
Memorandum of Understanding between

Forests New South Wales

and

The Orienteering Association of NSW

The New South Wales Rogaining Association

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1. INTRODUCTION

This document has been written to update a working relationship between the Orienteering Association of NSW (Orienteering NSW), the NSW Rogaining Association (NSW Rogaining) and Forests NSW (a Public Trading Enterprise within the NSW Department of Primary Industries).

Forests NSW recognises Orienteering NSW and NSW Rogaining as peak user groups representing the interests of members who have an interest in outdoor recreational pursuits through orienteering and rogaining, throughout NSW. Forests NSW recognises that orienteering and rogaining are valid, low impact forest uses and Orienteering NSW and New South Wales Rogaining Association recognise that State forests are a good venue for these activities.

2. PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT

This document establishes the basis for a co-operative working relationship between Forests NSW, the Orienteering Association of NSW (Orienteering NSW) and the New South Wales Rogaining Association (NSW Rogaining), Australian Capital Territory Rogaining Association (ACT Rogaining) including affiliated orienteering, rogaining and mountain-bike clubs. Collectively these three organisations are described herein as 'the Parties', 'orienteering' refers to both pedestrian and mountain-bike orienteering and 'rogaining' refers to both pedestrian and mountain-bike rogaining.

It is recognised that the ACT Orienteering Association undertakes events in State forests in New South Wales and it is the intention that this document should also cover these events.

The document has been developed for the purposes of achieving the following outcomes:

- ★ Provision of secure access to areas of State forest for the purpose of organised orienteering and rogaining events.
- ★ Standardisation of fees and conditions for special purpose permits granted by Forests NSW, for organised Orienteering NSW and NSW Rogaining events.
- ★ Access to planning information owned by Forests NSW for the development of maps by Orienteering NSW and NSW Rogaining.
- ★ Provision of copies of orienteering maps on State forests, by Orienteering NSW and Rogaining NSW, to the relevant Forests NSW Regional Office.
- ★ Access to specified areas of State forests for events based on the Forest Management Zones, 'plans of operation' and advice provided by Forests NSW Regional offices regarding culturally and environmentally sensitive areas.
- ★ Provision and use of mutually supportive promotional material.
- ★ Provision by Orienteering NSW and Rogaining NSW of a Certificate of Currency relating to Public Liability coverage.

3. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF FORESTS NSW

Forests NSW is a Public Trading Enterprise (PTE) within the NSW Department of Primary Industries and responsible for managing almost 3 million hectares of native and plantation forest on behalf of the people of New South Wales. Under the *Forestry Act 1916* the organisation's primary objective is

to provide a sustained supply of timber to the community in conjunction with a range of other values. Recreation is one of these other values.

Almost all State forests are available for recreational activities. Providing access to forests for a wide-range of activities through the maintenance of facilities as well as suitable forest environment is an important contribution by Forests NSW to the community because many activities can be undertaken in State forests that are restricted on other public lands. Forests NSW has in place a general Recreation, Sport, Tourism and Training Strategy and Policy called *Living, working, playing...Forests*, which sets the administrative environment for the provision and pursuit of recreation in State forests.

4. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ORIENTEERING ASSOCIATION OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Orienteering NSW is the peak body representing a number of orienteering clubs across New South Wales. Currently, six clubs are based in metropolitan Sydney and another six in regional NSW, with one dedicated mountain bike orienteering club. Orienteering NSW is a non-for-profit organisation staffed by 1.5 full time equivalents.

The association and its members have conducted events in various State forests since 1975 with the active cooperation of Forests NSW.

Orienteering NSW covers pedestrian orienteering ('Foot-O') and Mountain bike orienteering ('MTBO'). Rogaining is considered separately.

Orienteering is a competitive sport which involves participants visiting on foot or bike 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 map and compass to navigate the course. Courses are usually set in forest or bushland and vary in length but are generally 2 to 15 km. 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 by specialised mappers from within the orienteering community in advance of events. There is considerable lead time required for the setting of courses and preparation of maps.

The nature of the sport 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 reduce competitor familiarisation with locations.

5. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE NSW ROGAINING ASSOCIATION

NSW Rogaining is the body that organises all rogaining events in NSW and there are no separate clubs (as there are in orienteering in NSW).

Rogaining is a competitive sport, which is a combination of bushwalking and orienteering. It is a sport of long distance cross-country navigation, in which teams of two to five people visit as many checkpoints as they wish in a set time period. Participants may visit control points of differing values in any order, the aim being to accumulate the maximum number of points.

The traditional rogaine is 24 hours in duration, however, there are also shorter events of 6, 8 and 12 hours. Most NSW events are held within 2 to 3 hours travelling of Sydney. Most rogaines are on foot and held in attractive bush and farmland locations, however, some events are held in metropolitan areas (Metrogaines), or on bikes (Cyclegaines).

Rogaining uses standard topographic maps and course setting requires considerable preparation and lead time. The complexity and size of the course is determined by the length of the event and when on foot or bike.

6. OPERATING FRAMEWORK

6.1 Communication

The Parties agree to communicate at regular intervals to enable issues to be quickly identified and discussed. In so far as is possible, the primary means of communication will be directly between individual clubs and Regional Offices.

At a corporate level, each party to this document will identify a prime contact and contact details (Appendix D) for the purpose of resolving issues as they arise at short notice.

At a more strategic level, senior staff of each organisation (i.e. prime contacts identified in Appendix D), will meet as needed to discuss arising issues, to update contact lists and to discuss joint programs. Formal minutes of these meeting will be kept and circulated within each organisation.

6.2 Planning

Permission in principle for the use of a particular State forest, or part thereof, for an organised event will normally be sought by one of the affiliated member clubs of the Association 1-2 years prior to its first use for an orienteering event. Rogaining events do not require the same lead time as orienteering, since special maps are usually not made – hence less than 1 year notice will generally be appropriate for rogaining events.

Where available, Forest NSW will provide Orienteering NSW and NSW Rogaining with mapped 'plans of operation' for those areas identified for possible future events. These plans will identify areas of State forest proposed for harvesting and which may not, therefore, be available or safe for orienteering or rogaining events. These plans are usually prepared two years in advance, although this may vary depending on the Region concerned, and will be supplied to Orienteering NSW or Rogaining NSW as soon as practicable after completion or upon request.

Orienteering NSW and NSW Rogaining will provide Forests NSW with a map or list of possible areas of proposed future events each year. Forests NSW will hold this map in confidence (i.e. not release it so as not to compromise areas that have identified as in moratorium for forthcoming events).

6.3 Permit Application Process

6.3.1 State-wide Special Purpose Permit Application

Orienteering NSW and NSW Rogaining will separately apply for an annual State-wide Special Purpose Permit for events.

A list of all planned events for that year will be provided to Forests NSW prior to the commencement of each annual calendar. Separate lists will be provided by Orienteering NSW and NSW Rogaining. Amendments may be made to this list by Orienteering NSW and NSW Rogaining as they arise.

Forests NSW will provide this list to the NSW Game Council, on a quarterly basis, as confirmation of dates upon which State forests declared for Hunting are to be closed for hunting.

Applications shall be made using the standard Special Purpose Permit Application Form (Appendix A).

The 'Standard Conditions for Special Purpose Permits' will apply (refer Appendix B) to all events covered by the permit. It should be noted that special conditions may be applied on a case by case basis. Event organisers shall consult with the relevant Forests NSW Regional office (appendix D) one (1) month prior to the event. An event emergency management plan prepared by Orienteering NSW or NSW Rogaining, or if not available, a Forests NSW safety and emergency management checklist, should be completed and provided to Forests NSW.

Orienteering NSW and NSW Rogaining must show evidence of public liability insurance to a minimum level of \$10 million.

Assuming all necessary information and documentation has been supplied and other events/forest activities have been considered, Forests NSW will issue the Special Purpose Permit within three weeks of application.

Fees will be on the basis of this agreement (refer Appendix C) unless special circumstances apply. These will be considered at a Regional level on a case by case basis.

Orienteering NSW and NSW Rogaining will provide a return to Forests NSW to remit any necessary fees along with details of number of participants.

An annual Special Purpose Permit issued to an Orienteering NSW club or NSW Rogaining will not be exclusive and will not preclude the use of that area by other groups either for recreation or another activity.

6.3.2 Single Event Application

Under exceptional circumstances Orienteering NSW and NSW Rogaining, may apply for a one-off Special Purpose Permit for an event that is not included within the list identified under 6.3.1.

Applications to conduct events shall be made using the standard Special Purpose Permit Application Form (Appendix A). An additional application fee may be required.

The 'Standard Conditions for Special Purpose Permits' will apply (refer Appendix B). It should be noted that special conditions can be applied on a case by case basis.

The event organisers must show evidence of public liability insurance to a minimum level of \$10 million and an event emergency management plan, or complete a Forests NSW safety and emergency management checklist.

Assuming all necessary information and documentation has been supplied and other events/forest activities have been considered, Forests NSW will issue the Special Purpose Permit within three weeks of application.

Fees will be on the basis of this agreement (refer Appendix C) unless special circumstances apply. Following the event, the organising club shall remit any necessary fees along with details of number of participants.

6.3.2 General

Forests NSW will notify Orienteering NSW or NSW Rogaining of any other agreements made with other organisations whose activities may impact upon the use of the area for an event. Likewise, Forests NSW will notify other forest users of Orienteering NSW or NSW Rogaining events that may impact upon use. A website, listing known recreation events and permits is planned to be developed by Forests NSW to assist with this process. Forests NSW will include the dates and general locations of orienteering and rogaining events on this list and relevant contact information. The parties will endeavour to avoid scheduling multiple events or activities in the same area at the same time.

6.4 Land Use

The Parties recognise that the primary activity undertaken in State forests is management for timber harvesting. State forests are zoned for a range of management activities (known as Forests NSW Forest Management Zoning System) and some areas are not available for the full range of recreational activities, including orienteering.

The Parties recognise that in order to achieve the outcomes identified in Section 1, there may be opportunities from time to time for Association members to gain access to areas that would otherwise be closed to the public or be excluded from particular areas that might otherwise be available.

In these situations, the Parties recognise that it is important to minimise impacts on other user groups, and on environmental and asset values. The Parties also recognise that the provisions of any plan of management or Forests NSW policy on the use of the area concerned must prevail.

Forests NSW will provide Orienteering NSW with a Forest Management Zoning map which indicates land management intent, for the purpose of long term planning for events.

6.5 Closures

Forests NSW agrees to notify Orienteering NSW and NSW Rogaining prior to any decision to permanently or temporarily close areas that have been identified for future events.

Orienteering NSW and NSW Rogaining recognise that Forests NSW may need to close areas, including roads and trails, from time to time, for example, during extreme fire danger, drought, flood or bushfires, or at times when activities undertaken in association with timber harvesting or other scheduled forestry operations may make conditions unsafe for public access. In these situations, Forests NSW will provide advice to the appropriate club as soon as possible, if events have been scheduled for those areas.

At times of extreme fire danger or bushfire risk, Orienteering NSW and NSW Rogaining will contact the appropriate Region to confirm the status of such areas.

6.6 Publicity

The parties agree to develop joint media releases and journal articles to portray the co-operative approach being undertaken by the parties and to assist in achieving the outcomes identified within Section 1 of this Agreement.

As appropriate, Forests NSW logo may be included on maps and publications for those events that are in State forests. In the case of maps where Forests NSW has provided access to aerial photographs, GIS or other services and products that have assisted in the production of those maps Forests NSW Logo will be included.

Forests NSW will seek the permission of Orienteering NSW (or associated club) or NSW Rogaining prior to the inclusion of information and photos about events in any publication.

6.7 Dispute Resolution

The Parties recognise that it is best to attempt to resolve grievances, disagreements and issues between local representatives of the Parties where appropriate. As a first instance, resolution between Forests NSW Regional Manager and the Event Organiser should be sought.

If issues cannot be resolved at a regional level, then resolution should occur between a Director of Orienteering NSW or NSW Rogaining and the Director, Land Management and Technical Services Forests NSW, and then between the Chief Executive Forests NSW and President Orienteering NSW/ NSW Rogaining if needed.

6.8 Resourcing

The Parties agree to share information, particularly in relation to map production, where possible and take into account 'commercial-in-confidence' or other licence conditions associated with data and promotional projects related to achieving the outcomes identified in Section 1 of this Agreement.

7. TIMELINESS

The Parties to this document give an understanding to be timely and professional in their dealings with each other. Openness and integrity will be a cornerstone of their relationship. Agendas will be prepared jointly and circulated at least 7 days prior to each joint meeting. Minutes will be produced and circulated within 3 weeks of each meeting. Correspondence will be answered within 3 weeks of receipt and copies of any relevant publications will be provided within 3 weeks of publication.

The Parties acknowledge that the commitment in this regard is one to use their best endeavours and is subject in all respects to budgetary and human relations constraints existing from time to time.

8. REVIEW AND TERM OF THE DOCUMENT

This document will have a term of 5 years and will be subject to review at that time (ie by April 2010). This document may also be subject to review and change within the 5 year period. If one of the Parties wishes to alter the document then they shall consult the other party to seek a cooperative outcome.

