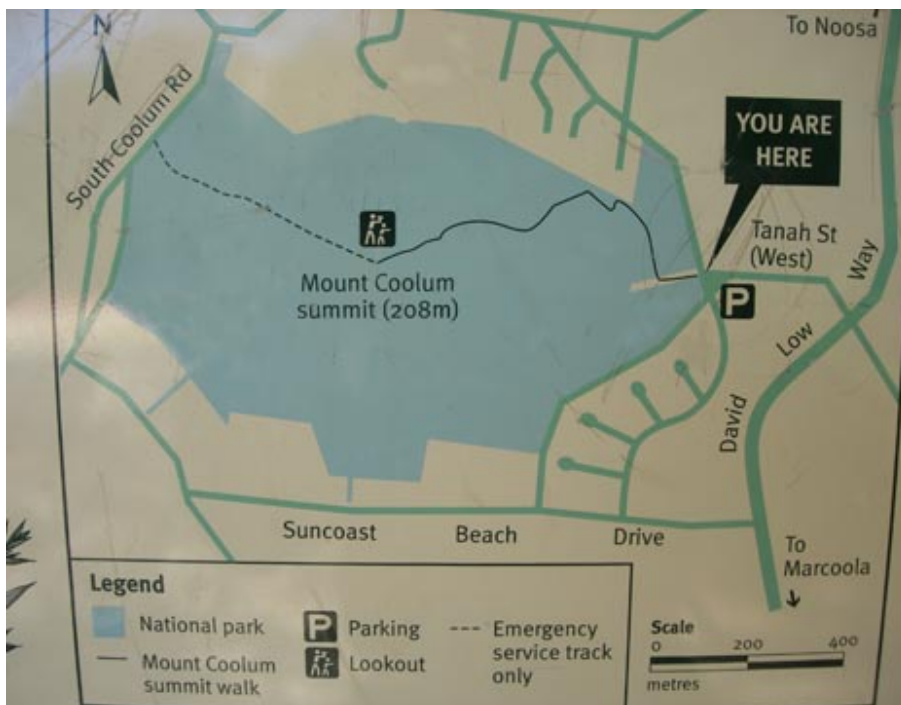




a southern profile of Mount Coolum, as seen from David Low Way

## Coolum Creek

Most notable about the Sunshine Coast, is the very narrow sprawl of buildings behind the coastline. Because everything is so spread out, there is never ceasing traffic north south. Climb Mt Coolum, and the shuttling traffic fades from view. The walker is eye to eye with aircraft on finals to Maroochydore Airport, and the course of the Maroochy River is a shining line snaking across the plain to the west.





On the initial climb up Mt Coolum, the view to the south is of Mudjimba or Old Woman Island, near the mouth of the Maroochy River. From the top, the mountain shoulder out to south west offers a view of the river as it runs north. The wide body of water in the centre (image below) is where the launch point at Stony Wharf Road gives access. At the lower right the river is about to turn west, and it is at this point that Coolum Creek joins. The treeline hides the small watercourse from the onlooker on Mt Coolum. To see the creek properly, a small watercraft is called for.





Top: Coolum Creek drains a large low lying plain to the west of Mt Coolum.

Below: Mt Coolum from Mt Ninderry





above: sugarcane tramway on Coolum Creek

West Coolum Road gives access to Coolum Creek about one kilometre upstream from the Coolum Creek Maroochy River confluence.. Canoeists approaching from further down the Maroochy River, can be sure of finding the right channel, as Coolum Creek runs north, and Maroochy, west. If the drainage canal 300 metres before Coolum Creek is taken, in error, the Pacific Motorway bridge, visible after 150 metres progress, will alert the navigator.

At the end of West Coolum Road, after one kilometre of gravel road, is a concrete ramp, and an Historical Notice reminds that at this point was the wharf for the Yandina to Maroochyore boat service, the only access until 1922.



Canoeists starting at the old wharf at West Coolum Road (picture below left), when going upstream should follow the eastern bank for the first 500 metres past the ramp, to avoid small islands on the western bank.

About 1.3 km up. the creek is split by an island, and the remains of sugarcane tramway bridges, form obstacles on both creek branches. The easiest portage is on the western creek branch, but both are problem free.

left: remains of the old wharf, and a view upstream of Coolum Creek

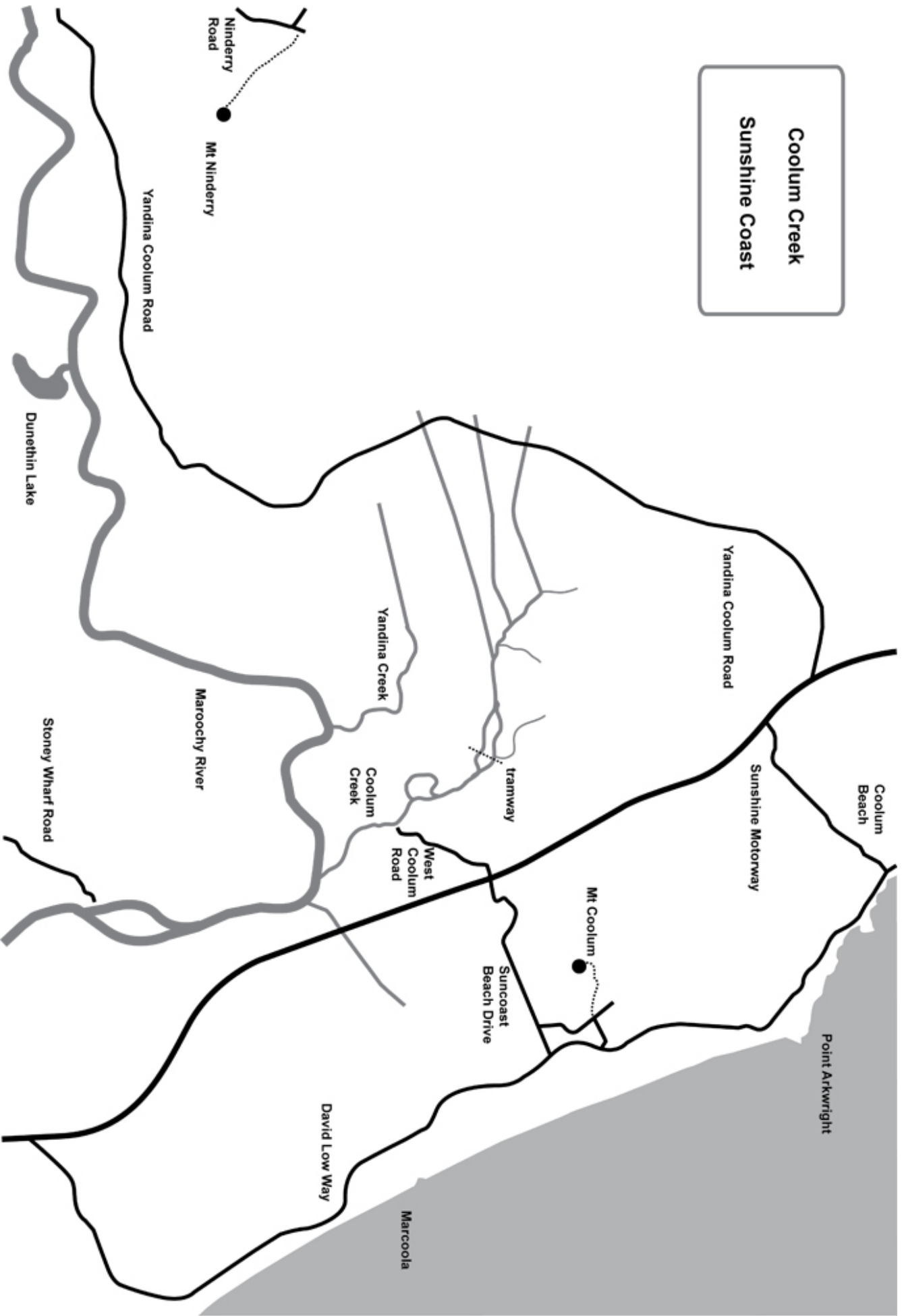


above: Coolum Creek

below: arrow straight drainage canal 2.4 km upstream from the old wharf



Coolum Creek  
Sunshine Coast



For the canoeist, Coolum Creek offers a pleasant high tide paddle. The Coolum Creek Conservation Area contains salt water mangrove habitat in its lower sections, and freshwater swamps in the upstream. The mangrove forest along the lower Coolum Creek is not just a narrow belt along the creek sides, with rising land beyond. The forest extends for kilometres, and is very little in elevation above the high tide level, being flooded by king tides and heavy rain.

To paddle through this area is to be aware of a beautiful deep forest landscape that is glimpsed in enduring shadows past the creekside vegetation, stretching out on a mosaic of sunlight and shadow. The birdlife is prolific. [The Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts](#) webpage on this area, says that 229 species of birds are recorded here. The passing paddler hears the sound of constant birdsong. Noisy Rainbow lorikeets feed on mangrove flowers above the creek.

There are extensive manmade drainage canals that drain the freshwater swamps on the plain to the west. The Yandina Coolum Road crosses these canals, in cleared fields where sugar cane was grown. Attempts were also made to convert the western freshwater swamp and wallum areas, to pasture.

Due, no doubt, to the still existent freshwater swamps, there are, at times, dense clouds of mosquitos to be endured. The sugarcane tramway bridges are too low to pass under at high tide, but are easy to portage on the bank, or to step from your boat onto.

below: the eastern tramway bridge

