



BUSHWALKING TRACKS AND CONSERVATION

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

November 2017

Role of BTAC

In 2006, Bushwalking Victoria (also known as BWV) created a standing committee known as the Bushwalking Environment Committee (BEC). In November 2013 the Board decided to rename BEC as the Bushwalking Tracks and Conservation (BTAC) to reflect more closely the new and expanded role developed as part of the Bushwalking Victoria strategic review process:

- To provide a more proactive focus on tracks and trails strategy – i.e. to concentrate on looking at opportunities for new or upgraded tracks and trails and to be able to articulate a vision of the bushwalking facilities that we want for the future.
- To increase the focus on engaging with key land-manager decision makers so that we can influence planning as it affects bushwalkers more effectively and at an earlier stage.
- To more actively engage bushwalking club members and individual members of Bushwalking Victoria in track maintenance and conservation activities.

BTAC Structure

BTAC operates at 4 different levels

BTAC Committee

The BTAC Committee is a standing committee of Bushwalking Victoria. Its role is to develop, coordinate, promote and administer its tracks and conservation strategy (see above).

The BTAC committee members include the:

- BTAC Convener
- BTAC Tracks and Conservation Projects Coordinator
- Bushwalking Track Development Coordinator
- Tracks at Risk Coordinator
- Field Officers Liaison
- Publications Coordinator.

For details refer to the *Bushwalking Tracks and Conservation (BTAC) Charter and Committee Roles*.

BTAC Field Officers

BTAC Field Officers are drawn from the Bushwalking Victoria club network and individual members. They are appointed by the BTAC committee and are responsible for a designated geographic area. They liaise and network with local bushwalking clubs and Land Managers and report monthly to the BTAC Committee. They are expected to be long-term appointees and not subject to changes at club committee level. They should be frequent visitors to their area and build strong relationships with Land Managers.

Duties

- Be responsible to BTAC for a designated area.
- Raise issues with the BTAC Committee as necessary.
- Research and investigate issues and actions as requested by the BTAC Committee.
- Liaise and network with local clubs.
- Build strong relationships with Land Managers.
- Recommend possible courses of action on issues.
- Present a report monthly to the Field Officer Coordinator, who will report to the BTAC Committee.
- Arrange or conduct field trips if necessary to investigate/assess an issue.
Note: Field trips must be approved in advance by the BTAC Committee for expenses are to be reimbursed.

See also *Field Officers Resource Kit*.

BTAC Club Contacts

BTAC Club Contacts act as a point of contact to receive information about projects and to advise BTAC of track / conservation issues and activities that concern their club.

Duties

- Receive advice and information from the BTAC committee and disseminate to club members.
- Receive and collate advice from club members about issues or problems encountered on tracks when bushwalking and forward to the BTAC committee.
- Encourage club members to complete and submit *Track Condition Report* or *Illegal Activity in the Bush Report* forms to tracks@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au.
- Report the advice from club members to the local Ranger (if known) or to the relevant BTAC Field Officer.
- Identify track work for which Bushwalking Victoria could provide assistance, and advise BTAC Tracks and Conservation Project Coordinator.
- Advise the BTAC Tracks and Conservation Project Coordinator via email (projects@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au) of any track or conservation work done by their club, and the number of man-hours worked.

BTAC Volunteers

BTAC Volunteers are individual members of Bushwalking Victoria or its affiliated clubs who do the hands-on work on tracks and conservation projects. Work may include clearing vegetation, constructing or repairing steps or rails, fixing netting on boardwalks, installing or replacing signs, clearing water bars, removing noxious weeds or any other work that

Parks Victoria or other Land Managers would like us to help with. Volunteers may act as a Project Leader, a Crew Leader or as a Track Worker.

Attending track maintenance and conservation activities/events/projects is voluntary and there is no obligation or expectation that a volunteer will attend every day of every activity. However once a volunteer has accepted a place on an activity, particularly when accommodation or other benefit is provided, they are expected to work on the agreed days.

Duties

See

- *Project Co-ordinator Guidelines*
- *Crew Leader Guidelines*
- *Volunteer Track Worker Guidelines.*

Role of Bushwalking Victoria's Office Manager

The Office Manager maintains a database of BTAC Field Officers, Club Contacts and Volunteers. This includes correcting/updating member details as notified by the BTAC Committee or a Volunteer.

Volunteer details are used to notify members about track and conservation projects via email.

If an insurance claim is made as a result of participation in a BTAC activity, the Volunteer's details may be sent to an insurance company as part of the insurance company investigating a claim.

Working with Land Managers

BTAC works on public land at the request, or with the co-operation, of the Land Manager, such as Parks Victoria (PV), the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), and the local council or shire. The Land Managers are the legal managers of the land and they have the final decision on all track maintenance issues.

For all projects on public land, BTAC plans the work to be done with a designated contact person, usually a ranger within PV or DELWP. The PV or DELWP Contact Ranger determines whether a Ranger will be Present during the work.

The project must be approved by the authorised Land Manager for the volunteers to be covered by State Government Insurance.

The Land Manager requires volunteers to complete a form to record their participation for insurance purposes. (Activity Attendance register for Volunteers Ver 2.0 – 2016/05/11)
Bushwalking Victoria's public Liability and Personal Accident Insurance also covers track maintenance activities for members of Bushwalking Victoria where a land manager's insurance does not apply.

Parks Victoria use the online app ParksConnect

DELWP and other Land Managers have similar forms.

BTAC Procedures

To minimise the most common risks encountered in track and conservation work, BTAC the following procedures and practices are to be followed in all cases.

Job Safety Analysis

The Land Manager must complete a *Job Safety Analysis (JSA)* for each activity and conduct a safety briefing.

The JSA identifies the requirements for supervision, tools and equipment and accreditation for a particular job. Its completion requires an assessment of the hazards and risks associated with the task. These steps are an integral part of planning the activity.

DELWP and other Land Managers have similar processes and requirements.

Bushfires

Work will not be scheduled during the hottest part of the year.

Events will be cancelled if a Total Fire Ban is declared.

A radio or mobile phone should be carried during the fire season to check fire ban status and warnings. It is useful to download both the Vic Emergency app and the Emergency+ app.

Any advice from Parks Victoria or DELWP staff on matters relating to fire, use of stoves etc must be followed.

Powered Equipment

Powered equipment is to be used only by persons with the required qualifications (chain saw licence) and experience (use of brush-cutters, hedge trimmers, drills).

Land Manager regulations and standards for the use of equipment shall be observed at all times.

Persons using powered equipment must not work alone. They should work at a safe distance from others to ensure prompt delivery of aid in case of accident.

Hand Tools

Hand tools such as bush saws, mattocks etc should be checked for safety before being issued for an activity, taking into account the tasks, design of equipment and maintenance (properly fitted handles etc).

Use of Chemicals

Application of chemicals must be done by or supervised by a person with an Agricultural Chemical User Permit (ACUP).

Protective Clothing and Equipment

Personal protective equipment (PPE) appropriate to the task must be worn. Chainsaw operators must wear chaps, steel capped boots, gloves, helmet with visor, eye and ear protection. The Land Manager will advise operators of brush-cutters and hedge trimmers or those applying herbicides or pesticides of the required PPE for the activity.

All Volunteers must wear sturdy boots, long pants and long sleeved shirts (JSA requirements for some working groups) and additional personal protective safety equipment – hard hats, gloves, eye protection that may be required. The Land Manager may direct that coloured safety vests must be worn.

Extremes of Weather

Activities shall not be conducted in extreme weather conditions, e.g. heat, cold, heavy rain, thunder and lightning or high winds.

Appropriate Gear for an Activity

Volunteers must take appropriate gear listed by Project Leader in the work plan.

Leaders should confirm that Volunteers have suitable camp gear, clothing, equipment, food and water to meet all reasonably predictable events.

The leader can deny participation in the activity if a person does not bring suitable food or clothing.

First aid

Leaders should ensure that persons with suitable training and equipment are available. Volunteers should carry a personal first aid kit at all times.

Medical Condition

Any volunteer who has any medical condition should give a sealed envelope to the leader containing details of the condition, any relevant information about medication and how much to administer in case of emergency. Emergency contact information and name of doctor should also be provided.

A second envelope with the same details should be placed inside and on top of pack with details of where the medicine is in the pack.

It is also their obligation to inform the leader of any condition that would affect their ability to do any work or activity asked of them.

Organisation

The Land Manager has overall charge of the activity, and Crew Leaders and other Volunteers must obey their instructions and work practices.

Volunteers shall comply with all reasonable requests from the Crew Leader and follow safety measures specified for the tasks.

Leaders and Volunteers shall ensure that their whereabouts are known to others, and that no person should leave the party without notifying and obtaining the permission of the Crew Leader. Permission will only be granted if another volunteer is available to accompany the person wishing to leave the work party to return to base.

Instructional training in the use and storage of tools during the activity appropriate for type of work to be performed must be given at the commencement of the activity. This includes instruction on how to carry tools safely.

Project Co-ordinator Guidelines

The Project Leader is appointed by the BTAC Tracks and Conservation Coordinator.

- Negotiate with the Land Manager the timing of the work and the assistance required: manpower, protective clothing/equipment, finance, tools and equipment.
- Develop a project plan describing the work to be done by BTAC, dates and times, food, clothing, equipment, accommodation / camping, and travelling arrangements.
- Ensure that, when work is first organised, the Land Manager will provide insurance.
- Ensure that the Ranger has the required paperwork and that the paperwork is actually completed.
- Identify the specific OH&S requirements for the work.
- Identify the skills and or certificates/qualifications needed by BTAC crew members.
- Recruit BTAC members with the requisite skills:
 - Prepare email seeking expressions of interest to participate in the project for the Office Manager to email to persons on the BTAC Volunteer List.
 - Prepare a notice for to appear in *Bushwalking News Victoria* seeking expressions of interest from prospective new volunteers.
- Advise respondents whether or not their services are needed.
- Assign Crew Leaders if work requires several crews.

Project Leader Guidelines

- Liaise with the Project Co-ordinator regarding the project plan describing the work to be done by BTAC, dates and times, food, clothing, equipment, accommodation / camping, and travelling arrangements.
- Send detailed information about arrangements for the scheduled work and a detailed list of things to bring to the responding volunteers.
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- On arrival at the project base, ensure that all Volunteers sign the Land Manager's forms and a BTAC attendance sheet.
- If the work group is to be split into smaller work crews, liaise with Crew Leaders about their areas of responsibility/activity on the project
- Brief the volunteers before work commences: provide information on hazards, introduce crew leaders and assign people to work crews, and describe communication process.
- Ensure all Volunteers are fit for the work they have been assigned.
- Organise training in safe handling of tools and equipment for new or inexperienced crew members.
- Monitor activity: monitor safety as the work progresses and keep track of BTAC crew members. In the absence of a representative of the Land Manager, assume a full supervisory role.
- Ensure the work is carried out in accordance with the agreement with Land Manager and OH&S requirements.
- With a Ranger, if present, conduct a debrief at the end of the activity.
- Check that equipment used is collected; check condition, and returned to storage with a report of any problems encountered or any equipment requiring maintenance/replacement.
- Complete requisite reporting documentation.
- Forward reports to the BTAC Project Coordinator, including before and after photos if available.

Crew Leader Guidelines

- Consult with the project leader about the project requirements.
- Assign tasks to crew members according to their skills.
- Supervise crew to ensure that work is done in accordance with instructions and safety briefing.
- Check that equipment used is returned to Project Leader and report any problems.
- Complete necessary paperwork and give to the Project Leader.

Volunteer Track Worker Guidelines

- Work under the direction of the Project Leader and comply with the Project Leader's instructions while undertaking activities, including and not limited to:
 - Working using hand tools (spade, axe, crow bar, fern hook, rake, hoe, bow/pruning saw, hammer, screw driver or herbicide applicator)

- Using powered equipment for which no certificate is required (hedge trimmers, brush cutters, electric drills, slashers)
- Using chain saw (certificate required)
- Applying agricultural chemicals without supervision (ACUP required)
- Applying agricultural chemicals under supervision (ACUP not required)
- Marking way points using GPS
- Communicating by UHF radio or satellite phone
- Identifying weeds or pests for control.
- In agreeing to participate in BTAC activities, participants agree to:-
 - Act under the reasonable instructions of the Activity Leader.
 - Dress and carry appropriate clothing for the activity and weather conditions.
 - Carry your own food and water (sufficient for the duration of the activity and weather conditions).
 - Carry your own first aid kit.
 - Carry a “Participants Emergency Contacts and Medical Information” form (in the top of your pack).
 - As a participant you need only do what you are comfortable in doing.
 - Read or be informed of the details in the Job Safety Analysis (JSA) for each of the tasks you are to carry out.
 - If you become aware of hazards not covered in the JSA process, immediately advise others in the vicinity of the hazard, and then advise the Activity Leader.
 - Stand clear of participants using motorised tools.
 - Only approach participants using motorised tools once you have made eye contact with them and they are aware that you wish to communicate with them and have either shut down the machine or otherwise made it safe for you to approach.
 - Stay with the work group or let someone know when you need to temporarily leave the activity site.
 - If you feel unwell, immediately let someone know, who will then notify the Activity Leader.
 - If accommodation is provided you may be required to share a room.
 - You are only permitted to leave your work group if approved by the Project Leader and partnered by at least one other member.

APPENDICES – Forms and Checklists

Examples of BTAC forms:

BTAC Project Leader's Checklist

BTAC Project Activity Report

Incident Report Form

Activity Attendance Register For Volunteers

BTAC Project Leader's Checklist

Print out this checklist and complete progressively

Before the Activity

- Get contact details of the ranger
- Contact the ranger and get details of what is required
- Assess the work to be done by BTAC
- Estimate assistance required: manpower, financial, equipment.
- Check insurance cover
- Check paper work requirements
- Write project plan
- Identify specific OH&S, skills, certificates/ qualifications/ requirements
- Advertise to volunteers and members of BTAC
- Assess volunteers and choose
- Advise accepted Volunteers of final arrangements
- In the week immediately prior to the task contact the Ranger to verify that everything is still OK and that the JSA checklist has been completed (for Parks Victoria/ DELWP).
Consult if extreme weather seems likely
- Assist people to share transport and advise them to establish cost sharing arrangements with the driver
- Collect BTAC tools, equipment and personal protective equipment/clothing if required
- Check BTAC tools, equipment and personal protective equipment/clothing is fit for purpose.

At the Activity

- Rendezvous with the ranger, if that was the arrangement.
- Ensure that all volunteers complete the *Record of Volunteer Hours* form.
- Ensure that the required Land Manager paperwork is completed.
- Ensure that a safety briefing is given by yourself or a ranger.
- Ensure that new or inexperienced members are shown how to use tools and equipment.
- Advise people that if they have a medical condition they must provide information to Project Leader / Crew Leader
- Assign volunteers to work crews and introduce crew leaders
- Check that all Volunteers are fit for the work they have been assigned and that they have suitable clothing, food, water and equipment
- Ensure that everyone is aware of requirements for lunch and tea breaks (bring them with you or come back to base) and importantly inform the party of the day's communication procedures
- Check that the appropriate safety equipment is being worn, issue tools, inform all Volunteers of the First Aid Kit location and head off
- Monitor progress and monitor safety as the work progresses
- Where possible take before and after photos to record some of the work done
- If no land manager representative present, supervise the work with the crew leaders

After the Activity

- Check that the work is complete
- Debrief work crews

- Check that equipment used is returned to land manager / BTAC
- Check with the ranger (if present) as to whether the work is satisfactory or if another date needs to be set to complete the work
- Check if the ranger has other tasks that could be the subject of a future working bee
- Ensure that everyone has transport home – count your numbers, making sure that all the party are accounted for
- For BTAC equipment - repair/replace damaged equipment, arrange routine service if due, replace expendables: oil, fuel, gloves.
- Forward BTAC Record of Volunteer Hours form and BTAC Activity Report to the BTAC Project Coordinator
- Ask Volunteers to forward any before and after photos to send to BTAC Project Coordinator

BTAC Project Activity Report

Date of Activity:			
Location:			
Name of Project Leader:			
Name/s of Crew Leader/s:			
Land Manager Contact (usually a ranger):			
Land Manager Name:			
Land Manager Location: (e.g. Parks Victoria Heyfield)			
Land Manager Contacts:	Phone:		
	Mobile:		
	Email:		
Description of the work (including start time for briefing and final departure time):			
The name of the track/s, the area of the track actually worked on and the type of:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clearing e.g. benching, removing fallen timber, install signs, repair infrastructure 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Types of weeds removed, controlled, slashed, cut and painted, dug out 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conservation work – nest boxes, water bars, board walk on fragile area 			
Did the Land Manager complete the forms for Insurance?	Yes		No

Is further work necessary to complete the project?

If yes give details:

Does the land Manager suggest any further work in this area?

If yes, give details:

Further relevant comments:

Incident Report Form

To be completed by Project Manager or Crew Leader as soon as practical after the incident.

This report should be kept by the BTAC Project Coordinator as a formal activity record.

In the event of any serious injury (an injury requiring medical treatment) copies of the incident report must be forwarded to the current Bushwalking Victoria insurance provider. with a copy to admin@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au or mail to Bushwalking Victoria, PO Box 1007, Templestowe Vic 3106

Part 1

Report Prepared By:	Date Prepared:
Date of Incident:	Time of Incident:
Type of Event: <i>Track clearing, install water bars, removing noxious weeds:</i>	
Location:	
Type of Incident: <i>Injury, missing person, damage to property, theft, fire, etc:</i>	
Incident Details:	

Action Taken:

Part 2

External Involvement: *Were authorities or other agencies notified at the time? If so who, by whom, and how? Did they then take a role in managing the incident? If appropriate have the Insurers been notified?*

Final Outcome: *What was the final outcome of the incident? When was it resolved?*

Future Prevention: *Can this incident be prevented at future BTAC activities? If so, how?*

Supplementary Information: *This section can include a list of attachments, such as a map, witness statements etc.*

Privacy Note

The inclusion of the names of individuals and their contact details in this report must be done in accordance with relevant Privacy laws.

Activity: **Date From** **Date To:**

Leader:

All persons participating in this activity must sign this register prior to commencing any tasks indicating that they have read the declaration below.

Declaration (please read)

By signing in to this activity I agree to the following requirements:

- I understand the type of activity to be undertaken and I have been informed of the details in the Job Safety Analysis (JSA) for each of the tasks to be carried out.
- I will inform the Activity Leader if I have any reason that may prevent or restrict me from undertaking any of the tasks I may be assigned.
- I have read, understood and agree to abide by the Bushwalking Victoria, Bushwalking Tracks and Conservation “Responsibilities of Participants” document.
- I will carry a Participant’s Emergency Contact and Medical Information form with current details.
- I consent to photographs or videos taken on an activity to be used by BWV for promotional purposes, or state my decision not to participate in photos or video production.

	<i>Volunteer Name</i>	<i>Club / BWV</i>	<i>Email</i>	<i>Mobile / Tel No.</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Vol H</i>	<i>Trvl H</i>
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							

Activity: **Date From** **Date To:**

Refer to Declarations on Page 1

	<i>Volunteer Name</i>	<i>Club / BWV</i>	<i>Email</i>	<i>Mobile / Tel No.</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Vol Hrs</i>	<i>Trvl Hrs</i>
8							
9							
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