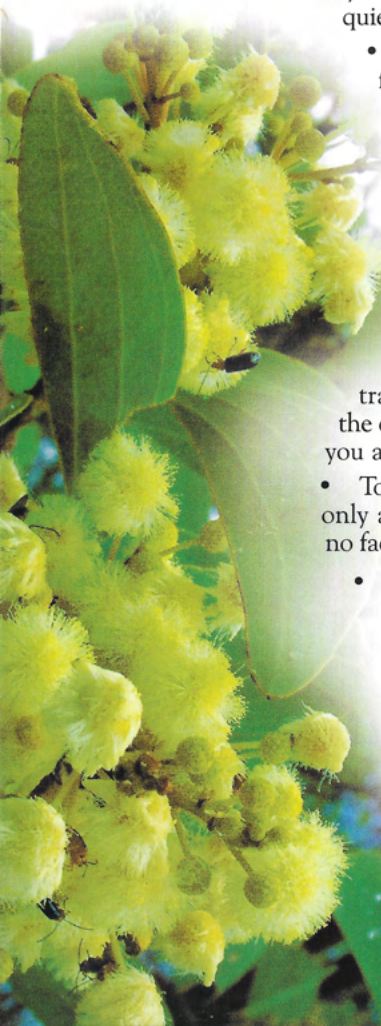


# Walk Safe

- Take adequate drinking water — 2 litres per person per day is a minimum, on a hot day you may need 3 litres.
- Take appropriate clothing (hat, sunscreen, insect repellent etc). Suggest walking parties min 3 max 12.
- Tell someone where you are going, and how long you expect to be.
- Do not deviate from the marked trails. The area has been the site of much mining activity and deep mine shafts are common — some may even be hidden by vegetation or partial collapse.
- Please do not disturb flora or fauna — all of which are protected in this area. Some domestic stock may be encountered. Just proceed quietly.

- While the vibrations of footsteps usually mean snakes have time to escape, they can sometimes be encountered. Just give them a little more time to leave!
- Be aware that some sections of the trails may be used by other participants including horse riders and motor-bike trail riders. Extend to them the courtesy they will extend to you as fellow users of the trails.
- Toilets and water are available only at Herberton — there are no facilities on the trails.
- Some mobile phones may not have good coverage on some trails



Heath flower



*The high elevation of the trails in tropical conditions makes it important to guard against dehydration and sunburn.*

## Bush Code of Ethics

- Stay on established paths — take care not to damage surrounding bush. Enjoy the flora but do not pick any flowers etc.
- If a toilet stop is unavoidable, bury waste at least 150mm deep and away from the trail.
- Carry out all rubbish.
- Respect private property by not straying onto land adjacent to the trails. Be courteous to other users of the trails, and be prepared to lend assistance if need be.
- Most bushwalkers carry a small first aid kit.
- Please report any damage or problems to the Tablelands Regional Council on 1300 366 361 or call into the Visitor Centre.

*There are other trails to enjoy. You may like to try the Short Walks of Herberton or enquire about the longer Guided Treks and Overnight Experiences.*

*Call in at the Visitor Centre for more details.*

### Herberton Mining Museum & Visitor Information Centre

**TRC** Jacks Road, Herberton  
Tel: 07 4096 3474  
[www.herbertonvisitorcentre.com.au](http://www.herbertonvisitorcentre.com.au)



Herberton  
North Queensland ~ Australia.

# The Great Northern Fire Trails



*A series of self-guiding walking trails of varying lengths and challenges that begin from the Great Northern Minesite ~ where the Tablelands began.*

*See rugged landscapes, evidence of past mining activity, wonderful vistas, an amazing selection of upland flora (and sometimes, fauna) in climatic conditions that are conducive to walking in the tropics.*

*All trails return to Herberton where you are invited to sample local hospitality*



Canberra

## The Great Northern Fire Trails

When walking along the trails through the high rugged hills surrounding Herberton, you may be forgiven for thinking you have lost touch with the bustle and pressures of modern living. Yet the area covered by the Great Northern Fire Trails has been the scene of great activity for over 100 years.

All trails traverse some part of Herberton Hill (St Patrick Hill), responsible for a major share of tin production on the Herberton

Mineral Field. The area is dotted with mine shafts, large and small mullock heaps, and other evidence of human activity as miners sought their fortune.

Much of the work was done by hand, so the number of men scattered across the hillsides has to be wondered at considering that every where you look there are signs of previous toil.

You are reminded that the whole area has been subject to mining activity — the evidence is everywhere. However, some mineshafts can be hidden by partial collapse and vegetation, others are small in section but quite deep. Some edges of shafts can be unstable.

*It is in the interests of your safety that you should not deviate from the trail or stand too close to the edge of any shaft.*

## Geology

Tin mineralisation appears to be the result of the intrusion of hot magmas now named the Elizabeth Creek Granites. This magma, rich in minerals, has allowed tin and other ores to migrate into other rocks (called host rocks) present at the time. Tin and tungsten mineralisation lie closer to the magma while a copper, silver and lead zone lies further away from the emplacing magma. However, the mineralisation is not distributed evenly through the host rocks.

All rocks are subject to pressure of some type. When they are intruded by magmas, they warp, fold, and crack. Very often, movement will also occur along these cracks. The resulting openings in the rock are called shears or fissures. They are not uniform, but bulge and twist along their length, and it is into these spaces that the ore will deposit. At times, movement in the host rock can result in crushing of the rock in the zone of movement. The resulting breccia may also be infiltrated with ore. At other times, the hot ore can react chemically with the old rocks giving diffuse enriched zones. These intrusions of minerals into existing rock strata in all these different ways form what are referred to as lodes. The majority of ore bodies in the field are lens-shaped or lenticular and pipe-like and are called fissure infill orebodies.

Overall, though, the ore bodies are a varied and fragmented lot that stretch the skills of any miner in trying to discover new commercially viable deposits. The old Cornish miners had a saying about tin — 'where she be, there she be'. Roughly translated, cassiterite deposits are where you find them. Even the most modern methods of exploration have not conquered the tin puzzle.

### Tin Ore Production

Production of minerals from the Herberton — Mount Garnet Field as reported by the Department of Mines 1980. Note the two categories for tin.

Lode Tin 77,960 tonnes	Silver 130,845 kg.
Alluvial Tin 53,739 tonnes	Scheelite 47 tonnes (A Tungsten ore)
Copper 12,090 tonnes	W/Sn ore 30 tonnes
Lead 11,832 tonnes	Molybdenum 25 tonnes
Wolframite 3949 tonnes (A Tungsten ore)	Bismuth 10 tonnes
Iron 1325 tonnes	Gold 10.51 kg.
Antimony 202 tonnes	(Sn = Tin, W = Tungsten)



Goanna

## Flora and Fauna

Herberton township is at an altitude of some 900 metres (3000 feet) above sea level and some sections of the Great Northern Fire Trails are much higher. Stewart Head rises to 1220 metres (more than 4000 feet).

The district also lies just outside the high rainfall belt that gives rise to the rainforests. The area is also heavily mineralised. Little wonder then that Herberton has developed

a unique assemblage of native flora. The Wild River Bottlebrush is obvious in the river bed, Xanthorreas dot the hillsides, paper daisies and ground orchids show here and there. The larger trees include turpentines, lemon scented gums, bloodwoods, stringybarks and Gympie Messmate.

Slightly smaller are the numerous oaks and, here and there, cypress trees.

Interspersed below them are the smaller shrubs: the corky bark shrub, various acacias, and banksias. And as altitude increases, the unique plants of the mountain heathlands start to appear — the grevilles and their low sprawling relatives.

And every so often, some native fauna will be encountered. Generally the animals are shy and have disappeared well before they can be noticed, but... maybe a goanna will be spied, or a fruit bat high above — and even one of the roos that live on the hill.



Paper daisys



# The Great Northern Mines

## MacLeod Street Trail

Begin at the Great Northern Carpark. Follow the main access road past the mine buildings in the Great Northern and up a slope to a survey marker near a very impressive Xanthorrhoea (grass tree). Then walk around the shoulder of the hill crossing a rocky creek bed and round to the left following a mining haul road past the tunnel of the Canberra Phoenix mine to a T-junction. Do not attempt to investigate any mines! Take the left track down a long slope until a residence is sighted. Turn left at another T-junction below this residence to turn into MacLeod Street and thence to the bitumen road



which returns you past the Children's Centre to the Great Northern Carpark.

This is the signature Walk of the Great Northern Fire Trails. The trail consists of a short figure-of-eight pathway that takes you past the three main mineshafts that contributed the lion's share of tin ore production which, for decades, was the anchor of the economy of Herberton.

Begin from the Great Northern carpark and, at the first upward slope before you get to any buildings, turn left downhill towards a gully. This is Prospectors Gully (also called Great Northern Gully) where the discovery of tin ore was made on 19th April 1880. Beside the creek is the original Gully Shaft, now collapsed and full of water. The winding gear above this shaft was powered by a horse whim. Some mining relics are nearby. Please do not interfere with relics — they are part of our heritage.

Follow the trail upwards to rejoin the main trail. Turn left and continue into an area of mullock dumps. A sign will direct you upwards to the right to bring you to the Eastern Shaft and buildings. This mine was the second main shaft sunk on the claim and much of the original mining haul plant is still in place. All items are heritage listed and date from the 1880s. Some pieces of equipment are the only known examples of their kind left in Australia.

Continue on past the Eastern Shaft to loop back to rejoin the main trail to return towards the carpark. On route you will pass the No.3 Shaft and building. Begun in 1906, this was the last great producer of the Great Northern Mining Claim. Mining effectively ceased in the 1950s.

## Denbigh Road Trail

From the Carpark walk to the first T-junction, turn right uphill and continue until the T-junction with the Firetrail is reached. (This is the same route as described in the Magazine Road Escape Trail). At this point, however, take a right turn to begin the Denbigh Road Trail. This trail takes you upwards on a moderate slope past signs of previous mining activity until a large quarry is reached. This is the Ironclad mine — in its final days mined as an open cut operation.



Ironclad Mine

From here the firetrail veers slightly to the left and down a long slope where, at a T-junction, a right turn will take you into White Street and thus to Denbigh Rd and back into town past the Servicecenter. Walk back up John Street to the Mining Centre Carpark.

Several tracks lead off from the firetrail at various places but they are all less prominent than the firetrail. Stay on the firetrail to complete the walk.

## Magazine Road Escape

Start at the Great Northern Carpark and follow the MacLeod Street directions to the first T-junction. Turn right here and walk up a fairly steep mining trail past a number of mineshafts and other evidence of mining to another T-junction onto a much wider trail. This is the Herberton Firetrail — the firebreak that protects Herberton from wildfires. Turn left here and walk up a quite steep part of the firetrail. Some nice views of Herberton can be seen from this area, but be careful of your footing on the loose surface.

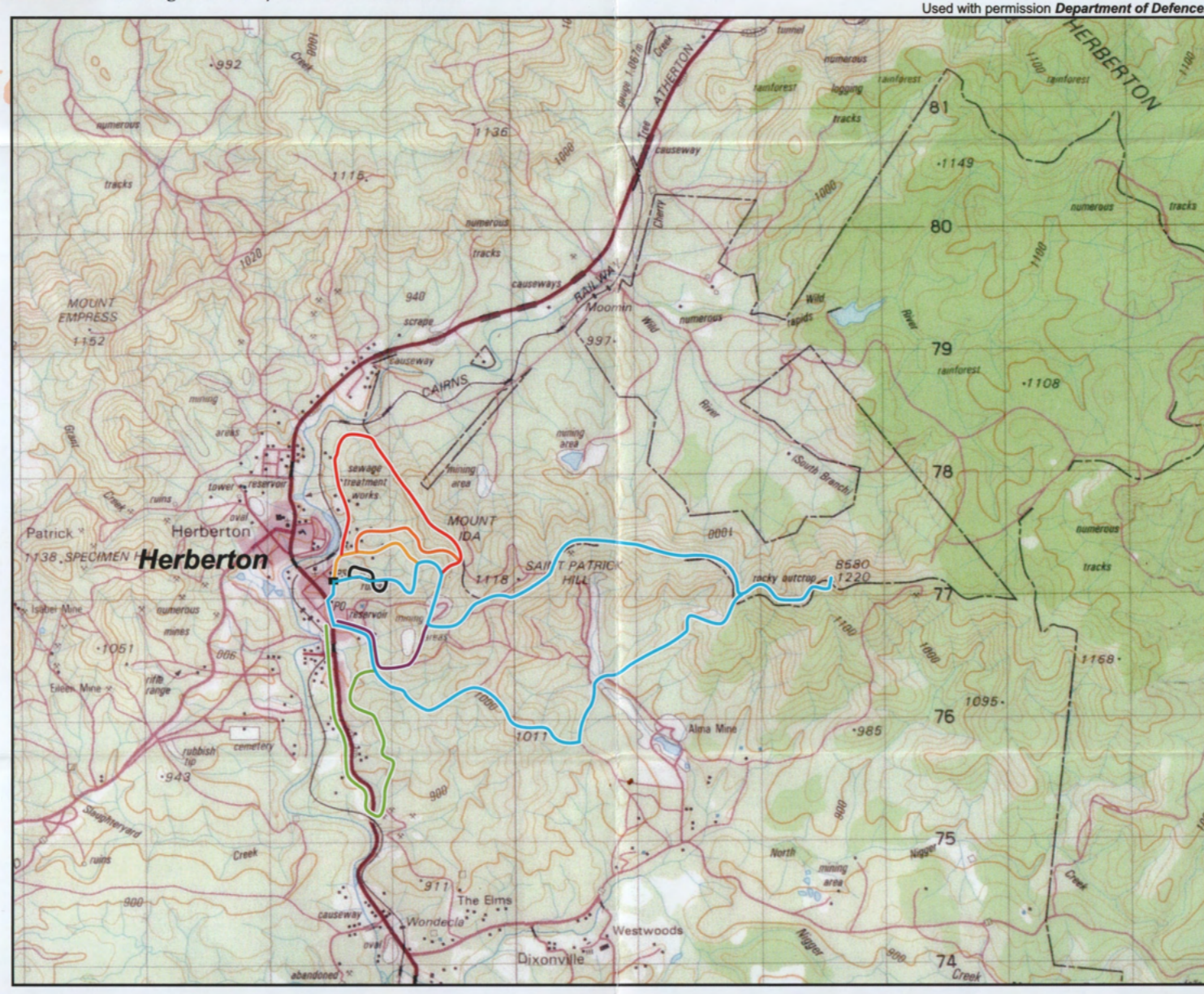
At the top of this steep slope you can assess your fitness for tackling the Mt Ida Loop which is much steeper still. If you choose not to confront Mt Ida, turn left onto the trail that leads downwards along the shoulder of the hill. This 'escape' track takes you back to Magazine Road and thus onto the bitumen that will take you back past the Children's Centre to the Great Northern Carpark.

## Mt Ida Loop

This trail is not too long but because of its steepness is better suited to fairly fit walkers.

You will need to exercise care with your footing on loose surfaces. Begin at the Great Northern Carpark and follow the directions for the Magazine Road Escape trail until you get to the top of the steep firetrail slope where the Escape trail turns off. Walk upwards a little further on the Firetrail and follow it as it turns to the left. You are now on the Mt Ida Loop, which is the continuation of the well-formed firetrail.

You will now have three distinct steep climbs and descents across the three peaks of Mt Ida. Many mineshafts are evident and spectacular views across Herberton and the neighbouring valleys will be seen. At the top of Mt Ida you can also look behind you to the left and see the cliffs of Stewart Head in the distance — another walking track destination. You will also notice the different vegetation on the peak — mountain heath plants are making their appearance. Keep following the firetrail to return to the bitumen at Mowbray Road. This road leads you back towards the township, past the Children's Centre, to return to the Great Northern Carpark.



Legend for the map: Great Northern Mines Paths | MacLeod Street Trail | Magazine Road Escape Trail | Mt Ida Firetrail | Denbigh Road Trail | Southern Firetrail | Stewart Head Trail

## Southern Firetrail

The Southern Firetrail is an extension of the Denbigh Rd Trail. At the T-junction that leads to White Street, turn left instead of right. Stay with the obvious firetrail track (a less well defined track is just above the firetrail) and proceed out towards Wondecla village. The Southern Firetrail takes you behind the houses that follow the highway out to Wondecla, past terraces that were part of an early garden, and on until a disused railway is reached. Descend to the road, cross it with care and begin your return to Herberton by walking up the trail on the left above the highway.

You can now follow the highway back into town, returning past the Servicecenter and John Street to the Mining Centre Carpark.

## Stewart Head Trail

This is the longest of the Great Northern Fire Trails. Follow the directions given for the first part of the Denbigh Road Trail up to the open cut mine (the Ironclad). Just past the Ironclad a small trail (two wheel tracks) leads off the firetrail to the left. This is the start of the Stewart Head Trail.

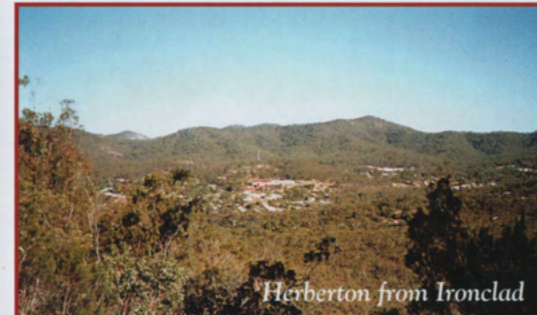
The track travels upward towards the ridge top that is called St Patrick Hill on the map. Most of the way the trail stays just south of the spine of that ridge. Keep going down and up another series of hills, some quite steep until the trail sign pointing to Stewart Head is reached. It is less than 400 metres cross country to the top — and the views are spectacular.

Rest a while, then return to the trail sign, turn left and continue following the track downwards until two quarries are reached. Just past them a sign points back towards Herberton which is just two large hills away.

The trail meets the Denbigh Road Trail at White Street to return you to town.



Herberton from Mt Ida



Herberton from Ironclad



Stewart Head

## TRAIL DETAILS

Trail Name	Distance	Difficulty	Time
Great Northern Mines	1.0 kms	Easy	Less than 1 hour
MacLeod Street Trail	2.1 kms	Easy to moderate	About 1 hour
Magazine Road Escape Trail	3.4 kms	Moderate	About 1½ hours
Mt Ida Firetrail	5.7 kms	Difficult (steep)	2½ hours
Denbigh Road Trail	3.0 kms	Moderate	1½ hours
Southern Firetrail	6 kms	Moderate	3 hours
Stewart Head Trail	12 kms	Moderate to difficult	Most of a day

Note: Conditions on the trails can vary. Be aware that in the wet season, high rainfall events can cause wash-outs, and during the dry season fire could temporarily close the tracks. Generally though, the trails are usable most of the year.