



Mooloolah River National Park - a pool of water lies on the sandy Aemula trail after rain



above: The Kawana Way bridge over the Mooloolah River. The canoe launch site is 250 metres east of the bridge. Across the bridge, south from the round-a-bout, it is possible to see the start of the Meleleuca walking track in the Mooloolah River National Park.

Exploring Mooloolah River NP

The Mooloolah River rises on the eastern slopes of the Blackall Range, and flows for about 70 kilometres to enter the sea at southern Mooloolaba. Tributaries include Addington Creek, (dammed by the Ewen Maddock Dam), Sippy Creek, and Mountain Creek.

For the first six kilometers upstream from the mouth, the river is surrounded by housing, with large canal estates north and south of the river. There are various boat ramps on this section, such as off Brisbane Road where it crosses the Mooloolah River, and near the mouth off Parkyn Parade. Upstream from the Kawana Way bridge, the Mooloolah River is within the Mooloolah River National Park for the next six kilometres.



There is a canoe launch site 250 metres south from the Kawana Way bridge, which is the closest option for going upriver. The launch site is the sandy river bank, best at half tide and higher. It is ten kilometres upstream from the Kawana Way bridge to where Sippy Creek joins the Mooloolah River, and this junction approximately marks the tidal limit, and limit of sufficient water. Note that the property on the banks is privately owned for the last 4 kilometres before the Sippy Creek junction.

The last two kilometers of the river, before Sippy Creek, sees the river narrow in width. There are several points where log snags choke the river, and make access limited to the top of the tide. At the eight kilometre upstream mark, there was, in 2010, a fallen tree completely spanning the river, and another at the 8.6 km mark. Note that in the upper tidal reaches, near Sippy Creek junction, the top of the tide is an hour later than tide times for the mouth.

Mooloolah River

Sunshine Coast

Mooloolaba



Wyuna Canal

Sunshine MWY

Kawana Way

lagoon

Sippy Creek

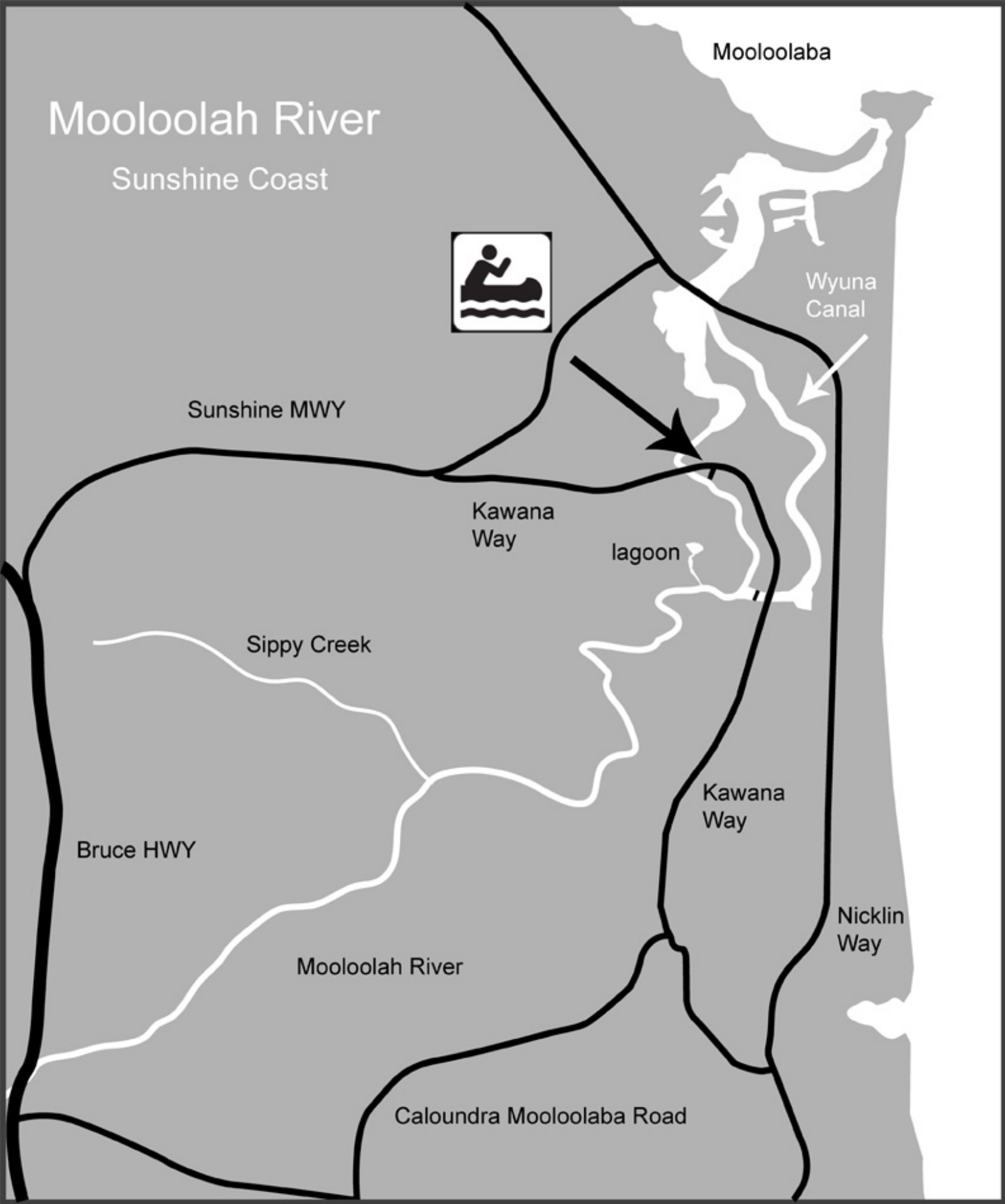
Kawana Way

Bruce HWY

Nicklin Way

Mooloolah River

Caloundra Mooloolaba Road





The tide can run quite quickly in the Mooloolah River, so timing your launch for the rising tide, to go upstream, will make the trip faster, and the launch easier. Above: the launch site, near the Kawana Way bridge, with two views upstream. This is typical estuarine environment, with mangroves on the high water line. The launch site is either a kind of soft coffee rock, or hard sand.

The paddler will share the water with power boats, and the section from the launch up to the Industrial Park and canal estate branch of the Mooloolah appears to be open to water skiers (permitted for 3.7 kilometres upstream from the Mountain Creek confluence). The channel is not that wide, so keeping close to the bank could be the sensible thing to do, if there are power boats about.



About one kilometre upstream from the launch site the eastern bank is a sandy cliff, and 1.75 kilometres upstream is a wide expanse where a weir blocks off the Wyuna Canal branch of the river. Six hundred metres upstream from the weir, and the industrial buildings at Premier Circuit, is a creek opening on the western bank (see right photograph above). This leads to a lagoon system enclosed in the mangroves: explore if you will, at high tide, and take particular note of your entry landscape to avoid geographical embarrassment.



How does a possum cross the river without getting wet? Answer: on a possum bridge. The tree above spans the river, but the two trees (photographs below), at the 8.0 and 8.6km (upstream from launch site) require portages..



The confluence of the Mooloolah River and Sippy Creek is two kilometres upstream from the second log across the river (photograph above right), a total of ten kilometres from the launch site..

Image left: high tide access only past this tree in the river. The riverbank vegetation gives way from palm trees and rainforest species, to open grassland. The land on both banks is a private cattle running property.



I turned around at the 8.6 kilometre upstream mark, after going past a few logs across the river. On the way back down I saw this Wedgetail eagle in a tree above the river. It was only 4 metres or so above the river, and, unexpectedly, did not fly away when I paddled underneath its perch. Once past the raptor, I looked back, and caught sight of a sick looking Ibis that the eagle was keeping a close eye on.



Eastern Grey male kangaroo seen in the tea tree (meleleuca) forest.

There are several walking trails in the Mooloolah River National Park, and on the next page a location map is provided. The trails are on fire management roads, and were not constructed for foot traffic. As such, the trails on elevated ground (the Littoralis, Aemula, and Meleleuca trails) are likely to be passable after rain, but the Boronia, Robur, and lower parts of the Meleleuca trail, become water logged, requiring weeks of dry weather to become accessible. Because the water table is close to the surface in the swampy regions, heavy wet weather may make such trails off limits for several seasons.

The area is at its best in the late winter and early spring, when the wild flowers are blooming. The thick close heath vegetation does not encourage off trail walking. As much of the park is low open heathland, with little shade, the summer sun will be very strong, and walking at that time of year should be early in the morning. Carry drinking water.

At the southern end of Premier Circuit in Warana, starting from the road, and marked by an Information Board, is a raised concrete walkway that runs 600 metres to the Mooloolah River.



The images above are of a work in progress, the walkway from Premier Circuit down to the river. At some later time, there should be a trail link to Birtinya, and south to Kawana Forest.

The northern trails are sandy tracks. Note that Boronia and Meleleuca trails are often impassable due to water logging. A typical circuit, entering at the northern end of Boronia Trail, and walking south to the Aemula Trail, then east, and north to the Littoralis Trail, and return west to the start is about 3.8 km.

