributing to climate change and increasing the risk of serious drought and extreme fire conditions.

A new groundbreaking study was released in early August 2008 by the Australian National University. The report shows that old growth forests store 10 times more carbon than was previously thought. The native forests of Tasmania and Victoria store the equivalent of 25.5 billion tonnes of greenhouse gases. The study demonstrated the critical role that Tasmania's ancient forests can play in combating climate change.

Protecting forests from logging is one of the cheapest and quickest ways we can help stop dangerous climate change. Last year the federal government announced that it was spending \$200 million to help stop deforestation in South East Asia—a very welcome initiative.



The Thylacine

The Florentine Valley has played a role in one of Tasmania's most shameful chapters—the extinction of the thylacine.

The thylacine (*Thylacinus cynocephalus* or Tasmanian Tiger) was the largest marsupial carnivore, a nocturnal hunter. The 'doe' carried up to four cubs in her pouch. Colonists blamed the thylacines for killing sheep, and the government paid 2184 one-pound bounties for thylacines killed between 1888 and 1909.

On 7 September 1936, the last captive thylacine died in a Hobart zoo. There has been no irrefutable evidence of the thylacine's existence since. In September 1986, it was declared extinct.

That last captive thylacine, which has featured in famous footage and photos, was captured in the Florentine Valley. Details are unconfirmed, but it seems that it was a young cub captured along with its mother and two siblings in 1924 by Walter Mullins. They were taken to the railhead at Fitzgerald (just east of Maydena) and delivered to the Beaumaris Zoo for the princely sum of 55 pounds.

Another snarer, Elias Churchill, caught eight thylacines in the Florentine area in the 1920s and 1930s. He saw many more in the area. But that was before most of the Florentine was destroyed for newsprint, woodchips and sawlogs. Now logging is penetrating the pristine Upper Florentine, where the thylacine once roamed.