



Biodiversity
Conservation
Trust

Biodiversity Conservation Trust

Passive recreational and commercial activities

For BCT agreements | January 2022

Passive recreational and commercial activities

BCT agreements are established to conserve biodiversity and protect habitat for native plants and animals. Passive recreational and commercial activities are permissible activities within an agreement area, but must be undertaken in a manner that avoids negative impact on the biodiversity values present within an agreement area.

The purpose of this guide is to outline recreational and commercial activities permitted within new agreements established under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act). This guide considers recreational and commercial activities only, and does not affect activities associated with accessing an agreement area to carry out management actions. Before entering an agreement, landholders are encouraged to consider which activities they may want to undertake on their land in the future and discuss this with the BCT. If the recreational or commercial activities you plan to undertake are not permitted, these must be excluded from the agreement area.

Permitted recreational and commercial activities may vary according to the type of agreement. For example, biodiversity stewardship agreements (BSA) must achieve ecological improvements from funded management actions. For this reason, activities permitted in a BSA are more restricted so that ecological gains have a better chance of success.

Landholders with existing agreements are encouraged to refer to the terms and conditions of their agreement. Where there is uncertainty whether a passive recreational and/or commercial activity is allowed, landholders are encouraged to seek advice from the BCT.

Permissible activities

The table below outlines common passive recreational and commercial activities permitted within BCT agreements. These activities are allowable where they do not cause damage or deteriorate biodiversity values of the agreement area. Overarching principles and best practice management are outlined on the following pages to guide how and when these activities can be done sensitively.

Activity	Agreement Type ¹			
	WR	CPP CA	CMP CA	BSA
Bush walking / trail running	✓	✓	✓	✓
Picnicking	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bird watching	✓	✓	✓	✓
Photography and filming	✓	✓	✓	✓
Non-hollow fallen timber collection	✓	✓	✓	✓
Environmental education	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ecotourism	✓	✓	✓	✓
Non-motorised boating (canoeing / kayaking)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rock climbing, abseiling, canyoning	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rogaining / orienteering	✓	✓	✓	✓
Recreational fishing	✓	✓	✓	✓
Camping at non-permanent camp sites	✓	✓	✓	✓
Campfires	✓	✓	✓	X
Non-motorised mountain biking	✓	✓	✓	✓
Drone use	✓	✓	✓	✓
Seed collection	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dog walking	✓	✓	✓	✓

¹ Agreement types include BSA: biodiversity stewardship agreement; CMP CA: Conservation Management Program conservation agreement; CPP CA: Conservation Partnership Program conservation agreement; WR: wildlife refuge agreement. Permitted activities are marked with a tick (✓) whereas activities that are not permitted are marked with a cross (X).

Activity	Agreement Type ¹			
	WR	CPP CA	CMP CA	BSA
Horse riding	✓	✗	✗	✗
Release area for rehabilitated wildlife	✓	✓	✗	✗
Motorised vehicles for recreation	✓	✓	✗	✗
Beekeeping	✗	✗	✗	✗

Principles to guide passive recreational and commercial activities

The BCT encourages landholders to protect biodiversity values while enjoying the natural assets of their agreement areas. Many activities can negatively impact ecological values when not carried out sensitively.

The potential for an activity to impact ecological values is generally related to its frequency and scale, with private recreational activities having less impact than public or commercial activities. Impacts associated with private recreational activities can however be more significant when small impacts accumulate over time.

The following principles help guide passive recreational or commercial activities within an agreement area:

- All activities are managed to avoid negative or unsustainable impacts on the biodiversity values of the agreement.
- Visitors must embrace a 'leave no trace' philosophy. This includes not creating new tracks or damaging vegetation. All rubbish must be removed from the site (including organic matter).
- Activities do not interfere with the implementation of management actions within the agreement.
- Appropriate biosecurity controls to prevent the introduction of any pest fauna, weeds and disease into any site are planned and implemented prior to the activity. This may include inspecting shoes, camping equipment and vehicles before entry.
- Activities must be consistent with the objectives, terms, and conditions of the agreement.
- Sensitive areas including threatened species habitat and threatened ecological communities should be avoided.

Guidance for best practice management

The types of passive recreational and commercial activities permitted within agreement areas are those that avoid impacts to biodiversity values and are consistent with the terms of the agreement. These activities will mostly occur on existing tracks or trails as identified in the agreement.

Best practice management and considerations on how to conduct activities to minimise ecological harm and ensure disturbances are minor and temporary are outlined below.



Tread lightly and don't leave a trace

Landholders can enjoy their agreement area under the principles of a leave no trace philosophy. The following low impact activities are unlikely to lead to long term impacts, particularly when restricted to existing tracks:

- walking or running either as individuals or a small groups.
- birdwatching as individuals or as part of a club or community group. The BCT recommends the Birdlife Australia Ethical Birding Guidelines.
- photographing and filming without the use of animal lures or attractants.

All drone users must abide with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority rules.

Bike riding and vehicles to remain on existing tracks

Bike riding and use of motorised vehicles can disturb the environment through vegetation damage, compaction of soils, accelerating erosion, introducing nutrients, spreading weeds, and creating air and noise pollution.

Where permitted, these activities must stay on existing tracks identified in the agreement. If the intensity of these activities is frequent enough to cause erosion or sedimentation this is not consistent with passive recreational use.

Unless specified in the terms and conditions of your agreement, BCT does not allow horse riding for recreation in conservation agreements or biodiversity stewardship agreements.





Ecotourism and group activities

The frequency and intensity of cumulative activities within an agreement area influences whether commercial ecotourism activities are acceptable for the site. The level of impact caused by ecotourism or organised group activities can vary, and should be discussed with the BCT prior to the event to ensure impacts are minimised as much as possible. All events require appropriate measures to limit impacts.

Management considerations for some common ecotourism and group activities include:

- Frequent rock climbing can disrupt fauna habitat and result in erosion and trampling of cliff line vegetation including sensitive moss, lichens, rare and unique plants. Where trampling is evident allow time for vegetation to recover.
- Limiting participant and spectator numbers and restrict activities to existing tracks as much as possible.
- Minimising impacts from rogaining or orienteering by scheduling infrequent events with small group sizes. Importantly, any marshalling stations or event areas (start/finish location, porta-loos etc.) must be located outside the agreement area.
- Recreational fishing can only occur for the purposes of consumption by the landholders or management of pest species. Access to waterbodies for recreational fishing should align with existing trails identified within the agreement and be managed to avoid erosion and damage to vegetation.
- Private recreational mountain biking must use existing trails identified within the agreement. Landholders are responsible for ensuring progressive widening of existing tracks does not occur.

Habitats are not destroyed and native wildlife behaviour is not disturbed

Activities in agreement areas must not damage vegetation, habitats or change the behaviour of native wildlife. There are several simple actions that can be taken to protect wildlife and their habitats while appreciating and caring for the environment.



- Environmental features such as logs and rocks are not moved.

- Temporary camping and camp-fires² should be in existing cleared areas only. These occasional camping locations must be chosen to minimise vegetation disturbance and trampling.
- Built structures (such as cabins, amenities, bird hides) or permanent camping areas³ must be excluded from the agreement area with an appropriate buffer or clearing allowance for mapped infrastructure identified in the agreement.
- Collection of non-hollow fallen timber is only permitted for the heating of the landholder's single dwelling or campfire on site. Fallen timber, hollow logs and standing dead trees provide important habitat for native animals, including threatened species. For this reason, landholders are encouraged to only collect from areas where fallen timber is plentiful rather than from open grassland or woodland where timber is sparse.
- Recreational dog walking requires that dogs must be under the control of the landholder or those authorised by the landholder. Those responsible for their dogs must not allow them to injure, kill or cause stress to native wildlife. Dog owners must be mindful that the scent of their dogs including faeces, can disturb the behaviour of native wildlife.
- If permitted within the agreement, fauna can only be released by licensed wildlife rescue and rehabilitation organisations. Landholders must be confident that the wild population and natural environment will not be negatively impacted by the release. All releases must be in accordance with the Department of Planning Industry and Environment's Rehabilitation of Protected Native Animals Policy, relevant Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Fauna and wildlife rehabilitation licence conditions.



Beekeeping

Schedule 4 of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* lists Competition from feral honeybees, *Apis mellifera L.* as a 'key threatening process'. European honeybees compete with native fauna for tree hollows, which are a very limited resource. To conserve the biodiversity values within an agreement area, protect native bees and nectar-feeding wildlife, European honeybees are not permitted.

Landholders considering keeping native bees need to think about how introducing native bees may impact on the local ecology. This includes how introducing a commercially sourced native beehive could:

- introduce a species that is not locally endemic,
- affect the genetics of the local native bee populations and/or,

² Camp-fires are not permitted in a BSA.

³ Camping or permanent structures in a BSA must occur in non-credit generating areas of the agreement or excluded from the BSA.

- compete with resident native bees or other invertebrates endemic to the site.

Native seed collection

The collection of native plant seed for the purposes of ecological restoration works can be undertaken in accordance with the Florabank Guidelines for both private and commercial purposes.



Limits to activities within BSAs

Some recreational or commercial activities are not permitted in BSAs that are allowable in other agreement types. These activity areas must be excluded and / or do not generate biodiversity credits. Such activities are listed in the table on pages 2 to 3, and discussed under the relevant activity heading.

Where activity areas require maintenance, these must be included within the BSA management plan to allow for ongoing management as part of the agreement. These areas and activities must be thoughtfully planned for inclusion within a BSA to minimise impacts to adjacent areas and allow for on-going management of impacts costed within the Total Fund Deposit (TFD).

The BCT Guideline for BSA sites (tracks, trails and other exclusions) [available on the BCT website](#) provides more guidance on requirements for BSA non-credit generating areas.

References

Australian Government, 2021. Florabank Guidelines. Access via www.florabank.org.au.

Australia Government Civil Aviation Safety Authority, 2022. Drone rules. Access via www.casa.gov.au/knowyourdrone/drone-rules

BirdLife Australia, 2020. BirdLife Australia Ethical Birdwatching Guidelines for birders, BirdLife activities, research and tour operators. BirdLife Australia, Melbourne.

NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust, 2021. Guideline for BSA sites (tracks, trails and other exclusions). Access via <https://www.bct.nsw.gov.au/info/biodiversity-stewardship-agreement-bsa-information>

NSW Department of Planning Industry and Environment, 2020. Rehabilitation of Protected Native Animals Policy. Access via www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research-and-publications/publications-search/rehabilitation-of-protected-native-animals-policy

NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, 2011. Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Fauna. Access via www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research-and-publications/publications-search/code-of-practice-for-injured-sick-and-orphaned-protected-fauna