A Study of the Land

in the

MOUNT BUFFALO NATIONAL PARK

R. K. Rowe

Soil Conservation Authority

1970

SOIL CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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Preface

This land study was carried out by the Soil Conservation Authority to provide basic information which would assist the National Parks Authority in the future planning and management of the Mt Buffalo National Park. In appreciation of this, the National Parks Authority has shared the cost of this production.

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SUMMARY

The Mt. Buffalo National Park has an area of 27,280 acres and dominates the southern part of the valley of the Ovens River in north-eastern Victoria. It consists mainly of an elevated granite block with a mildly dissected plateau at about 4,500 feet to 5,300 feet and very steep to precipitous slopes down to valleys at about 800 feet, in the east, where a small area of sedimentary rocks is included in the Park.

The climate ranges from sub-alpine at the upper elevations, where total precipitation is above 75 inches and snow lies for up to three months in winter, to the milder valley climate with rainfall of about 40 inches and no winter snow.

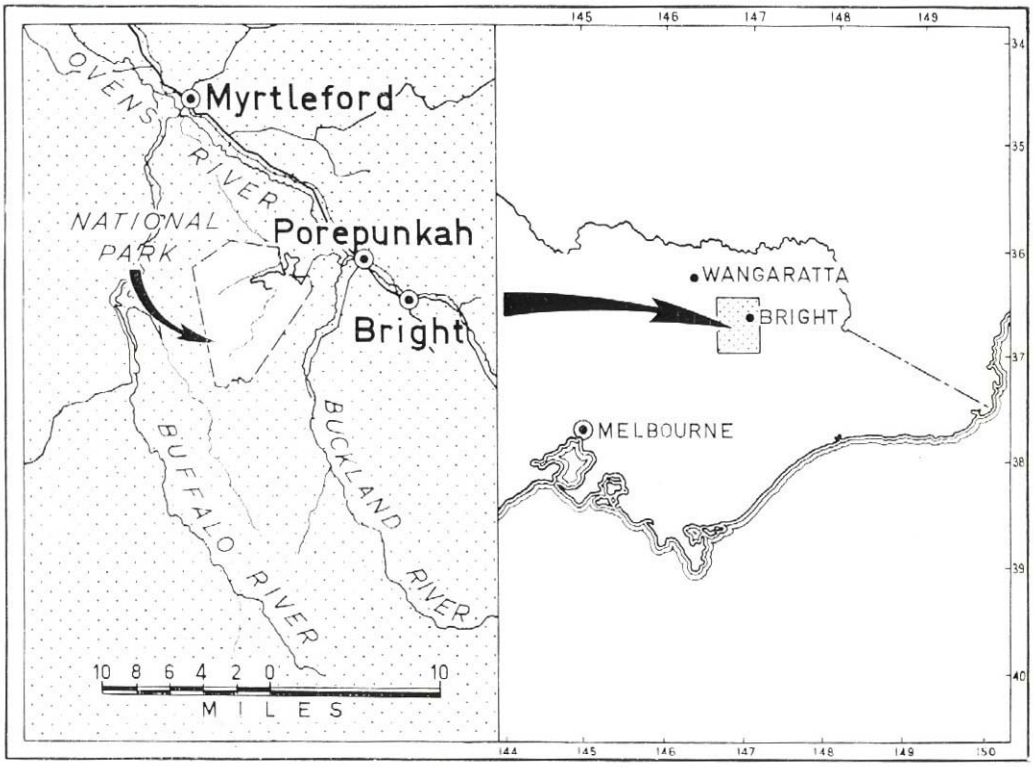
Soils at the lower elevations are fairly deeply weathered but are often formed on stony colluvial deposits. Although deep weathering of granite has occurred in places, the bulk of the soils are shallow or lithosolic. At the upper elevations soils with an organic-rich surface are common. Detailed descriptions of the dominant soil groups and analytical data are given in the appendix.

The dominant vegetative communities, at the lower elevations, are wet sclerophyll forest of peppermint and gum with some dry sclerophyll forest on drier sites. Above about 3,500 feet alpine ash forests become dominant and eventually give way to communities containing mountain gum and snow gum above about 4,500 feet. As elevation increases snow gum woodland becomes dominant in all areas except the high-valley plains where heaths and grassland occur without trees.

The Park has been popular with tourists since the early days of settlement, and cattle have been grazed in it over most of this time until 1958. Fire appears to have been possibly the main cause of changes in the vegetation and may have initiated much erosion. The construction of roads and tracks has contributed to the erosion. Although evidence is common, there are no extensive areas affected.

Some general conclusions are reached about the future development of the park, primarily as an area for the preservation of the environment, including primitive areas, and secondly as a scenic area.

MOUNT BUFFALO NATIONAL PARK



Plan of Locality