

Landscapes & Geosites

The Witchelina Ridgetop drive showcases a landscape 100's of millions of years in the making.

1. Ancient Seas, Ramparts and Ridges. Limestones, sandstones and shales formed here from fine grains of sand and mud that settled slowly to the bottoms of ancient seas. These were buried to form layers then buckled, folded and tilted as great mountain ranges formed 500 million years ago. Erosion that followed left strange natural stripes, subtle corrugations of harder limestones and upstanding ramparts and ridges across the landscape.



2. Breccia – broken rocks. Near the North Bungarider Dam is a white outcrop of quartz 'breccia', Italian for "broken rocks", which follows the line of the Bungarider Fault, where the rock has been ground up by movement along the fault. Balanced rocks and a rock hole also are seen here.

3. Saddles, Gullies and Zig Zag Folds. The Ridge Top track follows a ridge of hard white quartzite. Stop at the cairn and look north to see curiously regular pattern of saddles and gullies, as seen on the brochure cover; on the map they show sweeping curved "zig-zag" folds formed during building of the mountain ranges. Look SW across the vastness of the plains landscape to the distant majestic Mount Nor'west



4. Slate 'Pencils'. During mountain building intense pressure and heat on the rocks produces a new slaty cleavage by realigning minerals in the rocks. The rock here has two cleavages at right angles to each other, yellow younger lines and red older lines, that breaks the rock into lengths of slate 'pencils'.

5. Cuestas. This is a Spanish word describing ridges with a gentle slope on one side and a steep slope on the other. These cuestas have a hard quartzite lying over softer dark shale. There are crumples and crinkles in both rock types formed during mountain building.

6. Ancient Ripples. The Mirra Creek flows as a waterfall over a natural quartzite ridge which was enhanced by a stunning rock wall weir. Below the Weir, ripples almost 800 million years old are preserved in sandstone deposited by an ancient river.



7. Pebbles and Chips. The brilliant fields of white "milky" quartz pebbles and chips you can see around you have been washed down from the ridge above during times of heavy rain and flash flooding on the hill slope. They are fairly common on Witchelina because the quartz is very hard and resistant to erosion.

8. The Limy Breccia here looks a bit like a coarse concrete. It is a different kind of breccia, with limestone fragments encased in a limestone matrix. It could have formed by flow of salt diapirs moving through this area.

Total distance: **Approx. 93 kms round trip,**
allow 6-8 hours or take shortcut

Difficulty: **Easy, with 2 moderate sections**

Basic signs **As you drive, you'll see signs:**



- shows the direction to follow for the Ridgetop Nature Drive.



- Geosite of particular geological interest. *Please note: fossicking on Witchelina is prohibited.*



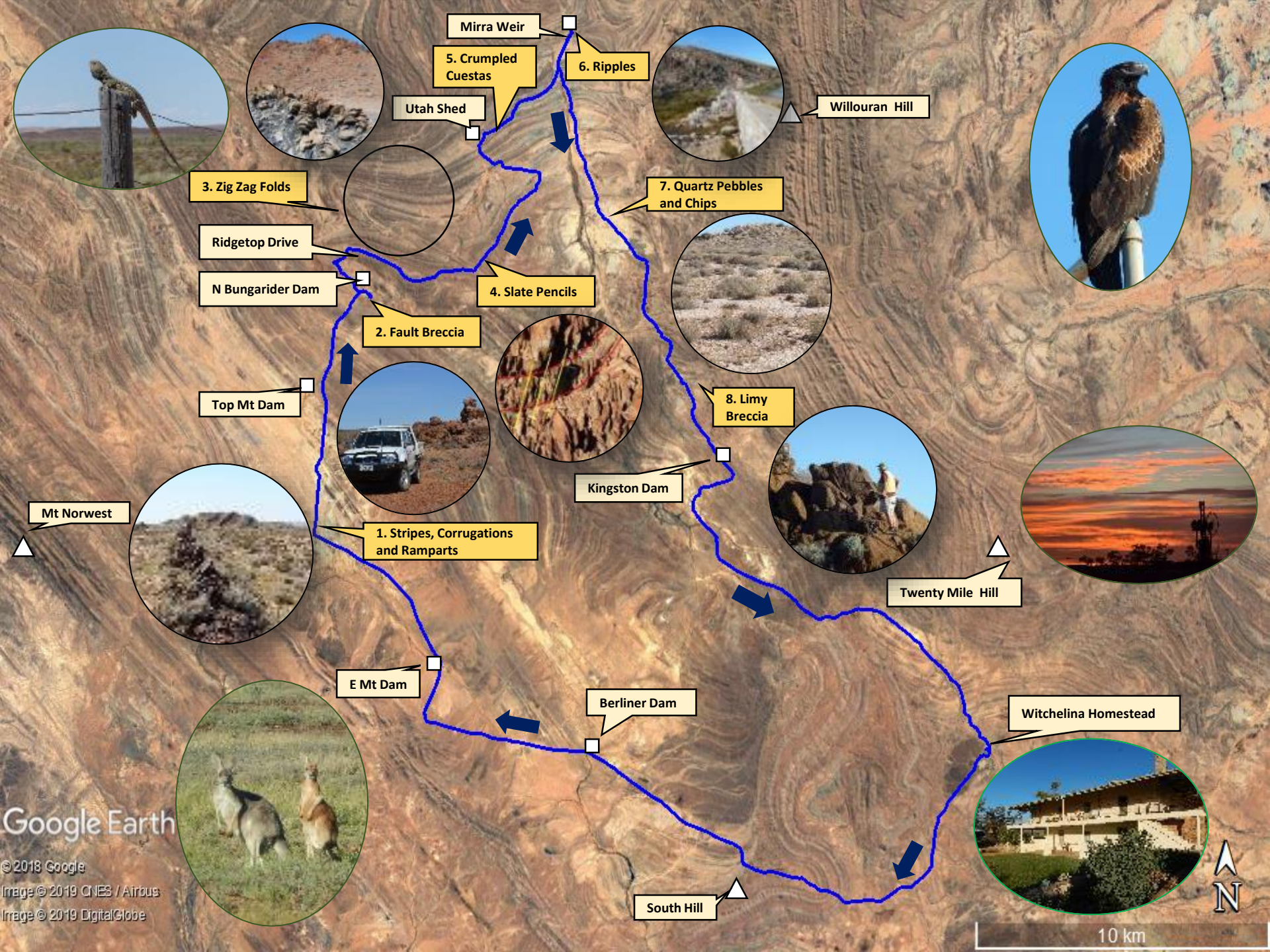
- Landscape site/feature where you may wish to stop.

The Ridgetop Nature Drive nature drive is only suitable for 4WD vehicles and is safe to travel only during daylight hours. Please begin your drive before 10.00am. Signs clearly show your route, please do not leave the marked track.



Ridgetop Nature Drive Witchelina





Mirra Weir

5. Crumpled Cuestas

6. Ripples

Willouran Hill

3. Zig Zag Folds

7. Quartz Pebbles and Chips

Ridgetop Drive

4. Slate Pencils

N Bungarider Dam

2. Fault Breccia

8. Limy Breccia

Top Mt Dam

Kingston Dam

Mt Norwest

1. Stripes, Corrugations and Ramparts

Twenty Mile Hill

E Mt Dam

Berliner Dam

Witchelina Homestead

South Hill

Google Earth

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10 km

