

Above the Treeline

Kosciuszko National Park

Location

Kosciuszko National Park straddles the highest part of the Great Dividing Range and protects tableland, montane, sub alpine and alpine ecosystems, glacial landforms, limestone caves, the headwaters of major rivers, most of the NSW snow country and Australia's highest peak, Mt Kosciuszko. The park is home to rare, endangered and endemic plants and animals including the Mountain pygmy possum and Corroboree frog and is important for recreation especially the snow sports.

About this program

The students explore the interactions of the alpine area's atmosphere, lithosphere, hydrosphere and biosphere on a guided walk to the summit of Mt Kosciuszko or to the picturesque glacial lake, Blue Lake. The students will record atmospheric conditions and plant adaptations, observe glacial and human impacts and learn about management strategies. Consider combining this program with the *Kosciuszko – a special place* power point presentation, *Strategic Planning Meeting* role play activity or *Going up the Mountain* field trip.

Objectives

Students will:

- observe biophysical interactions in the alpine environment and construct a diagram to explain these interactions.
- describe how the alpine environment is changing in response to climatic variations
- describe the geographical processes that form and transform the environment
- explain how current management strategies are contributing to the sustainable use of the alpine area
- collect and interpret photographic images
- label a line sketch
- identify the key features of the alpine ecosystem through observation and recording phenomena
- understand the spatial and ecological dimensions of the alpine area of NSW
- acknowledge the vulnerability of ecosystems to natural and human induced stress

Program outline

Mt Kosciuszko walk

Meet guide at Thredbo Village Centre coach parking area

Welcome, introductions, safety briefing, toilets 0.5 hrs

Chairlift ride 0.5 hrs

Walk to Mt Kosciuszko and return same route 6.0 hrs

Blue Lake walk

Meet guide at Kosciuszko Education Centre

Drive to Charlotte Pass 0.5 hrs

Welcome, introductions, safety briefing, toilets 0.5 hrs

Walk to Blue Lake and return same route 4.0 hrs

Resources

The teacher will be provided with worksheet masters before the visit. These should be reproduced for their students.

Additional references

www.environment.nsw.gov.au/bioregions/AustralianAlpsBioregion.htm

www.australionalps.environment.gov.au/learn/index.html

www.environment.nsw.gov.au/NationalParks/parkHome.aspx?id=N0018

Program

Levels:

Stage 6

Key learning areas:

Geography - Ecosystems at Risk
- Biophysical Interactions

Key outcomes:

- P2 describe the interactions between the four components which define the biophysical environment
- P3 describe how a specific environment functions in terms of biophysical factors
- P9 use maps, graphs and statistics, photographs and fieldwork to conduct geographical inquiries
- H2 explain the factors which place ecosystems at risk and the reasons for their protection
- H5 evaluate environmental management strategies in term of ecological sustainability
- H6 evaluate the impacts of, and responses to, environmental change

Location:

Guided walks from Charlotte Pass to Blue Lake or from Thredbo to Mt Kosciuszko.

Duration:

Mt Kosciuszko walk (return) - 7 hours
Blue Lake walk (return) - 5 hours

Availability:

Week days / November to April
(weather & snow permitting)

Cost:

\$12.00 per student (minimum fee \$240.00)

Equipment provided:

Worksheet masters, weather recording instruments, flora and fauna identification material and raincoats with hoods for those that need them.

Additional needs:

Students should bring a clipboard, worksheets and pens.

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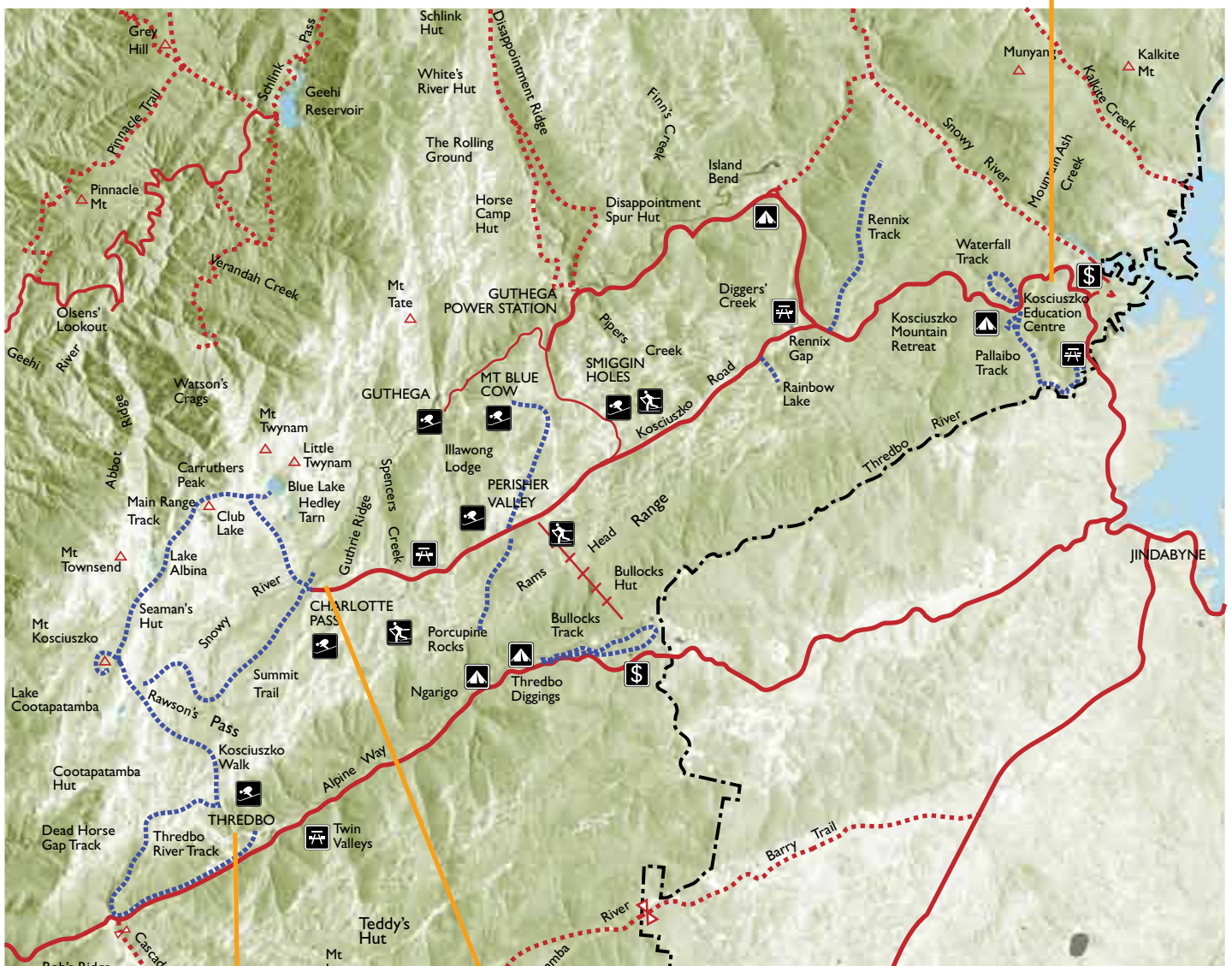
Kosciuszko National Park

Location map

Kosciuszko Education Centre...

Located on Kosciuszko Road at Sawpit Creek 14 km from Jindabyne towards Perisher. The centre is immersed in a mature montane forest, delivers quality educational experiences that help meet school syllabus learning outcomes. Kosciuszko Education Centre has interactive displays, coach and car parking, toilets, lecture room and picnic tables.

Kosciuszko Education Centre



Thredbo Village

Charlotte Pass

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Level of difficulty

Medium - both Mt Kosciuszko walk and Blue Lake walk have some steps or steep sections and are on a raised metal walkway or paved tracks with uneven surfaces.

Mt Kosciuszko walk is 13km return

Blue Lake walk is 10km return

Cost

The fee is \$12.00 per student including park use fee while you are with a Discovery Ranger. The minimum fee is \$240.00. A tax invoice will be forwarded to your school or excursion organiser after your visit. Teachers and parents free of charge.

Park facilities

Coach parking is available at Charlotte Pass and Thredbo. Toilets are available at Thredbo, Charlotte Pass and Rawson Pass.

What to bring and wear

Everyone should wear long pants, closed comfortable shoes and bring a sun hat, beanie, sun cream, jumper, raincoat with hood, adequate food and water, necessary medications, a clip board, pens and a digital camera (could be shared). Everyone will need to bring a back pack to carry all of their belongings for the day.

Blue Lake walk – consider wearing shorts under long pants so that the pants can be removed and kept dry when crossing the river. Consider carrying sports sandals for the river crossing.

Supervision

Discovery Rangers will guide and encourage students as they participate in activities. The control and supervision of students remains the responsibility of the teacher. It is the responsibility of the school to ensure an adequate number of adult supervisors are present.

Excursion planner



Mountain pygmy possum



Remnant snow patches in the Kosciuszko alpine area

National Park code of behaviour

- All features in the park are protected and nothing may be damaged or removed
- Stay on the walking tracks
- Light fires only in the fireplaces provided
- No pets are allowed
- Respect the rights of others and keep noise to a minimum
- Please take all litter home

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Safety information

This document provides background information to assist teachers in their risk management planning. Please make your own risk assessment based on the information provided.

Activity description - Discovery Ranger guided activities in the alpine areas.

Pre activity briefing - Participants will be briefed on expected conditions, potential hazards, appropriate behaviour, recommended clothing and emergency procedures at the start of the activity / day.

Safety equipment - Discovery Rangers carry radios and first aid kits, hold current first aid certificates and are aware of emergency procedures.

Potential risks	Suggested control strategies
Pre-existing medical conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Teachers will notify Discovery Coordinator of pre-existing medical / mobility conditions at least 24 hours before the visit ie return the "Pre-existing medical Information" form.Students susceptible to asthma, allergies or other conditions to carry personal medication and the teacher will be aware of their individual health plan.High risk students are monitored by teachers and carers.
Chairlift	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Brief participants on how to ride and exit chairlift safely.
Exposure to heat or cold	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Information re appropriate personal protection equipment (PPE) forwarded to schools prior to visit.Ensure participants have adequate drinking water, food and shelter.Adults to carry extra warm clothing eg hats, gloves, coatsTeachers ensure everyone has recommended PPE on walk.
Severe weather conditions including strong winds, snow, hail, lightning strikes, very high bushfire risk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Check weather forecasts prior to the activity, monitor throughout the visit and adjust activity according to weather conditions eg retreat to shelter at Thredbo, Rawson Pass or Charlotte Pass.
Snow and ice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Brief participants re; ice and slippery surfaces, safe snow play.Restrict snow play till the return walk so that participants stay warm and dry as long as possible.
Bites and stings (insects, spiders, snakes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Students briefed on appropriate behaviour at start of activity/ day eg 'look before sitting', do not touch.
Allergic reactions eg ants, nuts, plants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">High risk students to be identified and monitored by teachers/ carers. Students at risk of anaphylactic shock to have access to own EpiPen or other medication according to individual health plan.
Students lost or separated from group	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Brief teachers on route and procedure for waiting at all track intersections.Bushwalking group management practices eg buddy system, regular head counts and 'Tail end Charley' with regular stops are adopted.Stay on track and stay together especially if there is low visibility due to mist, fog, rain, snow.
Trips, slips and falls	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Discovery Ranger is familiar with activity site and is aware of variations in track surfaces. Continue to assess for hazards eg ice on tracks.Discourage running especially on the metal walkway.
Snowy River crossing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Do not undertake the Blue Lake walk if water is more than knee deep
Traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Avoid crossing roads but if this is necessary then ensure everyone crosses the road under direction of teachers or NPWS staff.
Sticks, rocks & stones	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Brief children to leave sticks & stones on ground at all times and to avoid climbing on rock boulders or large logs.

Safety information

Location:

Kosciuszko alpine area
Kosciuszko National Park

Staff Accreditation:

Discovery Rangers have current Senior First Aid accreditation. They are competent in the activity they are leading, experienced working with groups of students in the natural environment and have excellent knowledge of the specific areas they are visiting including being aware of the potential hazards of the location.

Discovery Rangers have been screened for child-related employment and have completed a Prohibited Employment Declaration

Emergencies:

Discovery Rangers are trained to deal with emergencies and emergency procedures are in place. Discovery Rangers have been instructed to call an ambulance whenever there is any doubt as to the continued well-being of a student or other visitor. Ongoing supervision of a student following first aid treatment will be the responsibility of the visiting school.

Contact details:

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