

Horsnell Gully Conservation Park and Giles Conservation Park



JUDI **Healthy Parks
Healthy People**



Horsnell Gully Conservation Park and Giles Conservation Park

Horsnell Gully and Giles conservation parks are located ten kilometres east of Adelaide in the rugged terrain of the Mount Lofty Ranges. The 245-hectare area was once farmland owned by the Horsnell and Giles families, and ruins can be found throughout the parks. Today, Horsnell Gully and Giles conservation parks are important links in the fragmented band of natural woodland along the Mount Lofty Ranges. There are excellent opportunities for bushwalking, birdwatching, photography, painting and nature study.

How to get to the park

The main entrance is located on Horsnell Gully Road, via Norton Summit Road, in the suburb of Skye. Entry is free.

Bushwalking

There is an extensive network of trails in the parks – an information sign is located near the main entrance. Please take care while walking in the park – some trails are steep and have loose, rocky surfaces and many follow vehicle tracks, which are used for maintenance or emergency operations.



Brown-tree Creeper

Old Coach Road Hike

2 km one-way *1 hr one-way

 **HIKE**
MODERATE

- some moderate inclines
- irregular surface with loose, uneven base
- average level of fitness

Trail start: Begin from the gate at the end of Coach Road in Skye or at gate 3.

Walk along what was once the principal road into Adelaide from the east during the 1870s and 1880s. There was a coach gate located on the highest point of 'Coach Hill', which is known today as the suburb of Skye. The driver blew a trumpet to tell the settlers that he had been through the gate and they had to climb up to close it. Near the spot where the power lines cross Coach Road, there was a hut for a 'team's keeper' who kept fresh horses for the coaches.

Main Valley and Rockdale Hill Hike

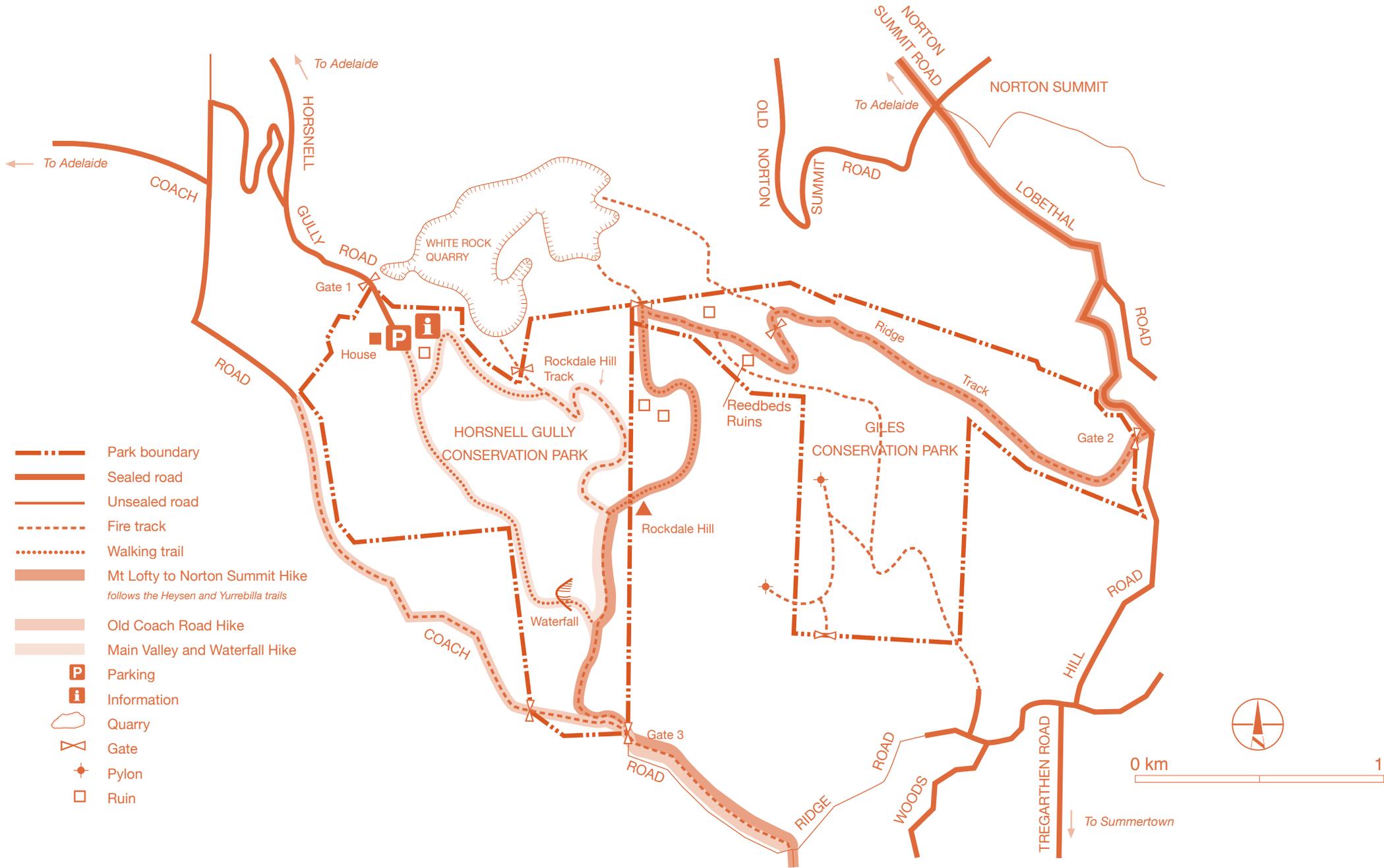
4 km return *2 hrs return

 **HIKE**
HARD

- some steep inclines
- irregular surface with loose, uneven base
- average level of fitness
- some hiking experience

Trail start: Start at the car park at Gate 1.

Follow the Main Valley trail and walk beneath majestic river red gums and South Australian blue gums to the waterfall. Keep an eye out for koalas in the tree tops or listen for sounds of southern brown bandicoots foraging in the undergrowth. Traverse the waterfall - beware of slippery rocks - and continue in a south-easterly direction to the Mount Lofty to Norton Summit trail. Follow this trail north to Rockdale Hill. From here, travel along Rockdale Hill Track, which gradually descends into the scenic valley before turning west and traversing a ridgeline, providing excellent views of the quarry and parts of the city of Adelaide. The trail then descends back into the main valley to the car park.



Mount Lofty to Norton Summit Hike

4.5 km one-way *2.5 hrs one-way



Trail start: In the park, begin from Gate 2 or Gate 3. To walk the entire trail, start from Mount Lofty or Norton Summit.

This hike follows a section of the Heysen and Yurrebilla trails through the park. The main features along this trail are steep gullies, diverse vegetation and spectacular views.

*Time is generously estimated for an average walking speed of 2 km per hour - allow extra time for resting and sightseeing.

History

Prior to European settlement, the Kaurna (Gar-na) people spent the winter months in locations such as Horsnell Gully and Giles, using the wood and bark from the woodlands for fire, warmth and shelter. During summer they lived on the coast, taking advantage of cool, ocean breezes.

John Horsnell, once coachman to Governor Gawler, settled the gully in 1842, establishing market gardens and orchards of walnut, Osage orange and olive trees – remnants of which can still be seen today. He established an English cottage garden that included roses, violets and agapanthus, and the first dairy in South Australia.



Bush Rat

In 1860-61, a house of local sandstone was built and, at one time, housed 14 children. The house remains and a coach house, stable and milking shed can also be found nearby. These ruins are well-maintained and represent one of the earliest farms in the area.

The Giles Conservation Park area was settled by Charles Giles, a pioneer of the horticultural and floricultural industry of South Australia. He purchased the land while living at another property on South Road and walked to the Summit every Monday morning with his week's provisions, returning home on Saturdays. There was no road up the valley of Third Creek at that time, and to reach his land the creek had to be crossed 21 times. Ruins of the workers' accommodation huts, once part of an extensive nursery and orchard, can be seen.

Horsnell Gully, including the Giles section, was set aside as a conservation park in 1964 to conserve vegetation associations of the Hills Face Zone, including a number of rare and endangered plants species. In 2007, the eastern section of the park was renamed Giles Conservation Park to honor the Giles family's historical connections to the park.

Plants

Although the main valleys have been severely disturbed, and introduced plants have become dominant, the upper slopes contain natural vegetation of high conservation value. Brown and messmate strinbybarks line the upper slopes and hilltops, while the lower slopes, open valleys and riparian gullies are dominated by river red gum, SA blue gum, pink gum and manna gum woodlands.

The understorey is made up of native cherry, golden wattle and a white flowering bush known as dusty miller. This plant uses its large white leaves to attract insects to tiny, hidden flowers. There are also many native orchids that flower from July to October.

Animals

Plant associations vary throughout the parks and so do the places where wildlife occurs. Curiously, in these parks common ringtail possums are found only in the stringybark forests, while brushtail possums are found in the smoothbark areas. The creeks and rocky areas in the stringybark woodlands support the elusive yellow-footed antechinus and bush rat. These small marsupials prefer rocky areas with dense scrub that provide food, shelter and nest sites.

Western grey kangaroos and koalas can be seen and, come dusk, short-beaked echidnas may be heard scouring through the understorey for ants. Bats may also be seen flitting in and out of the hazy sunset.

The secretive marbled gecko and brightly coloured tawny dragon can often be seen in a prominent, sunny position. The brown toadlet may be heard in dry, grassy open areas, while the 'crick-crick-crick' of the eastern froglet and the 'plonking' sound of the bull frog may also be heard throughout the parks' creeks.

Enthusiastic bushwalkers may be lucky enough to catch a glimpse of the crescent honeyeater, striated thornbill, brown thornbill, fan-tailed cuckoo, yellow-faced honeyeater, white-throated treecreeper and scarlet robin, common throughout the stringybark forest. In the smoothbark woodlands the brown treecreeper, restless flycatcher, New Holland honeyeater, striated pardalote, purple-crowned lorikeet and red-browed finch can be found. Keep on the look out for flocks of yellow-tailed black-cockatoos flying overhead.

National Parks Code

Help protect your national parks by following these guidelines:

- Leave your pets at home.
- Take your rubbish with you.
- Observe fire restrictions, usually 1 November to 30 April. Check the CFS hotline 1300 362 361.
- All fires including gas barbecues are prohibited.
- Respect geological and heritage sites.
- Keep our wildlife wild. Do not feed or disturb animals, or remove native plants.
- Keep to defined vehicle tracks and walking trails.
- Be considerate of other park users.

Thank you for leaving the bush in its natural state for the enjoyment of others.



Friends of Black Hill and Morialta

The Friends of Black Hill and Morialta is a community-based group of volunteers actively working with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to protect and conserve Horsnell Gully and Giles conservation parks. If you would like to know more about the group contact:

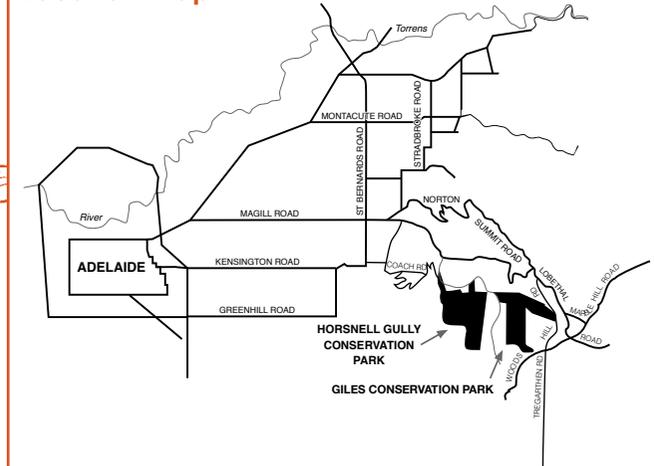
The President

Friends of Black Hill and Morialta Conservation Parks
88 Addison Ave, Athelstone SA 5076

Phytophthora

Phytophthora (fy-TOFF-thora), otherwise known as root-rot fungus is killing our native plants and threatens the survival of animals depending on plants for food and shelter. This introduced fungus can be found in plant roots, soil and water. Please help stop the spread by staying on tracks and trails and by complying with all *Phytophthora* management signs.

Location map



For further information contact:

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Athelstone SA 5076

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Fax (08) 8336 0900

Phone information Line (08) 8204 1910

Email denrinformation@sa.gov.au

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After-hours emergencies

Contact the Duty Officer on 1300 650 411
and quote pager number 465 281

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Revised October 2010
FIS 90844

Front cover: Common Ringtail Possum *Trichosures vulpecula*