

DUCK CREEK AND SHEEP STATION CREEK DESIGNATED FOSSICKING LAND

Quilpie Shire Council

The Toompine opal field is located between Quilpie and Yowah and includes Lushingtons, Coparella, Duck Creek, Sheep Station Creek and Emu Creek workings. Mining for opal has been carried out extensively in these areas since the 1890s using underground and open cut methods. At Duck Creek and Sheep Station Creek mining activity is now limited to small scale hand mining on mining claims. Some machine mining has previously been undertaken on mining leases and a few leases remain current

The Duck Creek and Sheep Station Creek Designated Fossicking Land was established under the Fossicking Act in 1995 by the Department of Mines and Energy, with the co-operation of the Quilpie Shire Council and the land holder to provide for tourist and recreational fossicking.

Access

The Duck Creek workings are located adjacent to Tirga Station and are situated on a low flat lying drainage divide between Duck Creek draining to the northeast and tributaries of Yowah Creek draining to the south. The workings are about 62km by road from Toompine (see map for details). Sheep Station Creek and Emu Creek workings are just to the south being situated at the head of Sheep Station Creek which is a tributary of Yowah Creek.

Queensland's opal fields

The occurrence and mining of opal in western Queensland are described in some detail in the *Queensland Opal* kit, which includes a commentary and maps.

The opal fields are within a belt of deeply weathered Cretaceous sedimentary rocks known as the Winton Formation, which extends in a northwesterly direction from the New South Wales border at Hungerford stretching west of Cunnamulla, Quilpie, Longreach and Winton to Kynuna, a distance of about 1000km.

Fossicking for the opal

The Duck Creek and Sheep Station Creek workings offer the visitor a chance to experience first hand typical opal bearing country in western Queensland. The remoteness and harsh conditions endured by the early miners is all too evident. Whilst much of the opal-bearing

ground occurs at depths beyond fossickers, the spoil dumps of the old workings offer the best chance of a find. "Specking" fragments of opal or ironstone matrix from the grounds surface is always a possibility.

Requirements

A person fossicking for opal is required to be the holder of a Fossickers Licence issued under the Fossicking Act 1994. Licences are available for individuals, families, clubs, educational organisations and commercial tourist operators for terms varying from 1 month to 12 months. Fees vary accordingly. Licences are normally valid for the whole of the State, although they may be issued for local areas if desired.

Fossickers Licences can be obtained locally from the Mining Registrar or Shire Council office and from agents at Cooladdi and Toompine.

Hand tools only are permitted (no machine mining). Commercial mining activities still occur in the Designated Fossicking Land and a number of mining tenures are current; **these mining tenures must not be entered without the written permission of the holders.**

Camping

Camping is allowed in the Duck Creek and Sheep Station Creek Designated Fossicking Land for a maximum period of 1 month. A Fossickers Camping Permit is required, which can be obtained from the same outlets as for licences. No facilities exist and due to the remoteness of the area visitors should ensure that adequate supplies of food, water and fuel are carried. Top-up bore water may be available from a tap provided by the land holder at the large steel gate 3.5km north of the entrance sign.

Precautions

The best time to visit the opal fields is April - September. Summer should be avoided due to the high temperatures and possible heavy rains making road access impossible in some areas. Road conditions should be checked with the RACQ or local police. Emergency supplies including food, water, first aid kit and vehicle spares should be carried when travelling in remote areas.

Fossicking around old shafts requires care and attention to safety at all

times. In particular, avoid the loose edges to open shafts and always keep children under supervision. Do not enter shafts; unstable ground, bad air, and snakes and spiders are some of the hazards that may be present.

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.
- To avoid erosion, keep vehicles to established tracks.
- Do not interfere with the vegetation, stock or wildlife.
- Control pets so they do not annoy other visitors, stock or wildlife.

For further information:

*The Mining Registrar
Quilpie District Office
Court House, Buln Buln Street
(PO Box 29) Quilpie Qld 4480
Telephone (07) 46561 266
Facsimile (07) 46561 442*

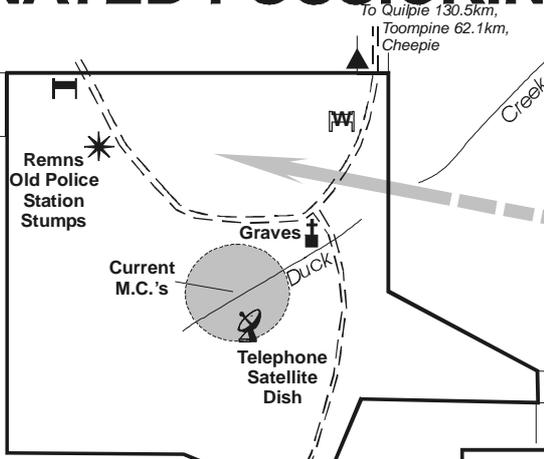
*The Chief Executive Officer
Quilpie Shire Council
PO Box 57
Quilpie Qld 4480
Telephone (07) 4661 133
Facsimile (07) 46561 441*

Duckck2.doc May2001

DUCK CREEK & SHEEP STATION CREEK DESIGNATED FOSSICKING LAND

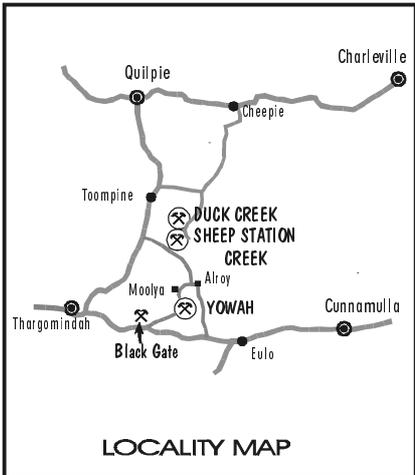
DUCK CREEK DESIGNATED FOSSICKING LAND

SHEEP STATION CREEK DESIGNATED FOSSICKING LAND



LEGEND

- Boundary
- Main Entrance sign
- Boundary Limit
- Warning Sign



Quilpie to Duck Creek

- km
- 0.00 Quilpie Post Office, Head West towards Eromanga
 - 2.7 Turn left onto Thargominda Rd
 - 35.7 Cross Bulloo River, go straight on
 - 70.4 Coparella turn-off on left, go straight on
 - 73.6 Turn left before grid, onto Boran Rd and follow fence
 - 84.6 Go through double iron gates (Coparella/Glen Valley boundary)
 - 94.6 Boran Homestead turn-off on left, keep right and go straight on
 - 98.0 Cross Boran/Wareo boundary grid, go straight on (ignore Old Duck Creek sign on right)
 - 109.8 Turn right at "T" intersection with Big Creek Rd
 - 111.0 Wareo Homestead on left, go straight on
 - 111.8 Turn right onto Tirga/Duck Creek access road
 - 123.0 Turn right before the Tirga Homestead gate and follow the netting fence
 - 123.6 Cross creek, go straight on
 - 126.4 Go through double iron gates (Tirga/Wareo boundary)
 - 127.0 Turn left through large iron gate and watertap, and head south along fence
 - 130.5 Cross northern boundary of Duck Creek Designated Fossicking Land
 - 131.4 Turn off to Sheep Station Creek Designated Fossicking Land

