



CENTRAL QUEENSLAND GEMFIELDS

TOMAHAWK CREEK FOSSICKING AREA

Tomahawk Creek is the largest of five Fossicking Areas on the central Queensland sapphire fields which were set aside in 1985 for recreational and tourist fossicking under a simple Fossickers Licence. Such fossicking is also possible on another six areas of Designated Fossicking Land, but on those certain commercial mining tenures are also allowed. Another brochure describes the general background to the fields.

Tomahawk Creek is 2450ha of undulating bushland beyond the bitumen and the townships, ideal for those wishing to try their luck 'away from it all.' Although heavily worked in places it still contains large areas of unworked ground, which accounts for its popularity.

Access and roads

Turn off the Capricorn Highway for Sapphire and Rubyvale. From Rubyvale take the unsealed Clermont road for 27km to the Reklaw Park/Mount Mica homesteads turn off. Turn left, then left again almost immediately onto the Reklaw Park track, and follow through a series of grids for 17km to the signposted entrance on the north east boundary of the Fossicking Area.

A minor track on the right leads to the 'Featherbed Run' diggings. The main track then crosses Hut Creek and veers left to follow the eastern edge of Oak Ridge to Zircon Gully, Ironstone Gully and Mount Hoy diggings. Tracks are rough but suitable for conventional vehicles except in wet weather. Caravans are not recommended, however seek advice locally and check conditions before setting out.

Water needs to be carried from Sapphire or boiled from waterholes in Tomahawk Creek. However these holes are the supply for some local residents and must not be polluted by washing or swimming.

Requirements

Fossicking requires a Fossickers Licence under the Fossicking Act 1994. Individual, family, club, educational organisation and commercial tour operator licences can be obtained for periods between one and twelve months, with fees varying accordingly. They can be obtained from the Mining Registrar at Emerald, selected local businesses, or the Department's other offices throughout the State. Hand tools only are permitted.

Camping

Camping is allowed for a maximum period of 3 months. A camping permit is required, which can be obtained for the payment of a small fee from the Emerald, Rockhampton, Mackay and Brisbane offices of the Department or the local businesses that issue the Fossickers Licences. There are no facilities except for a solar telephone near the entrance. It is the most remote of the Fossicking Areas, and visitors must be self-sufficient.

Sapphire occurrence

Wash of different types is extensive. Oak Ridge is blanketed by deep wash but its depth and a cover of large billy boulders renders it impossible to mine by hand. Shallow secondary wash covers Oak Flats; it is only between 300mm and 1m deep and although bouldery makes this area popular with visitors.

In Zircon Gully, thin (100-200mm), hard, almost cemented wash lies beneath 2m of sandy soil overburden. Ironstone Gully is the next to the south and has also proved popular.

The Mount Hoy diggings in the far south lie east of the volcanic plug of Mount Hoy. The shallow wash to 500mm deep consists of white quartz pebbles and cobbles of sandstone and conglomerate; few billy boulders are present. A short distance to the north in the area known as the "Ash", the wash comprises 70-100mm of top soil underlain by 250-300mm of loose pebbly grey soil with rare cobbles, resting on an irregular clay bottom. Some good blues, as well as fancy stones have been found here.

Code of Conduct

- Use only safe working practices. Holes deeper than 2m or undermined overhangs **are not permitted**.
- Workings should be left in a safe, tidy condition so as not to endanger other persons or stock.
- Dismantle any structures upon vacating a campsite.
- Remove all rubbish** and bury human waste at least 20cm deep.
- Do not interfere with any vegetation, stock or wildlife. Shooting is prohibited.
- Minimise inconvenience to others by limiting noise and control pets at all times.
- Be careful with campfires, particularly in dry times. Clear a 2m space around them.

For further information:

*The Mining Registrar
Clerana Centre
29-31 Clermont Street
Emerald Qld 4720
Telephone (07) 4982 4011
Fax. (07) 4982 4230*

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