

Davies Creek to Emerald Creek track

In the mid eighties and prior to World Heritage declaration of the North Queensland Wet Tropics, logging was very active in the upper Davies Creek catchment. Around 1984 I was cautiously stumbling around the tracks and trails of North Queensland armed with little information other than some topo maps and a set of binoculars. I had heard about Kahlpahlim Rock but had only vague directions to get to it. As anyone would know who has had to try and navigate their way in the rainforest with only a compass, the best way to find your directions was from a vantage point. Back then, the main road was "Davies Creek Rd" which headed over to the Emerald Ck valley. The road further up Davies Ck to the Kahlpahlim track was a minor road. In search of Kahlpahlim I followed the DC road uphill to try and get a view. This wasn't so hard then as there were scenes of total devastation of hillsides. Looking over my shoulder I could see the iconic "Lambs' Head" looming out of the clouds - in the opposite direction to where I was walking. I abandoned following the DC road and thought one day I should continue following this road to see where it went. Well, it took me another 26 years to get around to that and the rainforest had rather well recovered by then. I first stumbled across the track at the Emerald Ck end when I curiously followed a recently blazed trail in the approximate position where I suspected the DC creek road would come out. I plotted it with my recently acquired GPS to a point where it started to climb steeply uphill. I wasn't prepared for a walk into the unknown at that time so I thought I would commence at the Davies end and see if I could get the tracks to meet up.

I would like to say at this point that this is a very rough trail and you need to be cautious, observant and well prepared to undertake this walk. The track leaves the K Rock track about 10 mins walk from the carpark at the end of the road and is marked with a red triangle. The road slowly ascends for about 1.5 kms and 30 mins and into some big flooded gum forest. On the way you have to cross a fairly eroded creek veering to the right. Parts of the road are open and easy and parts are a crawl. Once into the big gum dominated forest the ascent is more leisurely until after about 1.5 hours walking you near the highest point on the track and quite dense rainforest. Keep your wits about you here as the track is a bit hard to discern and depends on who else has been through recently. Flagging was not very good when I went through in Nov 2010 and I ran out of tape early.

I haven't walked the section that drops quite steeply down to Emerald Ck so good luck if you plan a through walk. There are a few sidetracks to be encountered along the way but these won't take you very far. If you plan to walk there and back rather than through, I would allow 7 to 9 hours return allowing for a few stops along the way. There is little in the way of views along the track and not many creek crossings but the feeling of remoteness is exceptional. There is a fair amount of cassowary sign along the way.
Paul

