



## **Orienteering Association of Western Australia Environmental Policy**

### **Preamble**

This environmental policy is based on that adopted by Orienteering Australia, which in turn acknowledges the International Orienteering Federations's (IOF) policy. At its meeting on 12/14 April 1996, the Council of the IOF, acknowledging the importance of maintaining the environmentally friendly nature of orienteering, and in accordance with the General Association Of International Sports Federations (GAISF) Resolution on the Environment of 26 October 1995, included adopting the following principles:

- to continue to be aware of the need to preserve a healthy environment and to integrate this principle into the fundamental conduct of orienteering
- to ensure that rules of competition & best practice in the organisation of events are consistent with the principle of respect for the environment & the protection of flora & fauna
- to cooperate with landowners, government authorities and environmental organisations so that best practice may be defined
- to take particular care to observe local regulations for environmental protection, to maintain the litter-free nature of orienteering & to take proper measures to avoid pollution
- to include environmental good practice in the education and training of orienteers
- to heighten the national federations' awareness of worldwide environmental problems so that they may adopt, apply and popularise principles to safeguard orienteering's sensitive use of the countryside

### **Orienteering Association of Western Australia (OAWA) environmental policy**

#### **1. Introduction**

Orienteering is an outdoor sporting and recreational activity involving navigating cross country with the aid of a map and compass. As the sport is based primarily on the use of natural landscapes, those who participate generally have a high level of environmental awareness and a desire to cooperate with land owners in meeting their particular requirements. The sport is highly dependent on access to both private and public land to conduct events and the full cooperation of land owners and managers is vital for its ongoing growth. This Environmental Policy has been developed to clearly demonstrate what is expected of both organisers and competitors.

#### **2. Purpose**

This Policy is primarily intended to serve as a guide to organisers and competitors to ensure that our activities have minimal impact on both natural and constructed features of our competition areas. Secondly, it will provide a means by which both private and public land owners & managers can be informed of the steps that we take to avoid adverse impacts resulting from our sport.

#### **3. Statement of intent**

OAWA and its members/member clubs are committed to ensuring that the sport of orienteering is conducted in a manner that is environmentally sound and in accordance with landowner requirements. Furthermore OAWA will ensure that organisers and competitors are made aware of this policy and the means by which it will be implemented.

#### **4. Orienteering Association of Western Australia responsibilities**

4.1 OAWA is conscious of the need to collect data on the impact of orienteering and to pass on any substantial or significant reports to Orienteering Australia. Studies may be commissioned by OAWA using the skills of professional consultants.

Adopted 14 September, 2005

4.2 Requests by land owners for studies to be undertaken should be welcomed and, providing funding is made available, every cooperation should be given to researchers to help them carry out valid independent studies.

4.3 Map files should be maintained and updated with copies of courses to assist with monitoring impacts over a period of time and to provide a reference for setters to avoid overuse of control sites.

## **5. Event organisers' and controllers' responsibilities**

### **5.1 Area selection**

In selecting areas for orienteering the following points should be considered

- Whether an area is capable of sustaining the scale of the proposed event without excessive impacts on the physical environment or conflicts with other users.
- Where seasonal sensitivities exist, for example, due to wildlife breeding, lambing or other rural operations or climatic extremes, schedule events to avoid sensitive periods.
- Once an area has been selected, regular liaison must occur with the relevant owner or manager to ensure their requirements are incorporated into planning for the event at an early stage. When necessary, relevant permits must be obtained and organisers must ensure that everyone associated with the event is aware of the conditions that may apply.

### **5.2 Access and parking**

- Consult with owners and managers on selection of parking and assembly areas.
- Check that roads and tracks are adequately formed for the number of vehicles expected. Adverse weather conditions must be considered.
- Clearly define prescribed routes across open areas and provide attendants or clear signage to control parking.
- Vehicles should not be parked in areas of long dry grass if there is a fire risk by hot exhausts.
- Manage gate closure by signs or attendants.
- Ensure that stock are not adversely affected by the movement of vehicles or people.
- Car pooling should be encouraged.

### **5.3 Area management**

- Signs must never be nailed to trees because of the danger to felling and milling operations and also the risk of introducing disease into the tree.
- Secure permission to use pit toilets and agree siting. Portable toilets may be required in water catchment areas, areas of high public use, environmentally sensitive areas and on land where the management authority or owner does not permit pit toilets.
- Check whether fire restrictions apply and inform competitors of such restriction and of any precautions that are necessary. Lighting of fires at events should generally not be allowed.
- ensure that the assembly area at Orienteering events is SmokeFree (see OAWA policy)
- Assembly areas must be planned to ensure minimum impact on vegetation. Areas of concentrated activity such as start, finish, results and food sales must be carefully located.
- Particular care should be taken when selecting the route to remote start points to avoid creating tracks through sensitive areas or areas which would take some time to recover.
- The finish chute should be located away from steep slopes or areas of sensitive vegetation.
- All rubbish must be removed from the area. Competitors should always be encouraged to take out their own waste but adequate rubbish collection facilities must be provided. A thorough inspection of the area must be undertaken after the last competitors have left the area. All tapes to mark control sites or specific routes must be removed. The area surrounding water points on courses must also be carefully checked and cleaned if disposable cups or bottles are provided.
- Respect the rights of other users of an area when an orienteering event is in progress by sharing or, if practical, avoiding public areas and other facilities.

Adopted 14 September, 2005

- If public announcement systems are used, design and locate these to minimise the spread of noise outside the assembly area.

#### **5.4 Course setting**

- When setting courses in sensitive areas thought must be given to numbers of competitors passing or visiting specific points. Control sites are an obvious example where care must be taken to minimise impacts but other areas to be considered may include obvious crossing points at fences or creeks, marshes, mossy surface rock and soft earth embankments.
- In some cases, after consultation with land managers, it may be necessary to declare areas as 'out of bounds' because of management, security or privacy factors. An area may be undergoing regeneration or seasonal factors may dictate that the area should be avoided to prevent damage. Such restrictions need to be clearly communicated to competitors.
- On property containing stock or crops, owners must be consulted to determine what, if any, measures must be taken to avoid disturbance. Appropriate measures must be clearly communicated to competitors if courses pass close to such areas. Out of bounds areas must be clearly shown on each competitor's map.
- If the area contains known sites of natural or cultural significance which may be disturbed by the movement of orienteers, avoid placing controls on or near these sites or setting legs which would concentrate the movement of orienteers through them. (It may be counter-productive to mark such areas as out of bounds as this can attract undue attention).
- The property owner's requirements in regard to fence crossing must be communicated to competitors. In some cases it may be necessary to create & identify crossing points.
- If the area contains animals which flee rather than hide when disturbed (kangaroos, wallabies, sheep, wild pigs), endeavour to plan courses with a view to reducing continual disturbance to these animals. This may be done by having all courses follow the same general direction or by leaving parts of the area free of controls or obvious route choices.
- Some areas may contain sensitive surface rock that would be subject to damage by certain equipment e.g. spiked shoes. If required by the relevant land managers, pre-event advice must be given to competitors that such equipment cannot be used.

#### **5.5 Competitors' responsibilities**

- Read and adhere to organisers instructions.
- Pets and firearms must not be taken to events because of restrictions that generally apply.
- Fire restrictions must be observed.
- Gates must always be left as found, open or closed, unless there is a specific instruction otherwise.
- Report any damage to property to the organisers.
- Avoid spreading seeds and mud when cleaning your shoes and clothing. This can be done by cleaning them at the event site, provided that this does not spread material from an infested area on the course to a 'clean' assembly area. If cleaning at home, dispose of the material so that it is not spread. Do not leave cleaning until you arrive at the next event.
- Avoid fauna and stock as much as possible. Cattle trapped at fence corners or in a confined area can stampede and should always be given a wide berth.
- Try to avoid disturbing wildlife. Keep a distance when possible to avoid stressing animals.
- Remove your own rubbish. Do not leave it for the organisers to collect and take away. Drive and park as directed by the organiser.
- Wherever possible avoid damage to sensitive areas such as wetlands, marshes and soft earth embankments. Mossy rock surfaces should be avoided to prevent damage and also because they could be slippery and dangerous.
- Respect the rights of other users of the area such as walkers, picnickers, and of course resident land owners. Do not approach farm residences.