



Steels Creek Clamberers

Walk Report

Name of Walk: Donnelly's Weir to Maroondah Dam and return
Date of Walk: 25th November 2012
Length of Walk: Approximately 6 kilometres
Weather: Cool and overcast
Leader of Walk: David Allan
Number of Walkers: Varied - Nine in attendance, six walkers
Track notes, points of interest: Met at the car park for Donnelly's Weir, a short distance from the weir and its picnic facilities. Toilets and water available at and near the picnic facilities. One adult and two children decided to stay at the weir and await the return of the other walkers. The rest walked back southwards down the access road for a couple of hundred metres to the start of the walk alongside the Maroondah Aqueduct. The walk along the aqueduct was a beautiful and peaceful stroll, with ducks and a duckling seen on the water, and yellow-tailed black cockatoos spotted in the trees overhead. This section of the forest escaped the ravages of the 2009 fires and was looking beautiful in its late spring lushness. Where the track reaches the point where the aqueduct emerges from the tunnel under the hill from Maroondah Dam outlet tower, evidence of old buildings (street channels, steps to nowhere) can be seen, possible remains of the original construction camp for the aqueduct and tunnel dating from around the 1920's. The track then becomes a Melbourne Water access road that climbs gradually to a low saddle before descending towards Maroondah Dam. When nearing the dam, the water and outlet tower can be glimpsed through trees on the left of the track. Steps lead up to a good lookout overlooking the peaceful lake of Maroondah dam, which was within a few centimetres of its spillway level. The view across the dam was notable for the old exotic trees planted as part of the original dam construction, and the cloud-shrouded peaks of Mt Riddell and its neighbors south of Healseville. We then walked down to the dam spillway (not flowing) and spotted trout swimming in the water. We then retraced our steps to Donnelly's Weir for lunch followed by a discussion of ideas for walks for 2013.
This walk is a pleasant easy stroll through beautiful stands of forests and regrowth, and with historical interest and some fine views around Maroondah Dam itself. Donnelly's Weir is a pleasant picnic spot at a small but historic part of Melbourne's water supply system. As with many of the picnic grounds originally established by the old MMBW, Donnelly's Weir is also extensively vegetated with exotic trees, such as cypress and redwood, now large mature trees heading towards their centenary.
The walk can be modified to include other loop tracks (for example, Henderson's Hill) that take walkers through the popular Maroondah Dam picnic and garden areas and back across the dam wall.