

Appendix A – Walking Track Classification Specifications

Walking Track Classification System

Parks and Wildlife Service

This Walking Track Classification System is the outcome of a review of the track classifications defined in the *Walking Track Management Strategy for the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area*¹, hereafter the Strategy. The Bushwalking and Track Review (BATR) Panel undertook the review in partnership with the Parks and Wildlife Service. The BATR Panel endorsed the classification system outlined herein on the 1st June 2003.

The Walking Track Classification System is largely based on the track classification system used by the PWS and outlined in the Strategy but does not incorporate classifications for river portage tracks.

The primary purpose of this system is as a tool for the planning, provision and maintenance of walking tracks across the lands managed by the PWS.

Alignment with the Australian Standards (AS 2156.1)

An effort has been made to align the revised track classifications with the Australian standards for walking tracks (AS 2156.1) and the equivalent AS 2156 classifications are indicated in the specification tables on the following pages.

The Australian Standards provide a broad set of standards, however, in order to facilitate consistent interpretation of the character and differences between the track classes, the PWS Walking Track Classification System provides a more detailed set of specifications and guidelines which have been tailored to the Tasmanian context.

Explanatory Notes

It should also be noted that the Walking Track Classification System has considerable flexibility built in, as such, the system provides for discretion and consideration of contextual factors in its application. Two examples of the in built flexibility are:

- party sizes are “*recommended*” sizes only; and,
- campsite specifications state that “*in suitable localities an area might have more than one campsite*”.

The following text provides an explanation of the intent and interpretation of various elements in the preceding table.

¹ Parks and Wildlife Service (1998). *Walking Track Management Strategy for the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. Volume 1. Main Report*. Hobart, Tasmania, Parks and Wildlife Service. 91-101.

Gradient:

The Gradient specifications are provided as 'guidance for managers' to assist them in the design and modification of walking tracks. As such, the specifications with respect to track gradients must be applied with a degree of flexibility, for two main reasons:

First, much of the existing track network was established prior to the development and application of a track classification system. Indeed, the path of many tracks evolved as the result of walkers following a line of convenience in negotiating terrain that is often steep, and by its topographic nature restrictive of alternate routes of lesser incline.

Second, exact specifications would be impractical to implement – for example it would be impractical to ensure that every metre of every T2 track was at a gradient of less than 20°.

Surfacing and drainage (mud):

The prevention or repair of muddy sections of track will generally be given a lower priority than the prevention or repair of erosion or track widening except where mud churning is causing or is associated with track widening or erosion.

The repair or re-routing of sections of excessively deep (ie. >25cm) mud-bowls may be undertaken on tracks of T2, T3 and T4 standard, and even on localised sections of designated routes, as a low priority in the long term. Such repair should be undertaken using techniques compatible with the track classification, eg. using rock infill or single-width planking.

W1 Wheelchair standard nature trail (AS 2156 Class 1)	W2 (Standard) nature trail (AS 2156 Class 2)	T1 Track grade 1 (AS 2156 Class 3a)	T2 Track grade 2 (AS 2156 Class 3b)	T3 Track grade 3 (AS 2156 Class 4)	T4 Track grade 4 (AS 2156 Class 5)	R Route* (AS 2156 Class 6+)
OVERVIEW						
Opportunity for large numbers of visitors, including those with reduced mobility, to undertake walks which are provided with a high level of interpretation and facilities. Users can expect abundant opportunities to learn about the natural environment through interpretive signs or brochures. Users can expect frequent encounters with others.	Opportunity for large numbers of visitors to walk easily in natural environments which are provided with a moderate to high level of interpretation and facilities. Users can expect to learn about the natural environment with moderate to abundant opportunities to learn through interpretive signs or brochures. Users can expect frequent encounters with others.	Opportunity for visitors to walk in slightly modified natural environments requiring a moderate level of fitness and where the provision of interpretation and facilities is not common. Users can expect opportunities to observe and appreciate the natural environment with limited provision of interpretive signage. Users can expect occasional encounters with others along the track.		Opportunity for visitors to explore and discover relatively undisturbed natural environments along defined and distinct tracks with minimal (if any) facilities. Users can expect opportunities to observe and appreciate the natural environment without the provision of interpretive signage. Users can expect opportunities for solitude with few encounters with other along the track.	Opportunity for visitors with advanced outdoor knowledge to find their own way along often indistinct tracks in remote areas. Users can expect frequent opportunities for solitude with few encounters with others.	Opportunity for highly experienced walkers to explore remote and challenging natural areas without reliance on managed tracks. Users can expect extended periods of solitude with few encounters with others.
LENGTH						
Usually less than 1.5 km for a loop track or 750m if users have to double back.	Usually less than 3km for a loop track or 1.5 km if users have to double back.	No limit for any tracks of T1 standard or lower.				
WIDTH						
Min 1.2m, preferably at least 1.5m or with sections more than 1.5m wide every 30m and at bends to allow wheelchairs to pass. Max 2.5m, preferably less than 2m over most of track. (Tracks more than 2m wide may be disorientating for users with impaired vision.) Ramped sections should be exactly 1.02m wide with handrails on both sides.	Min 0.6m, generally at least 1m. Max 2.5m, preferably less than 2m over most of track. (Tracks more than 2m wide may be disorientating for users with impaired vision.)	Min generally 0.5m, generally at least 0.75m. Max 1.2m.	Width variable along the length of the track. Min 0.5m but short sections < 0.5m acceptable. Max 1m.	No minimum width. Maximum 0.75m.	No minimum width. Maximum 0.5m.	Pads or tracks to be < 0.5m. Pads or tracks to be kept to an absolute minimum
GRADIENT						
Max gradient 5°; mostly less than 2°.	Gradient mostly less than 8°, max 15° over short (30m) sections.	Guidance for managers Gradient mostly < 15° but may be steeper in places.	Guidance for managers Gradient mostly < 20° but may be steeper in places.	Guidance for managers Gradient limited by environmental considerations only.	Guidance for managers Gradient limited by environmental considerations only.	Guidance for managers No restrictions.
SURFACING & DRAINAGE						
Well drained, "shoe" standard. Firm even surface, eg concrete, asphalt, fine gravel, sawn wood planking. Edges clearly defined.	Well drained, "shoe" standard. Reasonably firm eg stabilised soils, gravel, pine chips, stone. Note: Evenly laid cordwood may be suitable for some W2 tracks but cordwood is generally unsuitable for tracks likely to be used by aged or disabled people.	"Boot" standard. May be rocky and uneven in places. Some mud and water to 10cm is acceptable in places. Extensive hardening is acceptable where required.	"Wet boot" standard. Stabilisation/hardening/drainage mainly for environmental purposes but some concessions to user comfort. Surface may be rough over extended sections. Mud up to 20cm deep acceptable in places.	Improved surfacing/drainage minimal - for environmental purposes only.	Improved surfacing/drainage minimal - for environmental purposes only.	Improved surfacing/drainage minimal - for environmental purposes only.
STEPS						
No steps; ramps < 5°.	Steps and stairs may be included, with handrails where necessary for user safety.					

* Applies to all trackless areas regardless of zoning.

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SCRUB CLEARANCE						
Min 0.3m on either side at ground level, 0.5m at shoulder level, 2.2m height clearance. No obstacles.	Min 0.3m on either side at ground level, 0.5m at shoulder level, 2.2m height clearance. No obstacles.	Clear of scrub across width of track and to above head height. Fallen debris and other obstacles will be rarely encountered.	Mostly clear of scrub across width of track. Some fallen debris and other obstacles may be encountered occasionally.	Sufficient to facilitate fairly easy navigation under normal conditions. Fallen debris and other obstacles may be encountered.	Minimal. As a general rule living woody vegetation will not be cut except where to ensure the track continues to be navigable.	None.
FACILITIES						
Bridges to full width of track, signposts, interpretation facilities, viewing platforms. Shelters and benches are acceptable but not picnic tables. Track markers are unnecessary.	Bridges to full width of track, signposts, interpretation facilities, viewing platforms. Shelters and benches are acceptable, but not picnic tables. Track markers are unnecessary.	Bridges and water crossings Bridges to be installed over all major creeks and rivers. Stepping-stones acceptable; fords acceptable where water is generally less than 10cm deep.	Bridges and water crossings Bridges to be installed over all major creeks and rivers that are not normally safely and readily fordable at a depth of less than 0.5m. Bridges may also be installed to minimise erosion at creek crossings. Log crossings and cable bridges acceptable; flying foxes or swing bridges acceptable over larger rivers. Some fords may be flood-prone.	Bridges and water crossings Bridges or other constructed crossings generally not required if major creeks and rivers are normally safely fordable, except for environmental purposes. Rough log bridges acceptable but not necessary. Flying foxes acceptable over rivers which cannot normally be forded, but some fords may be flood-prone. Delays may be expected under abnormal conditions.	Bridges and water crossings Bridges or other constructed crossings generally not provided, except for essential environmental purposes. Where possible natural crossings are preferred. Flood delays acceptable and expected under abnormal conditions.	Bridges and water crossings None except for essential environmental purposes. Natural crossings are preferred.
		Track markers Track markers where necessary to ensure that direction is obvious except under extreme conditions (eg snow).	Track markers Track markers where necessary to ensure that direction is obvious except under extreme conditions (eg snow in non-alpine areas).	Track markers Track markers where necessary to ensure that direction is obvious along most of track, although route may not be obvious in snow.	Track markers T4 tracks may be marked but markers should be low-key. Track-heads may be marked in a low-key manner. Some tracks may be difficult to follow in places. No other facilities except where necessary for environmental purposes - eg "fan out" signs.	Track markers None except where necessary for environmental purposes - eg track markers to concentrate usage in bottlenecks on alpine traverses. Signs may be installed for essential management purposes.
		Signage Directional signposts at start of track and at junctions with tracks of grade T3 or higher. Junctions with T4 tracks may be unsignposted; otherwise signposts should refer to the main (T1) track only. Interpretative signs may be installed existing structures such as huts. Signs may also be installed for management and safety purposes. Note: Users should be warned that routefinding and progress on T1 tracks might be difficult under extreme conditions such as blizzards, flooding, or heavy snow.	Signage Directional signposts at start of track and at junctions with tracks of grade T3 or higher. Junctions with T4 tracks may be unsignposted; otherwise signposts should refer to the main (T2) track only. Interpretative signs may be installed existing structures such as huts. Signs may also be installed for management and safety purposes. Note: Users should be warned that routefinding and progress on T2 tracks may be difficult under extreme conditions such as blizzards, flooding or heavy snow.	Signage Directional signposts at start of track and at junctions with tracks of grade T3 or higher. Junctions with T4 tracks may be unsignposted; otherwise signposts should refer to the main (T3) track only. Signs may be installed for management and safety purposes.	Signage Signage is limited and only for management purposes	Signage Signage generally not provided

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CAMPsites¹						
		At major camping nodes, campsites for up to 25 tents preferably dispersed in groups of up to five tents. Enclosed toilets to be provided at sites of more than 10 tents, or where necessary for environmental or health purposes.	Campsites for up to 12 tents, preferably dispersed in groups of up to four tents. Toilets to be provided at sites of more than 10 tents, or where necessary for environmental or health purposes.	Campsites for up to 8 tents, preferably dispersed in groups of two to four tents. Toilets of minimal design to be provided where necessary for environmental or health purposes.	Visibly impacted (long-term) sites for up to 4 tents. Toilets of minimal design to be provided only where necessary for environmental purposes.	Formation of campsites to be avoided where possible. Visibly impacted sites for up to four tents, preferably at least partially vegetated, are acceptable where unavoidable or desirable for environmental purposes. No toilets provided unless essential for environmental purposes.
MAXIMUM USAGE						
No restrictions.	No restrictions.	<i>To be defined where required for social, environmental and management purposes.</i>	<i>To be defined where required for social, environmental and management purposes.</i>	<i>To be defined where required for social, environmental and management purposes.</i>	<i>To be defined where required for social, environmental and management purposes.</i>	<i>To be defined where required for social, environmental and management purposes.</i>
RECOMMENDED MAXIMUM PARTY SIZE						
No restrictions.	No restrictions.	Recommended max party size 13. While recognising circumstances for group sizes up to 13 persons for environmental and crowding reasons, party sizes of 6 or fewer will be encouraged.	Recommended max party size 13. While recognising circumstances for group sizes up to 13 persons for environmental and crowding reasons, party sizes of 6 or fewer will be encouraged.	Recommended max party size 8. Party sizes of less than 6 will be encouraged.	Recommended max party size 6. Party sizes of four will be encouraged. Parties of up to 8 acceptable on some T4 tracks in the Central Plateau SRRZ, subject to environmental conditions.	Recommended max party size 6. Party sizes of four will be encouraged. Parties of up to 8 acceptable in some parts of the Central Plateau SRRZ, subject to environmental conditions including pad and track formation.
PUBLICITY						
No restrictions.	No restrictions.	No restrictions - may be included in maps, tourist brochures etc	Generally no restrictions, but some types of publicity may be discouraged if overall usage restrictions are necessary.	Potential publicists (eg magazine editors) will be encouraged to keep publicity low-key. T3 tracks may be included on maps.	All publicity to be discouraged. Not to be included on maps except for internal management purposes. Authors will be encouraged to keep route descriptions vague (eg in accounts of past expeditions). Photographers and publishers will be encouraged not to identify the precise location of photographs taken in areas accessible only by T4 tracks.	All publicity to be discouraged. Routes not to be identified on maps except for internal (ie Service) management purposes. Authors will be encouraged to keep route descriptions vague (eg in accounts of past expeditions). Photographers and publishers will be encouraged not to identify the precise location of photographs taken in trackless areas.
ROUTEGUIDES						
No restrictions.	No restrictions.	May be included in routeguides but routeguide authors will be encouraged to consult with the Service to ensure that published information and advice is compatible with management objectives.	May be included in routeguides but routeguide authors will be encouraged to consult with the Service to ensure that published information and advice is compatible with management objectives.	Routeguides are acceptable but should be sparsely written - routeguide authors will be encouraged to follow Service guidelines.	Inclusion of T4 tracks in routeguides will be strongly discouraged.	Publication of routeguides (including mention of "Routes" in routeguides) to be strongly discouraged. Service user notes will promote a "fan out" policy except where concentration of usage is desirable for environmental purposes.

* Applies to all trackless areas regardless of zoning.

¹ In suitable localities an area might have more than one campsite.

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GUIDED TOURS						
Licences are required.	Licences are required.	Permitted but licences are required and numbers of trips may be restricted.	Permitted but licences are required and numbers of trips may be restricted.	Permitted but licences are required and numbers of trips may be restricted. Advertising and publicity should conform to T3 guidelines see 10.2.3.	Licences may be issued on condition that guided parties conform to the recommended party-size limit and to the guidelines relating to the publicity of tracks and destinations (see 10.2.3).	Licences may be issued on the following conditions: guided parties must conform to the recommended party-size limit; guided tour operators must observe the guidelines in relation to the publicity of routes and destinations (see 10.2.3); guided tours must be conducted in such a way as to avoid contributing to unplanned track and campsite formation. In particular, operators will be required to avoid frequent use of any trackless route.

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