



Craigburn Farm Trails, Adelaide:

Adelaide Mountain bikers got an early Christmas present in December 2011 with the opening of some brand new suburban trails, courtesy of Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Words by Ian Fehler, Escapegoat Adventures www.escapegoat.com.au

The History:

Mountain bikers in Adelaide got a early Christmas present in 2011, when a totally new trail network was opened to the public in Sturt Gorge Recreation Park. The 170 hectare area is a recent edition to the park, having previously been used for cattle grazing. The new trails, within very easy reach of the city, are a very progressive move forward for mountain biking, as this represents the first investment in shared use MTB trails by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). DENR have previously limited cycling opportunities in parks, so the decision to actually invest in building new trails within the Sturt Gorge Recreational Park was greeted with excitement by the Adelaide MTB community. As the land is quite open and the conservation value lower than surrounding areas, DENR had a 'clean slate' to work on, rather than being too restricted by existing use and other factors. One of the goals for DENR in funding the project was to build trails that would entertain the broader MTB community and in doing so reduce the amount of unauthorised riding in nearby high conservation areas. The trails also link in well with other popular trails, including the adjacent City of Mitcham trails network.

The 20km of beautifully built trails were constructed by local trail builder and ex-National DH champion, Garry Patterson and his crew at TrailScapes. The trails have been carefully designed to get the maximum amount of trail and challenge into the area, with some cracking descents, challenging climbs and fun bermed flow trails following the lay of the land. All the trails have been designed to be ridden in both directions and built with optional A & B-lines throughout, so they are suitable for most beginner/intermediate riders. There are also some difficult lines and long doubles for experienced riders with the speed and eye to spot them.

From the main trailhead the trails fan out down the hill, each trail with a slightly different feel. The real thrill seekers head out on 'Walk the Dog' as the quickest route to the start of two awesome but very different intermediate trails, the rollercoaster fast jumps and berms of the aptly named "Craigberms" and the rocky and more technical "Sticks and Stones"- both of which warrant repeat rides to perfect lines and jumps. Others choose to go either east or west on "Sidewinder", a long contour style flow trail that rarely exceeds 6% in gradient.

From the end of these trails, riders can loop back to the start on the gentle shared-use surfaced "Lake-view" trail (although riders here are expected to ride at walking pace) or otherwise head along the more challenging 'Little River' trail. Here again you can choose

to head up the harder climb of Sidewinder, or carry on toward “Surf and Turf” and “Cowbones” The 'Cowbones' loop is fun in either direction, and offers a mix of jumps, tight fast corners and stunning views of the ocean in the distance.

Getting There:

The Craighburn Farm trails work as an excellent add-on to the popular City of Mitcham trails, and other trails in Sturt Gorge Recreation Park, which should be formally opened to riders in the future.

The trails are accessible by bike, car or train (a 20 minute train ride from Adelaide Railway Station to Coromandel Valley Railway Station then a 5 minute ride to Craighburn main trailhead). The trailhead itself is adjacent a closed section of Craighburn Road however you can park 500m away at the Blackwood Football Club and roll to the start.

The easiest route from the city is out on South Road, up Shepherds Hill road to the Blackwood roundabout, take a right down Coromandel Parade and another right at Cumming St. From there follow your nose as this becomes Craighburn Road. Park on the street or in the football club carpark and follow the signs through the boom gate. Follow this road for about 500m as it skirts the new housing development and the main trailhead should be visible in the paddock on your left.

You'll Need:

Pack some water and a few supplies, and just hit the trails! All the trails are suitable for even the most basic hardtail and the area is very popular with beginners and families as well as more experienced riders. There are plenty of shops and bakeries just a short distance down the road in Blackwood.

Although the Craighburn trails are unlikely to be closed due to firebans, do be aware that the adjacent trails in Mitcham are closed on any Total Fire Bans, and it is recommended for your own safety not to ride on those days.

Local Knowledge:

Whilst the trails will provide a great few hours of riding, for a more complete ride grab a local to show you the adjacent trails in Mitcham, which allow you to put together 20 or 30km loops.

Local Mtb business **Escapegoat Adventures** www.escapegoat.com.au are a DENR licensed tour operator, and are able to offer bike hire, guiding, and skills training at Craighburn Farm, amongst other areas.

The **Adelaide Mountain bike Club** <http://www.ambc.asn.au/> hold cross country races on the Craighburn Farm trails.

At A Glance:

Technical Rating: 3 to 4 out of 5 stars

Variety of Terrain: 3 out of 5

Facilities: 4 out of 5

Most Suited:

XC/Race Trail All-Mountain FR DH 4X/Jump

Facilities:

- **Mobile Coverage - yes**
- **Parking – Yes, in adjacent suburb**
- **Water – Yes nearby at the Football club**
- **Sign Posted Trails - yes**
- **Bike Shops – The nearest good bike shops include Mega Bike Blackwood, Mitcham Cycles in nearby Mitcham, and Upfront bikes at O'halloran Hill.**
- **Food/Drink – In adjacent Blackwood**
- **Barbeque Facilities - no**