

# Venture to the Falls

## Dorrigo National Park

### Location description and highlights

Dorrigo National Park is located astride the Great Escarpment at the edge of the Dorrigo Plateau and above the heart of the Bellinger Valley. Its magnificent rainforests are part of the Gondwana Rainforests of Australia World Heritage area, are of international significance, and are easily accessed via boardwalks and sealed walking tracks. The Skywalk boardwalk is perched over the canopy and Walk With The Birds boardwalk winds through the mid-levels of the forest.

### About this program

The field trip encompasses the Skywalk viewpoint over the canopy and an exploration of subtropical rainforest on a graded downhill walk to Crystal Shower Falls, with plenty of time for observation and discussion. Key themes are structure and features of rainforest, and differing uses of rainforest reflecting people's attitudes and values past and present.

### Objectives

Students will experience World Heritage subtropical rainforest in the park and appreciate its significance.

Students will compare modern values of rainforest with past values of Aboriginal people and earlier Europeans.

### Program outline

- Group meets at Dorrigo Rainforest Centre - welcome by Discovery Rangers.
- Toilet break.
- Walk 2.4km downhill to Crystal Shower Falls, track grade: medium.
- Return 1.4km uphill to the Glade Picnic Area for bus pickup. Farewell by Discovery Rangers.

### Links to support material for schools

About Dorrigo National Park

- [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/nationalparks/parkhome.aspx?id=N0011](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/nationalparks/parkhome.aspx?id=N0011)

Resource package - Dorrigo National Park

- Booklet: Discovering Gondwana: A guide to Dorrigo National Park
- Booklet: Under the Canopy
- Fact sheet: Forest types of Dorrigo National Park
- Fact sheet: Human Impacts on rainforests of Dorrigo Plateau
- Fact sheet: Why is rainforest important?
- Worksheet: Sun and shade in rainforest
- Worksheet: Rainforest food chains
- Worksheet: Rainforests Stage 1, 2, 3
- Student project model - Cut-out rainforest model

### Additional references

History of Dorrigo Plateau land use

- [www.nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn3287284](http://www.nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn3287284)
- [www.rainforest-alliance.org/programs/education/kids/fact-sheet.html](http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/programs/education/kids/fact-sheet.html)

Rainforest general

- [www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/education/Resources/rainforests](http://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/education/Resources/rainforests)
- [www.teachers.ash.org.au/jmresources/rainforest/links.html](http://www.teachers.ash.org.au/jmresources/rainforest/links.html)

Rainforest conservation

- [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/natureconservation.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/natureconservation.htm)
- [www.rainforestinfo.org.au/video/trees\\_v.html](http://www.rainforestinfo.org.au/video/trees_v.html)

World Heritage

- [www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/world/gondwana/index.html](http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/world/gondwana/index.html)

### Activity outline

#### Levels:

Stage 3

#### Key learning areas:

HSIE - Global environments:

Rainforests

SCIENCE - Environment Matters

#### Key outcomes:

- Students investigate a rainforest environment and evaluate its significance.
- Students evaluate a variety of viewpoints about rainforest past and present.

#### Location:

Dorrigo National Park

#### Length:

Two and a half hours

#### Time of Day:

Either morning or afternoon

#### Design technique:

- Students encouraged to observe and imagine
- Ranger supplies information and invites discussion
- Students evaluate management strategies for visitor impact

#### Equipment used:

Binoculars, photos of rainforest fauna, photos of traditional Aboriginal people and of early European uses of rainforest. Timber samples.

#### Additional equipment:

Nil

#### Teacher resources:

Classroom resource package available on DECCW website.

#### Student resources:

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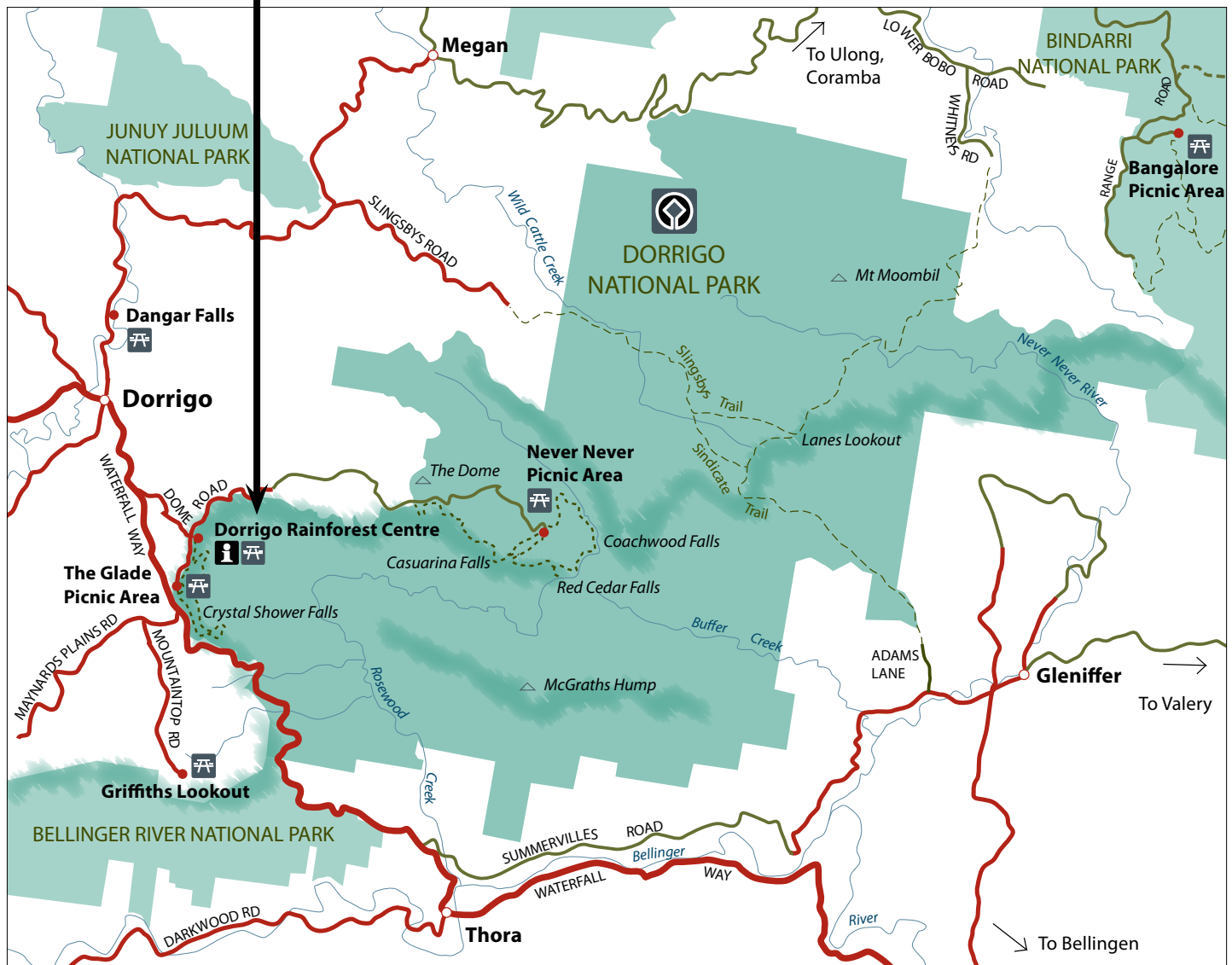
## Dorrigo National Park

### Location map

#### Meet at Dorrigo Rainforest Centre

Dorrigo Rainforest Centre is 4 km from Dorrigo, via Waterfall Way and Dome Road.

Dorrigo is 125 km from Armidale via the Waterfall Way, (approximately 1hr 45mins by bus) and 42km from the Pacific Highway/Waterfall Way intersection (approximately 50 mins by bus).



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### Level of difficulty

Medium: some medium grade slopes on walks  
Not suitable for wheelchairs

### What to bring and wear

Raincoats, hats, walking shoes, water  
First Aid kit, including treatment for leeches and ticks.

### Park facilities

Toilets, electric barbecues and picnic tables at Dorrigo Rainforest Centre and The Glade Picnic Area  
Raised boardwalks  
Sealed walking tracks  
Toilets, electric barbecues and picnic tables at The Glade Picnic Area

### Supervision

*Discovery* Rangers will guide and encourage students as they carry out their field studies. It is the responsibility of the school to provide sufficient numbers of adult supervisors as required by the NSW Department of Education and Training. Students should be accompanied by their class teacher, who will be expected to assist in keeping the students on focus.

### Student behaviour

For their own safety, students should be instructed to stay with the group at all times. They must not jump or climb on either the vegetation or any structures in the park.

If students will be visiting the National Parks Shop and making purchases, this should be done in groups of six or less, accompanied by a teacher and without any school bags or backpacks.

### Photo permissions

Photos of your group may be taken during this activity for use in National Parks and Wildlife Service promotional products. Please advise any objections.

### Excursion planner



*Wonga Walk*

### 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



*Suspension bridge at Crystal Shower Falls*

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### Safety information

This document provides background information to assist teachers in their risk management planning for excursions. Please make your own risk assessment based on the information provided. Information is current as at January 2010. Contact the Discovery Coordinator if more information is required.

Activity: Discovery Ranger guided walk on boardwalks and bitumen sealed walking track. Return distance is from 1km to 6.4km, vertical rise about 75 metres.

Potential risks	Suggested control strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allergic reactions to plants and animal bites.</li> <li>Poisonous and prickly plants, especially Giant Stinging Tree.</li> <li>Snakes and ticks.</li> <li>Biting insects such as bees, wasps and mosquitoes.</li> <li>Pre-existing medical conditions</li> <li>Interactions with other visitors.</li> <li>Students lost or separated from group.</li> <li>Variations in track surfaces (trip hazards) and overhanging branches.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students to wear suitable walking shoes (no thongs or sandals) and long clothing.</li> <li>Discovery Rangers to provide safety talk identifying hazards and emphasising care and respect for each other and the public.</li> <li>First aid kits to be carried by group leaders.</li> <li>Ensure students are closely supervised by teachers/carers, walk in an orderly manner (no running), remain on the track and keep together as group.</li> <li>Hazards on track to be identified to whole group when encountered.</li> <li>Brief teachers/carers on route and procedure for waiting at all track intersections.</li> <li>Adjust walking pace on steep sections.</li> <li>Students susceptible to asthma to carry personal ventolin inhaler.</li> <li>Students at risk of anaphylactic shock to have access to own EpiPen according to individual health plan.</li> <li>High risk students to be identified and monitored by teachers/carers.</li> <li>Advise participants to check for ticks and leeches during and after the activity.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Severe weather conditions. Strong winds and storms causing falling vegetation, hail or lightning strikes.</li> <li>Exposure to sun, rain or cold conditions.</li> <li>Atmospheric conditions such as dust or smoke.</li> <li>Risk of bushfires in the area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Head teacher to contact Area Office for advice if severe weather or very high fire danger is predicted.</li> <li>Students should wear warm clothes and raincoats (no umbrellas) or sun hats and long sleeves/pants depending on forecast.</li> <li>Postpone or shorten excursion if severe weather warning issued and high likelihood of storm impact in local area.</li> <li>Postpone excursion in periods of very high dust or smoke pollution.</li> <li>Postpone excursion in periods of very high to catastrophic fire danger.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steep slopes beside tracks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify steep sections and walk in single file on inside of slope.</li> <li>Stop on inside of slope to allow for other visitor to pass.</li> </ul>

### Safety information

#### Location:

Dorrigo Rainforest Centre  
Dorrigo National Park  
Dome Road, Dorrigo NSW 2453

#### Staff Accreditation:

All Discovery Rangers have current Senior First Aid accreditation and carry first aid kits.  
All Discovery Rangers have been screened for child-related employment and have completed a Prohibited Employment Declaration

#### Access:

Suitable for all age groups and all fitness levels.  
Wheelchair accessible carpark, picnic area, toilets, display, Skywalk and limited walking tracks.

#### Emergencies:

Staff are trained to deal with emergency situations and emergency procedures are in place.  
The emergency evacuation area is located at the Dorrigo Rainforest Centre. 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 students following first aid treatment will be the responsibility of the visiting school.

#### Contact details:

**Site Management**  
NPWS North Coast Region  
Dorrigo Plateau Area  
Dome Road (PO Box 170)  
Dorrigo NSW 2453  
Ph: (02) 6657 2309  
Fax: (02) 6657 2145

**Education Program**  
National Parks Discovery for schools  
Discovery Coordinator  
Dorrigo Rainforest Centre  
Dorrigo NSW 2453  
Ph: (02) 6657 2309  
Mob: 0428 247 297  
Fax: (02) 6657 2145  
email: [North.CoastRegionDiscovery@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:North.CoastRegionDiscovery@environment.nsw.gov.au)  
**In an emergency call 000**  
**NPWS after hours duty officer 02 6642 3620**