



NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service

Kosciuszko National Park Amendment to the Plan of Management

Commercial recreation in wilderness areas



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Cover photo: View of the Snowy River valley and Byadbo Wilderness from Jacks lookout.
Murray Vanderveer/DPE

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Summary

Kosciuszko National Park is reserved to achieve the objects of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NPW Act). These objects are centred on conserving nature, conserving cultural heritage values, and fostering public appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of these special values.

The NPW Act requires that all operations undertaken in the park are in accordance with the Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management. This amendment changes the Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management to facilitate visitor education and appreciation of wilderness values through commercial recreation, which will help support the protection and management of wilderness areas in the park. It has been prepared after consideration of the:

- objects of the *Wilderness Act 1987*
- management principles for wilderness areas under section 9 of the *Wilderness Act* and the management principles for national parks under section 30E of the NPW Act
- matters listed under section 72AA of the NPW Act.

Background

Wilderness areas

Wilderness areas are large and natural areas of land that, together with their native plant and animal communities, remain essentially unchanged by modern human activity. They allow natural processes to continue with minimal interference, which protects the existing biodiversity in a functioning natural system.

Wilderness areas are declared under the *Wilderness Act 1987*. The Wilderness Act affords these areas high levels of protection and outlines management principles to ensure they are managed to protect their unmodified state, associated plant and animal communities and preserve their capacity to evolve without significant human interference. The Wilderness Act also allows opportunities for solitude and self-reliant recreation and provides scope for this recreation to be provided on a commercial basis.

There are 9 wilderness areas in Kosciuszko National Park. They include Bimberi, Bogong Peaks, Bramina, Byadbo, Goobarragandra, Jagungal, Indi, Pilot and Western Fall wilderness areas. These are depicted in Map 6 of the Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management.

Commercial recreation

Parks provide opportunities for people to enjoy a variety of appropriate and environmentally sustainable activities in natural areas. Providing opportunities for people to participate in nature-based activities helps them develop an appreciation and understanding of parks and therefore builds community support for their protection.

Several operators currently offer nature-based recreational activities on a commercial basis in Kosciuszko National Park in accordance with the Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management through consents issued under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NPW Act).

Consents include conditions to ensure these activities are undertaken in a sustainable manner that minimises impacts on natural and cultural sites and wilderness values, potential conflicts with other visitor activities and risks to public safety.

The Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management currently prohibits commercial recreation in wilderness areas within the park. However, commercial recreation can be undertaken in the park's wilderness in a sustainable manner. Allowing commercial recreation in wilderness areas would enable more people to appreciate and understand the value of wilderness areas, which will serve to support their protection.

Protecting wilderness values

The plan of management contains provisions to ensure the protection of wilderness values. These include conditions that ensure recreational activities in wilderness are undertaken in a sustainable manner.

Chapter 8 of the plan of management (page 103) specifies appropriate recreational activities and provides specific guidance for individual activities. Section 8.18 (page 142) includes policies for the management of commercial recreation, including the assessment of new proposals, licensing and managing carrying capacities. This amendment extends the policies in Chapter 8 and Section 8.18 to include commercial recreation in wilderness areas.

Schedule 4, Table 2 of the plan of management (page 261) specifies the commercial recreation activities and large group activities that may be undertaken in each zone of the park and the policies that apply to consents. This amendment modifies Schedule 4, Table 2 to allow for commercial recreation in wilderness areas and sets a maximum group size of 8 people for commercial recreation activities authorised to operate in these areas.

Amendments to the Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management 2006

This amendment replaces existing content in the plan of management with updated content described below. Changes proposed should be read in conjunction with the online version of the *Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management 2006* which incorporates amendments undertaken in 2010, 2014 and 2019.

Amendments to the plan

Section 5.3 – Back Country Zone (page 29)

Remove the third paragraph:

The management focus for the Back Country Zone is to primarily retain these parts of the park free from further development and, where appropriate, restore their ecological integrity. Recreation management in this zone differs from that within the Wilderness Zone in that motorised boating and various commercial recreational activities and special events are allowed in certain areas, cycling is permitted on most management trails, and the variety, standard and capacity of recreational facilities is greater. 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.

Replace with:

The management focus for the Back Country Zone is to primarily retain these parts of the park free from further development and, where appropriate, restore their ecological integrity. Motorised boating and special events are allowed in certain areas, cycling is permitted on most management trails, and a range of recreational facilities is provided. Horse riding is permitted in parts of the Back Country Zone, as described in 8.7.1(2). Commercial activities related to horse riding in the areas described in 8.7.1(2) may be authorised via a consent.

Table 1 – Summary of Zoning Scheme (page 34)

Remove from the first column, fifth row:

Commercial tour operators prohibited.

Replace with: Appropriate commercial recreational activities may be authorised via a consent.

Section 8.18 – Commercial Activities (page 142)

Remove the last sentence from the first paragraph under the heading 'Background':

Commercial operations are prohibited within declared wilderness areas.

Action 8.18.1.1 (page 143)

Remove:

Permit commercial recreational activities in the Visitor Services Zone, Major and Minor Road Corridors and Back Country Zone in accordance with Schedule 4.

Replace with:

Commercial recreational activities may be authorised via a consent in all management zones in accordance with Schedule 4.

Action 8.18.1.2 (page 143)

Remove:

Prohibit all commercial recreational activities in the Wilderness Zone.

Replace with:

Repealed

**Schedule 4 Appropriate Recreational Activities, Table S4.2
Commercial or large group (>20 people) activities (page 261)**

Remove table heading:

Commercial or large group (>20 people) activities

Replace with:

Large group (>20 people) or commercial activities

Remove from the Wilderness column, rows for camping, canoeing/kayaking/rafting, cross-country running, fishing, ice climbing, nature study or cultural awareness, non-powered flight, picnicking, rock climbing and abseiling, snow play, snow sports (not lift assisted), swimming, tobogganing and walking:

group activities with consent¹²

Replace with:

with consent¹²

Remove from the Wilderness column, row for cycling:

group activities with consent on designated management trails only^{4 12}

Replace with:

with consent on designated management trails only^{4 12}

Remove from the Wilderness column, rows for horse riding:

with consent¹²

Replace with:

with consent (on trails described in 8.7.1(2) only)¹²

Legend for Table s4.2 (page 262)

Remove: 12. No commercial activities are permitted in the Wilderness Zone, except horse riding with consent on trails described in 8.7.1(2).

Replace with: 12. Commercial activities in the Wilderness Zone are restricted to a maximum group size of 8 people.

More information

- [Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management 2006](#)
- [Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management: Map 6](#)