

Visitor management

Orienteering and rogaining in QPWS-managed areas

Operational policies provide a framework for consistent application and interpretation of legislation and for the management of non-legislative matters by the Environmental Protection Agency (incorporating the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service). Operational policies are not intended to be applied inflexibly in all circumstances. Individual circumstances may require a modified application of policy.

Policy subject

This policy outlines the circumstances in which the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) may authorise and manage the conduct of orienteering and rogaining activities on QPWS-managed areas.

Background

While QPWS-managed areas provide a range of opportunities for different visitor activities, not all activities can be accommodated, as requirements for conserving natural and cultural values and other considerations including impacts on other uses, management programs, priority community needs and equity dictate against some activities.

Orienteering and rogaining activities vary from relatively informal, small scale gatherings to large scale championship or carnival events. Such events can give rise to a range of issues and impacts, including damage to vegetation, disturbance of wildlife and possible disruption of other visitor activities. Further information on these activities is contained in Attachment 1.

The particular scale and format of an event or events will determine the extent to which impacts are concentrated or dispersed across the landscape. Particular environments have different conservation and cultural significance and are more or less sensitive (resistant and/or resilient) to particular types, frequencies and intensities of use. Each of these factors will be critical in identifying the risks associated with proposed orienteering and rogaining activities, and in assessing and determining applications to conduct such activities.

The management of orienteering and rogaining will vary dependent on the balance of values at a site. To make appropriate judgements, an understanding of the scale and format of the proposed activity coupled with any available information on the particular natural and/or cultural heritage values of the area are required (including regional ecosystem classifications, landscape classification settings and known habitats of endangered, vulnerable or rare species).

For information on the QPWS landscape classification system, see the Operational Policy *Landscape classification system for visitor management*. Regional ecosystems may be classified as endangered, of concern or not of concern under the *Vegetation Management Act 1999*. The conservation status of wildlife is reflected in the listing of species as endangered, vulnerable and rare under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*.

Orienteering and rogaining in QPWS managed areas

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, 'QPWS-managed areas' include the following areas:

- Recreation Areas under the *Recreation Areas Management Act 1988* where the underlying land tenure is state forest or protected area (State land),
- State forests and other lands managed under the *Forestry Act 1959*, and
- Protected areas (State land) managed under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*.

Policy statement

Use of a QPWS managed area for orienteering or rogaining activities must be consistent with the management principles for the particular class of land and any approved management plan for the area.

Specifically, orienteering and rogaining activities are not permitted in:

1. any national park (scientific);
2. 'endangered' regional ecosystems;
3. 'of concern' regional ecosystems, except where it is established that the activities do not represent a threatening process;
4. the habitat of 'endangered' or 'vulnerable' species;
5. the habitat of 'rare' species, except where it is established that the activities do not represent a threatening process;
6. areas of known cultural heritage significance, except where it is established that the activities do not represent a threatening process; or
7. landscape setting classes 3, 2 or 1.

Competitive orienteering and rogaining events are considered to be group activities, and will require a group activity permit.

Permit requirements for informal and/or training activities will depend on the nature of the activity. Applications to conduct these activities will be assessed according to established criteria in the Operational Policy *Group activity permits* to determine whether they fall within the definition of a group activity, in particular whether they might interfere with the general public use of the area, and therefore require a group activity permit.

Permit assessment criteria

Permit applications will be assessed on a case-by-case basis against relevant legislation, management plan/s, species and regional ecosystem profiles and the policy statements and assessment criteria set out in this policy. Applications for use of particular areas will be rejected where the nature and/or extent of the proposed use is likely to lead to unacceptable impacts and where an area is yet to recover from previous activities.

Proposals to conduct orienteering and rogaining events in QPWS managed areas will be assessed against the following standard criteria:

- impacts on natural and cultural resources and values, including the existing settings of the areas proposed to be used,
- impacts on other users and activities (including existing lease and permit holders),
- impacts on management interests/programs, including the capacity of existing infrastructure.

Orienteering and rogaining in QPWS managed areas

Other criteria that may be used include:

- the presence of particular safety hazards (for example cliff faces or old mine shafts) within the proposed event area,
- any impacts and issues associated with ancillary activities,
- the likelihood of events contributing to the spread of pests or pathogens.

Permits will not be issued where the proposed additional use would result in the sustainable visitation capacity for the area or trail being exceeded.

Permits to conduct orienteering and rogaining events do not convey exclusive use of an area, unless specifically stated.

Procedure

Planning

When planning a competitive orienteering or rogaining event or training exercise in a QPWS-managed area, the organisers should in the first instance contact the Ecoaccess Customer Service Unit to obtain application forms and confirm contact details for the appropriate assessments and approvals team. Discussion with the relevant district manager/s (or delegates) about the proposal should occur as early as possible to allow sufficient time to plan events and to conduct initial negotiations about matters including:

- potential dates and any conflict with other events or management activities;
- access requirements, (including access to map an area for the purposes of planning an event);
- the location of car parking and marshalling areas, and other aspects including start, finish and general route details, and
- for training events, to determine whether a group activity permit is required.

Where vehicle access within an event site is possible via a locked gate, negotiations may also canvass providing gate keys for use in the event of an emergency, or for limited access for organisers and participants.

Forward planning for QOA events

The Queensland Orienteering Association (QOA) has given an undertaking to provide a copy of their anticipated annual calendar of events to each QPWS district manager responsible for areas where events are proposed. The responsible QPWS officer will advise QOA in writing as to whether proposed events are likely to conflict with natural or cultural values, other scheduled uses or management activities, or whether there are any other obvious issues that are likely to preclude approval. This advice is for planning purposes only and does not guarantee approval of any proposed event. More detailed discussions about proposals should commence as early as possible.

Applications

Where a group activity permit is required to conduct an orienteering or rogaining event, applications should be lodged as early as possible, and at least eight weeks prior to the planned start date for the event. Application forms can be obtained by contacting the Ecoaccess Customer Service Unit.

Completed applications must be accompanied by the application fee (where necessary) and include the following information:

- Name of the organisation, contact person and telephone/fax numbers,
- Name of the area/s where activities are proposed,
- Title and status (local, national, etc) of the event,

Orienteering and rogaining in QPWS managed areas

- Proposed date/s, time and duration of event,
- Estimated number of participants, organisers and spectators
- The size and intervals between competitive groups, and
- Map of the area showing no-access or exclusion areas, marshalling area, car parking and support facility areas, start/finish points and, where possible*, proposed control sites/courses. Information on control sites and courses will be treated as confidential by QPWS.

* Where final control site locations are not known at the time of application, event organisers must advise the relevant QPWS district manager of all final control sites at least 24 hours prior to the start of the event.

Modification of events by negotiation

Where a particular aspect of an event is assessed as causing unacceptable impacts or issues, QPWS will advise event organisers and if appropriate participate in negotiations about alternative arrangements. Generally impacts associated with events are likely to be reduced where car parking, marshalling, support facility and camping areas can be sited outside the QPWS-managed area. QPWS may exclude event activities from certain sites, locations or areas within a broadly defined event area.

Fees

An application fee applies for a group activity permit. An additional daily fee may also apply on a per vehicle or per person basis if special access is to be allowed, special supervision is needed, or an area is reserved for use.

Fees for group activities are prescribed in legislation. Refer to the Information sheet - *Group activity permit fees* for details.

Permit conditions

General

The terms and conditions of permits authorising an orienteering or rogaining event may include provisions relating to the following:

- The specific area and/or tracks to be utilised for the event,
- A specific time frame for the event (e.g. over one weekend),
- 'No-access' or exclusion areas,
- Possible weather condition constraints/QPWS postponement provisions,
- Location of marshalling areas, start/finish points and control sites,
- Limits on the times for which flags, markers and control points can be erected on the area,
- Maintenance of adequate first aid services and facilities on site,
- Maintenance of adequate temporary toilet facilities on site,
- Siting of car parking and support facility areas,
- Construction or installation of any additional infrastructure associated with the activity,
- Limits on the number of participants,
- Any requirements for a security bond,
- Procedures for site cleanup and rehabilitation, and
- Times and procedures for reporting and payment of any fees associated with the activity.

Orienteering and rogaining in QPWS managed areas

Placement of markers or other fixtures

Permits will include conditions requiring that the placement of markers or other fixtures must not disturb the soil, substrate, rock or vegetation in a park or forest, or disturb wildlife, or interfere with infrastructure or its use and operation. Activities such as the thinning or removal of vegetation to make markers visible are prohibited.

Indemnity and insurance

All permits and other authorities authorising the conduct of orienteering and rogaining activities on QPWS-managed land will include provisions requiring the holder to indemnify QPWS from claims from any person arising out of the approved activities, and to release and discharge QPWS from a claim by the permittee.

In most cases permits authorising the conduct of events will also require the holder to maintain not less than \$10,000,000 of public liability insurance cover. Refer to the Operational policy *Public liability insurance, indemnity, release and discharge requirements* for further details.

Postponement due to extreme weather conditions

In circumstances of extreme weather, including cyclones or periods of high fire danger where lives may be endangered, and after very heavy rainfall, approved events may need to be postponed. QPWS will notify event organisers as early as possible when postponement is required due to weather conditions.

Reporting

Permit conditions will require event organisers to forward a written report to QPWS following each orienteering or rogaining event. Reports will detail the final number of participants and other officials involved in the event/s, and any observed impacts. Incidents leading to personal death or injury, property damage or significant environmental damage must be reported to QPWS immediately.

Other matters to consider

Distribution of interpretive materials

QPWS may negotiate for event organisers to distribute interpretive materials to participants to promote an understanding of the natural and cultural values of the area.

Event organiser responsibilities

All costs associated with planning and conducting an event in a QPWS-managed area are to be borne by the organisers. QPWS is not responsible for liaising with private landholders on behalf of event organisers, or for the security of markers or other infrastructure associated with conducting an orienteering or rogaining event within a QPWS-managed area.

Commercial activities

Orienteering and rogaining activities in a QPWS-managed area that constitute a commercial activity require a commercial activity permit or agreement.

Reference materials

Operational policy - *Group activity permits*

Operational policy - *Public liability insurance, indemnity, release and discharge requirements*

Information sheet - *Group activities*

Information sheet - *Group activity permit fees*

Operational policy - *Landscape classification system for visitor management*



Orienteering and rogaining in QPWS managed areas

Guideline for determining applicant suitability

Enquiries

<p>Ecoaccess Customer Service Unit PO BOX 15155 CITY EAST QLD 4002</p> <p>Enquiries: 1300 368 326 Fax: 07 3115 9600 Email: eco.access@epa.qld.gov.au</p>	
--	--

Approved by

Alan Feely
Executive Director, Parks

Approval date

8/8/2005

Disclaimer:

While this document has been prepared with care it contains general information and does not profess to offer legal, professional or commercial advice. The Queensland Government accepts no liability for any external decisions or actions taken on the basis of this document. Persons external to the Environmental Protection Agency should satisfy themselves independently and by consulting their own professional advisors before embarking on any proposed course of action.

Orienteering and rogaining in QPWS managed areas

Attachment 1: Further information on orienteering and rogaining

Orienteering is an organised and generally competitive recreational activity that involves participants navigating on foot a set number of control points that have been flagged by event organisers. Participants select individual routes using an orienteering map (1:10 000 or 1:15 000 scale) and a compass to navigate around the course.

Courses are usually set in bushland and vary in length but are generally from 2 to 15 km, with an estimated winning time from 30 to 100 minutes. There may be a number of courses of varying length and difficulty set at each event to cater for a range of experience and physical ability.

Rogaining is also an organised, competitive recreational activity involving navigation on foot with map and compass, but often using standard topographic maps. Participants compete in small groups of 2-5, and visit control points of different value in any order, the aim being to accumulate the maximum points during a set period. The traditional Rogaine is run over 24 hours, however some shorter events are also held. Only four or five rogaining events are held in southern Queensland each year, with a similar number in northern Queensland.

Event organisers generally seek to stage events on land that will be unfamiliar to participants and away from established routes or tracks, and individual sites are revisited infrequently to minimise the familiarity of competitors with the terrain. A single event may be held on private and public land. Generally, the preferred terrain is open eucalypt forest with a variety of topographic features to provide navigational challenges. Very steep or densely vegetated areas where running is difficult are avoided.

The Queensland Orienteering Association (QOA) and the Queensland Rogaine Association (QRA) are the peak representative bodies for the respective activities in Queensland, and most events are arranged under the auspices of these organisations. Other organisations including the State Emergency Service, the Queensland Police Force, the Defence Forces, schools and universities also use orienteering and/or rogaining activities for training in teamwork and navigation, often using areas already mapped by the QOA or QRA.