

22 November 2006

The Director General
Attention: Planning Officer
Walpole Wilderness Area and Adjacent Parks and Reserves Draft Management Plan
Department of Environment and Conservation
Locked Bag 104
Bentley Delivery Centre WA 6983

Mr Keiran McNamara

Outdoors WA is pleased to submit the following input into the above titled draft management plan. We thank you for the invitation and the opportunity.

Ralph Gurr
Executive Officer

OUTDOORS WA SUBMISSION

– Draft Management Plan – Walpole Wilderness Area – November 2006

1. As an industry body Outdoors WA contends that we would be best involved in the development of the draft management plan rather than included in the public submission phase. History provides evidence that feedback at this stage of the process has little impact.
2. Outdoors WA endorses the need to achieve a balance between the pressures to open up and develop areas versus preserve and protect them as wilderness.
3. Four wheel drive vehicles ought to be confined to made or gazetted roads; access beyond that is in conflict with the concept of “wilderness” (excluding emergencies).
4. Outdoors WA supports the development of paddling trails and campsites along the Deep and Frankland Rivers (for day trips and expeditions), and around the Irwin, Broke and Walpole Nornalup Inlets. Similarly a sea kayak trail and “wild” campsites with safe landing points could also be developed.
5. The Nuyts “Wilderness Area” ought to also be considered for gazetting as a wilderness area despite not meeting all criteria (such has been the case since 1975). If such is not possible then it ought to be managed according to the same strategy.
6. Consideration ought to be given to moving the Bibbulmun Track further from this area.
7. The sustainability of the area would be enhanced further if visitors to the area were informed to a greater degree of the content of “Leave no Trace”, minimal impact and the “Caring Code for the Bush”. Specific materials could be developed for this area and perhaps even for “areas within his area” as a “one strategy fits all” approach may not be in the best interests of the area.
8. Consideration ought to be given to Aldridge Cove, Mount Hopkins, Granite Peak and Mount Roe areas as locations for abseiling and rock climbing in addition to those mentioned in the draft plan.
9. Abseiling on Mount Frankland ought to be restricted to a single descent route (as documented in DSR/CALM Walpole documents 2006) to minimise vegetation damage and risk to walkers on the trail below. Such a descent ought to have 3 anchor bolts placed on each pitch; that they be tested and tagged and meeting existing DEC standards.
10. Bushwalking track ratings ought to be consistent with the current DEC initiative headed by Stuart Harrison.
11. Reference to types of user groups and implied skill levels of their leaders is counter productive to the intent of the management plan and broader DEC policy; better to replace such with qualitative and quantitative reference to existing standards in program accreditation, activity standards, leader registration and codes of practice.
12. A booking system ought to be developed and positioned for the area, whereby user groups are required to gain DEC approval to enter the area, inclusive of appropriate documentation. This would prevent too many groups being in the area at the same time, assist in evacuation decisions and also allow for the collection of usage data.
13. Campsites accessible by vehicle to include fire rings (excluding coastal sites); wilderness and coastal campsites to be “fuel stove only”
14. Dogs ought to be banned from the area.