

'Bushwalkers' Code

This is the accepted Code of the Ku-ring-gai Bushwalkers Activity & Social Group Inc

www.bushwalkers.org.au

Do not disturb our bushland

If you enjoy the pleasures of bushwalking and related self-reliant outdoor activities, you have a big responsibility to protect and preserve the natural landscape for the enjoyment of future generations. This guide will help you enjoy the bush without leaving your mark.

Be self reliant

Enjoy the natural landscape as it is, on nature's terms. Carry with you the things you need for your comfort and safety.

For shelter, carry a lightweight tent or flysheet. You can save damage to the environment by using huts when available, but be prepared to share.

Do not camp in an overhang with Indigenous rock art, as the art can be damaged by dust, smoke and fumes (See also 'Respect Indigenous Heritage')

Tread softly

Do not exceed the individual park's (POMs) maximum party size limits.

Avoid popular areas in holiday periods when campsites are crowded.

Use existing tracks; don't create new ones. On zigzag paths, don't cut corners as this creates unsightly damage that leads to erosion.

In trackless country, spread your party out; don't walk in one another's footsteps. Avoid easily damaged places such as peat bogs, cushion moss, swamps and fragile rock formations.

Wade through waterlogged sections of tracks; don't create a skein of new tracks around them.

Except in really rough terrain, wear lightweight, soft-soled walking shoes or joggers rather than heavy boots.

Become proficient in bush navigation. Try not to build cairns, blaze trees, place tags etc, as this takes away from the natural setting of the bushland. If you need to leave markers ensure that you remove them at the end of the day.

Watch your safety

Know what to do in emergencies. Rescue operations often cause serious damage, so take care to avoid the need for rescue.

Acquire knowledge in First Aid so you know how to handle illness and injuries.

Carry clothing and equipment to suit the worst possible conditions you are likely to encounter.

Carry a mobile phone if you want to, but use it only for summoning aid in an emergency. Keep it switched off until needed.

Pack it in, pack it out

Don't carry glass bottles and jars, cans, drink cartons lined with aluminium foil and excess packaging.

If you can't resist carrying such things, don't leave them in the bush. Remember, if you can carry a full container in, you can easily carry the empty one out.

Remove all your rubbish including food scraps, paper, plastic, aluminium foil and empty containers.

Don't burn or bury rubbish. Burning creates pollution and buried rubbish may be dug up and scattered by animals.

Digging also disturbs the soil, causing erosion and encouraging weeds.

Carry a plastic bag for your rubbish. If you find litter left by irresponsible people along the track or around a campsite, please remove it. Show you care for the environment, even if others don't.

When walking in scrubby country, do not strap closed-cell sleep mats or items in plastic bags outside your pack. The bush will be littered with pieces of foam and plastic.

Be hygienic

Ensure you are at least 50 metres from campsites, creeks and lakes, when going to the toilet. Wait until you get out of sensitive areas such as caves and canyons before defecating or urinating.

Bury all faeces and toilet paper at least 15cm deep. In snow, dig through the snow first, then dig a hole in the ground.

Carry out things that won't easily decompose, such as used tampons, sanitary pads and condoms. Carry a lightweight plastic trowel or a large aluminium tent peg to make digging easier.

Keep water pure

Wash cooking and eating utensils well back from the edge of lakes and creeks so waste water falls on soil where it will be absorbed.

Prevent soap, detergent or toothpaste from getting into natural water systems. Similarly, when washing cooking utensils, don't use detergent and don't let oils and food scraps get into creeks or lakes.

Always swim downstream from where you get your drinking water.

Be VERY careful with fire

Have a fire only when you are absolutely certain you can light it with safety. A fuel stove is preferable for cooking and thermal clothing is better for warmth.

Always use a fuel stove in places where even a tiny fire may cause permanent damage. Places where fire lighting should be avoided include many rainforest and all alpine regions.

Do not light fires: in hot, summer conditions

- in dry windy weather
- in declared 'fuel stove only' areas
- when there is a declared fire ban.

Always remember

Fire doesn't destroy aluminium foil, and plastics release toxic gases when burnt. So carry foil and plastics out in your pack with all your other rubbish, including food scraps. Don't use your campfire as a rubbish incinerator.

If you light a campfire, follow these rules

In popular campsites, light your fire on a bare patch left by previous fires. Don't light it on fresh ground.

Light your fire on bare soil or sand, well away from stumps, logs, living plants and river stones (which may explode when heated).

Definitely **don't** build a ring of stones as a fireplace. This is unnecessary and unsightly. Dismantle stone rings wherever you find them.

Sweep away all leaves, grass and other flammable material for at least two metres around your fireplace. (Major bushfires have been caused by careless campers who didn't take this precaution.)

Burn only dead wood that's fallen to the ground. Don't break limbs from trees or shrubs.

Keep your fire small - remember, the bigger the fool, the bigger the fire.

Before you leave

Douse your fire thoroughly with water, even if it appears to be already out. Don't try to smother a fire by covering it with soil or sand as the coals will continue to smoulder for days. Only water kills a fire with total certainty.

Feel the ground under the coals. If it is too hot to touch, the fire is not out. Douse it some more.

Scatter the cold charcoal and ashes well clear of your campsite, then rake soil and leaves over the spot where your fire was. You should aim to remove all trace of it.

Choose campsites carefully

Think twice about using a popular campsite to avoid overuse. If possible, vary your route slightly so you can find an alternative site in a less frequented area.

Find an open space to erect your tent so it is unnecessary to clear vegetation. In difficult overgrown areas, trample undergrowth flat rather than pull plants out of the ground. A trampled spot soon recovers.

Use a waterproof groundsheet or tent with a sewn-in floor and you won't have to worry about surface runoff in wet weather. Avoid the temptation to dig drains around your tent. This practice damages the environment and is not acceptable

If you have to remove branches or rocks to create a tent site, replace them before you leave.

Leave your campsite pristine. After a few days it should be impossible to see where you were camped.

Protect Plants and Animals

Try not to disturb wildlife. Remember, you are the trespasser.
Give snakes a wide berth and leave them alone. They have more right to be there than you do.
Watch where you put your feet. Walk around delicate plants.
Don't feed birds and animals around campsites or they may become pests. Unnatural food can be harmful to many species.

Respect Indigenous heritage

Many places have spiritual or cultural significance for our Indigenous communities. Treat such places with consideration and respect.
Obtain permission from traditional landowners or the relevant land manager to visit sensitive areas.
Leave Indigenous relics as you find them. Don't touch paintings or rock engravings.

Be courteous to others

The sound of, radios, CD players, mobile phones and similar devices is out of place in the natural environment. Leave the electronics at home. (See note under Safety concerning the acceptable use of mobile phones.)
Ensure your behaviour and activities don't disturb or offend others. Always keep voices to a minimum. Camp as far away from other groups as conditions allow. Don't use another group's campfire without permission.
Leave gates and slip rails as you find them. When you open a gate, make sure the last person through knows it has to be closed.
Respect the rights of landholders and land managers. Don't enter private property without permission. In national parks, abide by plans of management and encourage others to do so too.

When in camp

Do your share of getting firewood and water. When breaking camp, help to remove the remains of your fire (if you had one) and clean up the site.
Don't throw rubbish on a fire where people are cooking. In fact, don't throw rubbish on a fire at all; carry it out with you. (See section: Pack it in, Pack it Out.)
Don't step over other people's uncovered food.
Offer what is required to help others in need. This could be your leader, who may be carrying group safety items, someone in the group who has injured themselves, or forgotten their billy, or another group who may not have communications to summon emergency medical aid. Recognise that some individuals may need your help but will never ask for it. Volunteer it.

Emergency contact

In an emergency you can contact the Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad on 13 22 22 and ask operator to send your message, including return STD phone number to pager no. 6277 321

Walk safely, walk with a club

Take nothing but happy memories and photographs - leave nothing but footprints.
Minimal Impact Bushwalking means do nothing
leave nothing that shows where you have been.

Adopted by The Ku-ring-gai Bushwalkers Activity & Social Group Inc.

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