

In 1867 a discovery of alluvial gold in a gully near the Mary River began the first major gold rush in Queensland, rescued the Colony's economy and founded the mining town of Gympie. Today tourists and holidaymakers can still visit and try their luck in a gold-bearing gully in the town, at the Deep Creek Fossicking Area. This area was set aside for fossickers in 1986 and is controlled by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines and the Cooloola Shire Council under the *Fossicking Act 1994*.

Access

Deep Creek Fossicking Area is at the southern entrance to Gympie, between the Bruce Highway and Brisbane Road. From the south exit the Bruce Highway at Brisbane Road or Jubilee Street and proceed along Araluen Terrace to Counter Street. From the north exit along River Road and Graham Street to turn right into Victoria Street. There are two entrance turnstiles, one each at the ends of Counter Street and Victoria Street. Yellow metal posts mark the boundaries of the Fossicking Area; please do not go outside these.

History

Gympie was discovered in October 1867 when a digger named James Nash, who was apparently travelling from Nanango to Maryborough, happened to camp near the gully which now bears his name. In trying some prospects from the wash in the gully, he obtained several ounces of alluvial gold in a few hours. After further checking he continued to Maryborough and registered his claim. Immediately the discovery became generally known, diggers swarmed from all parts in such numbers that within two months there were at least 15,000 men on the field. For the first few months, work was confined almost entirely to the alluvium of the creeks and gullies, which were easily worked and exceptionally rich; nuggets of

large size were found in the early days. Production from reefs commenced in 1868 and large-scale deep mining occurred from 1872 to 1925, when exhaustion of ground and drainage problems made it uneconomic.

Gold in Deep Creek

The area of gold bearing alluvium shown on the accompanying map is taken from the geological map of Government Geologist B Dunstan of 1912. Gold in this part of Deep Creek was derived from weathering and erosion of several reefs in the vicinity - namely the Columbia, Smithfield, Monkland, Never Mind and Russell. No records exist of the early alluvial diggings to indicate the depth of the alluvium or its gold content. The area was extensively worked in the first couple of years, but there is the likelihood that gold may still be found as a result of reconcentration over the years or in pockets missed by the early miners. The most likely places are along the banks and bed of the creek, in particular on the inside of the creek bends. The alluvium there consists of silty sand, which incorporates sand and small rock chips from old crushing batteries upstream. Depth in the creek banks exceeds 1m and in places may reach 5m.

Panning

Panning is the simplest recovery method. The pan is filled with sand or gravel, which has been sieved to remove the coarse fraction and water added. The material is mixed to slurry, and then the pan is gently tilted and rotated at the same time so that the over-flowing water carries off the lightest material. The pan is then swirled to spread out the residue containing the heavy material for close inspection.

Requirements

To fossick you need to hold a Fossickers Licence. Accordingly, licences can be obtained from the Department's office in Brisbane or

the Cooloola Information Centre on the Bruce Highway at Monkland. Hand tools only are permitted (including metal detectors); eductor dredges or machinery of any type is not allowed.

To fossick outside the Fossicking Area the holder of a licence must get the written permission of the relevant land owner.

Camping and pets

The Fossicking Area is surrounded by private land used for cattle grazing, so camping is not allowed and pets are excluded to avoid disturbance to stock.

Code of conduct

To protect the area for the future and to minimise conflict with other visitors, please:

- Make safe any excavation on leaving.
- Remove all rubbish and dispose of properly.
- Keep vehicles outside the gates.
- Do not interfere with the vegetation, stock or wildlife.
- Minimise noise from radios, vehicles etc.
- Do not light any fires (except if proper fireplaces are provided as part of picnic facilities sometime in the future).

For further information:

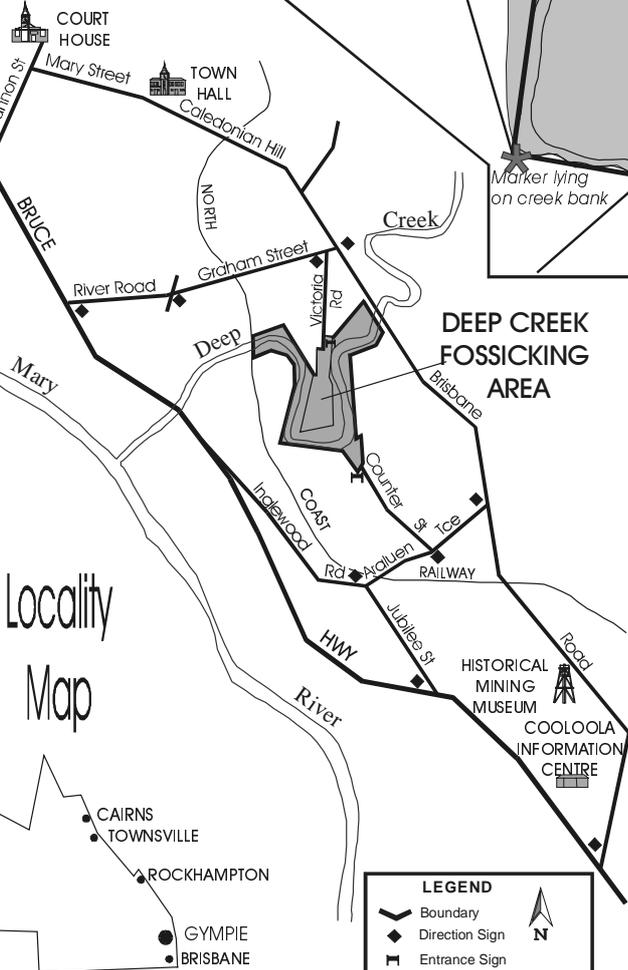
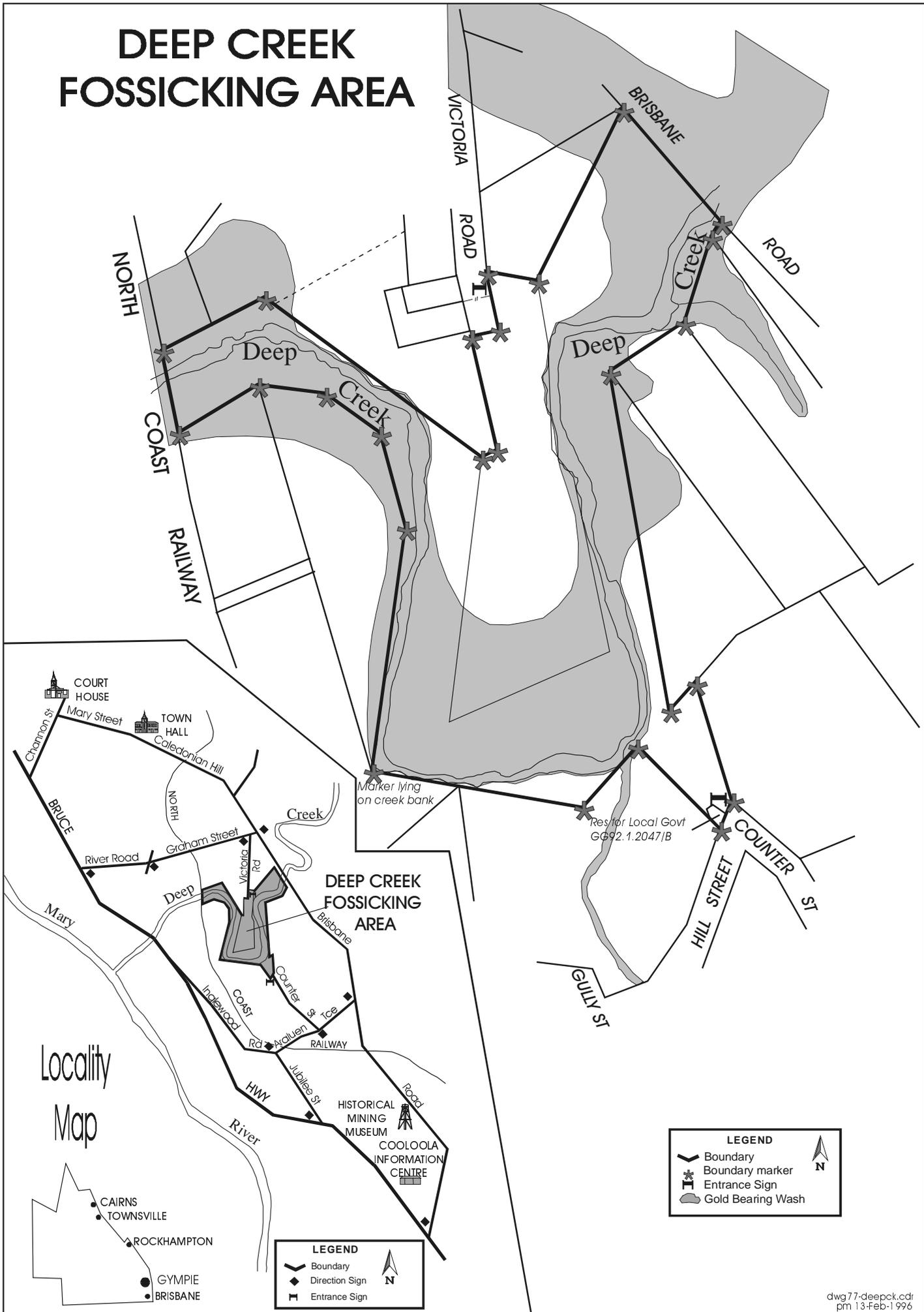
*The Mining Registrar
Brisbane District Office
Podium 2, Ground Floor
Cnr Main and Vulture Streets
Woolloongabba Qld 4102*

*(PO Box 1475)
Coorparoo Qld 4151*

*Telephone (07) 3238 3733
Facsimile (07) 3405 5345
Website: www.nrm.qld.gov.au*

*Cooloola Information Centre
Bruce Highway
Monkland
Gympie Qld 4570
Telephone (07) 4482 5444
Facsimile (07) 4482 8205*

DEEP CREEK FOSSICKING AREA



LEGEND

- Boundary
- Boundary marker
- Entrance Sign
- Gold Bearing Wash

LEGEND

- Boundary
- Direction Sign
- Entrance Sign