

Willows is one of six areas of Designated Fossicking Land on the central Queensland sapphire fields where recreational and tourist fossicking is possible under simple Fossickers Licences. However, certain types of commercial mining tenures are also allowed in these areas. Five Fossicking Areas have also been established to allow fossicking away from competition from commercial miners. Generally the Designated Fossicking Land encompasses deeper wash, but patches of ground suitable for shallow hand excavation occur in places. Other brochures describe the general background to the fields and the individual areas.

Willows is a discrete area of open bushland and semi-cleared areas centred on the small township of Willows Gemfields south of the Capricorn Highway.

Access and facilities

Turn off the Capricorn Highway to the south 69km west of Emerald, and follow the mostly sealed road for 9km to the signpost indicating the northern entrance to *Willows*. The road continues through the area to the township.

There are two caravan/camping areas, a shop, post office, telephone, fuel and water supplies.

One mining claim offers visitors buckets of wash and equipment to try their luck for a small fee.

Requirements

Fossicking requires a Fossickers Licence under the *Fossicking Act 1994*. Individual, family, club, educational organisation and commercial tour operator licences can be obtained for periods of

between one and twelve months, with fees varying accordingly. They can be obtained from the Mining Registrar at Emerald, the local caravan parks, or the Department's other offices throughout the State. Hand tools only are permitted.

Camping

Private camping is **not** permitted at *Willows*. However, caravan/camping areas are situated in the township.

Sapphire occurrence

Wash is extensive throughout most of the area. In the north the 'Duffer' contains sapphire-bearing wash, which varies from 500mm in depth in the southeast to 2m in the north. It consists of pebbles and boulders of billy in a red-brown soil, resting on a yellowish sandstone-mudstone. Sapphires are predominantly greens and yellows and blues are rare. An interesting geobotanical feature is that blackbutt trees grow profusely on the wash but there are few elsewhere.

The 'Rubbish Tip' area, southwest of and perhaps a continuation of the Duffer run, has similar wash, except that it is mostly shallow, less than 500mm deep. 'Augies Gully' which is located on the western side of the area has produced some good finds in recent years, particularly large yellows.

The 'Thru-the-Fence' locality appears to be the most popular area to fossick, as it is just to the east of the township and caravan parks. The wash is similar in appearance to other parts, and on average about 600m deep. Some good quality and large stones have been found here, mostly greens, yellows and stars. Zircons

and rare diamonds have also been found.

Code of Conduct

- Use only safe working practices. Holes deeper than 2m or undermined overhangs **are not permitted**.
- Workings should be left in a safe, tidy condition so as not to endanger other persons or stock.
- Remove all rubbish** and bury human waste below 20cm depth.
- Do not interfere with any vegetation, stock or wildlife. Shooting is prohibited.
- Minimise noise and control pets at all times.
- Clear a 2m space around campfires.

An area of water facilities north of the town (RA 176) is excluded from the Designated Fossicking Land. Fossicking is not permitted on residential Miners Homestead Perpetual Leases in the town, or any Mining Leases or Mining Claims without permission of the holders.

Details of these can be obtained from the Mining Registrar. As of December 2002, a mining lease (ML 7295) and a mining claim (MC 3630) exist in the 'Thru-the-Fence' area.

For further information:

*The Mining Registrar
Department of Natural Resources
and Mines
State Government Building
99 Hospital Road
Emerald Qld 4720*

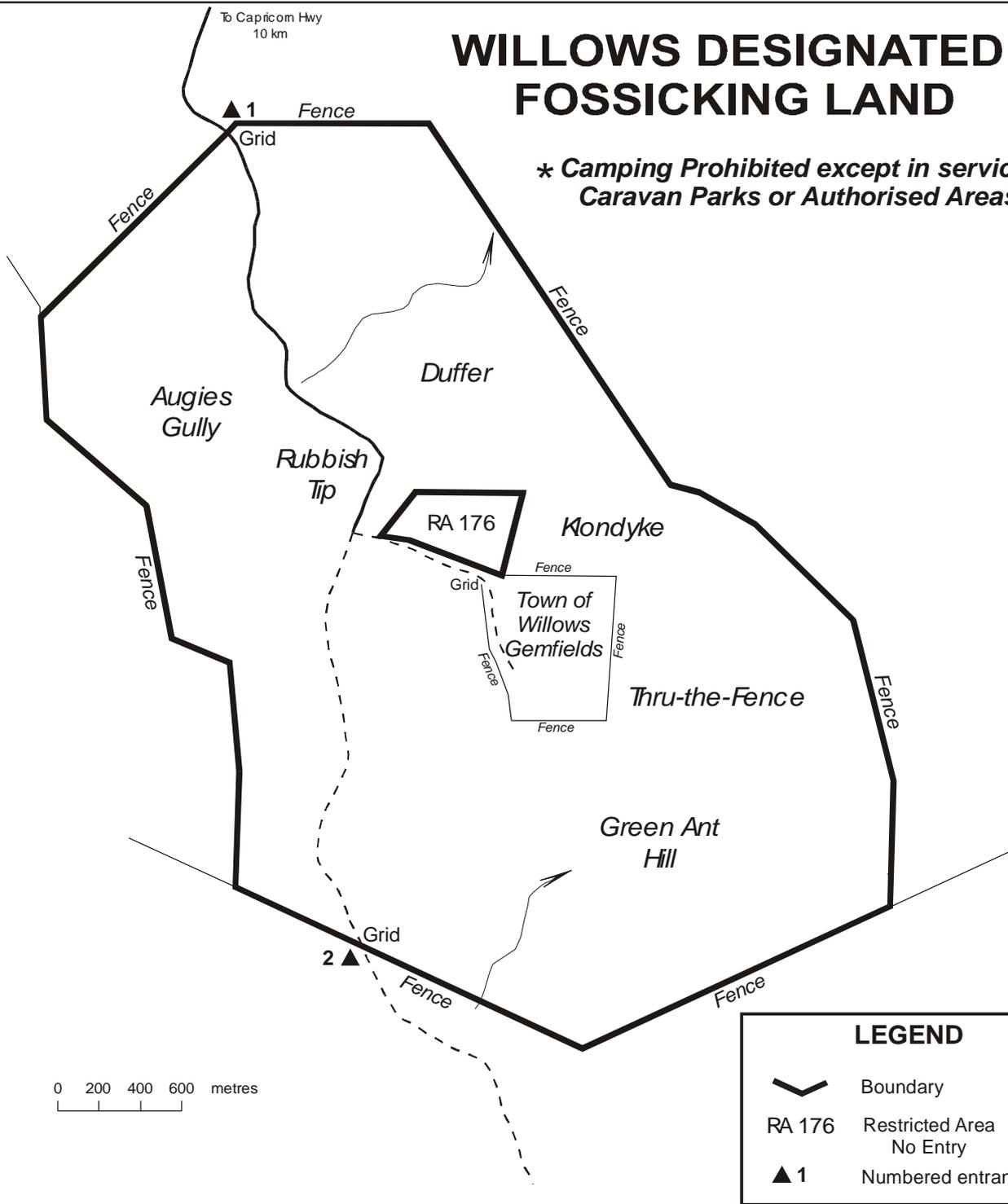
*PO Box 19
Emerald Qld 4720*

*Telephone: (07) 4987 9373
Facsimile: (07) 4987 9333
Website: www.nrm.qld.gov.au*

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WILLOWS DESIGNATED FOSSICKING LAND

*** Camping Prohibited except in serviced Caravan Parks or Authorised Areas. ***



LEGEND	
	Boundary
	Restricted Area No Entry
	Numbered entrance sign
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