

Lobethal Bushland Park comprises 118 hectares of varied terrain of gentle slopes dissected by several north-south running drainage/creek lines. The altitude ranges from 450m to 520m above sea level.

There is a network of marked walking trails throughout the Park. Main access to the Park is via a gate at the southern end of the reserve adjacent to Reservoir South, and a gate on Kenton Valley Road on the eastern boundary.

Aboriginal History

The traditional custodians of the Lobethal district are the Peramangk peoples. Before colonisation, they relied upon harvesting native foods such as bush vegetables, honey, seeds, eggs, insects, reptiles, fish and native animals for their sustenance.

European colonisation devastated the Peramangk peoples through dispossession and disease, and by the late 19th Century there were no resident tribal groups in the area.

European History

Since 1836 the Park has had many uses. It was mined for 120 years and in the 1880s and 1920s two reservoirs were built to supply the Onkaparinga Woollen Mill and the township of Lobethal. Extensive logging was also undertaken to serve demands during WWI and construction of wharves in Murray Bridge and Morgan.

In the early 1980s the land was sold to the local council who would preserve the area's natural value. 'Onkaparinga St John Bushland Park' was opened in 1986 by South Australia's Governor, Sir Donald Dunstan, with support from St John Ambulance.

Fauna

Much of the Park's fauna is difficult to observe as most are nocturnal, though visitors may encounter an Echidna, Brush- or Ring-tailed Possum, or Western Grey Kangaroo. Birds are the most frequently encountered wildlife and visitors may identify the Scarlet Robin, Shining Bronze-Cuckoo, Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo and the Red-browed Finch among others. Several native lizards and snakes are known to frequent the Park, as well as a number of frog species including the Spotted Marsh Frog.

Vegetation

There are significant examples of native vegetation in the Park that is otherwise rapidly disappearing. Most notable is the Messmate Stringybark Woodland and Open Forest, which has an open sclerophyll shrub understorey. Other parts of the Park include various formations of Messmate Stringybark and South Australian Blue Gum, and Prickly Tea-tree.

The reserve has very high flora diversity (194 species) with 12 species of conservation significance, including the nationally threatened species *Pterostylis cucullata* (Leafy Green-hood) and *Glycine latrobeana* (Clover Glycine).

Bush regeneration work by several groups has seen significant improvement of the habitat across the site.

Bushfire management

The Ash Wednesday fire of 1983 stopped immediately north of Lobethal Bushland Park and no major fires have been recorded within the Park since. To limit the potential for a bushfire to enter or leave the Park, a wide fuel break is maintained around the Park perimeter to reduce fuel loads, and a prescribed burning program has been initiated to help reduce fuel loads in the understorey.

Lobethal Bushland Park

Information and Walking Trails

ahc.sa.gov.au



Bicycles and dogs ONLY permitted in the recreation area around Reservoir South. Dogs must remain on a leash and on paths at all times.

Green Trail Easy-moderate 20 minutes

A gentle stroll around the scenic Reservoir South. Large stepping stones allow walkers to avoid getting wet feet during winter.

Yellow Trail Moderate 45 minutes

A moderately steep walk through the Stringybark Forest to a change in flora at higher ground. Get a great view of Lobethal, the surrounding rolling hills, and Mt Lofty in the distance.

Orange Trail Moderate 1 hour 10 minutes

This walk leads to the lookout on your way to Reservoir North, then further into the northern side of the park. These areas are scattered with mature Stringybark trees and an understorey of Bracken Fern.

Blue Trail Easy-moderate 1 hour 15 minutes

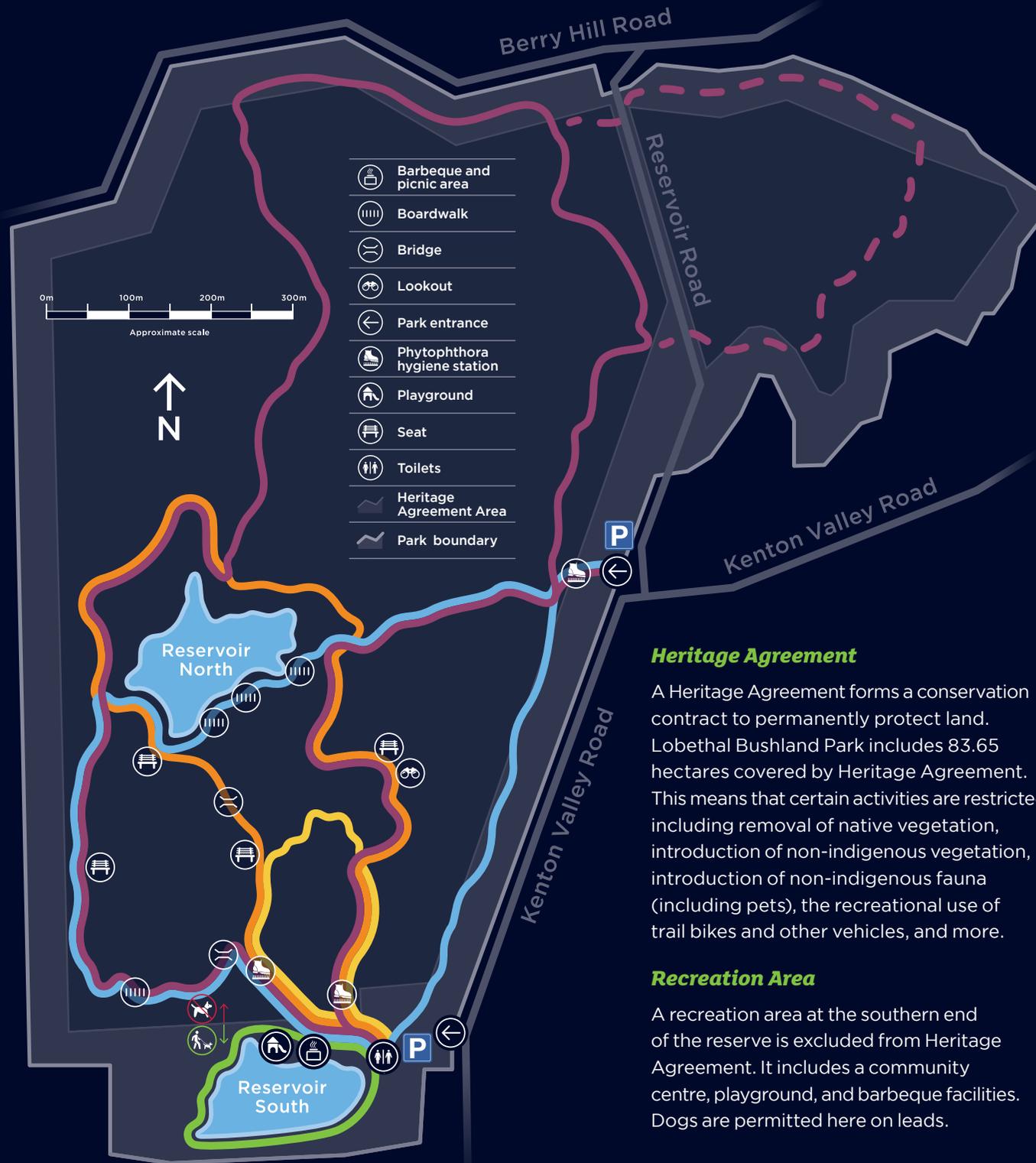
This circuit offers variety without being too demanding. Cross the creek line and travel through Stringybark Woodland to Reservoir North, then complete the circuit along the eastern boundary.

Purple Trail Moderate-Difficult 2 hours

This walk comprises the longest circuit within the park, covering woodlands, wetlands, grasslands, creeks, and both reservoirs. The circuit can also be accessed from the eastern boundary entrance.

Dashed extra loop Moderate 40 minutes

This is an optional addition to the Purple Trail and allows access to the north-eastern corner of the park, crossing over Reservoir Road and into the new Heritage area.



Heritage Agreement

A Heritage Agreement forms a conservation contract to permanently protect land. Lobethal Bushland Park includes 83.65 hectares covered by Heritage Agreement. This means that certain activities are restricted including removal of native vegetation, introduction of non-indigenous vegetation, introduction of non-indigenous fauna (including pets), the recreational use of trail bikes and other vehicles, and more.

Recreation Area

A recreation area at the southern end of the reserve is excluded from Heritage Agreement. It includes a community centre, playground, and barbeque facilities. Dogs are permitted here on leads.