

Report on the condition of the Forth Track

by I. B. Jennings

This track was examined with a view to ascertaining the repairs necessary to enable jeep access to be maintained for a drill crew operating at the old Pelion wolfram mine.

At present it is possible to drive a Land Rover to within a few hundred yards of the creek about ¼ mile north of Sardine Creek. Beyond this point the access is barred by fallen timber and broken bridges. The track has recently been repaired and re-formed as far as Gisborne clearing by F. H. Hains Pty Ltd, and to this point it is in excellent condition. Logging operations at Gisborne will recommence in a week or so and after that time, although access will be maintained, the heavy traffic is likely to cause deterioration of the track surface. Beyond Gisborne the track is still in good order for about 1 mile, but beyond this point rough diversions have been made around several fallen trees.

Beyond the end of the present negotiable section of the track there are long portions which are still in excellent order with only an occasional log and some areas of light re-growth which could easily be removed. In two or three places there are major log-falls which completely block sections of the track for distances of 20 to more than 200 yards.

Two of the main bridges will have to be rebuilt, two require minor attention and another requires extensive repairs. The state of the Oakleigh Creek crossing is unknown, but some 6 or 7 years ago the ford at this creek had been washed out to a depth of some 3 feet and it is clear that at least a new ford will have to be constructed. A summary of the condition from the end of the present jeep access to the Birthday Granite is given as follows:

Major logs across track —	104
Areas of minor limbs under 1 foot —	11
Minor landslides & areas where repairs to drainage and surface are required —	8
Culverts —	1 × 8' 1 × 6' repairs to end of 60' culvert
Bridges —	1 × 20' minor repairs 1 × 25' completely renew 1 × 25' rebuild over existing bridge 1 × 20' major repairs 1 × 20' minor repairs

It is estimated that to restore jeep access the services of a bulldozer (D4 or similar) would be required for about two weeks, together with a party of three men equipped with chainsaws, jacks and stump pullers for a further two weeks. Another week or so may be required for a couple of men to clean up light scrub and debris. The cost of this operation would be about \$2000.

An alternative scheme would be to push a bulldozer track through and simply make temporary fords over the major creeks. Drill crews could gain access by means of the Bombardier from Gisbornes clearing. To clear such a route would require the services of a bulldozer for 5-6 days together with two men with a chainsaw. The cost of this operation is estimated at about \$1000.

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