



Environment,
Climate Change & Water
National Parks & Wildlife Service



Orienteering and Rogaining Policy & Procedures

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Introduction

Orienteering and rogaining are outdoor adventure activities that share common attributes and need to be managed appropriately in order to minimise potential impacts on natural and cultural values and to ensure the safety of participants and other park visitors.

The permissibility of any proposed orienteering or rogaining event in a park is determined according to its consistency with the objects of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*, the National Parks and Wildlife Regulation 2009, the relevant park's Plans of Management and departmental policies.

Orienteering and rogaining are both organised competitive sports that require participants to visit designated locations in a limited amount of time. As such, all competitive orienteering and rogaining activities in parks are treated as events.

As sporting events, orienteering and rogaining require consent under clause 22 of the National Parks and Wildlife Regulation 2009 to be conducted in a park.

Events such as orienteering and rogaining have the potential to increase visitation to parks and to help raise awareness and appreciation of parks and their conservation. However, challenges arise for park management from orienteering and rogaining, including:

- the potential for disturbances to flora and fauna, soil and rock;
- the potential for damage to Aboriginal sites;
- the potential for interference with park infrastructure;
- the potential for interference with other park users; and
- large numbers of people travelling through the park, often off established routes or tracks, in a timeframe ranging from between 20 minutes to 24 hours.

Objectives

To manage orienteering and rogaining within parks to ensure that these activities result in minimal impacts on the environment, natural and cultural heritage values and other park visitors.

To provide a basis for effective communication between the Park Authority and the organisers of orienteering and rogaining events.

To ensure that the mix and pattern of recreational use within a park (including orienteering and rogaining activities, and other recreational activities such as cycling, camping and walking) maintains an appropriate level of safety, equity, harmony and satisfaction amongst park visitors.

Scope and application

This policy applies to all land acquired or reserved under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* ('parks').

Definitions

Aboriginal Area means lands dedicated as an Aboriginal area under s30K of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*.

Declared wilderness areas are those lands declared as wilderness under the *Wilderness Act 1987*.

Orienteering is a competitive sport which involves participants visiting on foot a set number of flagged control points between a start line and a finish line in the shortest possible time. Participants select individual routes and use a map and compass to navigate the course. Courses are usually set in bushland and vary in length but are generally 2 to 15km. There may be a number of courses of varying length and difficulty set at each event. Courses are usually completed in 20 minutes to 2 hours. Special orienteering maps (usually 1:10,000 or 1:15,000 scale) are prepared in advance of events. The nature of orienteering requires that events be held in unfamiliar territory and off established routes or tracks. Events tend not to be held in the same area too frequently so as to minimise the risk of competitors becoming familiar with the terrain.

Park Authority means the body responsible for care control and management of a park, as defined in the *National Parks and Wildlife Regulation 2009* (refer to accountabilities section of the Policy for more information).

Rogaining is the competitive sport of long distance cross-country navigation. The objective of rogaining is to collect the highest score by finding checkpoints within a set time limit (generally 24 hours). Teams of two to five members travel entirely on foot, navigating with the aid of a topographic map and compass. Teams select their own order of visiting checkpoints. The classic rogain includes both day and night navigation.

Relevant legislation or other mandating instruments

National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974

National Parks and Wildlife Regulation 2009

Policy

1. Orienteering and rogaining events will be given favourable consideration as an appropriate use of selected parts of most national parks, regional parks and state conservation areas.

2. As they are both organised group activities, orienteering and rogaining events require written consent from the Park Authority under the National Parks and Wildlife Regulation 2009.
3. An orienteering and rogaining event must have:
 - an identifiable, accountable and appropriately insured organiser (whether an individual, group or association);
 - an identified route or area of operation; and
 - a discrete short-term time frame (e.g. over one weekend).An event without all of these attributes will not be allowed.
4. Orienteering and rogaining events will not be permitted to take place in nature reserves, Aboriginal areas and historic sites due to the specific conservation requirements of these reserve categories.
5. In accordance with the Wilderness policy and the Events, Functions and Venues Policy, orienteering and rogaining events are not permitted in wilderness areas as they are not consistent with the management principles for wilderness.

Assessment of suitable routes or areas

6. Assessment of suitable areas by the Park Authority should include, but not be limited to, the following considerations:
 - flora and fauna needing particular protection from disturbance;
 - susceptibility of soils to erosion in general and under certain conditions (e.g. after rain or bushfire);
 - the impact on an Aboriginal site, "Aboriginal place" or "object" of cultural significance to Aboriginal people;
 - the presence of natural hazards (e.g. cliffs, unstable slopes, caves, etc.);
 - potential conflicts with other visitors;
 - management activities (e.g. hazard reduction burning, research, baiting etc.);
 - facilities available; and
 - availability of alternative areas for the activity.
7. Where an assessment identifies some difficulty in one or more of these considerations, and suitable alternatives are not available, the possibility of imposing specific conditions for the conduct of an event should be explored as a means of resolving the difficulty prior to any decision to deny consent.

Way marking

8. Placement of markers or other fixtures must not disturb the soil, substrate, rock or vegetation in a park, or disturb wildlife, or

interfere with park infrastructure, its use and operation. Activities such as the thinning or removal of vegetation to make markers visible will therefore not be allowed.

9. The Park Authority accepts no responsibility for the security of markers and other fixtures (e.g. if they are stolen or moved before an activity can take place).

Consent conditions

10. Limits, modifications or conditions may be attached to any consent for the staging of an orienteering or rogaining event. Conditions that will apply include (but are not limited to):

- the organisers agree to run the event in a way that will not generate any permanent or long term impacts on the park;
- organisers of orienteering and rogaining events are required to have mandatory public liability insurance of \$10 million to indemnify the Minister, the Government, the Director-General, the DECCW and all their agents, contractors and employees against all actions, suits, claims, demands or costs in respect to any death or injury to persons and damage or loss of property in connection with the event;
- the organisers of the event will be required to make good any damage that may be made to the park, its roads, or other infrastructure as a direct result of the activity or event;
- the course of the event, including the location of marshalling areas, start/finish points and control sites;
- the event must be conducted at the time or within the period agreed between the event organisers and the Park Authority;
- the number of event participants;
- participants, organisers and spectators must adhere to the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*, *National Parks and Wildlife Regulation 2009*; and obey any directions by DECCW staff; and
- the organisers of the event agree to notify the Park Authority of any adverse impact on the area evident to the organiser (e.g. tracking by competitors, graffiti or rubbish left by third parties).

11. In addition, organisers will be required to:

- ensure that all flags, markers and control points are erected or placed for no more than 14 days prior to, and 14 days after an event, unless a different time period is specified in the consent;
- clean up all litter and rubbish immediately after the event;
- maintain a first aid facility at the start/finish area;
- provide temporary toilets at the main assembly area if deemed necessary by the Park Authority;
- cooperate with park staff in setting aside suitable areas for spectators and car parking;

- mark on their event maps any sensitive area that is requested by DECCW to be out-of-bound; and
 - where relevant, follow other specific conditions of consent that may be required by the Park Authority as in accordance with the Events, Functions and Venues Policy.
- 12.** Where a proposed event may encroach on land outside the boundaries of the park or on any portion of a park subject to a lease, it is the responsibility of the event organisers to obtain separate permission from that park neighbour or lessee.

Fees

- 13.** In accordance with the Events, Functions and Venues Policy, fees may be charged for the staging of events at the discretion of the Park Authority.
- 14.** Additional charges may be imposed by the Park Authority where event-specific services need to be provided by the Region and/or where such services have been requested by the orienteering or rogaining event organisers. This may include assistance at the event, provision of BBQ fuel, supervision, site inspections, etc.
- 15.** The payment of fees may be reduced or waived by the Park Authority in circumstances where only a small proportion of the course encroaches on park or where the event meets the criteria for waiving or reducing fees outlined in the Events, Functions and Venues Policy.

Procedures

Information Dissemination

- 16.** The Park Authority will ensure that all peak NSW orienteering and rogaining associations are made aware of the policy and procedures on orienteering and rogaining.
- 17.** Organisers of orienteering and rogaining events will be responsible for the provision of information on bushwalking code of ethics to all participants. The Park Authority will provide organisers with copies of the code for distribution. This can be done when regional staff consult with event organisers to provide information about the area or park (refer to paragraph 27).

Preliminary Consultation

- 18.** It is in the interests of both the Park Authority and orienteering and rogaining groups to commence discussions and arrangements for events as early as possible. Preliminary consultation should be undertaken prior to lodging a written application for consent and will

help reduce application processing times. (Refer to Attachment 1 for further guidance on the consent application process)

- 19.** Preparation and mapping for events, particularly orienteering, require long lead times, sometimes at a significant cost to event organisers. Preliminary consultations between the Park Authority and orienteering and rogaining groups should be used to establish the suitability of a broadly defined area to accommodate such events. As the planning process continues, further discussions between event organisers and the Park Authority should identify more specifically where the events are proposed to take place.
- 20.** Where an orienteering or rogaining event is proposed in an area that contains a site or object of Aboriginal cultural significance, the relevant local Aboriginal communities and/or local Aboriginal Land Council must be consulted regarding any potential impacts and associated cultural issues. The Park Authority may assist the applicant with this process if required. Where the Park Authority has concerns about the potential heritage impact of the proposed activity, the Park Authority will seek advice from the DECCW Country, Culture and Heritage Division.
- 21.** Preliminary consultations should establish whether orienteering and rogaining are appropriate in an area under normal conditions, in respect to the considerations outlined in paragraphs 6, 10, 11, 19, and 20. However, preliminary consultation does not guarantee consent for the activity. Orienteering and rogaining events cannot proceed in a park without final written consent from the Park Authority (refer to paragraph 2).

Consent

- 22.** The particulars that should be provided by the applicant when lodging written applications for consent include:
 - name of organisation, contact person and telephone/fax numbers;
 - title and status (local, national, etc.) of the event;
 - proposed date, time and duration of event;
 - map of the area showing assembly area, start/finish and proposed control sites/courses (Note that information on control sites and courses must be treated as confidential by Regional staff);
 - estimates of the number of participants, organisers and spectators likely to attend the event; and
 - arrangements for waste management ("no waste" events should be encouraged where possible) and arrangements for car parking.

Note: Where some of the above particulars are not known at the time of application, the Park Authority may approve the application upon the condition that further information will be provided prior to the start of the event. In such circumstances

further conditions may be placed upon the consent where warranted.

23. Where orienteering and rogaining events are a common occurrence, it is recommended that a pro-forma consent document be prepared by the relevant Regional Office. Such a pro-forma might specify standard conditions for all events and also accommodate particulars relating to a specific event.

24. An applicant may submit a single consent application for more than one event at the discretion of the Park Authority, provided that:

- all of the proposed events will be held in the one NPWS Area

Note: Applicants should contact local Area offices for NPWS Area maps and to obtain information on which parks are in a particular Area.

- all of the proposed events will occur in one calendar year. Note if the date of a proposed event is deferred to the next calendar year, the applicant must apply for a new consent for that particular event.
- all the relevant particulars for each proposed event is provided at the time of application (refer to paragraph 22)

25. Consent is not to be transferable.

26. Consent may be denied where an identifiable group has breached the conditions of previous approvals, and should be denied to any group that has established itself to be irresponsible and an unreasonable user of the park. The Park Authority will also provide details of the group who breached conditions to the relevant peak organising body for the activity.

Promotion and Education

27. Regional staff are urged to use the consultative process between the Park Authority and local orienteering and rogaining groups as an opportunity to enhance community understanding of the natural and cultural values of the park in which the event is to occur. It is recommended that, where appropriate, event organisers are provided with interpretive information about the park and that event organisers be encouraged to promote an understanding of the park's natural and cultural values (amongst event participants). This is also intended to raise an awareness and appreciation of the management requirements for the park.

28. Regional staff may also negotiate with stakeholder associations to undertake monitoring of the impacts of an event on the park over a realistic time frame. These impacts could include trampling damage to vegetation, soil erosion or the establishment of new but self-sustaining walking routes.

Related policies and other documents

Events, Functions and Venues Policy

Geocaching Policy

Accountabilities

This section of the Orienteering and Rogaining Policy outlines the responsibilities of all persons who are involved in implementing the policy and/or ensuring its implementation. This reflects the appropriate delegation of the Director General's powers under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* and the National Parks and Wildlife Regulation 2009. Refer to the 'Legal and Investigations' section of DECCW-net for the complete list of delegations: <http://deccnet/legal/delegations.htm>

Positions with significant responsibilities

The DECCW position which has the predominant role for the implementation of this policy is:

Area Manager

Accountability statements for this position can be found at:

Item	Topic
2	Administering consents
10	Determining timing of an event
11	Provision of facilities
19	Preliminary consultation
20	Seeking advice on potential heritage impact
21	Administering consents
27	Community education and understanding
28	Monitoring impacts

Other positions which have accountability statements in this policy are:

Regional Manager

Accountability statements for this position can be found at:

Item	Topic
13	Determining fees
14	Determining additional charges
15	Waiving payment of fees

Principal Policy Officer, Reserve & Wildlife Policy Section

Accountability statements for this position can be found at:

Item	Topic
16	Ensure that peak orienteering and rogaining bodies are made aware of the DECCW policy

Policy review

The Reserve and Wildlife Policy Section is responsible for coordinating the review of this policy. Reviews will be undertaken at least every five

years, and more frequently if changes in legislation, policies or other areas require the amendment of this policy. The next scheduled review is due on November 2015.

Contacts for further advice

Principal Policy Officer

Reserve and Wildlife Policy Section

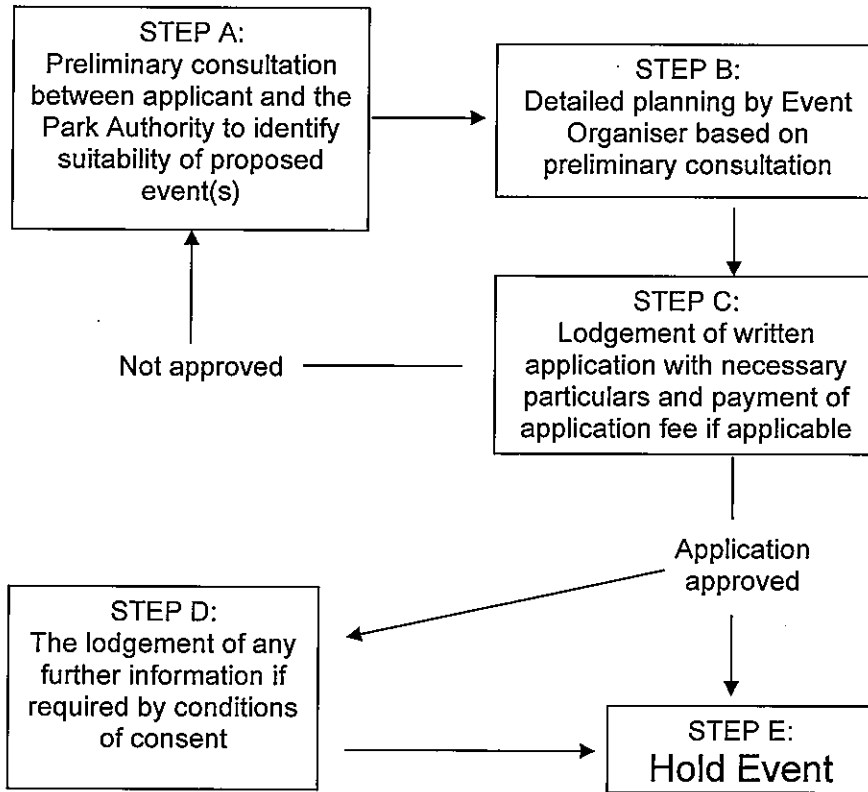
Parks and Wildlife Group

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Attachment 1: Consent application process

Before Event



After Event

