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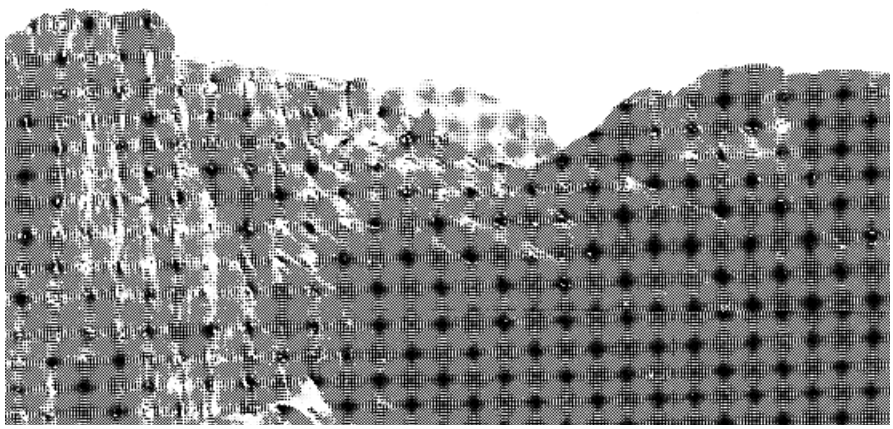
Mount Ossa

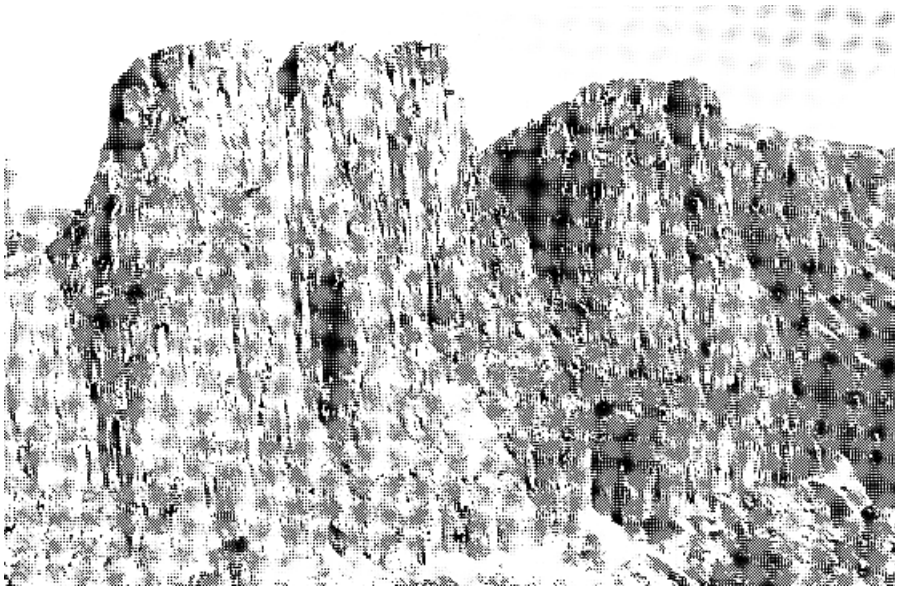
Mount ossa (1, 617 m) is the highest point in Tasmania, and together with various peaks above about 1, 200 m in the west of Region 5 constitute the Mt Ossa land system. It includes two areas around Cradle Mountain. This rugged high country is characterised by the most severe weather conditions with no protection from stormy westerly low pressure systems. Almost all of these peaks occur in the high monadnocks erosion surface described by Davies (1959). They display strong glacial morphology with a limited number of tarns but many cirques. Periglacial features such as boulder fields, block streams and rock glaciers are well represented as are dramatic cliff faces which often display columnar jointing. The crests are usually relatively flat, strewn with boulders and contain extensive dolerite rock outcrops. These components favour the development of fjaeldmark conditions, where continuous (westerly) wind blasting has the potential to dry out the soil and blow the finer constituents up against low open heath vegetation. This dies off on the windward side and so expands to the east (Kirkpatrick and Harwood 1980). These areas are being 'naturally' sheet eroded.

Soils in the Mount Ossa land system have stony, strong brown gradational profiles with organic rich top soil in protected places. They support low open heaths to open heaths on crest components while slopes are covered by low shrubland with dolerite talus dominating in places.

Most of this land system is situated in the cradle Mountain Lake St Clair National Park or the adjoining south west Conservation Area. Most of these inaccessible areas are seldom visited although peaks closer to the overland Track are climbed frequently.



View of Mount Ossa in the far distance and the rocky crests, cliffs and rocky slope components which make up the Land System.



Cliff component Mount Ossa Land system - eastern face of Mount Geryon.

LAND—SYSTEM

Mt Ossa

972551

Area(ha):
4439

COMPONENT	1	2
PROPORTION(%)	70	30
RAINFALL(mm)	Approximate Annual Rainfall: >2500	
GEOLOGY	Jurassic dolerite and dolerite scree	
	(Extensive Outcrop)	
TOPOGRAPHY	Rugged mountainous terrain with well developed Pleistocene glacial (erosional) features	
Position	Slopes/Scree Slopes/Cliffs	Rocky Crests
Typical Slope( )	60-70-90	0-5
NATIVE VEGETATION		
Structure	Low Shrubland	Low Open Shrubland to Open Heath
Floristic Associat ion (See Appendix 1 for common names)	Drimys lanceolata Cyathodes petiolaris Olearia pinifolia Richea acerosa Orites acicularis Lissanthe montana Exocarpos humifusus Podocarpus lawrencii Milligania densiflora Poa Sp Microstrobos niphophilus Diselma archeri	Orites acicularis O. revoluta Coprosma nitida Richea acerosa Epacris serpyllifolia Cyathodes petiolaris Podocarpus lawrencii Poa sp.
SOIL Surface(A)Texture	Clay Loam-Loam	Loam (Organic in Places)
B Horizon(subsoil) Colour (wet) Texture and primary profile form	Stony, strong brown (7. 5 YR 4/6) light clay. Gradational.	Stony, gravelly, strong brown (7. 5 YR 5/8) light clay. Gradational.
Permeability	High-Moderate	High-Moderate
Typical depth(m)	>0. 35	>0. 35
Depth(A)Horizon(m)	0. 20	0. 20
LAND USE	Nature conservation, recreation	
HAZARDS	Moderate to high sheet erosion	