

Further to these general comments, prospectors are encouraged to observe the provisions of the PMAV Code of Conduct whether or not they are members of the Association.

The PMAV Code of Conduct

PMAV members should:

- be informed of all statutory regulations that govern prospecting activities in Victoria.
- pursue where practicable, methods to improve the natural environment.
- ensure that at all times activities are conducted in a manner that complies with health & safety requirements.
- promote responsible prospecting and educate others about our Code.
- only conduct prospecting activities on private land with the consent of the owner.

Safety while prospecting

A day in the bush prospecting can be great fun, however your personal safety should also be considered:

- Take adequate water.
- Beware of mine shafts.
- Check the weather forecast and wear appropriate clothing.
- Fire is a particularly dangerous hazard for prospectors during summer. Be careful with campfires and always check for fire bans.
- Tell someone responsible where you're going and when you will be back.
- A basic knowledge of first aid is useful.

Further information

DPI's Minerals Business Centre

The Centre sells Miner's Rights, maps and other publications and can advise of other sales locations.

Location: Level 8, 240 Victoria Parade, East Melbourne. Phone: (03) 9412 5103.

State forests and other public land

The Minerals Business Centre can also provide advice relating to forests and other Crown land.

Parks and reserves

Parks Victoria Information Centre: 131 963*, or visit the web-site at www.parks.vic.gov.au

Prospectors and Miners Association

Phone: 0408 176 496 or visit: www.pmav.asn.au

Aboriginal cultural heritage

The Aboriginal Affairs Victoria web-site is at: www.dvc.vic.gov.au/aav.htm

European heritage

For further information call Heritage Victoria on (03) 9655 6519 or visit www.heritage.vic.gov.au

For more information on DPI or the above matters call DPI's Customer Service Centre on 136 186* or visit www.dpi.vic.gov.au

* Ask the call centre operators for the nearest DPI or Parks Victoria offices for advice on specific locations.

ISBN 0 7306 9489 5

© State Government of Victoria, Department of Primary Industries 2003



Prospecting Guide



April 2003



Introduction

Prospecting typically involves the use of metal detectors, hand tools, pans or sluices in the search for gold, gemstones and other minerals.

Prospecting can be an exciting experience. Many of the world's largest gold nuggets have been found in the Golden Triangle of central Victoria. Elsewhere, gemstone fossickers have found sapphires, zeolites and agate.

This leaflet, prepared by Parks Victoria, the Prospectors and Miners Association of Victoria (PMAV), Department of Primary Industries (DPI), Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) and the Victorian Gem Clubs Association (VGCA), is designed to help you enjoy this experience while protecting the natural environment and our cultural heritage.

Do you need a permit to prospect?

Yes, it is called a Miner's Right. A Miner's Right is a permit for prospecting in Victoria and must be carried at all times while you are prospecting. The only exception is if you are part of an organised group prospecting under the authority of a valid Tourist Fossicking Authority.

The Mineral Resources Development Act 1990 sets out the rights and obligations of the holder of a Miner's Right.

Important points of the Act include that you must not:

- Enter onto private property without the permission of the landowner.
- Prospect on a current Mining Licence without the permission of the licence holder.

- Use any equipment for excavation on the land, other than hand tools.
- Use explosives.
- Remove or damage any shrubs or trees.
- Disturb, destroy, interfere with or endanger an archaeological site or Aboriginal place or object.

In addition:

- You must repair any damage to the land arising out of the search.
- Children under 18 years of age do not need a Miner's Right if accompanied by an adult Miner's Right holder if prospecting.
- Do not disturb or remove any heritage features or objects (such as stone tools, middens, earthen mounds, bricks, building stone and old mining machinery).
- Treasure troves (hidden valuables) that may be discovered while fossicking belong to the Crown and must be reported to the Police.

Failure to comply with the above can result in prosecution.

Where can I go prospecting?

Prospecting is permitted in most State Forests, many Reserves and private property with landholder's consent.

Prospecting is also permitted in designated areas in the following Parks:

Beechworth Historic Park
Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park
Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park
Enfield State Park
Greater Bendigo National Park
Heathcote-Graytown National Park
Kooyoora State Park
Paddys Ranges State Park

Reef Hills State Park
St Arnaud Range National Park
Steiglitz Historic Park
Warrandyte State Park

Gemstone only fossicking:

Cape Liptrap Coastal Park
Otway National Park
Mornington Peninsula National Park
Warby Range State Park

Prospecting is not allowed in Reference Areas, most State or National Parks (with the exception of those listed above) and certain streams and rivers. These streams and rivers are listed on DPI's web-site.

Parks Victoria and DPI will be pleased to advise you where you are permitted to prospect. Refer to the contact numbers overleaf to find out the right person to talk to in your local area.

Minimum impact prospecting

You can enjoy prospecting and help minimise any impact in the following ways:

- Prospect only in the permitted area.
- Only drive your vehicles on tracks and roads open to the public.
- Only park your vehicle on the roadside.
- Take all rubbish home or place it in a bin where provided. **Do not bury it.**
- Minimise any damage to vegetation including the ground layer.
- Restore the ground as you found it- backfill any holes you dig and replace any leaf litter as it was as soon as practicable.