



# **Horse riding in wilderness amendments to plans of management for:**

**Far South Coast Escarpment Parks, Kosciuszko National Park and Mummel Gulf National Park and State Conservation Area**

**NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service**

**February 2019**

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**This amendment was adopted by the Minister for the Environment on the 13 February 2019.**

## **Acknowledgments**

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) acknowledges that:

- Far South Coast Escarpment Parks are in the traditional Country of the Yuin and Walbanga peoples
- Kosciuszko National Park is in the traditional Country of the Monaro, Ngarigo, Wiradjuri, Wolgalu and Ngunnawal peoples
- Mummel Gulf National Park and State Conservation Area are in the traditional Country of the Biripai, Anaiwan and Thungutti/Dunghutti peoples.

These plan of management amendments were prepared by staff of NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), part of OEH.

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## Why amend the plans?

In 2012 the NSW Government committed to establishing five pilots across New South Wales to trial horse riding in wilderness locations, as provided for in the NPWS [Strategic Directions for Horse Riding in NSW National Parks and Reserves](#). Further information on the pilots can be found on the OEH [Wilderness horse riding trial](#) webpage.

The horse riding in wilderness trials commenced in April 2014 in wilderness areas within Kosciuszko National Park, Mummel Gulf National Park, Deua National Park and Monga National Park. The plans of management relevant to each of these parks were amended in February 2014 to enable the trials to proceed on identified pilot routes for a period of up to two years.

Monitoring was undertaken during the two-year pilot and the outcomes have been published and are available on the OEH [Wilderness horse riding trial](#) webpage. Analysis of data from the monitoring program indicated relatively low usage by horse riders, minimal environmental impacts and low risk of impact to park and wilderness values.

After considering those outcomes and continuing stakeholder interest, amendments have been made to the three plans of management to enable horse riding to continue in the designated wilderness locations. Horse riding in other wilderness areas will not be allowed unless specified in the relevant plan of management.

## How to read the amendments

The amendments change sections of text in the three plans of management. They should be read in conjunction with the adopted plans, as well as the February 2014 amendments to the three plans that relate to the wilderness horse riding pilot. The individual plans of management themselves will be updated with these amendments during 2019.

Plans of management are available on the Office of Environment and Heritage website at: [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/parkmanagement/ParkManagementPlans.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/parkmanagement/ParkManagementPlans.htm). This page provides links to plans of management for [Mummel Gulf National Park and State Conservation Area](#), the [Far South Coast Escarpment Parks](#) and the [Kosciuszko National Park](#).

References in this document to numbering relate to the numbering used in the online versions of the adopted plans.

# Amendment to Far South Coast Escarpment Parks National Park Plan of Management

The plan of management for the Far South Coast Parks was amended in February 2014 to enable a trial of horse riding in wilderness at three locations in the Deua National Park and Monga National Park. This amendment makes changes to the plan of management to provide for continuation of horse riding at these specific locations.

Below are the amendments to the plan:

## **Under 5.6 HORSE RIDING**

### **1. Background**

Delete the second paragraph:

'For bridle tracks outside wilderness areas, Park Rangers have undertaken periodic assessment of the environmental impact of horses on tracks. Over a two-year period, at current levels of use, the level of impact has been low with no indication of any increase.'

Replace with:

'Recreational horse riding was trialled in three wilderness locations between April 2014 and April 2016, being the Shoebridge Bridle Track in Deua National Park and Monga National Park and the WD Tarlinton Bridle Track and Georges Pack Bridle Track in Deua National Park (see Figure 2). Monitoring during the trial identified low use of the tracks by horse riders, minimal impact from this use and that wilderness values were not compromised.'

### **2. Issues/Opportunities**

Delete the second dot point:

'Two wilderness pilots will be undertaken to trial horse riding access in wilderness. The first pilot will comprise the Shoebridge Track in northern Deua National Park (as identified in Figure 2) and the second pilot will comprise the WD Tarlinton and Georges Pack Tracks in southern and eastern Deua National Park (as identified in Figure 2). The pilots will be undertaken for a period of up to 2 years in accordance with a monitoring framework applied to the pilots.'

and replace with:

'Recreational horse riding is only permitted in wilderness areas on the Shoebridge Bridle Track in Deua National Park and Monga National Park and the WD Tarlinton Bridle Track and Georges Pack Bridle Track in Deua National Park (see Figure 2).'

Delete the third dot point:

'Horse riding is and will continue to be prohibited on all other bridle tracks, management trails and other areas in wilderness. The only exception to this is where access to bridle tracks is required to undertake approved management works.'

and replace with:

'Horse riding is prohibited on all other bridle tracks, management trails and other areas in wilderness. The only exception is where access to bridle tracks is required to undertake approved management works.'

Insert fifth dot point:

'Some bridle tracks in wilderness areas are remote, rough, steep and unmarked and are only suitable for very experienced users with specialised skills, including navigation and emergency first-aid. Parts of the bridle tracks cross other land tenure including private property.'

### **3. Desired outcome**

Delete the desired outcome:

'Opportunities for visitors to travel through the Parks on horseback on the recreational road network, management trails and bridle tracks outside wilderness areas.'

and replace with:

'Opportunities for horse riders to access the recreational road network, management trails and bridle tracks outside wilderness areas, and specific tracks in wilderness areas.'

### **4. Guidelines and Actions**

5.6.1 Delete current text:

'Allow horse riding on the recreational road network and on the management trails and bridle tracks outside wilderness areas. Based on an assessment of the significance and ecological impacts, determine which bridle tracks may be used for horse riding.'

and replace with:

'Allow horse riding on the recreational road network and on management trails and bridle tracks outside wilderness areas.'

5.6.2 Delete current text:

'Review where horse riding is allowed or the conditions under which horse riding can be undertaken within the Escarpment Parks should there be unacceptable environmental damage. Undertake such a review in consultation with interest groups.'

and replace with:

'Continue to assess the environmental and cultural impact of horses on bridle tracks and other routes. Where there is unacceptable environmental damage, review where horse riding is allowed or the conditions under which horse riding can be undertaken. Undertake such a review in consultation with relevant stakeholders.'

Delete 5.6.4

'Continue to undertake an annual assessment of the environmental impact of horses on bridle tracks outside wilderness areas (primarily the Shoebridge Track and Corn Trail).'

5.6.5 change action number to 5.6.4

5.6.6 Delete current text:

‘Two wilderness pilots will be undertaken to trial horse riding access in wilderness. The first pilot will comprise the Shoebridge Track in northern Deua National Park (as identified in Figure 2, page 72) and the second pilot will comprise the WD Tarlinton and Georges Pack Tracks in southern and eastern Deua National Park (as identified in Figure 2, page 72). The pilots will be undertaken for a period of up to 2 years in accordance with a monitoring framework applied to the pilots, commencing on a date to be publicly notified. Groups of more than 20 horses (including pack horses) will not be permitted.’

and replace with:

‘5.6.5 Allow horse riding in wilderness only on the Shoebridge Bridle Track in Deua National Park and Monga National Park and the WD Tarlinton Bridle Track and Georges Pack Bridle Track in Deua National Park (see Figure 2). Groups of more than 20 horses (including pack horses) will not be allowed.’

5.6.7 Delete current text:

‘Allow camping with horses at Supers Memorial Camp (Wadbilliga National Park) and Bendethera (Deua National Park). Implement a permit system for these horse camps if considered necessary due to either volume of use or environmental impact. Otherwise, camping with horses is not permitted within wilderness areas as part of the wilderness trial.’

and replace with:

‘5.6.6 Allow camping with horses at Supers Memorial Camp (Wadbilliga National Park) and Bendethera (Deua National Park). Implement a permit system for these horse camps if considered necessary due to either volume of use or environmental impact. Camping with horses is not allowed within wilderness areas.’

Insert additional action:

‘5.6.7 Work collaboratively with recreational horse riding groups on trail monitoring, maintenance, and the development and promotion of codes of conduct that encourage responsible use.’

## 5. Figure 2

Replace with new map (see below) titled ‘Figure 2. Horse riding in wilderness locations’

## 6. Table 5 – Actions Identified in this Plan

Table 5 is to be updated to reflect the changes made above in item 4. ‘Guidelines and Actions’.

Delete existing section 5.6 of Table 5 and replace with:

5.6 HORSE RIDING	
5.6.2	Continue to assess the environmental and cultural impact of horses on bridle tracks and other routes. Where there is unacceptable environmental damage, review where horse riding is allowed or the conditions under which horse riding can be undertaken. Undertake such a review in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

5.6.6	Allow camping with horses at Supers Memorial Camp (Wadbilliga National Park) and Bendethera (Deua National Park). Implement a permit system for these horse camps if considered necessary due to either volume of use or environmental impact. Camping with horses is not allowed within wilderness areas.
5.6.7	Work collaboratively with recreational horse riding groups on trail monitoring, maintenance, and the development and promotion of codes of conduct that encourage responsible use.

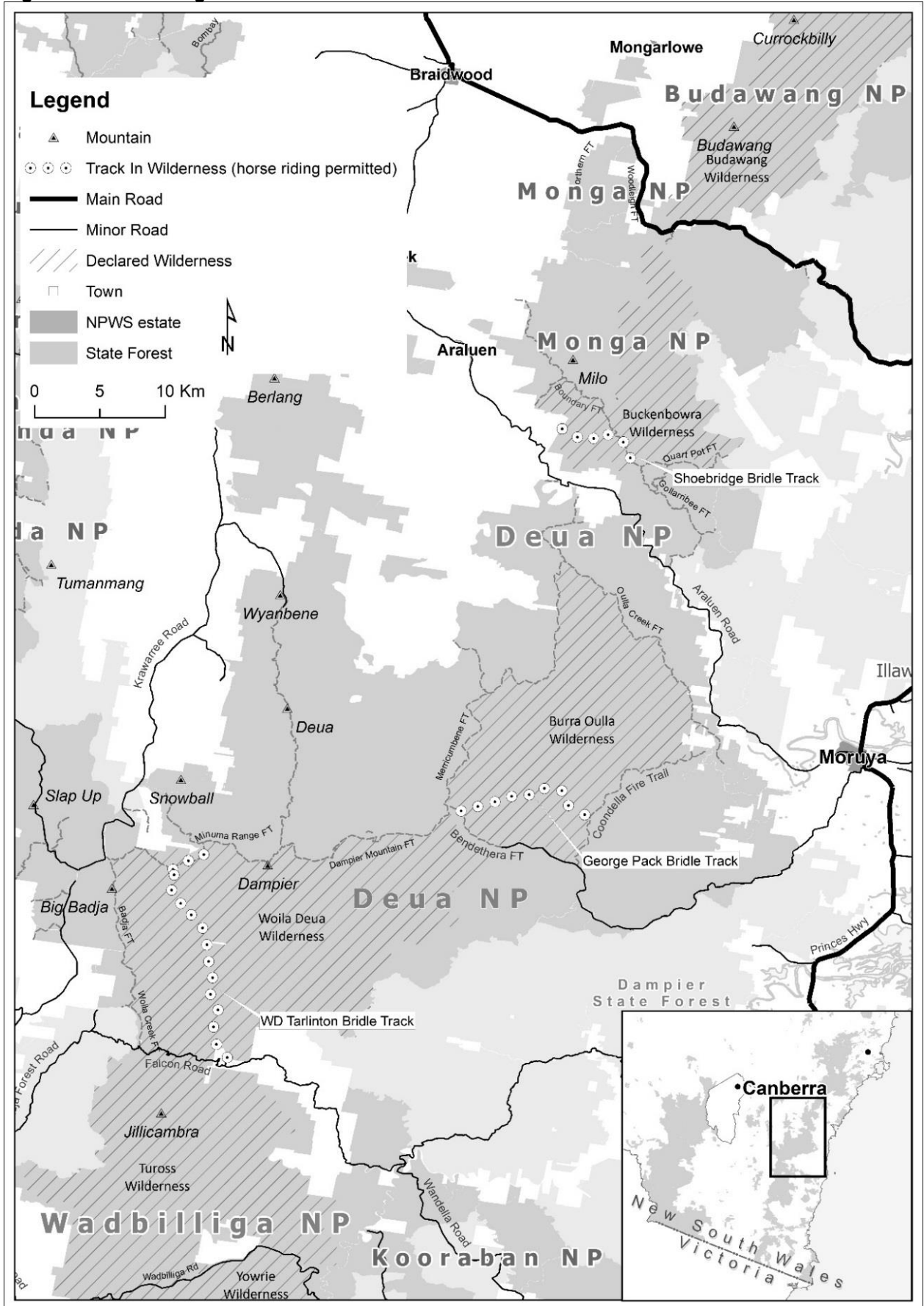
## 7. Table 6 – Guidelines Identified in the Plan

Table 6 is to be updated to reflect the changes made above in item 4. 'Guidelines and Actions'.

Delete existing section 5.6 of Table 6 and replace with:

5.6 HORSE RIDING	
5.6.1	Allow horse riding on the recreational road network and on management trails and bridle tracks outside wilderness areas.
5.6.2	Continue to assess the environmental and cultural impact of horses on bridle tracks and other routes. Where there is unacceptable environmental damage, review where horse riding is allowed or the conditions under which horse riding can be undertaken. Undertake such a review in consultation with relevant stakeholders.
5.6.3	Due to potential conflicts with walkers, prohibit horse riding on the designated walking tracks with the exception of Bendethera Caves portal for access to the Zig Zag Bridle Track and the Corn Trail.
5.6.4	Allow horse riding on the identified dual use trails: Mongarlowe-Corn Trail link, Corn Trail in Monga National Park and Bendethera Portal (as far as the Zig Zag Trail) in Deua National Park.
5.6.5	Allow horse riding in wilderness areas only on the Shoebridge Bridle Track in Deua National Park and Monga National Park and the WD Tarlinton Bridle Track and Georges Pack Bridle Track in Deua National Park (see Figure 2). Groups of more than 20 horses (including pack horses) will not be allowed.
5.6.6	Allow camping with horses at Supers Memorial Camp (Wadbilliga National Park) and Bendethera (Deua National Park). Implement a permit system for these horse camps if considered necessary due to either volume of use or environmental impact. Camping with horses is not allowed within wilderness areas.

Figure 2. Horse riding in wilderness locations





# Amendment to Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management

The plan of management for the Kosciuszko National Park was amended in February 2014 to enable a trial of horse riding in wilderness along an identified route. This amendment makes changes to the plan of management to provide for continuation of horse riding at this location.

The proposals here refer to the text and numbering of the 2006 plan as amended in 2014.

## **1. Section 5.3 Back Country Zone**

Delete the last two sentences of the third paragraph:

'Horse riding is permitted in parts of the Back Country Zone, as well as some Wilderness areas as part of the horse riding in wilderness pilot described in 8.7.1(2). Commercial activities as part of the horse riding in wilderness pilot described in 8.7.1(2) are also permitted.'

And replace with:

'Horse riding is permitted in parts of the Back Country Zone, as well as some Wilderness areas as described in 8.7.1(2). Commercial activities related to horse riding in those areas are also permitted.'

## **2. Section 8.7 Horse Riding – Background**

Section 8.7 describes where horse riding is permitted in the park.

Delete the third paragraph and replace with:

'Horse riding is prohibited on the Main Range and certain other alpine and subalpine areas within the park. Recreational horse riding is prohibited in declared wilderness areas (the Wilderness Zone) except in those locations described in 8.7.1(2). Except for the Thredbo alpine resort area where horse riding is currently permitted under lease conditions, the focus of horse riding in the park is within the Back Country Zone.'

## **3. Section 8.7.1 Horse Riding – Policies and Actions**

The amendment of February 2014 inserted a new action numbered 8.7.1(2).

Delete 8.7.1(2) and replace with:

'Allow recreational horse riding in the Wilderness Zone in the locations that were part of the 2014-2016 horse riding in wilderness trial, as follows:

- Only permit horse riding on the trails identified in Map 8, those being Nine Mile Trail (from Barry Way to the Ingeegoodbee Trail) and Ingeegoodbee Trail (from the Victorian border to the Tin Mines Hut at the southern end of the Cascades Trail)
- Each horse riding group, either commercial or non-commercial, will have a maximum of eight horses only

- Camping with horses is not allowed within 500 metres of huts or further than 100 metres from the existing management tracks.'
- Monitor the environmental and cultural impact of horses on authorised Wilderness routes. Where there is unacceptable environmental damage, review where horse riding is allowed or the conditions under which horse riding can be undertaken. Undertake such a review in consultation with relevant stakeholders.
- Horse riding on approved Wilderness trails is not permitted between the June long weekend and the October long weekend due to weather and soil conditions.

#### **4. Map 8**

Replace map 8 with a new map (see below) titled 'Map 8. Horse riding in wilderness locations'

#### **5. Schedule 4. Appropriate recreational activities**

##### **Table S4.1 Non-commercial activities**

Change horse riding row in the Wilderness zone column to:

'Yes (only on trails described in 8.7.1(2))'

##### **Table S4.2 – Commercial or large group (>20 people) activities**

Change horse riding row in the Wilderness zone column to:

'Group or commercial activities with consent (only on trails described in 8.7.1(2))'

Amend note 12 to:

'No commercial activities are permitted in the Wilderness Zone, except horse riding with consent on trails described in 8.7.1(2).'

#### **6. Schedule 6. Standard of Visitor Facilities**

##### **Table S6.3 – Vehicular road and trail classification**

Amend third dot point under Notes to:

'Management trails in the Wilderness Zone are for management, emergency and other authorised vehicles only but may be available to the public for walking and in some instances cycling and horse riding as described in 8.7.1(2).'



# Amendment to Mummel Gulf National Park and State Conservation Area Plan of Management

The plan of management for the Mummel Gulf National Park and State Conservation Area was amended in February 2014 to enable a trial of horse riding in wilderness in Mummel Gulf National Park. This amendment makes changes to the plan of management to provide for continuation of horse riding at these locations.

The proposals here refer to the text and numbering of the 2012 plan as amended in 2014.

## **1. 3.6 Recreation, Education and Research**

Delete the fifth paragraph:

'Horse riding will also be trialled on a route through wilderness within the planning area, for the purpose of a wilderness pilot. The wilderness pilot will be undertaken on Dicks Hut Fire Trail and River Road (as shown on Map 1). The pilot will be undertaken for a period of up to two years in accordance with a monitoring framework applied to the pilot, commencing on date to be publicly notified.'

and replace with:

'Between April 2014 and April 2016, a horse riding in wilderness trial was undertaken on Dicks Hut Fire Trail and River Road (see Map 1). Horse riding is only allowed on these specific routes in the wilderness area.'

## **2. Table 4: Permissible recreation activities, their location and conditions of use**

In the row 'Horse riding', delete the second paragraph in the second column ('Location/s where the activity is permissible'):

'On the Dicks Hut Fire Trail and River Road route as part of the wilderness pilot, described in 3.6.'

and replace with:

'On the Dicks Hut Fire Trail and River Road.'

## **3. Table 5: Vehicle Access within the Planning Area**

In the row 'Dicks Hut Fire Trail', delete the last sentence in the last column ('Comments'):

'Horse riding will be permitted on this trail as part of the wilderness pilot, as described in 3.6.'

and replace with:

'Horse riding is allowed on this trail.'

In the row 'River Rd', delete the last sentence in the last column ('Comments'):

'Horse riding will be permitted on this trail as part of the wilderness pilot, as described in 3.6.'

and replace with:

'Horse riding is permitted on this trail.'

#### **4. Implementation Table 9.3 - Visitor Use and Services**

Delete 9.3.6:

'Allow horse riding on the BNT, Panhandle Fire Trail and those parts of the Porters Camp Road, Mummel Fire Trail and Daisy Patch Road that are within the planning area only. Allow overnight camping at New Country Swamp only. All horses and other pack animals will be required to be yarded, fed and watered away from designated camp sites. Horse riding will also be trialled on a route through wilderness within the planning area, for the purposes of a wilderness pilot. The wilderness pilot will be undertaken on Dicks Hut Fire Trail and River Road. The pilot will be undertaken for a period of up to two years in accordance with a monitoring framework applied to the pilot, commencing on a date to be publicly notified.'

And replace with:

'Allow horse riding on the BNT, Panhandle Fire Trail and those parts of the Porters Camp Road, Mummel Fire Trail and Daisy Patch Road that are within the planning area. Horse riding in wilderness areas is allowed on Dicks Hut Fire Trail and River Road. Groups of more than 20 horses (including pack horses) will not be permitted on wilderness area routes. Allow overnight camping with horses at New Country Swamp only. Horses and other pack animals are not permitted in the campground and must be yarded, fed and watered in the yards provided.'

Delete 9.3.7:

'Undertake monitoring of visitor use levels and impacts, including at New Country Swamp and on roads and trails. Implement actions if necessary to control impacts such as provide a small yard for BNT animals near or adjacent to the existing New Country Swamp camping area.'

And replace with:

'Undertake monitoring of visitor use levels and impacts during routine activities, including at New Country Swamp and on roads and trails. Implement actions if necessary to control impacts.'

