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# **INTERIM RECREATION STRATEGY FOR THE NATURAL AREAS OF THE ACT**

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APRIL 2004



Planning for People

Prepared for Environment ACT  
(part of the ACT Government and the  
Department of Urban Services) by:

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# **INTERIM RECREATION STRATEGY**

## **FOR THE NATURAL AREAS**

### **OF THE ACT**

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# Introduction to the Interim Recreation Strategy

This Recreation Strategy is being released as an Interim document whilst a range of other significant planning and consultation processes are underway which will greatly influence the Final Recreation Strategy for the Natural Areas of the ACT

This Strategy is a secondary document to Plans of Management, Territory Plan, Shaping Our Territory Report and the Implementation Studies which have been commissioned as a result of that document. Once this range of planning studies and processes has been completed, (anticipated late 2004), this Interim Strategy will be further developed to reflect their outcomes.

## *Namadgi Plan of Management review*

Namadgi National Park's Plan of Management is currently under review and a range of issues are being discussed that will impact on the way recreation is managed within the Park. It is expected the revised Plan of Management will be finalised by the end of 2004.

## *Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve Business Case and Masterplan*

The ACT Government has initiated a business case and masterplan to test the recommendations for Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve from the Shaping Our Territory Report. This Business Case and Masterplan will put recommendations to the Government which are expected to shape the future for the Reserve and will focus on the visitor experience provided. The Business Case and Masterplan will be presented to the Government in May 2004.

## *Cotter Precinct Masterplan*

The Shaping Our Territory Report proposed that a masterplan be developed for the Cotter precinct to incorporate the recommendations from that Report. This area is managed by a range of land managers and a greatly enhanced visitor experience has been proposed including commercial accommodation, a Tree Top Walk and to act as a 'Visitor Hub' for entry to the northern areas of Namadgi National Park, Urriara and Pierces Creek Forests. It is expected the Cotter precinct Masterplan will be submitted to Government late in 2004.

## *Other Shaping Our Territory Planning*

The Shaping Our Territory Implementation Team has been tasked with completing five studies into identified areas, Tidbinbilla/Block 60, Cotter Precinct, Rural Villages, Stromlo/Deeks Forest and the International Arboreteum. Each of these masterplanning exercises will greatly impact on the Recreation Strategy. It is expected the reports on the Rural Villages will be presented in May 2004 and the International Arboreteum and Stromlo later in 2004.

### *Strategic Fire Access in Namadgi National Park*

A key recommendation of the Mcleod Report was that a review of the tracks and trails within Namadgi National Park be undertaken to develop strategies for fire fuel management and suppression. This review is currently underway with a final report due, with recommendations, as an element of the revised Plan of Management for Namadgi National Park. and as a separate Fire Management Plan.

### *The Final Recreation Strategy*

The Final Recreation Strategy will be completed late in 2004 when the studies, masterplans, reviews and reports listed above have been completed. The Interim Recreation Strategy provides a working document that will provide guidance to field staff and planners.

The Interim Recreation Strategy is consistent with existing Plans of Management and Recommendations from the Shaping Our Territory Report.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Background

The Australian Capital Territory has nearly 60% of its land managed as Wilderness Area, National Park, Nature Reserve, Special Reserve and Plantation Reserve. This high ratio of urban to natural areas provides unique opportunities and responsibilities for the provision of recreation facilities and activities. This document outlines a strategy for managing these recreational opportunities over the next five years.

A key event that has triggered this Strategy was the January 2003 bushfires where two-thirds of the entire Territory – including 27 000 hectares of farmland, 110 000 hectares of nature reserves and national parks, and 11 000 hectares of plantation forestry – were bushfire affected.

The ACT Government, through the ACT Bushfire Recovery Task Force, commissioned a study, resulting in the 'Shaping Our Territory' report, to provide recommendations for the long-term options for land use. This work considered the main economic, social, recreational and environmental needs and potential of the ACT and region over the long term.

This Recreation Strategy implements those recommendations from the 'Shaping Our Territory' report that have been endorsed by the ACT Government. The Strategy also proposes approaches to implementing the actions and guidelines from the Plans of Management for the Protected Areas which relate to the provision of recreational opportunities..

Some areas within the scope of the Strategy's are currently, (April 2004), undergoing extensive planning processes as a result of recommendations of the 'Shaping Our Territory' report. These areas, (Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, International Arboretum, and Cotter Precinct), are addressed in broad concepts only by this Strategy.

'The planning objective proposed for recreational use in non-urban land is to provide adequate resources to satisfy community demand for as many legitimate recreational activities as possible, consistent with any limitations imposed by the natural resources of the ACT' ('Shaping Our Territory' – pg 46)

Namadgi National Park is currently, (April 2004), having a new Plan of Management written which will provide additional direction for the recreational use of that area.

## 2. Purpose

The Recreation Strategy for the Natural Areas of the ACT (Recreation Strategy) is a five-year Recreation Strategy that provides a strategic approach to the provision of recreational facilities and opportunities for the Territory's non-urban natural areas; (ACT Government lands managed by Environment ACT and ACT Forests).

The Recreation Strategy provides a management approach that will enable the community to undertake appropriate recreation activities consistent with other requirements to protect important, cultural, environmental and public access values. The strategy aims to guide the ACT Government to respond to community recreational requirements in a manner that will still allow for the long-term protection of natural areas. The recreation strategy will both protect the environment and identify recreation opportunities.

The Recreation Strategy makes recommendations concerning Namadgi National Park,

Murrumbidgee River Corridor and the lands managed by ACT Forests including Stromlo, Kowen, Pierces Creek, Uriarra, Gibraltar Creek and other smaller forest areas. Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, International Arboretum and the Cotter Precinct are addressed only in broad planning concepts. Whilst Canberra Nature Park was not included within the scope of the brief, recreational facilities and use of these areas has been considered in relation to the strategy.

This document brings together the elements of a planning and consultation process that commenced in February 2003 and now provides a basis for implementing the recommendations of the 'Shaping Our Territory' report. Considerable comment was received from a broad range of stakeholders on an 'Issues and Options' paper as well as a draft 'Recreation Framework for the ACT Discussion Paper'. Comments received have been addressed through this draft strategy.

## Recreation Strategy Goals and Objectives

- To provide strategic direction for the range of recreational opportunities appropriate to be provided in the ACT's natural areas.
- To provide a strategic approach to the implementation of the recommendations of the 'Shaping our Territory' report in the first five years
- To ensure protection of areas of high natural, cultural or economic significance from inappropriate use or development.
- To ensure an appropriate balance of recreation opportunities is provided across a range of areas.
- To provide a tool for land managers to better provide for recreation use whilst protecting the natural and cultural values of the protected areas.
- To provide an opportunity for the wants and needs of conservation, recreation and other stakeholders to be included.
- To provide a basis for the post-fire reconstruction or redevelopment of recreational opportunities and settings appropriate to meeting the needs of the Canberra community and visitors.

## 3. Other Studies that Impact on this Strategy

This Strategy has been developed as a secondary document to the Plans of Management for protected areas and the "Shaping Our Territory" report. This Strategy does not make any recommendation that is in conflict with either of these primary documents.

Those other planning processes which are currently in progress, can be expected to directly impact on this Strategy and may change the recommendations from this document. When the planning processes detailed below are finalized the Final Recreation Strategy will be published.

1. Development of the Plan of Management for Namadgi National Park.
2. Business Case and Masterplan for Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve.
3. 'Shaping Our Territory' Implementation Group Study Area Reports.
  - a. International Arboretum.
  - b. Rural Villages (Pierces Creek, Uriara & Stromlo).

- c. Stromlo/Deeks Forest Park.
- d. Cotter Precinct.

## 4. Recreation Experiences and Opportunities in ACT's Natural Areas

A wide range of facilities and services exist across the ACT's natural areas. Whilst many are suited to visitor needs, others would benefit from improvements for safety, amenity or visitor comfort.

Prior to the January 2003 fires, the natural areas of the ACT provided a broad range of recreational opportunities consistent with the management of different lands. A range of management issues were recognised for many of the areas such as shortfalls in the facilities provided and the experiences available for some user groups. Conflicts existed between some activities.

The fires have resulted in a reduction in the range of settings, in the amenity of the settings, and in the facilities provided for many recreation activities.

In planning for the natural areas, the issues existing before fires need to be considered in determining future recreational needs to ensure optimal visitor experiences consistent with the range of values for each of the areas. The recommendations of the 'Shaping Our Territory' report have the potential, with good planning, to lead to the provision of exceptional expanded and improved opportunities for high quality recreational settings and experiences.

Working with user groups is a critical step in ensuring appropriate facilities and services and minimal conflict.

## 5. Setting the Direction: The ACT Recreation Strategy Framework

### Guiding Principles for the Recreation Strategy

#### *Conservation of Natural and Cultural Values*

There is an appreciation that there are natural and cultural values associated with the area and that planning will recognise these conservation needs. Planning proposals will aim to enhance the management and interpretation of the natural and cultural values where appropriate. Planning will be consistent with existing management plans and the visitor experiences balanced with the protection of significant values.

#### *Importance of Natural Areas for Recreational Activities for the ACT Community*

The non-urban lands managed on behalf of the ACT Government by Environment ACT and ACT Forests are highly valued by the community and provide a diverse range of recreation experiences for residents of Canberra and the ACT. The need to identify an appropriate balance of recreational opportunities consistent with the primary need to protect environmental, cultural and landscape values must be recognised across the ACT.

#### *Integrated Planning*

In assessing the range of recreation opportunities and experiences that can or should be provided for recreation in non-urban lands, consideration needs to be given to the range of opportunities available or able to be developed in the broader region. Not all



activities and expectations will be accommodated in each reserve or recreation zone.

#### *Economic Evaluation*

Whilst some funding for reconstruction and redevelopment may be available in the short to medium term, ongoing capital or operating costs for recreational facilities cannot be assumed. Commercial opportunities, both public and private sector, to provide for recreation need to be grounded in realistic business cases.

#### *Use of Appropriate Land*

Positive opportunities for partnerships with landholders outside reserves that provide benefits to a range of stakeholders may be available to ensure protection of significant reserve values and economic return to neighbours and businesses in the area.

#### *Consultation with User Groups*

Facilities and services for recreation will be planned in consultation with user groups to ensure that, wherever possible, they ensure protection of values, meet the needs and expectations of users, minimise risks, and reduce conflict between activities.

#### *Provision Based on Identified Needs and Demand*

Recreation experience provision must be justified on the basis of identified community needs and demand. Needs and demand may relate to both the ACT resident population and visitors to the ACT.

## **Recreational Settings**

The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) is a planning framework commonly used in natural area management and recreation planning which identifies a continuum of recreation settings based on variations in levels of natural setting, infrastructure provision and management presence. The basic assumption of ROS is that quality recreational experiences are assured by providing a diverse range of recreational opportunities, catering for various tastes and user group preferences. The strategy uses the following recreation setting classes:

- Area 1 Remote and self sufficient Recreation
- Area 2 Conservation/Recreation
  - Area 2a Semi remote forest based recreation
  - Area 2b Semi remote grassland and woodland based recreation
  - Area 2c Semi remote pine forest based recreation
- Area 3 Roaded and natural recreation
- Zone 4 Developed recreation area

## **6. The Role of the ACT's Natural Areas**

The range of recreational opportunities available across the natural areas of the ACT has, in the past, been provided across a range of land tenures—national park, nature reserve, forest land, nature park and urban park. Whilst this strategy primarily makes recommendations in relation to Namadgi National Park, Murrumbidgee River Corridor, and the ACT Forests, it also recognises other significant values and roles including:

- The foundation concept of the National Capital Open Space System and the

critical linkages between natural areas, corridors and other open space in the ACT.

- The role Canberra Nature Park plays in providing 'backyard' natural area opportunities for Canberra residents in more than 25 locations across the city.
- The need for corridors that link urban areas and rural lease lands with recreational areas, particularly where areas have a strong recreational focus (e.g. ACT horse paddocks).
- The opportunities provided by Canberra urban parks for more developed recreational activities (such as cycle paths and picnic areas), which contribute to the range of opportunities and meets some demand.

Key recommendations of the Non Urban Study and the current Plans of Management provide direction for the recreation opportunities within the natural areas of the ACT. These can be summarized as;

Namadgi National Park will continue to provide extensive opportunities for primarily remote recreation consistent with protection of its significant natural and cultural values, with opportunities for more intense recreation focused in a small number of key visitor nodes.

Murrumbidgee River Corridor has played an important role in water-based recreation for the Canberra population and will continue to provide this focus although with a higher standard of recreational facilities and opportunities to further explore the river corridor. The existing high use visitor nodes will continue to be the focus for intensive recreation and sustainable use of the corridor will be encouraged through infrastructure provision.

The Cotter precinct will continue to serve as an important nodal point in the context of non-urban recreation and tourism opportunities which can be enhanced as a hub for a diverse range of passive and active recreation.

Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve has changed as a result of the fires but the reserve will continue to be valued for the environment in which indigenous habitat and species can be protected and presented to the community. Planning will provide for facilities and services that develops the park as a local native wildlife research and discovery destination.

Whilst the nature of ACT Forests lands is changing following the January fires, the lands will continue to play a significant role in recreation provision for Canberra through providing those recreational opportunities which cannot be provided in national parks and reserves, and can be sustainably provided for in the land managed by ACT Forests.

The outcomes of the Non Urban Study have provided expanded opportunities for the provision of exceptional recreational opportunities for the area. Good planning can result in best practice facilities and opportunities across the ACT's natural areas.

Canberra Nature Park is significant in the role it plays in the natural environment across the urban area. It serves to provide people with natural settings close to their homes. It can continue to serve this role with potential for some increase in sustainable recreational activity.

## 7. Key Directions

In terms of the key areas managed by Environment ACT and ACT Forests, the following key concepts are recommended for implementation within the five year planning horizon of this strategy.

### *Namadgi National Park*

#### Assumptions:

- Limited change to fundamental purpose.
- An increase in management access trails as a result of Macleod and other Inquiries.

#### Proposals:

- Some potential for increased use consistent with proposed management plan.
- Enhancement of opportunities and facilities to encourage appreciation and interpretation of values.
- Increased educational opportunities.
- Increased access for winter use
- Options to alter mountain bike access will be explored through the development of the revised Namadgi Plan of Management.
- Potential for future sealing of Boboyan Road and upgrading of Brindabella Road

### *Murrumbidgee River Corridor*

#### Assumptions

- The 'Shaping Our Territory' Implementation team will develop a Masterplan for the Cotter precinct that will shape the experience, opportunities and facilities for this area.

#### Proposals

- Cotter as a gateway to TR5 and enhanced as a hub for range of active and passive recreational activity suited to retaining family values including day use, walking, cycling, adventure activities
- Enhanced opportunities for accommodation
- MRC sites to be upgraded to provide high quality recreation settings and experiences
- High quality icon walking track linking MRC sites along both sides of the river including camping option in Bullen Range
- Cycle trail on part of MRC
- Consideration of adventure activity infrastructure located near or associated with the Dam Wall

### *Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve*

#### Assumptions:

- Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve is currently (April 2004) undergoing an extensive business planning and master planning exercise that will inform the ACT Government's decisions on the future use of the area. The Government has endorsed key recommendations from the 'Shaping Our Territory' report that include;
- Tidbinbilla to remain a reserve with wildlife, education and recreation focus
- Nature based tourism opportunities developed at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve will offer a unique experience to visitors, will have the potential to increase visitation.

- The ACT Government will lead the way with innovation and best practice in management, education and recreational infrastructure.
- Showcasing sustainable design and development.

### *ACT Forests Lands*

The 'Shaping Our Territory' report has recognised the significant recreational values that are attributed to ACT Forests in their recommendations.

#### Assumptions

- Plantation forestry will not be re-established in Stromlo Forest
- Kowen will remain available for recreation for a minimum 20 year period
- Ingledene unlikely to be available for recreation
- Other isolated forests may continue to be available for recreation
- Uriarra and Pierces Creek will be available for recreation subject to management of water catchment values, best practice road design, site considerations and fire management.
- Uriarra and Pierces Creek settlements likely to be rebuilt/expanded
- The ACT Forests estate, which is in public ownership, should continue to be available to recreational users.

#### Stromlo Forest

The 'Shaping Our Territory' Implementation team will commission landscape and recreation planning teams to undertake master planning and detailed planning for the development of Deek's Forest Park and Stromlo Precinct to provide for mountain biking, equestrian activity and cross-country running including

- a variety of running circuits to accommodate both amateur and professional athletes;
- a world-class cross-country running course;
- a dedicated mountain bike venue including a circuit to accommodate the MONT 24-hour event and other circuits of varying types, including downhill from Mount Stromlo;
- equestrian facilities including riding trails; and
- the grassing of the now covered landfill area as an open recreation place for the public and possibly as a campsite for major events.

### *Canberra Nature Park*

#### Assumptions:

- Increased pressure on these areas from displaced recreational activities.

#### Proposals:

- Undertake detailed planning for reserve areas to enable increased use whilst minimising impacts on key values.

## **8. Implementation**

An Implementation Schedule will be prepared in consultation with staff and

stakeholders. It is intended that the Implementation Schedule be staged over the five year period and identify realistic cost estimates, timeframe and accountabilities for achieving the strategy. This implementation Schedule will be included in the Final Recreation Strategy for the Natural Areas of the ACT.

# 1. Introduction

This five year Recreation Strategy is being developed for the non-urban natural areas of the Australian Capital Territory including lands managed on behalf of the ACT Government by Environment ACT and ACT Forests. The Strategy will provide guidance for the restoration, recovery and redevelopment of recreation facilities destroyed and damaged by the January 2003 fires as well as ensuring an effective foundation for recreational opportunities into the future.

The strategy is designed to complement existing, and future plans of management as well as the National Capital Plan and Territory Plan in managing recreation needs and impacts. It is one of many tools to assist land managers in preserving the natural and cultural values of the protected areas. The strategy adopts an integrated land management approach by Environment ACT and ACT Forests.

53% of the ACT is made up of either national park or nature reserves, with a further 7% of the Territory comprising plantation forests. The bushfires of January 2003 have had an enormous impact on the way of life for the people of Canberra and the ACT. One of the major affected areas has been the natural areas where 88% of the ACT Reserved areas, 68% of the ACT Forests and 57% of rural leasehold land have been burnt. These areas have numerous important values, one of which is recreation.

The recreation strategy is being developed to determine the most appropriate approach to enable the community to undertake recreation activities in a managed and sustainable way consistent with protection of significant values. The purpose of the strategy is to provide a tool that will enable environmental and cultural values to be protected whilst the re-introduction of facilities and activities is undertaken in a way that responds to community recreational needs and ensures the long-term protection of natural areas and their values. The recreation strategy will both protect the environment and identify recreation opportunities.

The Recreation Strategy is being prepared to:

- be consistent with plans of management for reserves including the review of the Namadgi National Park management plan;
- clearly define the constraints and opportunities for potential recreation and tourism developments to ensure that they do not adversely impact on the values or overall integrity of reserve areas;
- consider past use and management of areas in recommending the best future use;
- recognise the immediate needs of the community to use natural areas in the short and medium term.
- implement the recommendations of the 'Shaping Our Territory' report.
- incorporate planning considerations from the Canberra Spatial Plan.

## Recreation Strategy Goals and Objectives

- To provide strategic direction for the range of recreational opportunities appropriate to be provided in the ACT's natural areas.

- To ensure an appropriate balance of recreation opportunities is provided across a range of areas.
- To ensure protection of areas of high natural, cultural or economic significance from inappropriate use or development.
- To provide a tool for land managers to better provide for recreation use whilst protecting the natural and cultural values of the protected areas.
- To provide an opportunity for the wants and needs of conservation, recreation and other stakeholders to be included.
- To provide a basis for the post-fire reconstruction or redevelopment of recreational opportunities and settings appropriate to meeting the needs of the Canberra community and visitors.
- To clearly define the constraints and opportunities for potential recreation and tourism developments to ensure that they do not adversely impact on the values or overall integrity of reserve areas.

## 2. Process and Timelines

### Process for this Project

This document brings together the elements of a planning and consultation process that commenced in February 2003.

### Issues and Options Paper

An Issues and Options Paper was distributed as a starting point in the development of a Discussion Paper. The Issues and Options Paper was circulated to inform key stakeholders about the Recreation Strategy and to seek initial input in relation to the broad options for the major recreation areas.

Whilst a limited time period was available, a number of responses and submissions were received from stakeholders and agency staff.

### ACT Recreation Framework Discussion Paper

A draft Discussion Paper entitled 'Recreation Framework for the ACT' was then prepared to provide direction for the initial redevelopment of key recreation areas to enable the Canberra community and visitors to have recreation opportunities and areas in the short term. This Discussion Paper identified an approach to the recreational zoning of the ACT's natural areas as well as proposing some direction for the future use and management of key visitor nodes including Namadgi Visitor Centre, Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, the Cotter precinct and the existing visitor sites along the Murrumbidgee River Corridor.

Considerable comment was received from a range of stakeholders on the draft 'Recreation Framework for the ACT Discussion Paper'. Comments received have been summarised in this Recreation Strategy and have, wherever appropriate, been addressed through the strategy.

The Recreation Strategy aims to achieve the following key tasks:

- Link the planning framework with past and potential uses.
- Analyses recreation use, needs and gaps.
- Make recommendations in relation to the provision of recreational opportunities for a five year period.

### Interim Recreation Strategy

The Final Recreation Strategy for the Natural Areas of the ACT will be finalised when a series of major planning studies are completed. At the time of writing (April 2004) significant planning and consultation processes are underway whose outcomes will greatly influence the content of this document.

When these studies and processes are completed, expected late 2004, then the final Recreation Strategy for the Natural Areas of the ACT will be published. The Final Strategy will include an implementation plan that includes;



- Staging of recommendations over five years with capital and operational cost estimates and priorities.
- Monitoring program (visitor use, expectations, satisfaction plus impacts).
- Principles and guidelines for site planning and design.

## **Shaping Our Territory Report**

The ACT Government, through the ACT Bushfire Recovery Task Force, commissioned a study, the 'Shaping Our Territory' report, to provide recommendations for the long-term options for land use. This work considered the main economic, social, recreational and environmental needs and potential of the ACT and region over the long term.

This Recreation Strategy implements those recommendations from the 'Shaping Our Territory' report that have been endorsed by the ACT Government.

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## **Consultation conducted in preparing this Strategy**

As outlined above, a range of opportunities have been provided for comment and input from stakeholders including the community in the development of this Recreation Strategy.

A total of 30 submissions were received from the following groups:

- Conservation Non Government Organisations (3)
- Recreation clubs (9)
- Conservation/Parkcare community groups (6)
- Education organisations (4)
- Individuals (3)
- ACT Government agencies (2)
- Rural organisations (2)
- Commercial operators (1)

The following section summarises the comments provided in the submissions received.

## **Summary of Stakeholder Comments Received**

The major comments made included the following:

- Maintain open space system including Stromlo Forest and other ACT forested lands. This issue was identified in 11 submissions.
- Increase or at least maintain passive recreation opportunities and facilities. This issue was identified in 10 submissions.

- Conservation must be maintained as the fundamental principle of land use. Maintain wilderness areas and prohibit development of additional roads or facilities unless off conservation estate. (9)
- Need for improved education and interpretation opportunities and infrastructure. (7)
- Need for increased agency management/policing of reserves and better integration across agencies. (5)
- Need for icon eco-tourism project. (6)

There was a strong interest in maintaining the existing open space system including ACT Forested land and, particularly, Stromlo Forest. There was a concern that if forested lands were developed as alternate land uses and consequently did not provide recreation opportunities for the more impacting activities such as trail bikes and motor events, then these activities could be expected to switch to use lands with more conservation value. However in a few submissions it was made clear that motorised activities in forested lands were not well managed and provided a significant environmental and social impact.

There was also strong support for maintaining the conservation and wilderness values of ACT lands and not allowing any more development. This is a reflection of the large number of conservation interest groups and passive recreation clubs that responded to the survey. There were a number of submissions promoting more passive recreation opportunities through the re-establishment of trails and trail heads (such as Stromlo) and use of multiple use trails. Most of these submissions were advocating passive recreation opportunities which do not increase the impact on the conservation values of the ACT lands.

Strong support was shown for the re-instatement of environmental education opportunities post fire. Many submissions highlighted the opportunity to share resources and facilities. All education submissions highlighted the need to protect the conservation and wilderness values in the Parks. More interpretation of the cultural and post fire environment was raised as an issue in a number of submissions.

There was also some comment about the lack of access to parks and parts of Namadgi by mountain bike and horse riding groups. The mountain bike fraternity proposed an Icon cycle trail through wilderness and development of international class events trails. Horse riders wanted more access to Canberra Nature Parks.

Some submissions from clubs which run recreation events such as running, orienteering and walking requested additional facilities such as toilets, and car parking. It was stated that additional development needs to be benign and not detract from the natural values of the Parks.

Opportunities to use volunteers in a broad range of park and forest management services and functions were also raised.

### **Gaps/Future Opportunities Identified**

Some areas where submissions identified recreational facility needs included the following:

- Development of multiple use trails.
- Development of trail heads or 'hubs' for low impact and passive recreation opportunities at locations such as the Cotter and Stromlo.
- Better interpretation of cultural and environmental environment. eg Heritage Trails.

- Improved recreation links between public open spaces (e.g. Cooleman Ridge and Murrumbidgee Corridor; Stromlo and the Bicentennial Horse Trail; and Canberra Nature Parks and Cotter and Namadgi).
- Provision of facilities (eg car-parking spaces) for low impact recreation events.
- More policing and management of Parks and Forested lands.
- Development of an Icon project or opportunity.
- Ecotourism developments off Park.
- Aboriginal cultural interpretation/education/partnerships.

## **Management Issues**

Policing was identified in numerous submissions as a major management issue. This issue came up in reference to pine plantations where there is increasing motorised recreation, unregistered trail bikes and unlicensed riders, as well as illegal activities such as car dumping and vandalism. Other environmental issues such as erosion of tracks from overuse and weeds were also highlighted in some submissions.

Communication by park management agencies and liaison with adjoining land management agencies and landholders was also raised in some submissions.

Specific issues and facility needs associated with different recreational activities have been included in sections 4 and 5 of this document.

## **Specific Area Issues Raised**

### ***Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve***

- There should be no built accommodation within the Reserve.
- No further development within—manage to wilderness end of Recreation Opportunity Spectrum.
- No more roads.

### ***Murrumbidgee Corridor***

- Need to ensure protection of Bird migratory Corridor.

### ***ACT Forests***

- Keep Stromlo as low impact and passive recreation area close to urban environment ACT Forests managed areas need to be used for recreation to take pressure off Canberra Nature Park and Namadgi National Park.
- Major issues include vandalism, noise, Unregistered motorised recreation, Illegal hunting, lack of Policing, Use of public roads, Erosion caused by recreation, lack of legislation.

### ***Namadgi***

- No development within—manage to wilderness end of Recreation Opportunity Spectrum.
- No more roads or infrastructure.

### ***Canberra Nature Park***

- Erosion of trails and tracks.
- Inadequate access for horseriding and mountain bike riding.
- Lack of policing of illegal activities

## 3. Planning and Management Context

The Recreation Strategy is to be developed for Namadgi National Park, Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, Murrumbidgee River Corridor and the lands managed by ACT Forests including Stromlo, Kowen, Pierces Creek, Uriarra, Gibraltar Creek and other smaller forest areas.

Whilst Canberra Nature Park is not included within the scope of the brief, recreational facilities and use of these areas has been considered in relation to the strategy.

Adjoining rural areas as well as adjacent lands managed by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service are, necessarily, considered in terms of the role they serve and their potential for future recreational use.

### 3.1 Responsibility for Land Management

The ACT Parks and Conservation Service (ACTPCS) is part of Environment ACT, located within the Department of Urban Services. ACTPCS manages open space, natural and cultural resources and recreation facilities throughout the ACT, and the Googong foreshores in NSW on behalf of the ACT Government.

ACTPCS is responsible for:

- Management of public land including national parks, nature reserves and special purpose reserves, (but not Canberra's urban parks);
- Assistance with investigation and research into environmental issues;
- Implementation of conservation legislation including regulation, protection and management of native flora and fauna;
- Environmental interpretation and advice on pest plant and animal control;
- Support of nature-based tourism

(Dept Urban Services, 1999)

The Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991 requires that management plans be prepared for areas identified as Public Land. Management plans are in place for Murrumbidgee River Corridor, Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve and Namadgi National Park. The plan for Namadgi National Park is currently being reviewed. The Recreation Strategy will be consistent with all management plans.

ACT Forests manages around 26,000 hectares of land in the ACT. Of this, approximately 16,200 hectares contained pine plantations. The remainder is taken up with areas of native vegetation including Nature Reserves, Special Purpose Reserves, other conservation areas, watercourses, road reserves and general utility areas. Native forests managed by the organisation are managed under the Nature Conservation Act.

The high level of visitation in ACT Forests takes a great deal of pressure off the nature reserves and other natural areas around the ACT. In addition, ACT Forests areas have, in the past, been able to accommodate medium to high impact activities that are potentially damaging to more sensitive reserve areas.

## 3.2 Reserve Values

### Namadgi National Park

Namadgi National Park is the largest of the ACT's conservation reserves with an area of 106,000 hectares. It represents 46% of the land area of the ACT. At the northern end of the Australian Alps, Namadgi consists of many plant and animal communities with several at the limit of their distribution. It also contains a wetland of international significance, numerous Aboriginal and cultural sites and is an area of importance to Aboriginal people. The park is used for many recreational pursuits and the Cotter catchment is the source of Canberra's drinking water.

The Discussion Paper for the Preparation of a New Plan of Management for Namadgi National Park, (2002) summarises the values of the park as follows—

#### *Natural Values*

The main features of ecological interest in the park are:

- The wide range of vegetation types and animal habitats.
- The existence of some restricted vegetation types and animal habitats, including some that are not well represented in other reserves.
- Threatened, restricted or uncommon plants or animals and their habitat.
- The relatively unbroken vegetative cover and links with similar habitats in similar environments surrounding the park.
- A range of aquatic habitats still protected from invasion from foreign species.
- The relationship of the native forests of the Cotter valley with those of the coastal escarpment and other mountainous areas.
- A wetland of international importance listed under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

#### *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage*

There are numerous known sites within Namadgi National Park (and almost certainly many more as yet unknown sites) that provide evidence of extensive occupation of the area by Aboriginal people over many thousands of years. These include occupation sites (such as rock shelters and open campsites), paintings, stone arrangements and extractive (quarry) sites. Namadgi also has continuous and contemporary associations for many Aboriginal people.

#### *European Cultural Heritage*

Pastoralists lived and worked in the broad valleys of the park from the 1830s until the 1980s. Evidence of their former presence includes rural; residences and outbuildings, track-ways, fences and other pastoral infrastructure and modified countryside.

Namadgi also includes significant sites relating to the development of Australian botany and forestry; Australia's involvement in space exploration; Canberra's water supply infrastructure; the marking out of the ACT border; and leisure and recreation facilities.

#### *Landscape Values*

The park includes the highest peaks in the ACT. These peaks form the mountainous backdrop on the western and south-western skyline of Canberra.

Numerous tors, rocky slopes and cliffs within the park have considerable scenic value as do Namadgi's hills, ridges, rivers and valleys – some of which have been modified by Aboriginal and European activities.

#### ***Educational and Scientific Values***

Areas within the park that have been subject to minimal disturbance by humans are important for scientific reference. Within the park, there are a number of long term reference sites and other sites of scientific value, including cultural heritage sites, which provide outstanding opportunities of education. The wide range of natural conditions that occur in the park means that good examples of the environmental interactions of geology, climate, altitude and other factors are readily accessible.

#### ***Water Quality Values***

Management of the Upper Cotter for urban water supply provides Canberra with water of high quality. This is due to the largely undisturbed nature of the catchment and management policies that have, to date, strictly limited public use of the area.

#### ***Recreational Values***

The proximity of Namadgi to Canberra's urban areas means that there is a large demand for a range of outdoor recreation activities including car touring, picnicking, fishing, car camping, bushwalking, nature study, photography, rock climbing, mountain biking and horse riding. As use of Namadgi for recreation purposes grows, there is increasing potential for this use to compromise the park's other values and lead to conflict between activities.

#### ***Nature Based Tourism Values***

Namadgi is an attractive tourist destination that complements the range of nature based tourism opportunities found at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve and other places. Environmentally responsible and culturally appropriate nature based tourism can contribute to the conservation of the ACT's natural and cultural heritage assets through an improved understanding, appreciation and interpretation of the environment.

### **Murrumbidgee River Corridor<sup>1</sup>**

The Murrumbidgee River Corridor (MRC) is a strip of land and water up to 4km wide along the full length (66km) of the ACT sector of the Murrumbidgee River. The corridor serves important hydrological, ecological and recreational functions. It contains important aquatic systems and many significant natural and cultural features. It provides outstanding opportunities for river recreation.

The management plan for MRC (1999) identifies the following key values of the reserve—

#### ***Hydrological Role***

One of the functions of the River corridor is to maintain as natural a hydrological regime as possible. Activities that impact on this regime include water diversion, impoundment and bed load extraction. It is also important to recognise the downstream impact that may result from urban activities on the Murrumbidgee River and its tributaries within the ACT.

#### ***Ecological Roles***

The corridor is important to local and regional ecology providing:

- Freshwater ecosystems, which are the diversity of living things, and non living, integrated through complex energy and nutrient cycles in freshwater aquatic areas.

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<sup>1</sup> Dept Urban Services, *Murrumbidgee River Corridor Management Plan, 1999*

- Wildlife corridors for flora and fauna including fish.
- Regional habitat diversity.
- Geomorphologic features particularly those related to rivers such as rock and sand terraces, alluvial fan deposits and evidence of channel migration.

***Social Roles***

The corridor's roles include:

- Rural contrast—retaining elements of nature so close to suburbia.
- City edge definition—an essential part of Canberra's outstanding landscape setting.

Heritage value including:

- Geological and landform sites.
- Native plants and animals.
- Aboriginal sites.
- Historic sites.
- Landscapes which define certain sites and are part of their cultural character.
- The rich assemblage of sites and areas along the corridor—illustrating the evolution of human settlement of the ACT with living places and providing examples of previous landscapes and human activities.

***Recreation***

- As settings for a wide array of appropriate activities including walking, swimming, fishing, picnicking, and canoeing.
- As a focus for other regional leisure activities which involve passing through the corridor including walking, car touring, horse riding and cycling.

***Nature Conservation***

- Protection of the full range of ecological communities in the ACT through management of the corridor as part of a reserve system.

***Grazing******Landscape Aesthetics and Significant Scenic Values***

A series of Special Purpose Reserves have also been gazetted as Nature Reserves within the Murrumbidgee River Corridor:

- Gigerline Nature Reserve
- Bullen Range Nature Reserve
- Stony Creek Nature Reserve
- Woodstock Nature Reserve
- Swamp Creek Nature Reserve

These reserves are managed as relatively undisturbed areas of ecologically significant communities or habitats. They may also include features of geological, archaeological or historic interest, and may have high scenic values. Human disturbance of these areas will



be kept to a minimum and this will be reflected in the provision of visitor facilities at these reserves<sup>2</sup>.

## **Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve**

Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve has been severely impacted by the bushfires of January 2003 with 99% of the Reserve fire-affected and most of the visitor infrastructure destroyed. A major masterplanning study is underway, (March 2004), that will provide recommendations for the ACT Government for the implementation of the 'Shaping Our Territory' Report recommendations.

Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve (TNR) is an area of approximately 5450 hectares in the west of the ACT. It is well known for its wildlife displays and rich Aboriginal and European heritage. The reserve borders Namadgi National Park which links it to Kosciuszko National Park in NSW, forming part of the Australian Alps national parks that extends into Victoria. It also has boundaries with ACT Forests, rural lessees and the Department of Education and Training complex at Birrigai.<sup>3</sup>

The values of the reserve are detailed in the Management Plan (1999), and are summarised as follows:

- Excellent examples of 14 vegetation communities including tall wet forests.
- A large number of plant species uncommon or rare in the ACT, particularly ferns and orchids.
- A range of landscape types. The enclosed nature of the Tidbinbilla Valley greatly enhances settings for recreational and educational opportunities.
- Numerous sites of aboriginal and European culture with a high significance.
- An outstanding resource for nature based recreation, with a concentration of natural and cultural elements, wildlife displays, closeness to Canberra and good sealed road access.
- Wide range of recreational activities including bushwalking, nature enjoyment, picnicking and organized walks programs.
- An outstanding tourist attraction with excellent potential for increased nature based tourism.
- A complement to the range of educational opportunities available in the Environment ACT reserve system. It offers extensive educational opportunities to visitors and the local community.
- An excellent facility for research on wild flora and fauna. It contains terrestrial and aquatic environments in a semi natural setting with servicing infrastructure. Husbandry and research activities carried out at Tidbinbilla complement those undertaken at other facilities.

A Special Purpose Reserve exists predominantly in the valley floor of Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. Development in the reserve is confined to this area and would be expected to be in the future.

The following principles<sup>4</sup> were used to develop the preferred nature based tourism opportunity for Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve and are still considered pertinent. They also

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<sup>2</sup> Source: Dept Urban Services, Murrumbidgee River Corridor Management Plan, 1999

<sup>3</sup> Source: Dept Urban Services, Management Plan for Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, September 1999

<sup>4</sup> Janet Mackay & Associates, 2001

formed the basis for the selection criteria on which options were analysed and compared:

- New nature based tourism opportunities developed at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve must offer a unique experience to visitors.
- New Developments should be complementary to existing attributes, services and programs.
- They should have the potential to increase visitation by an increase the number of visitors, an increase rate of return visitation or by an increase in the length of stay.
- Contribution to the financial performance of Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve by new developments is important. At least, financial outcomes should be cost neutral in terms of operational budgets.
- The Government should be seen to be leading the way with innovation and best practice. Not only must new development at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve comply, but all existing infrastructure must be seen to be of a similar standard.
- The current conditions for the fauna must be maintained or improved.
- New attractions must be supported by innovative programming, marketing and a preparedness for constant change.
- Linkages between Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, Birrigai and the ACT tourism industry must be fostered and maintained.

## **Canberra Nature Park <sup>5</sup>**

Canberra Nature Park is comprised of twenty-seven discrete reserves, totaling some 6,000 hectares and is almost exclusively made up of hills and ridges. The land managed as Canberra Nature Park forms part of the National Capital Open Space System (NCOSS).

Canberra Nature Park has an urban fringe of approximately 200 kilometres and has more than 6,000 residential leases adjoining its boundaries. This proximity to urban areas means there are management issues for Canberra Nature Park which are not necessarily found in other nature reserves, such as provision of areas for utilities e.g. communications facilities, high rates of visitor use, greater vulnerability to domestic pets and urban encroachment e.g. the use of Canberra Nature Park as a dump for garden refuse and other household rubbish.

In identifying the need for a management plan for Canberra Nature Park, the following vision was adopted:

- An integrated, connected system of diverse nature reserves throughout urban Canberra managed to conserve native flora, fauna and habitat, and to provide opportunities for appreciation, recreation, education and research consistent with protecting the natural and cultural heritage, and landscape values of the area

This vision for Canberra Nature Park will be achieved by:

- Conserving and managing the biodiversity and natural and cultural heritage values of Canberra Nature Park on an ecologically sustainable basis.
- Continuing to support and encourage scientific research, particularly those projects addressing management issues.
- Encouraging community participation in the Service's activities.

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<sup>5</sup> Environment ACT, 1999, *Canberra Nature Park Management Plan*

- Allowing a range of recreational pursuits that are in accordance with best practice principles; providing services to users.

Through the management of Canberra Nature Park as the unique setting for the 'Bush Capital' the ACT Government expects to:

- give as many people as possible the opportunity to experience wildlife on their 'doorstep';
- maintain Canberra's natural bush setting;
- enhance local ecosystems;
- conserve important and poorly represented ecosystems;
- conserve cultural values;
- provide an opportunity for participation in conservation programs;
- provide low key recreational and educational experience; and
- assist in the promotion of Canberra as a tourist destination.

The following values have been identified for Canberra Nature Park:

Ecological/ Nature Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management of flora and fauna to provide for biological diversity.</li> <li>• Control of undesirable species, protection of sensitive populations.</li> <li>• Communities and ecosystems.</li> </ul>
Scientific Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vegetation and wildlife management, flora and fauna conservation.</li> <li>• Geomorphology, soil and water science, anthropology, archaeology.</li> <li>• Vegetation and biotic response to fire.</li> <li>• Evidence in slope deposits of past climate change.</li> <li>• Unusually rich flora in some units.</li> </ul>
Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aesthetic backdrop to city centre and suburban fringe.</li> </ul>
Educational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal and informal school excursions.</li> <li>• Opportunity for natural appreciation, natural/cultural history based.</li> <li>• Instruction, town planning, water quality preservation and physical.</li> <li>• Fitness activities.</li> </ul>
Cultural Appreciation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aboriginal history-formal and informal interpretation.</li> <li>• European history, pastoralist land use.</li> </ul>
Recreational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passive enjoyment, walking, bird watching, picnicking, sight-seeing.</li> <li>• Bike riding, orienteering, horse-riding (identified areas only).</li> <li>• Dog walking (identified areas only).</li> </ul>

## ACT Forests

ACT Forests manages around 26,000 hectares of land in the ACT. Of this, approximately 16,200 hectares contains pine plantations. The remainder is taken up with areas of native vegetation including Nature Reserves, Special Purpose Reserves, other conservation areas, watercourses, road reserves and general utility areas. Native forests managed by the organisation are managed under the Nature Conservation Act.

The ACT Forests estate consists of:

- Kowen Forest, including Majura and Fairbairn.
- Stromlo Forest.
- Pierces Creek Forest, including Block 60, Gibraltar and Miowera.
- Uriarra Forest.

- Ingeldene Forest.
- Small forestry areas close to residential areas including Gungahlin Eucalypt Plantation; Lyneham Ridge Eucalypt Trial; Long Gully (Isaacs) Pines; Tuggeranong Pines.
- Native forest conservation areas.

Apart from the economic value of the plantations, the ACT Forests estate also holds significant natural, cultural, recreational, landscape, water quality and educational values.

Over 11,000 hectares of ACT Forests managed lands were impacted by the January 2003 fires.

#### ***Natural Values***

Approximately 10,000 hectares of ACT Forests' estate is managed for its conservation values. Included in this area are numerous sites of natural significance including rare, threatened and endangered flora, fauna and ecological communities, and flora and fauna at the limits of their geographic distributions.

#### ***Cultural Values***

Located within ACT Forests' estate are many unique cultural sites that offer insights into Aboriginal occupation (rock shelters, grinding grooves and artefacts), early European settlement (slab and pise huts, homestead sites and associated flora) and European history (WWII internment camps, arboreta, and Glenloch Cork Oak plantation).

#### ***Recreational Values***

The role of the ACT Forests in recreation provision in the region was identified in the ACT Forests Recreation Strategy (2003) as:

- To provide high quality facilities to complement those provided elsewhere in the region.
- To capitalise on the unique opportunities available in the forests.
- To contribute to land management and protection of natural and cultural values in the region through providing those recreational opportunities that cannot be provided in national parks and reserves, and can be sustainably managed in the ACT Forests.

#### ***Landscape Values***

During the early 1900s it was recognised that a comprehensive reforestation program was required to repair the city site and adjoining lands that had been denuded of timber through land clearing and grazing. In 1913 T.G.C. Weston was appointed head of a government Afforestation Section for the purpose of restoring Canberra's landscape through plantings of *Pinus radiata*. Since this time pine plantations have become an important part of Canberra's surrounding landscape.

#### ***Water Quality Values***

Pine plantations were first established in the Cotter catchment in 1925 to arrest land degradation issues following clearing for grazing. The erosion from these sites was suspected of causing a detrimental effect on Canberra's water supply. Since this time commercial plantations have remained in the Cotter catchment, with ongoing management practices designed to protect Canberra's water supply.

### ***Educational Values***

The ANU's School of Resources, Environment and Society regularly conducts field trips and studies within the plantations for its forestry students.

The CSIRO's Division of Forestry and Division of Plant Industry conduct ongoing research in the pine plantations and associated issues throughout the estate.

## **3.3 Impact of January 2003 Fires on the non urban areas of the ACT**

"The ferocious fires of January 2003 inflicted loss of life and very substantial damage, personal hardship and community cost on the rural areas of the Australian Capital Territory, as well as on urban Canberra.

Around two-thirds of the entire Territory – including 27 000 hectares of farmland, 110 000 hectares of nature reserves and national parks, and 11 000 hectares of plantation forestry – were fire affected:

- rural villages such as those at Uriarra, Pierces Creek and Stromlo Settlement were devastated and homes in rural ACT were lost;
- there was destruction and damage to farms, outbuildings, fences and stock and this came on top of the hardships brought by severe drought;
- vast alpine areas and tracts of native forest were burnt with consequent damage to the environment;
- there was a near 70 per cent loss of the ACT's commercial pine plantations;
- the fires affected an already difficult water supply situation, creating damage to the catchment with a resulting impact on water quality; and
- particular places much prized by the community for their recreational and educational value were damaged, such as Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, the Cotter, Birrigai, Mount Stromlo Observatory and Deek's Forest Park".<sup>6</sup>

## **3.4 Planning Context**

### **3.4.1 National Capital Plan**

The National Capital Authority is responsible for the National Capital Plan. The National Capital Plan ensures that Canberra and the Territory are planned and developed in accordance with their national significance. Any planning for Canberra's future has to take account of the national significance of Canberra.<sup>7</sup>

The National Capital Authority's vision for Canberra is for:

- A National Capital that symbolises Australia's heritage, values and aspirations, is internationally recognised, and of which Australians are proud.

The National Capital Plan sets out:

- standards for the maintenance and enhancement of the character of the national capital;

<sup>6</sup> *Shaping our Territory: Opportunities for on Urban Act, final report of Non Urban Study, November 2003*

- general standards and aesthetic principles to be adhered to in the development of the national capital; and
- general policies for land use and for the planning of national and arterial road systems throughout the Territory.<sup>7</sup>

### 3.4.2 Territory Plan<sup>8</sup>

The overarching legal framework for planning and land management in the ACT is set out in the Commonwealth's Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988 which provides for the preparation of a Territory Plan. The current Territory Plan came into effect in October 1993 and is administered under the Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991.

The fundamental purpose of the Territory Plan is to manage land use change and development within the ACT in a manner consistent with strategic directions set from time to time by the ACT Government, Legislative Assembly and community. Together with the Land Act and National Capital Plan it provides a comprehensive and transparent framework for consideration of development proposals.

The Plan reflects a vision of the ACT as a dynamic national and regional capital; of a prosperous, harmonious community; and of Canberra as a beautiful, healthy city that is managed carefully to retain valued natural and cultural features. The key Land Use Policies of specific and direct relevance to the ACT Non –Urban Recreation Strategy appear under the headings of:

- Plantation Forestry
- Mountains and Bushland
- River Corridors
- Hills, Ridges and Buffer Areas

Of relevance, although not directly, are:

- Rural Land Use
- Broad acre land use
- Urban Open Space
- Entertainment, accommodation and leisure
- Restricted access recreation

If a proposed variation to the Territory Plan is inconsistent with the provisions of the National Capital Plan then it can only proceed if an appropriate variation to the National Capital Plan is firstly approved. In the case of variations proposed that are consistent with the National Capital Plan, the National Capital Authority must still be consulted.<sup>9</sup>

### 3.4.3 Canberra Spatial Plan<sup>10</sup>

The Canberra Spatial Plan has been being developed during the period 2002-2004 to provide Canberra with a clear and visionary framework for where the community and

<sup>7</sup> *Shaping our Territory: Opportunities for on Urban Act, final report of Non Urban Study, November 2003*

<sup>8</sup> *Territory Plan on line, ACT Government website*

<sup>9</sup> *Shaping our Territory: Opportunities for on Urban Act, final report of Non Urban Study, November 2003*

<sup>10</sup> *Your Canberra Future Directions Summit, 2003*

government wants Canberra to be in 25 to 30 years. A component of the overall Canberra Plan, The Canberra Spatial Plan will integrate with the Canberra Economic White Paper and the Canberra Social Plan to provide a sustainable framework for Canberra's people, economy and environment.

The Canberra Spatial Plan has been released.. This plan takes a broad view of what the community expects from planning in Canberra. It considers transport, population growth, employment location, land availability, retail and leisure activity, ecological constraints, and environmental impact.

The Canberra Spatial Plan :

- Sets out an integrated spatially based framework for the future development of Canberra.
- Looks forward over 25-30 years.
- Is based on community expectations.
- Expresses and integrate the physical and geographic dimensions of the ACT Government's other strategies.
- Is the Canberra-wide context within which neighbourhood and district planning policies will be set.
- Provides a framework for resolving issues and is flexible with a built in review process
- Sets out short term implementation proposals and benchmarks

### **3.4.4 National Capital Open Space System**

Seventy percent of the ACT has been designated National Capital Open Space System (NCOSS) in the National Capital Plan. NCOSS encompasses the major open space elements of the river valleys, hills, ridges and mountain bushland areas of the ACT. These open space elements were identified to be planned, developed and managed as an integrated system that recognised the need for future development of the city over a long time scale whilst protecting the environmental quality.

The open spaces protected and managed for recreation through NCOSS provide the opportunity to network urban open spaces along the hill and river corridors to the distant mountainous areas. The linked open space system can reinforce wildlife corridors, ensure visual continuity of image and provide a wide range of recreation opportunities in natural and semi-natural areas.<sup>11</sup>

The National Capital Open Space System is important to this recreation strategy as it provides a connected open space system for a series of recreation settings ranging from the remote southern areas through multiple use forestry and rural areas to fingers of ridgelines and creeks that permeate the urban area.

### **3.4.5 Non-Urban Study – 'Shaping Our Territory' Report**

The ACT Government, through the Bushfire Recovery Taskforce shortly after the bushfires, commissioned a Study into Non-urban Bushfire Affected Areas to consider the best use of non-urban land for the sustainable development of the ACT. This study was planned to have a long time horizon.

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<sup>11</sup> National Capital Development Commission, National Capital Open Space System (undated)

The study was required to consider the main economic, social, recreational and environmental needs and potential of the ACT and region over long term. It was required to make recommendations in relation to the strategic development of the land for a range of activities such as:

- Softwood and hardwood forests;
- River and other corridors;
- Recreational and Educational uses;
- Landscapes (vistas and open spaces);
- Nature Parks;
- National Parks e.g. Namadgi National Park;
- Business development & Tourism (including ecotourism);
- Broad-acre rural activities including farming;
- Water catchments; and
- Rural residential and settlements.

The final report “Shaping our Territory: Opportunities for Non-Urban ACT” was released by the Chief Minister on November 5th 2003. Some of the key strategic recommendations that affect recreational use are summarized below. More detailed recommendations are referred to in section 8 of this strategy, Key Directions.

### **‘Shaping Our Territory’ recommendations**

- **Re-establishment of forests**

- Plantation forestry should not be re-established in Stromlo Forest
- The existing commercial pine plantation timetable for Kowen to be maintained with consideration of rural residential development once harvesting completed (20-30years)
- Ingledene to be considered for rural residential development
- Block 60 to be managed consistent with protection of cultural values
- Other isolated forests to be considered on a case by case basis (Gibraltar Creek, Miowera)
- Remaining areas to be replanted with pines for commercial timber production, subject to best practice road design, site considerations and fire management.
- Bushfire abatement and water catchment values to be the primary determinants of areas of re-establishment of Uriarra and Pierces Creek forests

- **Fire protection**

- There should be fire abatement zones to protect the urban areas of the ACT and other assets such as: rural villages; recreation, research or tourism facilities; and key infrastructure.



- The definition of any areas as bushfire-prone will carry implications for new and extended buildings in those areas, but these design requirements should not be imposed retrospectively on existing buildings.
- Fire risk is not sufficient reason to change land use in Namadgi National Park, however better fire management practices are needed including fuel load reduction and improved access trails
- **Rural villages and rural residential**
  - Uriarra and Pierces Creek settlements likely to be rebuilt/expanded
  - Stromlo settlement to be considered in future planning
  - Ingledene to be considered for rural residential
- **Water Resources Planning**
  - If a decision is made to enlarge the Cotter Dam, the expanded dam has the potential to enhance development of the Cotter as a recreational precinct.
- **Recreation**
  - As a general principle, the amount, breadth and quality of the recreational amenity of the non-urban areas should be at least as great, and desirably greater, than before the fires.
  - A diverse and high-quality range of recreation opportunities should be provided for (such as walking, playing sport, hiking, horse riding, mountain bikes, motor sports, camping etc.) to meet existing and expected future needs;
  - In terms of accessibility, recreation opportunities should cover local (walking distance from home – like the local bike path), suburban (short five-minute drive – like the local oval or park), regional (20-minute drive – like Deek’s Forest Park) and distant (like the national park).
  - The ACT Forests estate, which is in public ownership, should continue to be available to the community for a diverse range of recreational activities.
  - The availability of land in the ACT Forests estate for high-impact activities (e.g. car rallies and trail bikes), which cannot be conducted on other ACT land, should continue.
  - The negotiation of strategic public walking routes across selected rural leases, particularly in river corridors, should be explored.
  - Deek’s Forest Park should be relocated towards the foothills of Mount Stromlo as a mixed-use recreational area, readily accessible to the community.
  - A range of recreational enhancements should also be made at the Cotter and Tidbinbilla,
  - The opportunity for increasing water-based recreational opportunities in the Cotter area should be pursued if an enlarged Cotter Dam is constructed in the future.
- ***Stromlo Forest***
  - Provision should be made for an international arboretum in the ACT Forests estate, adjacent to the Tuggeranong Parkway in the Green Hills Forest area.

- Deek's Forest Park should be re-created in the area to the west of Uriarra Road and on the foothills of Mount Stromlo;
- The land that is not required for future urban growth (as identified in the Canberra Spatial Plan) should remain in the public domain within the ACT Forests estate and be redeveloped for landscape and recreation objectives as a forest recreation park.
- ***Kowen Forest***
  - In areas continuing as pine plantation, recreation activities similar to those that occur at present should be enabled.
- ***Uriarra and Pierces Creek Forests***
  - The Mount McDonald area and the area between the Cotter and Pierces Creek Village should be retained in the ACT Forests estate and used to enhance the Cotter precinct development..
  - Improved facilities for high-impact recreation activities, such as spectator viewing and tracks for car rallies/mountain bike events, should be established prior to pine replanting, particularly in areas close to the Cotter precinct.
- ***Tourism***
  - The Cotter precinct should be developed as a recreational and tourism hub consistent with its core ambience and value as a family picnic area.
  - A clear point of difference for Tidbinbilla should be identified and amplified – the education/science interaction has significant potential in this regard.
  - Zones for specific activities (i.e. mountain biking, car rallies etc.) that are being forced out of other areas of Australia should be provided. Zones specifically designated for multiple, compatible land uses and recreation have the potential to become a point of difference for tourism in the ACT.
  - Communication and cooperation between tourism and environmental agencies and groups should be encouraged to enable promotion of existing facilities (e.g. promoting the Australian Alps Walking Track).
  - The development of small-scale farm-based tourism activities to enhance the non-urban experience should be enabled.
  - Further work on the costs, benefits, environmental impact and options for a Brindabella – Mount Franklin drive should be undertaken.
  - The concept of linkage between Canberra's attractions and the non-urban attractions around Tourist Drive 5 should be developed and marketed, including, if feasible, bicycle lanes.

### **3.4.6 Urban Edge Study**

The Urban Edge Review is currently being undertaken to address the way forward for planning policy, design guidelines and management systems for Canberra's urban edges that exist now and are still to be constructed. The urban edge includes all open space lands that abut the residential area that are sufficient in size to be a landscape feature or setting. It includes leased and unleased lands but excludes developed urban parkland.

### **3.4.7 Other Planning**

The Recreation Strategy has considered the outcomes and outputs of a range of other planning documentation and has reviewed rather than duplicate the content and recommendations of these documents. Key current and past work includes—

***ACT Nature Based Tourism Strategy (ACT Government, 2000)***

The Nature-based Tourism Strategy for the ACT sets out the ACT Government's directions and priorities for the future development of nature based tourism in the territory. The strategy has been developed as one component of the ACT Tourism Master Plan.

With regard to the ACT, the ACT Tourism Strategy (2001-2005) notes that:

- Consumers are becoming more interested in self-improvement and lifelong learning. As a consequence there is an increasing desire for participatory, intellectually stimulating and purposeful tourism experiences.
- Increasingly, tourists are also seeking 'authentic' experiences.
- Increased longevity is resulting in older tourists and the tourism industry must pay more attention to their needs.

The ACT Nature Based Tourism Strategy seeks to achieve a series of outcomes as follows:

- Contribute to the conservation of the ACT's natural and heritage assets—via improved understanding appreciation and interpretation of the environment and sound management principles and practices;
- Increase the recognition of the ACT as a unique nature based tourism destination;
- Provide quality nature based tourism products and experiences—via appropriate investment, research and training;
- Foster the development of an effective, efficient and profitable industry through the facilitation of linkages and development of opportunities within and between sectors.<sup>12</sup>

***Nature Based Tourism in the ACT—Appraisal of Prospects for the Industry (Sinclair, Knight, Mertz 2000)***

This study was commissioned by Environment ACT to undertake an appraisal of the potential for nature based tourism in the ACT. The report concluded that there was significant scope for the development of the nature based tourism sector in the ACT. It identified the need for additional nature based product, as well as improvements to existing infrastructure and the linking of a range of natural opportunities.

***Campground Strategy for Parks and Forests in the ACT (Environment ACT, 1998)***

The Campground strategy was prepared in recognition of the need for an integrated approach to the planning for and management of camp grounds to provide a range of camping experiences and opportunities. A Campground Opportunity Spectrum was used to ensure a diverse range of recreational experiences. The study included the administration of a survey of visitor use and attitudes. A level of facilities was proposed for the range of recreational campground settings.

The Campground Strategy made a series of recommendations.

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<sup>12</sup> Environment ACT, 2000, Nature based Tourism Strategy for the ACT – a summary of directions and initiatives

***ACT Trails Strategy (Maher, Brampton for Environment ACT, 2002)***

The ACT government recently completed the first stage of a project that will result in the development of a comprehensive and integrated trail system in the ACT across public land. Stage One of the project had three key outcomes:

- a demand and supply report
- a system for classifying and prioritising trails; and
- a framework for the ACT Heritage and Nature Trails Strategy.<sup>13</sup>

The report contains some demand information as well as an audit of existing trails. Whilst some of this information is useful to the this Recreation Strategy, it is expected that the final Trails Strategy will contain considerable information and recommendations which will assist in providing appropriate trails for walking, cycling, horses etc. that complement those established on other public land in the ACT.

***Adventure Tourism Strategy (Australian Capital Tourism)***

The ACT government developed an Adventure Tourism Strategy to assist in increasing the range of attractions to attract a greater level of tourism to the ACT. The strategy recommended the need for the tourism industry including a broad range of tour operators to work with land managers to develop improved adventure tourism opportunities.

***ACT Forests Recreation Strategy, (ACT Forests, January 2003)***

ACT Forests, in 2002, commissioned a Recreation Strategy for the ACT Forests to provide a strategic approach to the management of recreation. The strategy was completed the week preceding the January fires.

The ACT Forests Recreation Strategy recognised that ACT Forests has a specific role to coordinate the public's use of the forest so that it can occur:

- without placing visitors to the forest at risk,
- without causing any permanent degradation to the forest environment; and
- without unduly affecting commercial operations.

In undertaking this role, the Strategy identified that it would be necessary:

- To provide high quality facilities to complement those provided elsewhere in the region
- To capitalise on the unique opportunities available in the forests
- To contribute to land management and protection of natural and cultural values in the region through providing those recreational opportunities that cannot be provided in national parks and reserves, and can be sustainably managed in the ACT Forests.

The strategy recommended the following as its principal goal:

- 'To encourage increased use of the forests through provision of a range of high quality, cost effective recreational opportunities that complement those available elsewhere in the region.'

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<sup>13</sup> Maher, Brampton, 2002

The strategy proposes the following guiding principles to enable ACT Forests to meet this goal:

- ACT Forests will provide a broad range of recreational opportunities that complement those provided on other land in the region, but will include some opportunities that are unique to the forest land.
- Facilities and services for recreation will be planned in consultation with user groups to ensure that, wherever possible, they meet the needs and expectations of users, minimise risks, and reduce conflict between activities.
- Facilities and services will be planned and managed to be cost effective to the community and the organisation in terms of both construction and ongoing maintenance.
- Recreational opportunities will be managed to provide a range of sustainable visitor experiences and to enable safe and equitable access to forest areas whilst protecting the environment.
- The use of the ACT Forests for recreation will aim to engender an appreciation of the forest industry as well as the natural, cultural, economic and recreational values of the land.
- The strategy identifies a series of opportunities to develop greater variety in the range of recreational settings to enable more diversity in visitor experiences, potential for growth in visitation, and greater appreciation of the values of the forestry areas. These include:
  - Integrated recreational planning.
  - Key tracks/routes for each recreational activity, with the establishment of new tracks.
  - Improved provision for and management of group activities.
  - Encouraging greater overnight use of forestry areas.
  - Focusing management and maintenance resources on key sites.
  - Improving forest recreation information and publicity of events and activities.

The strategy also identifies a series of significant opportunities considered to have the potential to provide a significant improvement in the image of ACT Forests and the branding of the agency as a best practice recreation management organisation. These relate to the following:

- Touring routes.
- Mountain bike opportunities.
- Separation of non motorised activities.
- Development of high use sites.
- Events management.
- Development of additional accommodation opportunities.
- Camping partnership.
- Enhanced access to Kowen Forest .
- Consideration of unregistered motor cycles.

- Neighbourhood forests.

The strategy defines eight recreation zones and recommends management objectives and a range of improvements for each of the recreation zones.

It proposes facility level standards appropriate to ACT Forests that provide a basis for consistent facility standards and for providing information to the community to enable accurate perceptions to meet visitor expectations of facilities and services.

***Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve Investigation of Nature Based Tourism Options  
(Janet Mackay & Associates, 2001)***

Environment ACT, in 2001, commissioned a study to identify the next nature-based tourist attraction to be built in Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve so the Reserve could continue to maintain its position as the region's premier nature based tourism attraction.

The report, after considerable stakeholder consultation and research, recommended that Environment ACT undertake a suite of improvements to facilities and services at Tidbinbilla rather than proceed to develop a new nature based tourism attraction. The recommendation was based on the premise that the Repositioning Suite of infrastructure, program and promotion would be the most cost-effective option with the highest potential to meet the range of needs of TNR. It was shown that the suite could attract a broad market as well as repeat visitation, provide opportunities for promotion and education about natural and cultural heritage values and address some of the management issues associated with existing infrastructure.

The recommendation for the Repositioning Suite included the following key elements:

- Develop cultural heritage centre adjacent to Education Centre as base for indigenous day and evening programs for schools, groups and other visitors.
- Develop additional high profile wildlife based display centred at Visitor Centre. Options include:
  - hands on and/or 'behind the scenes' wildlife area;
  - threatened species breed and release program area;
  - reptile display; and/or
  - interactive threatened species based displays.
- Develop amphitheatre as centre for interactive animal and cultural heritage programs.
- Plan and provide for camping within the reserve and/or at Birrigai and/or ACT Forests lands adjacent to the reserve.
- Upgrade the café to provide a high standard evening eating capacity and unique dining linked to group bookings and pre-booked programs and ensure commercial sustainability.
- Develop an evening program including dusk walk, potential evening cultural program (Dreamtime stories or dancing) with possible options within it.
- Investigate simple and environmentally friendly transport system
- Market evening experience to Canberra population, international market, bus groups and conference market.
- Market educational and evening programs with camping opportunities for schools.

***Cotter Precinct Design Concept Plan (Janet Mackay & Associates and DSB Landscape Architects, 2002)***

The Cotter Recreation Area has been a significant recreation and tourism destination since the early days of Canberra. Over time the natural and cultural elements of the area have come under pressure for use and the facilities have become outdated and in need of upgrading to meet current standard and community expectations. IN 2002 Environment ACT commissioned the Cotter Precinct Design Concept Plan to provide the framework for the future planning and upgrade of recreation area facilities.

The report identified that the Cotter serves an important role in the range of recreational opportunities available to the ACT. The Cotter provides formal recreational activities within a 'natural' setting in close proximity to the city of Canberra, offering a relatively unique bush experience to visitors.

The landscape character of the study area should maintain its 'natural' quality, reflecting the aesthetic style of the region in forms, materials, colours and scale, while acknowledging the ecological integrity of the area.

The Cotter currently provides a limited range of recreational experiences and settings. Opportunities exist to develop greater variety in the range of recreational settings that will enable more diversity in visitor experiences. This range could be enhanced by:

- the management of one or more of the recreational nodes as more natural settings (Casuarina Sands or Cotter Avenue behind the hotel);
- investigation and potentially development of a greater range of walking tracks including linked and looped tracks between recreational nodes;
- the investigation and development of an additional area for camping to provide the potential for a less crowded experience, as well as a base for investigating commercial management of the campground,
- increased opportunities for access and activities for people with disabilities;
- enhancement of the use of the Hotel site to provide functions which attract and interest a broader range of the community and enable activities and areas integrating the service provided with the natural environment;
- the availability of information which enables people to be aware of the range of activities and opportunities available to them in the area; and
- investigation of a broader range of accommodation options which do not compromise the natural and recreational values of the area.
- Specific issues that need to be addressed to improve the visitor experience include the following:
  - Facility standards—improvements and refurbishment to meet contemporary standards.
  - Design standards—A coordinated approach to the styles and types of site furniture to reinforce the character and integrity of the Cotter.
  - Signage, and information—developing an image for the Cotter area and a sense of place for the visitor, as well as making information available to visitors in a range of ways.
  - Interpretation—of natural and cultural values to the extent that demand indicated visitors will value it.

- Access and circulation—improvements to enhance visitor safety and access between recreational nodes.
- Commercial opportunities—to meet visitor needs, enhance recreational opportunities, and assist in revenue contribution to management
- Reuse of the Hotel—to better service the visitors and enhance rather than detract from the Cotter environment
- Vegetation management—to ensure efficient management of existing and future vegetation to ensure the setting people seek is maintained



## 4. Recreation Experiences and Opportunities in ACT's Natural Areas

### 4.1 Facilities and Services

A wide range of facilities and services exist across the ACT's natural areas. Whilst many are suited to visitor needs, others would benefit from improvements for safety, amenity or visitor comfort.

Appendix 4 provides an inventory of facilities provided in the natural areas of the ACT. This also identifies the impact of fires on facilities.

**Table 4.1 Facilities Provided Across the ACT's Natural Areas**

Reserve	Access	Key Visitor Nodes	Facilities and Services	Fire Impacts
Namadgi National Park	Public access by sealed and unsealed roads. Major roads: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Orroral</li> <li>Honeysuckle</li> <li>Nass/Boboyan</li> <li>Corin</li> </ul> Minor roads: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Honeysuckle</li> <li>Old Boboyan</li> <li>Mt Franklin</li> <li>Bendora</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Orroral Valley campground</li> <li>Honeysuckle Creek</li> <li>Mt Clear</li> <li>Orroral Tracking Station</li> <li>Yankee Hat</li> <li>Namadgi Visitor Centre</li> <li>Australian Alps walking track</li> <li>Bicentennial National Trail</li> <li>Bulls Head</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visitor Centre</li> <li>Information</li> <li>Picnic area</li> <li>Fireplace</li> <li>Campground</li> <li>Toilets</li> <li>Bushwalking registers</li> <li>Horse trails and yards</li> <li>Walking tracks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some access routes closed due to risk issues.</li> <li>Most public facilities re-instated.</li> <li>Potential for some management trails to have different management status post bushfire inquiries.</li> </ul>
Murrumbidgee River Corridor	Public access by sealed and unsealed roads. Major access roads: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cotter</li> <li>Uriarra</li> <li>Point Hut</li> <li>Tharwa</li> <li>Naas</li> <li>Paddy river</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Point Hut crossing</li> <li>Pine island</li> <li>Kambah pool</li> <li>Angle crossing</li> <li>Cotter precinct</li> <li>Uriarra</li> <li>Nature Reserves:</li> <li>Gigerline</li> <li>Bullen range</li> <li>Stony creek</li> <li>Woodstock</li> <li>Swamp creek</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Picnic areas</li> <li>Campground</li> <li>Toilets</li> <li>Riverside access</li> <li>Horse riding</li> <li>Carparks</li> <li>Playgrounds</li> <li>Kiosk and hotel</li> <li>Swimming holes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recreational values affected by fire effects.</li> <li>landscapes changed due to removal of tree hazard.</li> <li>Some facilities damaged and yet to be replaced/refurbished.</li> <li>Hotel and kiosk completely destroyed.</li> </ul>
Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve	Public access by sealed and unsealed roads. Major roads are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paddys river</li> <li>Tidbinbilla</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information centre</li> <li>Education Centre</li> <li>Day use areas</li> <li>Wildlife viewing areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information</li> <li>Picnic areas</li> <li>Visitor center</li> <li>cafe</li> <li>Wildlife viewing areas</li> <li>Wetland board walk</li> <li>Toilets</li> <li>Outdoor theatre</li> <li>Education Centre</li> <li>Information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some access closed due to public risk.</li> <li>Wildlife populations severely impacted.</li> <li>Wildlife viewing areas impacted.</li> <li>Day use areas reinstated.</li> <li>Most infrastructure (except Visitor Centre) destroyed.</li> </ul>

Reserve	Access	Key Visitor Nodes	Facilities and Services	Fire Impacts
Stromlo Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public access to forest via Cotter Road and Uriarra Road</li> <li>Other vehicular access by key</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deek's Forests Park</li> <li>Blue Gums</li> <li>Cotter Road gate (start of forest)</li> <li>Dairy Farmers Lookout</li> <li>Narrabundah Hill</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walking tracks</li> <li>Cycle paths</li> <li>Picnic/day use facilities</li> <li>Car parks</li> <li>Horse trails</li> <li>Camping areas</li> <li>Toilets</li> <li>Cycle course</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilities and environment destrpyed by fire.</li> <li>Some infrastructure remains at Deek's Forest Park.</li> </ul>
Kowen Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public access via Sutton Road</li> <li>Other vehicular access by key</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Molonglo Gorge</li> <li>Molonglo-Blue Tiles</li> <li>Old Kowen homestead</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walking tracks</li> <li>Horse trails</li> <li>Day use areas</li> <li>Camping area</li> <li>Toilets</li> <li>Event areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unaffected by fire except for increased activity displaced and redirected to Kowen from burnt areas</li> </ul>
Pierces Creek forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public access via Cotter Road</li> <li>Range of vehicular tracks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Murrays Corner</li> <li>Cotter precinct</li> <li>Cotter Caves</li> <li>Concrete Crossing</li> <li>Willow Flat</li> <li>Laurel Camp</li> <li>Tidbinbilla Hut</li> <li>Woods Point</li> <li>Gibraltar Falls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vehicular access tracks</li> <li>Camp sites</li> <li>Day use areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilities and environmental setting destroyed by fire;</li> <li>Access restricted as at August 2003 due to safety issues</li> </ul>
Uriarra Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public access via Cotter Road</li> <li>Range of vehicular tracks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blundells Flat</li> <li>Blue Range</li> <li>Sherwood</li> <li>Condor Hut</li> <li>Padovans Crossing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vehicular access tracks</li> <li>Camp sites</li> <li>Day use areas</li> <li>Walking tracks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilities and environmental setting destroyed by fire;</li> <li>Access restricted as at August 2003 due to safety issues</li> </ul>
Other forests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access via public roads; Other vehicular access by key</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gungahlin Eucalypt Plantation; Lyneham Ridge, Tuggeranong Pines; Eucalypt Trial;</li> <li>Narabundah Hill Pines; Isaacs Pines; Majura Pines; Fairbairn Pines;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vehicular access tracks</li> <li>Walking tracks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seriously impacted</li> </ul>
Canberra Nature Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to perimeter via public roads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Black Mountain</li> <li>Bruce and O'Connor Ridges</li> <li>Coolerman Ridge</li> <li>Farrer Ridge</li> <li>Gossan Hill</li> <li>Gungahlin Hill</li> <li>Isaacs Ridge</li> <li>Mt Ainslie</li> <li>Mt Majura</li> <li>Mt Painter</li> <li>Mt Pleasant</li> <li>Mt Taylor</li> <li>Mulligans Flat</li> <li>Oakey Hill</li> <li>Red Hill</li> <li>Mt Rob Roy</li> <li>The Pinnacle</li> <li>Tuggeranong Hill</li> <li>Urambi Hills</li> <li>Wanniassa Hills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walking tracks</li> <li>Cycle tracks</li> <li>Horse riding</li> <li>Day use areas</li> <li>Cycle course</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No impact</li> </ul>

## 4.2 Recreational Use Patterns

Table 4.2 shows where the range of recreational activities occur across the ACT's natural areas. The shaded boxes reflect those areas where recreation provision has been affected by the impacts of bushfires.

**Table 4.2 Activities occurring in ACT natural areas**

Activity	NNP	TNR	MRC	PF	CNP	Rural	Spec. Sites	Comments
Pleasure driving/sightseeing	++	+	+	+		++		Tourist Route 5
Picnicking	++	++	++	+	+			Also urban parks (++)
Swimming/water recreation			++					Also urban parks (++)
Walking – short			+	++(s)	++			Also urban parks (++) (s) Stromlo Forest
Walking – day walks	++	++	++	++	++	+		
Walking – overnight	+++							
Jogging, running etc.			+	++	++			Also urban parks and streets (++)
- bushrunning	++							
Exercising dogs – on lead	-		++(a)	++	++			(a) Specified sites only, also urban parks and streets
- off lead	-		++(a)	++	=/-			(a) Specified sites only, also urban parks
Cross-country running				++	++			Also urban parks (++)
Mountain running	++	+		++	++			
Orienteering	++		+	++	++	+		Also urban parks (+)
Rogaining	++		+	++	+	+		
Equestrian – horse holding				+		++		
- competition areas						++	++	
- trails	+(b)		+(b)	++	++(b)	++		(b) Specified routes only
Endurance riding				++			++(h)	(h) Brookvale (NSW)
Mountainbike riding	++©	+	+	++	++©			© restrictions apply
Mountainbike racing				+++				
Mountainbike orienteering				+++				
Road cycling	++	+	+	+		++		Also urban roads (++)
Motorbike touring	+	+	++(d)			++		(d) Cotter Reserve Hotel
Trailbike riding	-	-	-	+++	-			
Motorbike sport – forests				+++				
Car rallying				+++				
Motor sports facilities						+++	++(e)	(e) Fairfair Park
Four-wheel drive touring	+			++				Mainly outside ACT
Bush camping	++			++				
Formal campgrounds			++					Mainly in urban area
Low cost accommodation			++			++	++	
Nature study	++	++	++	+	++	+		
Birdwatching	++	++	++	++	++	++		
Fishing	++		++	+		+		Also urban lakes (++)
Blackberruying			+	++				
Fungas collecting	-			++	-	++		
Firewood collection	-			+++	-	+(f)		(f) Lessees only for private use
Dogsled racing				++(s)				(s) Stromlo Forest
Gundog trials				++				Bluetts Pines
Field archery				+++			++	
Paintball				+++			++	
Canoeing			++					Also Molonglo Reach/lakes
Rafting			+					
Cross –country skiing	+							Mainly in Kosciusko NP
Alpine Skiing							+	Corin Forest, very limited. Mainly in Kosciusko NP
Snowplay activities	+							
Rockclimbing & Abseiling	++	+	+	+		+		
Powerboating/water skiing							+	Molonglo Reach, Limited, many at Lake Burrinjuck

Activity	NNP	TNR	MRC	PF	CNP	Rural	Spec. Sites	Comments
Hunting	-	-	-	-	-	-		No permitted in ACT
Gun Sports				+(g)	+(g)	+(g)	++	(g) Specific sites only
Photography/painting	++	++	++	++	++	++		
Relaxing	+	+	++	++	++	+		

Limited information is available on visitation to the ACT's natural areas. Visitor numbers are summarised in Table 4.3 below.

**Table 4.3: Visitation to Natural Areas 2000–2002**

Location	2000–01	2001–02
Namadgi National Park	152,121	154,452
Murrumbidgee River Corridor	968,441	900,000 (est)
Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve	164,633	175,760
ACT Forests	Records lost in fires	Records lost in fires

The following information summarises booked activity within the forests for 2001–2002. This does not reflect individual recreational use, or other organised activity that is not communicated to ACT Forests:

- Total events for which permits/licenses sought in 2001-02: 661
- Total visitor days for which permits/ licenses sought in 2001–02: 34,237
- Total visitor days for booked camping: 6,807<sup>14</sup>

## 4.3 Recreation Management Issues

### 4.3.1 Issues Identified by Staff

Issues identified by staff are presented in Table 4.4 below.

**Table 4.4: Issues Identified by Staff**

Namadgi National Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pests including rabbits, foxes, cats, pigs.</li> <li>• The tipping of rubbish including wrecked and stolen cars and building materials.</li> <li>• Vandalism of facilities and installations.</li> <li>• Illegal access to areas which are gated for protection of economic, natural, cultural values or for reasons of public safety.</li> <li>• Erosion from concentrated recreational activities.</li> <li>• Fire.</li> <li>• Conflict between some recreational activities.</li> </ul>
Murrumbidgee River Corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Illegal track development.</li> <li>• Safety issues associated with river access.</li> <li>• Development of tracks from high use levels along the river.</li> <li>• Pests including rabbits, foxes, cats, pigs.</li> <li>• The tipping of rubbish including wrecked and stolen cars and building materials.</li> <li>• Vandalism of facilities and installations.</li> <li>• Illegal access to areas which are gated for protection of economic, natural, cultural values or for reasons of public safety.</li> <li>• Erosion from concentrated recreational activities.</li> <li>• Fire.</li> </ul>
Tidbinbilla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inappropriate actions around wildlife.</li> </ul>

<sup>14</sup> ACT Forests Recreation Strategy, Janet Mackay & Associates, 2003

ACT Forests <sup>1815</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflict between users.</li> <li>• Development of unauthorised mountain bike tracks.</li> <li>• Inappropriate trail bike use such as unregistered bikes and bikes being used in a dangerous manner or in conflict with other users or disturbing areas.</li> <li>• Unauthorised BMX tracks.</li> <li>• Conflicts between sled dog races/training and people walking/running.</li> <li>• Conflicts between visitors and dogs in some areas, particularly associated with river use.</li> <li>• High levels of night time activity in closed forest areas.</li> <li>• The impact of the mountain bike racing course at Blue Range on the camping experience.</li> <li>• Costs of maintenance of facilities.</li> <li>• Issues associated with car rallies and trail bike events including the impacts of closure of forests, and the noise levels associated with the activities.</li> <li>• Public safety associated with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ landscape and tree management;</li> <li>○ water activities; and</li> <li>○ night-time security in forests, anti social behaviour.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Weeds within forest areas, on roadsides and recreation sites.</li> <li>• Pests including rabbits, foxes, cats, pigs.</li> <li>• The tipping of rubbish including wrecked and stolen cars and building materials.</li> <li>• Vandalism of facilities and installations.</li> <li>• Illegal access to areas which are gated for protection of economic, natural, cultural values or for reasons of public safety.</li> <li>• Erosion from concentrated recreational activities.</li> <li>• Fire.</li> </ul>
Canberra Nature Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflict between activities.</li> <li>• Inappropriate use of lands by neighbours (encroaching).</li> <li>• Illegal track development.</li> <li>• Erosion caused by bikes.</li> <li>• The tipping of rubbish including wrecked and stolen cars and building materials.</li> <li>• Vandalism of facilities and installations.</li> <li>• Illegal access to areas which are gated for protection of economic, natural, cultural values or for reasons of public safety.</li> </ul>

### 4.3.2 Issues Identified by Stakeholders

Issues identified by stakeholders in relation to recreation management are outlined in Table 4.5 below.

**Table 4.5: Issues Identified by Stakeholders**

Recreation activity	Issues	Recommendations made by stakeholders to address the issues
Trail biking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some illegal unregistered use.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities in Forest to avoid switching to parks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved policing.</li> <li>• Signage.</li> </ul>
Mountain Biking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater demand than supply in ACT.</li> <li>• Growing interstate visitation.</li> <li>• No access to Bimberi Wilderness area.</li> <li>• 79% of tracks lost in the recent fires.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop stacked loop track system - tracks could be multiple use.</li> <li>• Development of areas for major mountain bike events.</li> <li>• Dedicated MB areas Eg. Madjura.</li> <li>• Prefer natural areas rather than pines due to interference with forestry operations.</li> <li>• Education strategy for environmentally responsible MB use.</li> <li>• Increased access within CNP.</li> <li>• Provide tracks in a variety of bushland settings.</li> <li>• Permanent facilities close to urban areas.</li> <li>• Development of Cotter.</li> <li>• International standard trail system.</li> </ul>
Horse riding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Horse riding does not conflict with other recreation activities as generally perceived.</li> <li>• Lack of overnight horse camping opportunities.</li> <li>• Lack of Float Parking areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased horse riding in Canberra Nature Parks.</li> <li>• Horse camps at Cotter, Point Hut Crossing.</li> <li>• Better links with the Bicentennial National Horse Trail—especially from Stromlo.</li> </ul>

<sup>18</sup> many of these issues relate to pre-fire recreation, but still need to be accounted for in recreation planning

Bushwalking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Impacts of other users.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued non-motorised access Monitoring of the impacts of bushwalking.</li> </ul>
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**Table 4.5—continued**

Recreation activity	Issues	Recommendations made by stakeholders to address the issues
Walking/running	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi use tracks in Stromlo being used by walkers, joggers, cyclists, dog walkers, horse riders with limited management resulting in some conflict between users.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop walking hubs at Stromlo, Cotter, and Tidbinbilla.</li> <li>Better links with other recreation areas and activities.</li> <li>Maintain a variety of tracks.</li> <li>Improve emergency access.</li> <li>Retain Stromlo Forest for Urban active recreation.</li> <li>Develop formal running routes through Namadgi.</li> <li>Develop Cotter as an area for running.</li> <li>Night lit running at Stromlo.</li> </ul>
Adventure Sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fires have removed all the trees essential for paintball and other forest sports.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep open spaces.</li> </ul>
Orienteering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require diversity of opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More car parking spaces.</li> <li>Possibly more toilets at major orienteering locations.</li> <li>Maintain open spaces and no development.</li> </ul>
Rock climbing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Areas closed by Environment ACT.</li> <li>Limited access.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain access to key areas: Booromba rocks, Red Rocks Gorge, Kambah rocks, and Orroral ridge.</li> <li>Engage climbing community in management of activity.</li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Various.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New environmental education centre located within the natural environment.</li> <li>Development of Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve as a place for environmental education particularly for schools.</li> <li>Need for Scouting site/stage post in the Brindabella's.</li> </ul>

## Concluding Comments for Input to the Recreation Strategy

Prior to the January 2003 fires, the natural areas of the ACT provided a broad range of recreational opportunities consistent with the management of different lands. A range of management issues were recognised for many of the areas, and there were shortfalls in the facilities provided or the experiences for some user groups. Conflicts existed between some activities.

The fires have resulted in a reduction in the range of settings, in the amenity of the settings, and in the facilities provided for many recreation activities.

In planning for the natural areas, the issues existing before fires need to be considered in determining future recreational needs to ensure optimal visitor experiences consistent with the range of values for each of the areas.

Working with user groups is a critical step in ensuring appropriate facilities and services and minimal conflict.

## 5. Demand Analysis

### 5.1 ACT Population Characteristics<sup>19</sup>

The estimated resident population of the Australian Capital Territory at December 2000 was 312,500 persons with a population growth rate of 0.8%. Over the last decade the population has increased by 10%, from 285,000 persons in 1990(ABS).

The following key attributes are likely to impact on recreational use patterns in coming years:

- The ageing of Canberra's population is occurring and gathering pace. It is a phenomenon that will not reverse. The median age of the Canberra population is forecast to rise from 33.1 years in 2001, to 40.4 years in 2016.
- Ageing of the population in Canberra will be evident in the greater proportions of persons aged in the 50 to 60 years age group, and less in the younger age groups.
- The number of people with disabilities is forecast to increase by 7,500 persons by 2016, from 53,000 in 2000 to 60,500 in 2016. This is an annual increase of 1.0%.
- Canberra will continue to have a younger age profile than the national average (despite a steadily ageing population). The population will continue to grow - largely based on natural increase. However, there will still be high flows of people coming to, and leaving Canberra, for educational opportunities, work and opportunities in the private and public sectors, and for family reasons.
- It indicates that the main implication of ageing of the population in Canberra will be evident in the greater numbers and proportions of persons aged in the 50 to 60 years, and less in the younger age groups. The forecasts show that the proportion of Canberra people aged less than 15 years will fall from 20.6% in 2000 to 16.5% in 2016.
- The number of families is projected to increase from 83,000 in 1996 to 104,100 in 2021 (an increase of 25.4%). This growth in the number of families is slightly slower than the national level.

The scale and demographics of anticipated growth in the Canberra population means that there is a need for a broad range of recreation opportunities from the more remote settings with opportunities for adventure activities, through to developed sites with opportunities for more passive recreation and facilities for disabled people. Planning needs to ensure that this range is provided in the most appropriate areas both in terms of protection of reserve values, and geographic development of Canberra.

In addition to the lands within the ACT, the adjoining reserves and national parks in New South Wales, in particular Brindabella National Park, complement the range of recreational opportunities in the ACT and are well used by the Canberra community.

### 5.2 Participation in Recreational Activities by ACT Residents

Sport and Recreation ACT recently compiled information on participation by the ACT population in sport and recreation activities.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Source: Demographics ACT, ACT Government (April 2001) ACT Population Forecasts 2001 to 2016

<sup>20</sup> Sport and Recreation ACT, December 2002 Participation in Exercise, Recreation and Sport 2001

Some key relevant findings are summarised below:

- ACT sport and recreation participation rates were significantly higher than those nationally.
- The activity with the highest participation rate in the ACT was walking (31.4% of population).
- 9.9% of the population undertook bushwalking (compared with 5.5% nationally). 0.9% participated in organised bushwalking with 9.4% doing it in non-organised groups.
- 14.8% participated in cycling. 1.1% participate in organised cycling and 14.1% non organised.

## 5.3 Demand for Individual Recreational Activities

### Walking

Walking is a regular recreational activity for 73% of the ACT population<sup>21</sup>, considerably higher than the national average. Maher Brampton drew the following conclusions in relation to the characteristics of demand for walking in the ACT:

- Largest number participating already.
- Lowest entry costs and fewer barriers to participation.
- Strong and increasing preference for more natural settings.
- Will continue to be the largest user group<sup>(22)</sup>.

The Victorian Trails Strategy<sup>(23)</sup> indicated preferences for walk lengths for visitors to National Parks as follows:

- Short walk up to one hour: 52%
- Medium walk 1-4 hours: 26%
- Long walk greater than 4 hours: 11%

This study also compared participation in activities on Metropolitan Park trails, which are somewhat similar to Canberra Nature Park and CUPPS, and may also be compared to those forest areas close to residential neighbourhoods as:

- Walking: 82%
- Walking the dog: 7%
- Cycling: 8%
- Jogging: 2%
- in line skating: 1%

In the ACT, facilities provided range from the extensive track network provided by CUPPS around the lakes and in residential areas, through to bushwalking on marked routes in remote areas of Namadgi National Park.

Walking tracks are provided in Canberra's Urban Places, in lands managed by ACT Forests and by Environment ACT. The facilities range from concrete paths shared with cyclists to simple tracks with drainage works only, and in remoter areas, foot pads requiring self

<sup>21</sup> Maher, Brampton Associates p. 18

<sup>22</sup> Maher, Brampton Associates p. 20



23 *Parks Victoria, 2001, p. 13*

sufficiency and navigational ability. In many areas, tracks have evolved through use patterns rather than good planning, and many tracks have experienced limited management or maintenance such as drainage.

To accommodate the broad walking needs of the community, there is a need to provide a range of track distances and standards.

In the development of the ACT Trails Strategy, organised groups indicated the following as the areas most used for walking (in order of priority):

- Namadgi/Brindabellas
- Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve
- MRC
- Canberra Nature Park
- Mt Taylor
- Mt Ainslie
- Mt Majura
- Stromlo Forest<sup>2416</sup>

## **Mountain Bike Riding**

Cycling is a significant activity for the Canberra population. Maher and Brampton (2002) cite the results of the Canberra Bicycle Plan 2000 that found 40% of Canberra households cycle at least once each fortnight and that 75% cycle for recreation.

Given this recreation strategy is focused on non urban areas, it can be recognised that the more developed end of the cycling spectrum is well catered for 'with the most remarkable network of cycle paths which link various suburbs and areas in an extensive network which would be the envy of many other cities...some of which pass through or skirt elements of the Canberra Nature Park ...'<sup>17</sup>. This strategy in its focus on natural areas primarily deals with mountain bike riding.

Mountain bike riding includes touring on formed trails, single track riding off trails, downhill riding and mountain bike downhill events. Maher and Brampton identified two distinct sub group of cyclists—the younger, fitter bikers with a liking for challenge, and those off-road cyclists who seek less demanding and more developed trail experiences.

Maher and Brampton drew the following conclusions about mountain bike trails in the ACT:

- Class 2 trails in semi natural areas are desired by both sub sets of this user group.
- Off road (recreational) cyclists identify a strong desire for class 1 trails in semi natural (and to a lesser extent natural) settings.
- More experienced and challenge oriented mountains bikers have identified a desire for class 2 and 3 trails in natural settings. This demand is especially strong for 'single tracks' trails. Few appear to exist at present.
- There is a high latent demand for passive off-road cycling opportunities (off road cycle trails).

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<sup>16</sup> Maher, Brampton Associates p.15

<sup>17</sup> Maher Brampton Associates, p. 9

- Community consultation in the development of the Trails Strategy framework indicated demand for additional mountain bike opportunities including:
- Riverside trails in Murrumbidgee River Corridor:
- Trails within and linking Canberra Nature Parks.
- Longer routes and loops in Namadgi National Park.
- Trails within urban/neighbourhood forests.

This study also indicated:

- There is a strong demand for access to local trails close to home, and for those to be linked to trails in non-urban settings.
- Where travel is required to access a trail, those trails that involve less travel time are preferred.<sup>18</sup>

## Organised Cycling Activities

The Australian Sports Commission estimated that in 2001 14.8% of the ACT population participated in cycling<sup>19</sup>. It was also stated as the third most popular recreational activity by participation after swimming and walking in a survey of recreation preferences of Lanyon Valley residents in 1999<sup>20</sup>. A wide range of cycling experiences exist in the ACT from commuting using the extensive network of urban cycle tracks to remote mountain biking in Namadgi National Park or competing in one of the many mountain bike events held in the ACT Forests.

ACT Forests have been a popular venue for many organised cycling activities because of their large network of management tracks and mountain bike tracks.

Social rides through the forests (Majura Pines and Stromlo) have been run by Pedal Power ACT year round every couple of months attracting about 10 people per ride.

ACT Veterans Cycling Club has run road races starting from Deek's Forest to Uriarra Homestead 4 to 5 times per year that can attract over 100 participants per event. The ACT Veterans used Deek's Forest because it provided adequate parking and toilet facilities.

The largest organised bike event held in the ACT forests has been the annual mountain bike race run by Canberra Off Road Cyclists which has attracted up to 1200 participants plus spectators (up to an estimated 4000 in total). This group has also run mountain bike races bi-monthly in Stromlo, Blue Range, Majura, Kowen and Ingledene in addition to being part of a national mountain bike race series. These events attract about 100 and 200 participants respectively plus spectators.

ACT Veterans Cycling Club need good quality road surfaces as they tend to use road bikes, while the Canberra Off road Cyclists need a variety of terrain and a network of management trails and single tracks. For major events the proximity to Canberra afforded by Stromlo Forest and the facilities of Deek's Forest have been invaluable.

## Equestrian Activities

Horse riding for sport and recreation is a popular activity in Canberra. The number of people who went horse riding in the ACT at least once during 1999-2000 is estimated by the Australian Bureau of Statistics to be 4200. (Hogg, D. 2002)

<sup>18</sup> Maher, Brampton Associates, p. 16

<sup>19</sup> Australian Sports Commission: 'Participation in Exercise, Recreation and Sport 2001', Australian Sports Commission.

<sup>20</sup> Jeavons Recreation and Tourism Planner: 'Lanyon Valley Community Needs and feasibility Study' 1999 for the ACT Bureau of Sport and Recreation.

Opportunities for horse riding in the ACT are provided in a range of settings and lands including open space and Government Paddocks adjacent to urban areas and further afield in ACT Forests, Murrumbidgee River Corridor, Namadgi National Park and other lands managed by Environment ACT.

Horses are generally kept in commercial horse keeping facilities or in one of the many government horse paddocks across the ACT where informal groups have evolved and now provide basic training facilities.

Riding in the ACT can be broadly divided into competitive and recreational riding. Competitive activities are organised predominantly through the clubs and broadly comprise equestrian events held in formal settings (dressage, showjumping, horse trials and eventing) and the distance events such as endurance rides that have traditionally been held in the ACT Forests. Much of the recreational riding occurs through riding schools, pony clubs and independently using the extensive trail network provided in the ACT.

The Equestrian Park a public recreation area adjacent to Stromlo Forest and managed by the ACT Equestrian Association under a licence from the ACT Government, has been a major venue for show jumping and eventing. It was also used as a base for endurance events held in the adjacent forests. The precinct includes the Canberra Lakes Pony Club, which has its own lease within the site, and a campsite for the Bicentennial National Trail.

Monaro Horse Trekkers and Capital Territory Division and Endurance Riders Association of Australia are the main organisers of structured events in the non-urban recreational lands in the ACT. The Monaro Horse Trekkers conducted, pre January 2003 fires, 25 to 30 km rides once each 2 to 3 weeks. Their needs were fairly straight forward- suitable parking; a route which is pleasant, scenic and easily passable; water points and 5-6 hours riding time. This group frequently used Kowen, Stromlo and Kowen Forests.

The Capital Territory Division and Endurance Riders Association of Australia regularly conducted 2 major national endurance events each year- usually in Blewits, Stromlo and Green Hills, attracting between 100 to 200 participants to each event. This group has indicated a need for permanent course marking, camping within the forest- eg at Deek's catering for 150- 200 cars, trucks and floats, 300- 400 people, toilets, showers, BBQs and power. Linkages to adjacent paddocks were also seen as important for storage of horses leading up to events.

## **Four Wheel Driving**

Four wheel drivers are often attracted to an area by not only its track network but also the scenery, views and vegetation. A four-wheel drive vehicle is seen by many as the means of reaching a desirable natural or cultural feature.

The network of tracks and trails in the ACT Forests and surrounding areas have provided an excellent resource for 4WD drivers. The Uriarra and Pierces Creek forest areas, the adjoining north western section of Namadgi National Park and parts of Brindabella National Park have traditionally been used for independent four wheel driving as these areas offer a fairly extensive opportunity for the activity.

## **Organised Vehicular Events**

The ACT Forests have traditionally been a popular venue for motor sports (car and motor bike) events in the ACT with the Brindabella Motor Sports Club, the Light Car Club of Canberra and the Australian Capital Tourism Rally of Canberra being the main user groups. The largest of the events, the Australian Capital Tourism Rally of Canberra held annually, attracted up to 60 participating cars and up to 4567 people in total. Smaller car rallies attracting up to 40 vehicles and 300 participants (as spectators and drivers) have been held outside these times throughout the year. In 2001/02 five such events were held in addition to rally training and 4wd driver training activities.

Three organised motor cycle trials and trail rides attracting between 45 and 150 persons were booked into the ACT Forests in 2001/02.

The forests have also been used for lower key motor sports activities such as club 4WD tours and training and 4WD driver training by CIT Department of Engineering and Resources. The CIT activities are held approximately 5 to 6 times per term and involve 12 to 15 students. They require no facilities and have a preference for venues at which very few if any other people will be encountered. Kowen Forest has been the site most used by CIT.

Requirements of organised motor sports events are fairly simple- exclusive access, perimeter fencing and parking, power, signage, toilets and shelter at staging sites for major events.

The principal management issues include:

- Closure of forest for event duration.
- Risk management- participants and spectators.
- Damage to track infrastructure.
- User fee policy to cover all maintenance matters arising from event.
- Given the high impact of these activities on other recreational uses, locating organised motor sports activities away from other recreational nodes is important.

## **Dog Sledding**

Dog sledding is an activity consisting of mainly training activity with one major event held each year. The Canberra Sled Dog Classic attracting up to 120 people and held in Deek's Forest. Club dog sled training was a weekly event attracting up to 40 participants held each Saturday and Sunday at Stromlo (Blue Gum) and Uriarra Forests. Dog sledding is generally run from March to October each year.

Needs of dog sledding are fairly simple- an area with few other people and preferably no other dogs off leash. Good quality graded tracks is essential for their activity.

The January 2003 fires have had a major effect in the supply of suitable venues for their activity- particularly as the Canberra Sled Dog Classic was held in Deeks Forest Park because it was considered to be the only area with a network of tracks of a standard suitable for a major dog sledding event. This event has now been relocated to Kowen Forest with its base situated at the Old Kowen Homestead recreation site.

## **Field Archery**

The Capital Field Archers have had the use of Block 33 in Pierces Creek for field archery

activity. They conduct training activities fortnightly for ½ day and once per year the Australian Field Archery titles are held at the site. The Australian titles attract about 60-80 participants while the fortnightly club activities attract about 8 participants. Two archery clubs had their base in Kowen before moving to Block 33 about 6 years ago.

The group needs no facilities and Block 33 has been an appropriate site due to its relative isolation and terrain. Archery events have also been held in Kowen Forest at Majura and Mountain paddock.

## **Organised Running and Walking Activities**

The ACT Forests have been popular venues for organised running and walking activities. User groups have included:

- ACT Veteran Athletics, who have conducted monthly handicap events mainly in Deek's Forest, Stromlo and West Duffy. They have been relatively self-sufficient. They have been of the opinion that the provision of parking, toilets, BBQ, tables and seats at venues they have used were adequate. Their venues have been severely affected by the January 2003 fires. Their activities are conducted year round with between 100 and 200 participating. They seek pleasant natural settings for their activity.
- ACT Cross country whose cross country activities are held in winter usually in Deek's Forest, Narrabundah Hill, Molonglo Gorge and Mt Ginini. Their venues have been severely affected by the January 2003 fires. Their activities, which have been run for about 17 years, attract between 100 and 200 participants. They had indicated a general satisfaction with facilities where provided although improved toilets at Molonglo gorge were suggested as they do not cope well with large numbers.
- Tuesday Running Group have conducted their activity weekly in ACT Forests, particularly Deek's, Stromlo and Duffy Forests for the past 10 years. Their venues have been severely affected by the January 2003 fires. The group activity attracts about 40 participants. In response to the ACT Forests Recreation Strategy consultation they indicated the level of facilities and running opportunities provided at Stromlo to be quite adequate for their needs.
- ACT Walking for Pleasure who have run their weekly activities mainly in Deek's and Sherwood Forests and Blue Range for the past 13 years. Twenty to 30 people regularly participate.
- Womens Jogalong.

While some opportunities for the above groups may have been provided by Canberra's Urban Places, it is the venues provided by ACT Forests and Environment ACT that have offered opportunities at the natural end of the experience spectrum.

## **Orienteering**

Orienteering ACT has a membership of approximately 500 people. The organisation has used the non-urban open space areas of ACT for many of its activities including:

- ACT and National Championships.
- Club events, generally on week-ends.
- Mountain bike orienteering.
- Children's Week-end programs.
- Evening and lunch-time events.

## Night Events

ACT Orienteering conducts about 90 events per year at around 40 to 50 venues, of which 25% may have been in ACT Forests.

The number of participants and the number of vehicles has varied according to the type of event, but it is not uncommon for 50-80 cars being driven to regular club events. National orienteering events obviously attract larger numbers requiring parking for up to 300 cars.

ACT Orienteering generally does not need facilities, except parking and because of the number of different venues used, the infrequency of their use and the variation in numbers participating, it may difficult to justify provision of infrastructure specifically for orienteers. Given such usage patterns it may be more appropriate to consider infrastructure development at sites that can be shared by a number of different user groups.

Prior to the January 2003 fires it had been indicated by ACT Orienteering (through consultation as part of the ACT Forests Recreation Strategy preparation) that improved parking could be provided at sites such as between Stromlo and Blewits Pines and inside Kowen Forest suggesting that these sites could be suited for multi-use.

An appropriate outcome for ACT Orienteering could be one fixed training venue, a permanent orienteering course relatively close to the city (eg Stromlo) and other venues, some of which may be suitable for major events such as national championships.

## Paintball Sports

A fixed site in the Fairbairn Pines is leased to a private operator for a 5 year period for the purpose of running a Paintball facility.

It operates year round and on week-ends attracts up to 50 people per group that hires the venue. On week days up to 200 per group have been experienced.

## 5.4 Gaps in Supply Identified by Stakeholders

Table 5.1 shows gaps in supply or potential recreation opportunities based on reserve areas that have been identified by stakeholders in the course of consultation.

**Table 5.1: Gaps in Supply Identified by Stakeholders**

Reserve/Area	Gaps in supply/ future development
Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fire ecology interpretation.</li> <li>• Develop as a hub for walking.</li> <li>• Possible benign development for education/school groups.</li> <li>• Develop as a walking Hub.</li> <li>• Eco-tourism style accommodation.</li> <li>• Behind the scenes wildlife viewing.</li> <li>• Regional endangered species programs.</li> </ul>
Murrumbidgee Corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservation of vegetation.</li> <li>• Maintain outdoor education access.</li> <li>• Develop Point Hut Crossing as an overnight horse camp.</li> <li>• Improve facilities for day-use.</li> <li>• Icon walking trail.</li> </ul>
Cotter precinct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aboriginal interpretation.</li> <li>• Hub for multiple use trails network.</li> <li>• Appropriate location for tourism development.</li> <li>• Develop as a hub for walking.</li> <li>• Develop a possible Horse camp.</li> </ul>
Tourist Route 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More pullover bays for scenic viewing.</li> <li>• More trails for horse-riding and cycling adjacent to road.</li> </ul>

Reserve/Area	Gaps in supply/ future development
Namadgi National Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MB access to Bimberi wilderness. Icon MB Trail across Brindabella Range.</li> <li>• Maintain outdoor education access (eg Booroomba Rocks and Orroral valley).</li> <li>• Monitor impacts of bushwalking.</li> <li>• Develop formal running routes.</li> <li>• Provide more cultural interpretation of the Huts - Heritage Trail - develop as an Icon project.</li> <li>• Possible ecotourism accommodation.</li> </ul>
Stromlo Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Return to forested are close to urban fringe with passive recreation and possible accommodation opportunities.</li> <li>• Link trail to Bicentennial Horse Trail.</li> <li>• Develop as a hub for walking.</li> <li>• Night lit running trail.</li> <li>• Promote as a Urban Active Park.</li> <li>• Develop as a walking Hub.</li> </ul>
Kowen Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a variety of tracks for Mountain Biking.</li> </ul>
Ingledene Pine Plantation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install signage.</li> <li>• Increase policing.</li> <li>• Develop area for environmental education.</li> </ul>
Canberra Nature Parks (General)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Madjura Nature Park to be developed as a dedicated MB course for major events.</li> <li>• Increased access for MBs.</li> <li>• Increased access for horseriding on multiple use tracks.</li> <li>• Increase ecotourism opportunities—more trails and walks.</li> </ul>
Coolleman Ridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental and Recreation link with Namadgi National Park and Murrumbidgee Corridor.</li> </ul>

## **6. Setting the Direction: The ACT Recreation Strategy Framework**

### **6.1 Guiding Principles for the Recreation Strategy**

#### **Conservation of Natural and Cultural Values**

There is an appreciation that there are natural and cultural values associated with the area and planning will recognise conservation needs. Planning proposals will aim to enhance the management and interpretation of the natural and cultural values where appropriate. Planning will be consistent with existing management plans and the visitor experiences balanced with the protection of significant values.

#### **Importance of Natural Areas for Recreational Activities for the ACT Community**

The non-urban lands managed by Environment ACT and ACT Forests are highly valued by the community and provide a diverse range of recreation experiences for residents of Canberra and the ACT. The need to identify an appropriate balance of recreational opportunities consistent with the primary need to protect environmental, cultural and landscape values must be recognised across the ACT.

#### **Integrated Planning**

In assessing the range of recreation opportunities and experiences that can or should be provided for recreation in non-urban lands, consideration needs to be given to the range of opportunities available or able to be developed in the broader region. Not all activities and expectations will be accommodated in each reserve or recreation zone.

#### **Short term Demand for Natural Areas**

Planning for recreation needs to take account of the potential higher impacts from recreational use on areas affected by fire in the short term.

#### **Economic Evaluation**

Whilst some funding for reconstruction and redevelopment may be available in the short to medium term, ongoing capital or operating costs for recreational facilities cannot be assumed. Commercial opportunities, both public and private sector, to provide for recreation need to be grounded in realistic business cases.

#### **Use of Appropriate Land**

Positive opportunities for partnerships with landholders outside reserves that provide benefits to a range of stakeholders may be available to ensure protection of significant reserve values and economic return to neighbours and businesses in the area.

#### **Consultation with User Groups**

Facilities and services for recreation will be planned in consultation with user groups to ensure that, wherever possible, they ensure protection of values, meet the needs and expectations of users, minimise risks, and reduce conflict between activities.



## Provision Based on Identified Needs and Demand

Recreation experience provision must be justified on the basis of identified community needs and demand. Needs and demand may relate to both the ACT resident population and visitors to the ACT.

## 6.2 Recreational Settings

The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) is a planning framework commonly used in natural area management and recreation planning which identifies a continuum of recreation settings based on variations in levels of natural setting, infrastructure provision and management presence<sup>21</sup>. The basic assumption of ROS is that quality recreational experiences are assured by providing a diverse range of recreational opportunities, catering for various tastes and user group preferences.

A recreation setting, or recreation opportunity setting as it is also known, is the combination of social, physical, biological and managerial conditions that give value to a place. Key factors influencing management will include conservation values; access; other non-recreational resources use; on-site management; social interaction; acceptability of visitor impacts; and acceptable level of regimentation.

In order to ensure that existing and future recreation opportunity provisions not only meet the needs of a broad cross section of the community, but are also sustainable in a physical, ecological and social context, a framework of planning is required. The ROS framework will provide an overlay over non-urban recreational land in the planning area to guide the nature and the level of future visitor use, facility development and the range of recreation activities and experiences.

The ACT Recreation Framework Discussion Paper proposed an approach based on six zones. Following feedback from stakeholders, and discussions with those involved in the review of the Namadji National Park plan of management, a four zone approach is now being adopted including three sub zones within one category.

The strategy uses the following recreation setting classes which are defined in Table 6.1 overleaf:

- Area 1            Remote and self sufficient Recreation
- Area 2            Conservation/Recreation
- Area 2a          Semi remote forest based recreation
- Area 2b          Semi remote grassland and woodland based recreation
- Area 2c          Semi remote pine forest based recreation
- Area 3            Roaded and natural recreation
- Area 4            Developed recreation

Recreation areas mapped for Environment ACT and ACT Forests managed land can be found on the Map on page 56.

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<sup>21</sup> Mackay & Virtanen, 2002

**Table 6.1: ROS Settings for ACT Non-urban Recreation Lands**

	<b>Area 1 Remote</b>	<b>Area 2 Conservation/recreation</b>			<b>Area 3 Roaded Natural</b>	<b>Area 4</b>
	Remote and self sufficient Recreation	Semi remote forest based recreation	semi remote grassland and woodland based recreation	semi remote pine forest based recreation	Roaded and natural recreation	Developed recreation
Description	Very low level of modification. High integrity natural systems. High landscape aesthetic quality	Low-moderate level of modification. Medium integrity of natural systems. Medium high landscape aesthetic quality.	Low-moderate level of modification-readily perceived.	Moderate to large plantation forests, moderate-high level of modification-readily perceived; shielded or at least 1km from significant noise, roads or visual impacts.	Moderate to large natural areas shielded from or at least 1km from significant noise, or visual impacts.	Substantially modified area within a semi-natural setting. May be within 1km of significant visual or noise impact.
Access	Vehicle access to trackheads around periphery of zone. Public access by walking tracks which may be few in number some of which may be of a low maintenance regime.	Vehicle access to trackheads around periphery of zone. Horse riding not permitted. Cycling along selected trails.	Vehicle access to trackheads around periphery of zone. Horseriding and cycling along selected trails	Vehicle access to track heads around periphery of zone. Vehicle access may be permitted for specific activity after approval by management agency. Pedestrian access via walking tracks and forestry trails.	Access via relatively well maintained walking tracks and 2WD roads. Some access limited to 4WD.	Access via well maintained walking tracks, possibly with sealed surfaces and primarily sealed 2WD roads
Contemporary Use	Very low intensity self-sufficient recreation.	Low intensity self-sufficient recreation	Medium intensity self-sufficient recreation	Medium intensity self-sufficient, non motorised recreation except for specific recreation activities for which approval has been obtained.	Medium intensity recreation including vehicle based.	High level of recreational use including nodes for large organised events
Range of Facilities	Public facilities rarely found and only for resource protection.	Minimal development and facilities-effectively for environmental protection. Dispersed camping.	Low-key development consistent with existing network of shelter huts, toilets and interpretive trails. Dispersed camping. On-site interpretation	Only basic visitor facilities consistent with network of shelter huts, toilets, interpretive trails and consistent with sustainable recreational use. Formal camping areas may be designated.	Low-key facilities at picnic areas-tables, BBQ's, toilets and visitor interpretation signs or displays. Designated camp grounds with limited facilities and with opportunities for a remote style of bush camping.	Substantial and well maintained facilities at picnic areas-tables, BBQ's, toilets and visitor interpretation signs or displays. Opportunity for provision of camping with a range of facilities. May be visitor centres/kiosks and other high level facilities

	Area 1 Remote	Area 2 Conservation/recreation			Area 3 Roaded Natural	Area 4
	Remote and self sufficient Recreation	Semi remote forest based recreation	semi remote grassland and woodland based recreation	semi remote pine forest based recreation	Roaded and natural recreation	Developed recreation
Social Interaction	Extremely low level of interaction with other users. Predominant perception of isolation and remoteness from urban society. Possible restriction if maximum group size and overall numbers in zone at any one time.	Low level of interaction with other users. Medium opportunities to escape urban society enjoy solitude. Group events in selected areas by special permission.	Low level of interaction. Medium opportunity to escape urban society enjoy solitude or participate in group events.	Moderate levels of interaction with other visitors, especially during peak season. Group events in selected areas by special permission. General perception of isolation and remoteness from urban society.	Relatively frequent interaction with other visitors, especially during times. Perception of travelling a road through a remote area.	Frequent visitor interactions, particularly during peak periods
Management Presence	Low to no presence.	Low to moderate presence.	Low to moderate presence.	Some forestry on-site management, which may include signs and infrequently used forestry tracks.	On-site regulation and management presence including signage, fences, barriers, formed car parks etc. High presence of management during conduct of events.	Explicit on-site regulation and management including signage, fences, barriers, formed car parks etc.

## 6.3 The Role of the ACT's Natural Areas

"The non-urban land of the ACT supports a diverse range of the community's recreational pursuits, including informal individual and family activities, adventure and nature-based activities and sports in natural or semi-natural environments. The recreation resources of the ACT are managed as a mosaic of areas that variously permit or encourage some activities while excluding others.

The January 2003 fires have rendered much of the non-urban recreational land temporarily unsafe or unsuitable for recreational use and reduced the quality of the recreational experience. Understandably, there is strong community concern about whether and when recreational activities will again be possible in these areas."<sup>22</sup>

The range of recreational opportunities available across the natural areas of the ACT has, in the past, been provided across a range of land tenures—national park, nature reserve, forest land, nature park, urban park. Whilst this strategy primarily makes recommendations in relation to Namadgi National Park, Murrumbidgee River Corridor, Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve and the ACT Forests, it also recognises other significant values and roles including:

<sup>22</sup> *Shaping our Territory: Opportunities for Non-Urban ACT*

- The foundation concept of the National Capital Open Space System and the critical linkages between natural areas, corridors and other open space in the ACT.
- The role Canberra Nature Park plays in providing 'backyard' natural area opportunities for Canberra residents in more than 25 locations across the city.
- The need for corridors that link urban areas and rural lease lands with recreational areas, particularly where areas have a strong recreational focus (e.g. ACT horse paddocks).
- The opportunities provided by Canberra urban parks for more developed recreational activities (such as cycle paths and picnic areas) that contribute to the range of opportunities, and meets some demand.

Namadgi National Park will continue to provide extensive opportunities for primarily remote recreation consistent with protection of its significant natural and cultural values, with opportunities for more intense recreation focused in a small number of key visitor nodes.

Murrumbidgee River Corridor has played an important role in water-based recreation for the Canberra population and will continue to provide this focus although with a higher standard of recreational facilities and opportunities to further explore the river corridor. The existing high use visitor nodes will continue to be the focus for intensive recreation and sustainable use of the corridor will be encouraged through infrastructure provision.

The Cotter precinct will continue to serve as an important nodal point in the context of non-urban recreation and tourism opportunities which can be enhanced as a hub for a diverse range of passive and active recreation.

The nature of Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve has changed as a result of the fires but the reserve will continue to be valued for the environment in which indigenous habitat and species can be protected and presented to the community. Planning will provide for facilities and services which develops the park as a local native wildlife research and discovery destination.

Whilst the nature of ACT Forests lands is changing following the January fires, the lands will continue to play a significant role in recreation provision for Canberra through providing those recreational opportunities which cannot be provided in national parks and reserves, and can be sustainably provided for in the land managed by ACT Forests.

The outcomes of the Shaping Our Territory Report have provided expanded opportunities for the provision of exceptional recreational opportunities for the area. Good planning can result in best practice facilities and opportunities across the ACT's natural areas.

Canberra Nature Park is significant in the role it plays in natural environment across the urban area. It serves to provide people with natural settings close to their homes. It can continue to serve this role with potential for some increase in sustainable recreational activity.

## **6.4 Compatible Activities**

Some recreational activities can be undertaken alongside one another with no negative impact between the users. Other activities are not compatible. Appendix 2 contains a matrix of the range of activities carried out in the ACT's natural areas and identifies the level of compatibility between them. This matrix can be used as a tool for determining appropriate management actions for a number of activities in an area.

## **6.5 Facility Level Guidelines**

To assist in the promotion of areas for the experience they provide, and to enable management to provide a consistent standard of facilities and services, with the resources available, a series of facility level guidelines is proposed. This will provide guidance in relation to the facilities that should be provided within a recreation zone.

Appendix 2 provides recommended facility level guidelines for the ACT's natural areas. These provide a guide to ensure that visitor expectations can be met in terms of the facilities and services provided consistent with the range of recreation opportunities.

## **6.6 Concluding Comments for Input to the Recreation Strategy**

In planning for recreation for Canberra's natural areas for the next five years, it must be recognised that each reserve and land area plays a role in the provision of a range of opportunities for recreation

To enable sustainable recreation and optimal balance of social and environmental factors, the use of a Recreation Opportunity Spectrum provides guidance as to the level of development appropriate to an area and a zone. Consideration of compatible activities and facility level guidelines can be used to complement the ROS approach.

Managing within the guidelines for a zone will enable balancing of significant values with recreational use, and providing the best range of recreational opportunities to enable high quality recreational experiences.

## 7. Planning for individual activities

### 7.1 Consistency with ACT Trails Framework

The ACT Trails Strategy Framework has been developed to assist in planning for the range of trail requirements for walking, cycling and horse riding.

The ACT Trails Strategy Framework has combined the six classes in the Australian Standard for Walking Track Classification and Signage (AS 1428, 2001) into three more general classes as follows:

- **Class 1:** Large numbers of trail users; relatively easy/low levels of challenge; heavily modified trail with substantial infrastructure and information.
- **Class 2:** Fewer/relatively infrequent encounters with other trail users; moderate levels of challenge; well defined trail but with lesser levels of infrastructure and information.
- **Class 3:** Few contacts with others; relatively demanding experience; limited surface modification and information provision.

The Trails Framework identified three landscape setting types as follows:

- **Semi urban:** Heavily modified landscape; mostly urban or near urban; relatively high population density.
- **Semi natural (rural):** Modified landscape but with natural features dominant; may include rural landscapes.
- **Natural:** Relatively undisturbed landscape; natural features dominant throughout; includes those areas commonly referred to as 'bush'.

In terms of the ROS zoning being applied in this recreation strategy, the following table identifies the relationship between the ROS zones and the Trails Strategy categories.

**Table 7.1: Relationship between ACT Trails Strategy and Recreation Strategy zoning**

Trails strategy	Natural				Semi natural	Semi urban
	Zone 1	Zone 2a	Zone 2b	Zone 2c	Zone 3	Zone 4
Class one				X	X	X
Class two		X	X	X		
Class three	X	X	X	X		

### 7.2 Consistency with other Standards

The Australian Standard for Walking Track Classification and Signage (AS 1428, 2001) is the standard that should provide guidance in the development and construction of walking tracks in the ACT. The trail framework provides details of the level of service that is appropriate to the track classes, and this may form the basis for detailed track planning.

Table 7. 2 shows the current provision of walking opportunities in terms of the standard.

**Table 7.2: Current provision of Walking Tracks**

	Class one	Class two	Class three
Namadgi National Park		X	X
MRC		X	X
TNR			X
CNP		X	X
CUPPS	X	X	
ACT Forests		X	X

## 7.3 Appropriate Activities

The following table reflects the zones in which the range of recreation activities are considered appropriate to be provided. Appendix 2 provides guidelines developed on the basis of stakeholder consultation in relation to the recreational setting, facilities and experience elements associated with recreation activities.

**Table 7.3 Appropriate Activities for ROS Settings**

	Area 1	Area 2a	Area 2b	Area 2c	Area 3	Area 4
Mountain bike touring	Small groups, identified management trails only	identified management trails or specific purpose trails only	identified management trails or specific purpose trails only	X	X	X
Road Racing					X	X
Club mountain bike tours		identified management trails only	identified management trails only	X	X	X
Club mountain bike racing				X	X	X
Major mountain bike competition				X	X	X
Dog sled training				X	X	
Dog sled events				X	X	
Showjumping, horse trials and eventing				x	X	X
Independent recreational horse riding	By permit	X	X	X	X	X
Endurance events		X	X	X	X	X
Field archery				X	X	
Four wheel drive				X	x	
Trail bike riding				X	x	
Car rallies				X	X	
Motor bike rallies				X	X	
Organised running events				X	X	X
Walking	X	X	X	X	X	X
orienteering Permanent courses		X	X	X	X	X

	Area 1	Area 2a	Area 2b	Area 2c	Area 3	Area 4
orienteering Infrastructure nodes from which events could be run		X	X	X	X	X
Orienteering regular events		X	X	X	X	X
Rock climbing/abseiling	X	X	X	X	X	X
Paintball				X	X	
Swimming	x	x	x	x	x	x
Dog walking				X		



## 8. Key Directions

Key Directions for recreation in the ACT's Natural Areas for the five year period 2003-2008 has been considered within the context of the broader planning for the ACT's Non Urban Lands and the recommendations presented in "Shaping our Territory: Opportunities for Non-Urban ACT".

In terms of the key areas managed by Environment ACT and ACT Forests, the following recommendations are made for the five year period 2004-2009.

### 8.1 Namadgi National Park

Assumptions:

- Limited change to fundamental purpose.
- Some increase in access trails including management access as a result of Macleod and other Inquiries.

Planning principles ('Shaping Our Territory'):

- the importance of protection of the water catchment and natural environment;
- development opportunities should only be considered having regard to best practice fire management; and
- the area currently provides casual low-key recreation opportunities and these should remain available to existing and future residents.

Proposals:

- Some potential for increased use consistent with management plan.
- Enhancement of opportunities and facilities to encourage appreciation and interpretation of values.
- Increased educational opportunities.
- Options for Mountain bike access will be explored through the development of the revised Namadgi Plan of Management.
- Increased access for winter use
- Potential for future sealing of Boboyan Road and upgrading of Brindabella Road

### Mount Franklin Road

The Mount Franklin Road from Picadilly Circus to the snowline receives considerable winter use for snow play. The value of this corridor as a recreational opportunity for the Canberra community is high, but the experience could be improved by enhanced public safety and day use facilities.

***Recommendations***

- Undertake a road management plan to consider the options for improvements to public safety associated with the road to incorporate the following elements:
- Specific areas of public risk.
- Options for road upgrading.
- Potential sites for day use facilities, lookouts, parking, vehicle turning.
- Sites for road closure dependent on snow depth.
- Options for traffic management through limiting numbers at specific sites.
- Costing for preferred road management option.
- Provide enhanced day use facilities to complement access including:
- Interpretive walk providing interpretation of wetland environment ; and
- Replace Mount Franklin Chalet with day use shelter and appropriate interpretation about the previous use and buildings as well as recreation opportunities in the area
- Undertake a review of the recreational opportunities provided through the re-alignment or opening of any access trails recommended as a result of the Macleod and other Inquiries with a view to enhancing access where consistent with protection of significant values.

**Orroral Valley**

The Orroral Valley is a significant access point for day and overnight visitors to Namadgi as a destination and as a trailhead. This area is appropriate to ongoing use for a range of recreational activities. The Orroral Ridge, above the valley, is an important area for walking, climbing and camping.

***Recommendations***

- Upgrade facilities at Orroral Tracking station site consistent with contemporary standards and an emphasis on public safety and day use facilities
- Upgrade interpretive signage at the old Tracking Station to provide a high quality educational experience.
- Liaise with user groups for events such as orienteering and mountain bike riding to discuss the appropriateness and needs of the tracking station site as a staging area and base for major events.
- Establish working group with climbing groups to resolve the issues affecting access to climbing sites including Booromba Rocks and Orroral Ridge and to prepare Orroral Ridge site management plan to address:
- Management of climbing.
- Camping issues.
- Track proliferation.

- Risk management and appropriate signage system for monitoring and permitting climbing activity.
- Design and implement system for monitoring and permitting climbing activity
- Investigate the establishment of a walking track:
- Providing a safe lookout from ridge; and
- Linking Honeysuckle Creek camp ground with Orroral Ridge.
- Liaise with cycling groups to identify opportunities for marked cycling routes using existing track network.

## **Corin Dam**

The Corin Dam area is a popular day use area and starting point for walks. It should continue to serve this purpose.

### ***Recommendations***

- Maintain and review day use facilities at Corin consistent with demand.

## **Boboyan/Gudgenby Area**

The Boboyan Valley includes the Boboyan Road, the main thoroughfare through the park, and the Old Boboyan Road. A range of recreational opportunities are provided in this area and additional use can be provided for.

### ***Recommendations***

- Enhance facilities for day visitors and car tourers in this area through:
- Upgrading lookouts on the Boboyan Road to enhance appreciation of the park by car tourers and other visitors.
- Redevelopment of facilities at Glendale Picnic area including extended capacity for day use, disabled access and enhanced amenity through landscaping.
- Redevelopment and upgrading of facilities at the Yankee Hat car park to improve access and circulation and to provide an attractive day use area as well as trailhead.
- Development of the Old Boboyan Rd walk as a heritage trail.
- Seek Expressions of Interest for alternative use of Gudgenby Homestead.
- Develop an interpretive plan to develop the homestead precinct as a heritage area encompassing the themes of historical land-use.
- Prepare site plan for the development of an additional car park and day use area to encourage increased use of the Gudgenby Homestead area for day use and as a trailhead.
- Liaise with cycling groups to enable cycling to occur on management trails.

## Upper Naas—Mount Clear

### *Recommendations*

- Liaise with horse riding groups to confirm new route for Bicentennial National Trail and to establish appropriate facilities for horse riding including siting of overnight camp-site.
- Liaise with cycling groups to enable cycling to occur on management trails and to confirm an appropriate linkage to enable riding into Kosciuszko National Park.
- Develop additional walking tracks in the Mount Clear area including the development of a heritage trail linking the huts in this area.

## 8.2 Murrumbidgee River Corridor

### Assumptions

- Limited change to fundamental purpose
- Increased level of development and higher profile for Cotter precinct as gateway to Tourist Route 5
- Higher visitor numbers associated with proximity of urban expansion

### Planning principles (Non Urban Study):

- the Cotter–Uriarra area provides the first impressions for visitors traveling along Tourist Drive 5 which, together with the Cotter precinct itself, should be considered as the primary vehicle for enhancing the tourism and recreation opportunities within non-urban ACT;
- development opportunities should only be considered having regard to best-practice fire management;
- the Murrumbidgee and Molonglo River Corridors should be protected as a valuable natural asset;
- the key considerations for the pine forest areas include the provision of ongoing recreation opportunities, maintaining the landscape setting, managing the land and minimising bushfire risk to the forest and adjacent areas;
- the area currently provides for substantial recreation opportunities and these should remain available to existing and future residents;
- The importance of ongoing public consultation on this important precinct should be recognised, including the potential benefit of design competitions that permit the community to express a view as planning and development proceeds.
- Negotiations with the ACT Planning and Land Authority and the National Capital Authority to make amendments to the National Capital and Territory Plans should be undertaken in a timely manner to allow implementation of the master plan.
- Any proposed developments should be coordinated with the ACT Government's water strategy. In particular, any proposed enlargement to the Cotter Dam should complement the Cotter Precinct Master Plan and, if possible, recreation opportunities should be incorporated into the design of the dam.

## Proposals

- Cotter as gateway to TR5 and enhanced as a hub for a range of active and passive recreational activity suited to retaining family values including day use, walking, cycling, adventure activities
- Commercial centre potentially including tourist Information Centre, café, retail and accommodation complex
- Enhanced opportunities for accommodation
- TR5 to have enhanced attractions through planning and business incentives
- MRC sites to be upgraded to provide high quality recreation settings and experiences
- High quality icon walking track linking MRC sites along both sides of the river including camping option in Bullen Range
- Cycle trail on part of MRC
- Consideration of adventure activity infrastructure located near or associated with the Dam Wall

## Cotter precinct overall

A master planning exercise is to be undertaken, (May 2004), for the Cotter precinct that will include all areas managed by the ACT Government. This exercise, like Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve's masterplanning, will determine the nature of the development within the precinct. This process will develop detailed recommendations for all areas within the Cotter precinct.

## Other Murrumbidgee River Corridor Sites and Linkages

The Murrumbidgee River Corridor sites provide valuable outdoor recreation riverside settings for visitors. To date, access along the river has been limited to informal use with track networks developing through use. The Murrumbidgee River Corridor provides an ideal opportunity for managed tracks that link key sites and provide access for visitors to appreciate the values of the riparian zone and the river corridor. The potential also exists for marketing of the Murrumbidgee River Corridor as one of a limited number of long distance walking tracks along a river corridor. A consistent approach to landscape design furniture and construction should "badge" the sites as linked and managed by the same agency.

## *Recommendations*

- Investigate the options for development of a walking track along the east side of the Murrumbidgee River Corridor from Uriarra Crossing to Tharwa Bridge with a loop section using the western side of the river from Point Hut to Cotter.
- Investigate the need and options for provision of a camp site/shelter on the loop section of such a track
- Investigate the options for development of a single use cycle track on sections of the Murrumbidgee River Corridor, or for areas where dual use of a walking/cycling track would be feasible.
- Reinstate and upgrade Point Hut to Casuarina Sands walking track on Eastern side of River

- Provide consistent entry point and basic orientation, safety and regulatory information at each site
- Investigate best use of former pine plantation area, Pine Island North

## **Uriarra Crossing**

Uriarra Crossing provides a valuable setting for day use and camping in the corridor and is not as highly used as other sites. Potential exists to enhance the setting through upgrading of facilities with capacity for additional camping to supplement the setting and capacity at Cotter Campground.

### ***Recommendations***

- Develop detailed site plan for Uriarra Crossing to optimise facilities to be provided as a natural setting and trailhead with improved vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation.

## **Pine Island**

Pine Island is an important recreational site for the Canberra community, although the landscape has changed considerably as a result of fires. The site can continue to provide a similar role, although site management and facilities can be enhanced. Site planning should have as a major focus the need to discourage anti social behaviour through appropriate design, which may include modifications to the current layout of the site.

### ***Recommendations***

Develop detailed site plan for Pine Island to address the following key elements:

- Access and circulation, with an emphasis on designs that discourage anti-social activities.
- Access to the river and erosion control.
- Revegetation for landscape amenity, separation of sites and visitor areas, and shade.
- Improved visitor activity areas, including use of former pine plantation area.
- Review of facility needs.
- Walking track trailhead and transition needs.
- Entry and sense of place.

## **Kambah Pool**

Kambah Pool can continue to serve a key role in riverside recreation for the Canberra community, but site upgrading is overdue. Considerable resources are required to ensure this site is redeveloped to meet the needs of contemporary users and consistent with the values of the area in which it is located.

### ***Recommendations***

Develop Master Plan for development incorporating the following elements:

- Improved landscaping and site design for enhanced amenity value.

- Review of facility needs including rubbish bins
- Entry and sense of place.
- Access, parking and circulation.
- Refurbishment/replacement of dated facilities to reflect contemporary standards and provide access for the disabled.
- Walking track trailhead and transition needs.
- Security.

## **Point Hut Crossing**

Point Hut Crossing does not receive as high use as other sites, but its location on a key access route indicates a need for high quality visitor setting. The proposed loop walking track could potentially have Point Hut as a key trailhead site.

### ***Recommendations***

- Develop detailed site plan for Point Hut Crossing to optimise facilities to be provided as a natural setting.
- Consider the needs of the site as a trailhead for walkers with improved vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation.
- Provide for parking and loading facilities for use by horse riders.

## **Tharwa Bridge**

Tharwa Bridge is an area of high importance to the local community and the subject of a community partnership with Environment ACT. As a key point on Tourist Route 5 and highly visible from the Tharwa Bridge, appropriate site management is essential.

The Tharwa precinct is an important location for tourists and the local community in terms of the art, craft and café opportunities. Greater promotion of this asset through signage and enhanced exposure would benefit the local economy.

### ***Recommendations***

- Work with the community to identify appropriate facility and landscape needs for the site to complement its location and to meet community needs.
- Plan appropriate signage and information to complement and promote the Tharwa Craft precinct and potentially attract additional outlets to create a thriving precinct.

## **Angle Crossing**

Angle Crossing is a very low use area although use is increasing with rural development in the Royalla area. The implementation of simple day use facilities will enable people to enjoy this site. Should rural residential development proceed at Ingledene, a significant increase in usage of this

access road and the Angle Crossing site can be anticipated and higher level facilities will be required as development proceeds.

### ***Recommendations***

- Install simple day use facilities at Angle Crossing and monitor use and impacts associated with use.

### **Overall image**

The overall image and branding of the Murrumbidgee River Corridor can be improved with signage and design standards:

- The development of a detailed interpretive plan is required to address the appropriate information to be conveyed to meet user needs at different sites.
- Access linkages with the lower Molonglo including walking and cycling opportunities need to be effectively marketed as part of the overall image and promotion of the MRC

## **8.3 Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve**

The nature of Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve has changed as a result of the fires but the reserve will continue to be valued for the environment in which indigenous habitat and species can be protected and presented to the community.

Assumptions:

- Tidbinbilla to remain a reserve with wildlife, education and recreation focus
- Nature based tourism opportunities developed at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve will offer a unique experience to visitors and will have the potential to increase visitation.
- The Government will lead the way with innovation and best practice in management, education and recreational infrastructure.

Planning principles (Non Urban Study):

- Provide local, interstate and international visitors with opportunities to encounter wildlife in natural surroundings;
- Encourage greater community understanding and respect for environmental and national park values, including the need to preserve habitat for fauna and flora;
- Provide a focal point for scientific research and understanding of threatened species recovery programs, and the management of sub-alpine and woodland environments;
- Provide a venue for cultural and recreational activities including community events and festivals;
- Provide a place of learning about the human history of Tidbinbilla and the surrounding district;
- Provide a venue that attracts a significant number of local repeat visits by seeking to attract a broad cross-section of the Canberra community; and



- Provide a venue with a reputation as a “must see” attraction for national and international visitors, particularly school children visiting the ACT.

#### Proposals

- Refocus and redesign of wildlife areas for a greater emphasis on local and regional species in natural habitats;
- Facilitating the development of infrastructure for interactive scientific and cultural displays and activities by institutions, community and indigenous groups;
- Enhancing the quality of the interpretation of native fauna and flora, with a particular emphasis on children’s learning and outdoor experiences;
- Developing opportunities for the research and delivery of threatened species recovery programs;
- Providing expanded opportunities for a broader range of leisure, outdoor activities, attractions and accommodation in the reserve and its surrounds;
- Protecting the integrity of the natural environment and sensitive wildlife habitat through land use zoning and careful infrastructure design; and
- Showcasing sustainable design and development.

The redevelopment of Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve is a major planning and construction project that will, if approved, continue for several years. Initial cost estimates approach \$22 M and as such are outside the scope of this document.

The surrounding stakeholders and setting should be included in the planning process so that a “Precinct” approach can be adopted that includes Birrigai, Block 60 and the Corin road Forestry areas.

The review of nature based tourism opportunities carried out in 2001 recommended a range of improvements to the infrastructure, programs and delivery of core business at TNR. Fundamentally, the review identified that a high level of infrastructure existed in the reserve which could be better utilised and managed to provide better programs which complement the core business of the reserve for a range of visitors including one off and repeat visitation.

## 8.4 ACT Forests Lands

The final report of the Non Urban Study has recognised the significant recreational values which are attributed to ACT Forests in their recommendations. It is clear that ACT Forests will continue to play a leading role in offering opportunities for recreation including broad scale and high impact activities such as four wheel driving, cycling, horse riding, rallies as well as the broad range of outdoor pursuits. The integration of forest areas and forest park with the urban area will continue to enable the community to use the forest areas suited to everyday recreation including walking, horse and cycle riding, dog walking.

#### Assumptions

- Plantation forestry will not be re-established in Stromlo Forest
- Kowen will remain available for recreation for a minimum 20 year period

- Ingledene unlikely to be available for recreation
- Other isolated forests may continue to be available for recreation
- Uriarra and Pierces Creek will be available for recreation subject to management of water catchment values, best practice road design, site considerations and fire management.
- Uriarra and Pierces Creek settlements likely to be rebuilt/expanded

#### Planning Principles (Non Urban Study)

- There should be fire abatement zones to protect the urban areas of the ACT and other assets such as: rural villages; recreation, research or tourism facilities; and key infrastructure.
- The definition of any areas as bushfire-prone will carry implications for new and extended buildings in those areas.
- As a general principle, the amount, breadth and quality of the recreational amenity of the non-urban areas should be at least as great, and desirably greater, than before the fires.
- a diverse and high-quality range of recreation opportunities should be provided for (such as walking, playing sport, hiking, horse riding, mountain bikes, motor sports, camping etc.) to meet existing and expected future needs;
- in terms of accessibility, recreation opportunities should cover local (walking distance from home – like the local bike path), suburban (short five-minute drive – like the local oval or park), regional (20-minute drive – like Deek's Forest Park) and distant (like the national park).
- The ACT Forests estate, which is in public ownership, should continue to be available to the community for a diverse range of recreational activities.
- The availability of land in the ACT Forests estate for high-impact activities (e.g. car rallies and trail bikes), which cannot be conducted on other ACT land, should continue.
- The negotiation of strategic public walking routes across selected rural leases, particularly in river corridors, should be explored.
- Deek's Forest Park should be relocated towards the foothills of Mount Stromlo as a mixed-use recreational area, readily accessible to the community.
- A range of recreational enhancements should also be made at the Cotter and Tidbinbilla,
- The opportunity for increasing water-based recreational opportunities in the Cotter area should be pursued if an enlarged Cotter Dam is constructed in the future.

### **Stromlo Forest**

- Provision should be made for an international arboretum in the ACT Forests estate, adjacent to the Tuggeranong Parkway in the Green Hills Forest area.
- Deek's Forest Park should be re-created in the area to the west of Uriarra Road and on the foothills of Mount Stromlo;
- The land that is not required for future urban growth (as identified in the Canberra Spatial Plan) should remain in the public domain within the ACT Forests estate and be redeveloped for landscape and recreation objectives as a forest recreation park.

## **Kowen Forest**

- In areas continuing as pine plantation, recreation activities similar to those which occur at present should be enabled.

## **Uriarra and Pierces Creek Forests**

- The Mount McDonald area and the area between the Cotter and Pierces Creek Village should be retained in the ACT Forests estate and used to enhance the Cotter precinct development.
- Improved facilities for high-impact recreation activities, such as spectator viewing and tracks for car rallies/mountain bike events, should be established prior to pine replanting, particularly in areas close to the Cotter precinct.

## **Stromlo Forest**

The role of Stromlo as a recreational area has been recognised through the decision to establish the Deek's Forest Park on a new site on the foothills of Mount Stromlo. Whilst the extent and spatial pattern of residential development in the Stromlo area has not yet been finalized, it is anticipated that development would not commence for some years.

### ***Recommendations***

Commission landscape and recreation planning team to undertake master plan and detailed planning for the development of Deek's Forest Park to provide for mountain biking, equestrian activity, orienteering and cross-country running including

- a variety of running circuits to accommodate both amateur and professional athletes ranging in length from 2 to 32 kilometres;
- a world-class cross-country running course;
- a dedicated mountain bike venue including a circuit to accommodate the MONT 24-hour event and other circuits of varying types, including downhill from Mount Stromlo;
- equestrian facilities including riding trails;
- orienteering facilities; and
- the grassing of the now covered landfill area as an open recreation place for the public and possibly as a campsite for major events.

Once the extent of urban development is agreed,

- Identify with planners a series of visitor nodes which can be managed for recreational use consistent with the residential development (e.g. Narrabundah Hill, the Cork Oaks, Molonglo River corridor) and develop site plans to provide high level visitor facilities which will complement residential development and recreational linkages to other areas.
- As part of residential planning, identify a suitable site to establish a National Xtreme Sports Park which provides opportunities for high impact sports previously undertaken in forest areas (dirt bikes, trail bikes, cycling etc).
- Develop a detailed plan for tracks along the Molonglo River including consideration of equestrian, cycle and walking opportunities.

- Integrate the proposed International Arboretum into recreational and transport linkage planning

## **Kowen**

The Kowen area is currently under abnormally high pressure for many types of forest recreation due to the extent of fire damage to other pine forests. While much of the Kowen forest is locked up for security reasons, it is nevertheless prone to illegal entry, which is a management concern. Notwithstanding the security concerns, it may become necessary to consider additional recreational uses for the Kowen forest area in the light of any decisions regarding the future uses of the forest areas to the west of Canberra.

### ***Recommendations***

- Implement the Molonglo Gorge Recreation Plan to establish Molonglo Gorge as the key recreation site within the Kowen Forest.
- Pursue the necessary planning approvals to provide opportunities for camping at Molonglo Gorge consistent with the Molonglo Recreation Plan.
- Upgrade the Molonglo Gorge walking track as a safe walking track leading to a well maintained camping and day use area at Blue Tiles consistent with the semi remote experience in this recreation zone.
- Consider demand and opportunities for additional walking tracks and mountain bike tracks within Kowen with a focus on Molonglo as the trailhead and/or walks which link key cultural heritage sites.
- Manage the area south of Gorge Road and River Road and to the east of Charcoal Kiln Road at its junction with River Road as an area with access for approved purposes.
- Investigate the options for group camping in the vicinity of Kowen Homestead within Kowen forest with consideration of future commercial opportunities as demand increases.
- Investigate the potential for providing public access to the western section of Kowen forest.
- Provide appropriate site management and interpretation at Kowen Homestead site consistent with the Heritage Management Plan.
- Continue to manage existing approved recreation activities within the forest including gun club and scout activities.
- Continue to manage existing activities including paint ball and motor cycle activities at the Fairbairn pines.

## **Uriarra and Pierces Creek**

Consistent with bushfire management and protection of water quality, re-establishment of forestry area in Pierces Creek and Uriarra forests is likely to occur. Those areas which provide extensive tracts of land for motorized recreation as well as linkages to broader areas have been invaluable in the past and opportunities need to continue to be available for motorized recreation.

### ***Recommendations***

- Detailed recreation planning needs to be integrated into the replanting of forest areas and planning for management and fire suppression access.

- Establish working group with key recreational stakeholders to identify suitable tracks, circuits, forest drives, staging areas and other facilities for organised and non organised motorised sports
- Establish working group with key recreational stakeholders to identify suitable areas and facility requirements for orienteering events
- Identify and establish appropriate sites for day use and natural camping as part of forest planning and investigate the demand for hut or roofed tented accommodation associated with forest drives
- Re-establish facilities at Blue Range affected by fires and maintain this area for camping, day use and mountain bike events
- Investigate an extension to the Blue Range camping area to provide for group camping with potential for simple hut style accommodation, which can be booked for groups and events.
- Liaise with horse riding groups to identify suitable equestrian routes and location for group camping for horse riding activity and appropriate facilities (eg yards, parking, water, loading ramp).
- Undertake a site plan and establish high quality day use (and potentially camping) visitor facilities at Murrays Corner

## **8.4.2 Other Forest Areas**

### ***Recommendations***

#### **Gibraltar Falls**

- Continue to maintain Woods Point as a semi developed camping area.
- Maintain Gibraltar Falls as a trailhead access point and establish a high standard walking track linking to Woods Point.
- Undertake a Heritage Site Management Plan to ensure protection of heritage values and consider risk management issues associated with this site.

#### **Majura**

- Engage the cycling community in the development of a cycling management plan for the Majura Pines including consideration of potential for an Xtreme Sports Park

#### **Other areas**

- For those areas where planning decisions have not been finalised but recreational use may be expected,
- Work with local residents to identify facility requirements and management issues.
- Encourage community involvement in planning and maintenance of facilities.
- Continue to provide opportunities for a range of activities consistent with strategic objectives.

Some key directions were proposed through the ACT Forest Recreation Strategy which are still relevant. These include the following which can be integrated into forest planting and planning:

### ***Significant Opportunities***

A series of specific, innovative recreation opportunities and strategies have been identified which are considered to have the potential to provide a significant improvement in the image of ACT Forests and the branding of the agency as a best practice recreation management organisation.

**Touring Routes**

Identification, marking and branding of forest touring routes linking key destinations and recreation sites for cars and motor cycles.

**Mountain Bike Opportunities**

Promotion of the range of high quality opportunities for mountain bike activities including downhill and touring routes.

**High Use Sites**

Stage the development of quality facilities suited to high use recreation at key locations (Molonglo Gorge, Greenhills, Isaacs, Majura, Kowen old homestead) across the forests and market as ACT Forests destinations.

**Development of Additional Accommodation Opportunities Including:**

- Additional camping capacity in a natural setting (eg. Molonglo, Murrays Corner)
- Other specific purpose, roofed, but camping style accommodation at key sites available for booking and potential revenue generation (eg Blue Range, Block 60, Murray's Corner).

**Camping Partnership**

Liaise with ACT PCs to investigate partnership opportunities for the establishment of camping and/or hut style accommodation in Block 60 to provide a destination for a forest drive and accommodation to service a change in market for Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve.

**Access to Kowen Forest**

Investigate the re-opening of the western section of Kowen Forest.

**Neighbourhood Forests**

Work with neighbours to forest pockets close to urban areas to develop facilities appropriate to these areas and to the needs of the community, and engaging the community in the planning and ongoing maintenance of the sites.

**Enhancement of Range of Opportunities**

The range of recreational opportunities provided in ACT Forests (pre fire) could be enhanced by:

- Undertaking integrated planning for recreation sites to ensure:
- That each significant recreational activity has at least one site/ locality that provides an optimal experience for that activity.
- A range of recreation settings exist including some sites as more natural settings.
- Options are considered to manage the impact of forestry operations.
- Develop and promote key tracks/routes for each recreational activity in conjunction with key groups including:

- Establishment of additional walking tracks consistent with ACT Trails strategy including tracks which link and interpret cultural sites.
- Enhanced opportunities for horse riding, mountain biking etc.
- Improved provision for and management of group activities to better meet group needs and to minimise conflicts with other recreational activities.
- Provision of additional multi purpose group facilities for use on booked basis in the areas most suitable for group activities.
- Working with user groups to plan best practice event facilities including parking, staging areas, risk management strategies and to enhance the capacity for areas to suit a range of activity events.
- Encouraging greater overnight use of forestry areas by:
  - The provision of a broader range of accommodation options to complement those provided for camping and those provided by other land managers.
  - The investigation and development of additional areas for camping, and specific group camping, to provide the potential for a less crowded experience.
- Focusing management and maintenance resources on key sites by:
  - Upgrading existing facilities consistent with the ACT Forests corporate style manual.
  - Improved quality and publicity of forest recreational information.
  - Working with ACTPCS to provide joint information at key access points to the forests and reserves.

### ***General Improvement to Visitor Experience***

- Monitoring of visitor use, expectations and satisfaction to acquire the information to better service the needs of users.
- Facility standards—establishment of best practice facilities to meet contemporary standards.
- Design standards—A coordinated approach to the styles and types of site furniture to reinforce branding and image of ACT Forests.
- Interpretation—of natural and cultural values to the extent that demand indicates visitors will value it.
- Risk management—at key recreation sites with monitoring program to ensure public safety.
- Forestry operations—careful planning to maintain recreational amenity around recreation nodes as well as maintaining visitor safety through publicity, signage and work place safety regime.
- Promotion of the range of recreation opportunities through information, publicity, and the promotion of touring routes.
- The establishment and ongoing liaison with specific user groups to identify and work together on recreational needs.
- Implement policy of weekly newspaper and radio updates/community service announcements about events for safety and publicity purposes.
- Liaise with CTEC and negotiate with commercial operators to consider opportunities for commercial recreational experiences in ACT Forests including potential adventure activities and guided, educational tours.

## 8.5 Canberra Nature Park

Assumptions:

- Increased pressure on these areas from displaced recreational activities.

Proposals:

- Undertake detailed planning for reserve areas to enable increased use whilst minimising impacts on key values.

### ***Recommendations***

- Establish Canberra Nature Park Users' Consultative Committee to assist in planning for key visitor nodes.
- Undertake demand and gap analysis survey and review to establish base for effective planning for Canberra Nature Park and Googong.
- Review existing management of Canberra Nature Park visitor nodes to identify areas where additional recreational use may be accommodated.
- Develop strategy for the management of cycling and horse riding in Canberra Nature Park to enhance opportunities for these activities consistent with protection of significant values, and to facilitate links between a range of recreational nodes.
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## 9.Implementation (indicative)

An Implementation Schedule will be prepared in consultation with staff. It is intended that the Implementation Schedule be staged over the five year period and identify realistic cost estimates, timeframe and accountabilities for achieving the strategy.

The following indicative Implementation Plan is provided for comment.

<b>Namadgi National Park</b>	<b>YR 1</b>	<b>YR 2</b>	<b>YR 3</b>	<b>YR 4</b>	<b>YR 5</b>
<b>Mount Franklin Road</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake a road management plan for Mount Franklin Road</li> <li>Replace Mount Franklin Chalet with day use shelter and interpretation</li> <li>Undertake a review of the recreational opportunities provided through the re-alignment or opening of any other access trails</li> </ul>		X X ONG			
<b>Orroral Valley</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upgrade facilities at Orroral Tracking station site</li> <li>Upgrade interpretive signage at the old Tracking Station</li> <li>Liaise with user groups re staging of events at the tracking station site</li> <li>Establish working group with climbing groups to resolve issues at Orroral Ridge</li> <li>Upgrade Orroral Ridge Trail, off Orroral Link road to provide vehicular access to car park and day use area at Orroral Ridge</li> <li>Investigate the establishment of a walking track: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>linking Honeysuckle Creek camp ground with Orroral Ridge</li> <li>providing a safe lookout from the ridge</li> </ul> </li> <li>Liaise with cycling groups re marked cycling routes using existing track network</li> </ul>	X		X X	X X	
<b>Corin Dam</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain and upgrade day use facilities at Corin consistent with demand</li> </ul>	ONG				
<b>Boboyan/Gudgenby Area</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance facilities for day visitors and car tourers in this area through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upgrading lookouts on the Boboyan Road</li> <li>Redevelopment of facilities at Glendale Picnic area</li> <li>Redevelopment and upgrading of facilities at the Yankee Hat car park</li> <li>Development of the Old Boboyan Rd walk as a heritage trail</li> </ul> </li> <li>Seek Expressions of Interest for alternative use of Gudgenby Homestead</li> <li>Develop an interpretive plan for Gudgenby Homestead precinct</li> <li>Prepare site plan for car park and day use area in the Gudgenby Homestead area.</li> </ul>	X	X X	X X	X	X X
<b>Murrumbidgee River Corridor</b>	<b>YR 1</b>	<b>YR 2</b>	<b>YR 3</b>	<b>YR 4</b>	<b>YR 5</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate the development of a walking track on east side of Murrumbidgee River Corridor from Uriarra Crossing to Tharwa Bridge with a loop section using the western side of the river from Point Hut to Cotter</li> <li>Investigate provision of a camp site/shelter on the loop section of track</li> <li>Investigate the options for development of a single use cycle track on sections of the MRC, or for areas where dual use of a walking/cycling track would be feasible</li> </ul>	X X X				
<b>Uriarra Crossing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop detailed site plan for Uriarra Crossing.</li> <li>Construct facilities consistent with site plan</li> </ul>		X X			
<b>Pine Island</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop detailed site plan for Pine Island</li> <li>Construct facilities consistent with site plan</li> </ul>	X X				
<b>Kambah Pool</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop Master Plan for redevelopment of Kambah Pool</li> <li>Construct facilities consistent with site plan</li> </ul>	X X				
<b>Point Hut Crossing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop detailed site plan for Point Hut Crossing</li> </ul>	X				

• Construct facilities consistent with site plan	X				
<b>Tharwa Bridge</b>					
• Work with the community to identify appropriate facility and landscape needs for the site	X				
• Plan appropriate signage and information to complement and promote the Tharwa Craft precinct.			X		
<b>Angle Crossing</b>					
• Install simple day use facilities at Angle Crossing and monitor use and impacts associated with use		X			
<b>Overall image</b>					
• Develop interpretive plan to assist in meeting user needs at different sites.		X			
• Investigate and promote access linkages with the lower Molonglo			X		

<b>Canberra Nature Park</b>	<b>YR 1</b>	<b>YR 2</b>	<b>YR 3</b>	<b>YR 4</b>	<b>YR 5</b>
• Establish Canberra Nature Park Users' Consultative Committee	X				
• Undertake demand and gap analysis survey and review	X	X			
• Review existing management of Canberra Nature Park visitor nodes		X			
• Develop strategy for the management of cycling and horse riding in Canberra Nature Park.					

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## Appendix 2: Recreation And Environmental Setting Guidelines

Activity	Environmental setting required	Facility and service needs	Experience elements	Linkages etc.	Comments
Bushwalking (back country)	Bushland preferably with interesting landscapes special features such as escarpment, gorge, waterfall, lake, views, tall open forest, rainforest, heath, cliffs, site of geological significance, cultural features	Tracks and routes established across a range of environments including remote to developed areas and range of land tenure Long distance tracks Riverside tracks Loop tracks Facility needs appropriate to ROS zone including access, maps, trailhead facilities, track hardening/maintenance, signage	Range of experience elements required in natural environment and varied terrain including (i) remote experiences to hardened tracks (ii) varying levels of challenge; (iii) range of levels of physical activity	Linkages between areas including the various nodes in the open space system are important	The ACT Trails Strategy and Australian Standards for walking tracks provide the framework within which tracks need to be considered
Walking (front country) Including power walking, dog walking	attractive natural setting	Short – medium distance and loop tracks near urban areas and key visitor nodes; Stacked loop systems close to walking activity (eg picnic areas) hubs; Facility needs appropriate to ROS zone including access, maps, trailhead facilities, track hardening/maintenance, signage interpretation	Range of experiences related to environment (natural and cultural), access and challenge	Short walks may be linkages between visitor nodes or elements in the open space system	The ACT Trails Strategy and Australian Standards for walking tracks provide the framework within which tracks need to be considered
Horse-riding endurance	Extensive bushland or forest areas	Tracks established across a range of environments including remote to developed areas and range of land tenure. Facility needs appropriate to ROS zone including access, maps, trailhead facilities, track hardening/maintenance, signage, car and float parking toilets and staging areas for competitors and spectators	Natural environment and varied terrain from remote to semi remote motorised Challenging terrain	None essential	

Activity	Environmental setting required	Facility and service needs	Experience elements	Linkages etc.	Comments
Horse-riding – trail rides	Bushland or forest areas with features of interest such as waterfall, lake, views, tall open forest, cultural features	Tracks established or available across a range of environments including remote to developed areas and range of land tenure Short – medium distance and loop tracks near urban areas and key visitor nodes Facility needs appropriate to ROS zone including access, maps, trailhead facilities, track hardening/maintenance, signage, car and float parking, toilet facilities	Natural environment and varied terrain and challenge levels from remote to developed	Linkages from agistment areas to appropriate trails are essential; linkages between nodes in the open space system; Bicentennial National Trail; Camping areas available for trail riders need to be accessible; BNT linkages from Namadgi to NSW need to be safe and accessible	Perceived conflicts between horse riding and other foot based activities indicate a need for tracks separated predominantly for horse riding activity
Mountain bike riding	Minor road or vehicle track in bushland and forest, features of interest such as permanent creeks, waterfall, views	Range of four wheel drive and cycle tracks available to cyclists ranging from remote to developed; Stacked loop trail system from key visitor nodes; Some areas for informal downhill cycling activity; Facility needs appropriate to ROS zone including access and parking; maps, trailhead facilities, directional signage	Natural environment and varied terrain from remote to developed Challenge- not always associated with speed, but sometimes with technical skills- particularly single track rides.	Linkages from and between urban area to natural areas; linkages between visitor nodes; Linkage from ACT to NSW via Namadgi National Park constrained by current zoning.	Planning for informal downhill riding is difficult to achieve given the desire for varied, bumpy rugged and unmanaged terrain (such as erosion gullies)
Mountain bike racing	Steep downhill area close to population areas.	Managed track with access to start for bicycles marshalling areas, media, visitor facilities, and areas for spectator viewing and parking Security, exclusive access	Varied and steep terrain; challenge	None essential	
Road cycling	Arterial roads and loops	Access and parking	Varied terrain and challenge in natural setting	None essential	
Picnicking	Natural settings across range of terrain linked to other attractants including scenery, water, trailhead or built facilities	Range of facility needs close to access roads including parking, picnic/BBQ facilities, toilets, play space, information	Natural environment and range of settings and service levels across semi remote motorized to developed settings	Tourist drives and local area cycle tracks, walking tracks	
Camping	Natural settings across range of land tenure and remote to developed areas linked to other attractants including	Ranges from developed to simple facilities related to ROS zoning;	Ranges from secure, comfortable campsite with cabin type accommodation to remote experience	Walking track/horse camp/mountain bike route linkages need to be considered	

Activity	Environmental setting required	Facility and service needs	Experience elements	Linkages etc.	Comments
	scenery, water, walking tracks or built facilities				
Visiting huts	Huts in natural environment	Range of access including car, cycle and walking needs; Toilets and interpretation consistent with ROS zoning	Understanding and appreciation of the past and current role of site in landscape	Access tracks; waking tracks between series of huts	
Car touring/sightseeing	Road, varied scenery, features of interest such as view from escarpment or hill lookouts, views, waterfall, estuary, tall open forest, heath, cultural features, sites of geological significance	Road network with features of interest and visitor facilities consistent with ROS zoning including picnicking, retail, accommodation and activities	Safe access and varied scenery and attractions	Loop tourist drives and signposted links to arterial roads, picnic areas, cultural sites	
Four wheel driving	Vehicle track in bush land, features of interest such as permanent creeks, waterfall, tall forest, heath, cultural features, sites of geological significance	Access to track network Varied terrain Attractive destinations and loop trails Visitor facilities consistent with zoning including picnicking and camping	Varied terrain and challenge in natural areas from semi-remote motorised to developed	Loop roads and marked drives	
Car rallies	Vehicle tracks in bushland	Exclusive access Perimeter fencing/ security Parking, power, signage, toilets, shelter at staging sites for major events. Security	Varied terrain and challenge; extensive area	None essential	impact on other users
Motor cycle rallies	Vehicle tracks in bushland	Exclusive access Perimeter fencing/ security Parking, power, signage, toilets, shelter at staging sites for major events. Security	Varied terrain and challenge; extensive area	None essential	impact on other users
Motor bike riding	Vehicle track in bushland, features of interest such as permanent creeks, waterfall, tall forest, heath, cultural features, sites of geological significance	Access to track network and loop trails; Visitor facilities consistent with zoning including picnicking and camping	Varied terrain and challenge from semi-remote motorised to developed	Loop trails	Impact on other users

Activity	Environmental setting required	Facility and service needs	Experience elements	Linkages etc.	Comments
Orienteering/ rogaining	Natural settings across range of land tenure and remote to semi remote non motorized areas	Access and parking for two wheel drives; assembly areas; toilet facilities	Natural setting; varied terrain and challenge	Areas for the activity are linked to the development of maps for periodic re-use	



## Appendix 3: Facility Level Standards For Act Natural Areas

		<b>ZONE 1 REMOTE</b>	<b>ZONE 2 SEMI- REMOTE</b>			<b>ZONE 3</b>	<b>ZONE 4</b>
Key Area	Facilities/ services	Core Conservation Area	2A Conservation/recrea tion woodland landscape	2b Conservation/recrea tion cultural landscape	2C Conservation/recreation pine forest landscape	Roaded natural	Development
Access		Private vehicle use not permitted in zone. Vehicle access to trackheads around periphery of zone and road corridors. Cycling and wheeled conveyance on selected fire trails. Walking on and off trail. Horse riding not permitted.	Private vehicle use not permitted in zone. Vehicle access to track-heads around periphery of zone and road corridors. Cycling and wheeled conveyance on selected fire trails. Horse riding not permitted.		Vehicle access to groups by permit. Able to walk, cycle and ride horses on vehicle trails. Low standard tracks for specific purposes- eg single track mountain biking. Events in designated areas. Licensed tours and groups permitted.	A mix of 2WD and 4WD trails for public use. Able to walk, cycle and ride horses on vehicle trails. Low standard tracks for specific purposes- eg single track mountain biking. Some graded and purpose built tracks to appropriate standards.	Tracks constructed to Australian and NZ standards. Disabled access to all facilities.
Day use facilities	BBQs and fireplaces	Fuel stove only	Encourage fuel-stove use. Some fires in constructed fireplaces only at huts or designated campgrounds.	Encourage fuel-stove use. Some fires in constructed fireplaces only at huts or designated campgrounds.	Encourage fuel-stove use. Some fires in constructed fireplaces only at huts or designated campgrounds.	Private fuel stove use to be encouraged. Replace wood fireplaces with electric/ gas at key visitor nodes.	Gas/ electric BBQs
	Toilets	Remote toilet only for essential environment protection.	Remote toilet only for essential environment protection.	Toilet for waste control at key nodes. Minimise visual impact.	Toilet for waste control at key nodes.	Compost/ sealed pit. Septic for visitor amenity at key visitor nodes.	Flushing toilet, cold hand wash.
	Seats / tables	None provided. Minimal development zone.	None provided. Minimal development zone.	None provided. Minimal development zone.	Some provided at key visitor nodes.	Some at sites across Zone. Concentrations at key nodes. Design for disabled access.	Extensive provision. Some covered.

		<b>ZONE 1 REMOTE</b>	<b>ZONE 2 SEMI- REMOTE</b>			<b>ZONE 3</b>	<b>ZONE 4</b>
Key Area	Facilities/ services	Core Conservation Area	2A Conservation/recrea tion woodland landscape	2b Conservation/recrea tion cultural landscape	2C Conservation/recreation pine forest landscape	Roaded natural	Development
	Potable water.	Natural source.	Natural source.	Natural source.	Natural source.	Could be pumped	Reticulated
	Shelter	No new facilities.	No new facilities.	Existing historic huts to be sympathetically adapted as appropriate for sustainable public recreational use.	Maintain existing network of shelter huts. Provide for interpretation at selected nodes.	Provide for shade at key recreation nodes.	Provide for shade, rain and wind protection.
	Other	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Mobile food service at peak times associated with organised events.	Telephone, kiosk/ commercial food service. Lighting of group areas
Camping		Dispersed camping.	Dispersed camping. Some formal camping especially for group use.	Dispersed camping. Some formal camping especially for group use.	Dispersed, with no facilities except for group use or resource protection.	Partially serviced camp sites. Opportunities for remote style bush camping. Hut/ cabin accommodation at appropriate sites.	Full services camping with hot showers and roofed accommodation up to cabin standard.
Landscape management		Minimal- for resource protection only.	Minimal- for resource protection only	Minimal- for resource protection and visitor management at periphery and key visitor nodes.	For resource protection and erosion control. Landscape management at key visitor nodes.	Active landscape management for visitor use and to maintain setting	Detailed site plans, plantings and management.
Interpretation and signage.	Interpre- tation	Generally no on- site interpretation.	Generally no on-site interpretation.	Network of self- guided or guided interpretive trails incorporating on-site interpretation and publications.	Key natural, cultural and forest management sites.	Key natural, cultural and forest management sites.	High quality on- site interpretation for visitor enjoyment and education. Face to face communication at peak times

		<b>ZONE 1 REMOTE</b>	<b>ZONE 2 SEMI- REMOTE</b>			<b>ZONE 3</b>	<b>ZONE 4</b>
Key Area	Facilities/ services	Core Conservation Area	2A Conservation/recrea tion woodland landscape	2b Conservation/recrea tion cultural landscape	2C Conservation/recreation pine forest landscape	Roaded natural	Development
	Signage	Generally no on-site signage.	Limited directional signage, safety and minimal impact messages on fire trails, trailheads and walking tracks. Safety and minimal impact	Limited directional signage, safety and minimal impact messages on fire trails, trailheads and walking tracks. Safety and minimal impact	Signs to identify sites and directional signage on network of tracks and trails.	Directional signs at key access points and junctions. Directional signs to key recreation nodes. Routes/ tracks marked for specific activity.	All trailheads and visitor facilities signposted. Orientation maps at key points.
Access		Private vehicle use not permitted in zone. Vehicle access to track heads around periphery of zone and road corridors. Cycling and wheeled conveyance on selected fire trails. Walking on and off trail. Horse riding not permitted.	Private vehicle use not permitted in zone. Vehicle access to track-heads around periphery of zone and road corridors. Cycling and wheeled conveyance on selected fire trails. Horse riding not permitted.		Vehicle access to groups by permit. Able to walk, cycle and ride horses on vehicle trails. Low standard tracks for specific purposes- eg single track mountain biking. Events in designated areas. Licensed tours and groups permitted.	A mix of 2WD and 4WD trails for public use. Able to walk, cycle and ride horses on vehicle trails. Low standard tracks for specific purposes- eg single track mountain biking. Some graded and purpose built tracks to appropriate standards.	Tracks constructed to Australian and NZ standards. Disabled access to all facilities.
Day use facilities	BBQs and fireplaces	Fuel stove only	Encourage fuel-stove use. Some fires in constructed fireplaces only at huts or designated campgrounds.	Encourage fuel-stove use. Some fires in constructed fireplaces only at huts or designated campgrounds.	Encourage fuel-stove use. Some fires in constructed fireplaces only at huts or designated campgrounds.	Private fuel stove use to be encouraged. Replace wood fireplaces with electric/ gas at key visitor nodes.	Gas/ electric BBQs
	Toilets	Remote toilet only for essential environment protection.	Remote toilet only for essential environment protection.	Toilet for waste control at key nodes. Minimise visual impact.	Toilet for waste control at key nodes.	Compost/ sealed pit. Septic for visitor amenity at key visitor nodes.	Flushing toilet, cold hand wash.
	Seats / tables	None provided. Minimal development zone.	None provided. Minimal development zone.	None provided. Minimal development zone.	Some provided at key visitor nodes.	Some at sites across Zone. Concentrations at key nodes. Design for disabled access.	Extensive provision. Some covered.

		<b>ZONE 1 REMOTE</b>	<b>ZONE 2 SEMI- REMOTE</b>			<b>ZONE 3</b>	<b>ZONE 4</b>
Key Area	Facilities/ services	Core Conservation Area	2A Conservation/recrea tion woodland landscape	2b Conservation/recrea tion cultural landscape	2C Conservation/recreation pine forest landscape	Roaded natural	Development
	Potable water.	Natural source.	Natural source.	Natural source.	Natural source.	Could be pumped	Reticulated
	Shelter	No new facilities.	No new facilities.	Existing historic huts to be sympathetically adapted as appropriate for sustainable public recreational use.	Maintain existing network of shelter huts. Provide for interpretation at selected nodes.	Provide for shade at key recreation nodes.	Provide for shade, rain and wind protection.
	Other	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Mobile food service at peak times associated with organised events.	Telephone, kiosk/ commercial food service. Lighting of group areas
Camping		Dispersed camping.	Dispersed camping. Some formal camping especially for group use.	Dispersed camping. Some formal camping especially for group use.	Dispersed, with no facilities except for group use or resource protection.	Partially serviced camp sites. Opportunities for remote style bush camping. Hut/ cabin accommodation at appropriate sites.	Full services camping with hot showers and roofed accommodation up to cabin standard.
Landscape management		Minimal- for resource protection only.	Minimal- for resource protection only	Minimal- for resource protection and visitor management at periphery and key visitor nodes.	For resource protection and erosion control. Landscape management at key visitor nodes.	Active landscape management for visitor use and to maintain setting	Detailed site plans, plantings and management.
Interpreta tion and signage.	Interpretation	Generally no on- site interpretation.	Generally no on-site interpretation.	Network of self- guided or guided interpretive trails incorporating on-site interpretation and publications.	Key natural, cultural and forest management sites.	Key natural, cultural and forest management sites.	High quality on- site interpretation for visitor enjoyment and education. Face to face communication at peak times

		<b>ZONE 1 REMOTE</b>	<b>ZONE 2 SEMI- REMOTE</b>			<b>ZONE 3</b>	<b>ZONE 4</b>
Key Area	Facilities/ services	Core Conservation Area	2A Conservation/recrea tion woodland landscape	2b Conservation/recrea tion cultural landscape	2C Conservation/recreation pine forest landscape	Roaded natural	Development
	Signage	Generally no on- site signage.	Limited directional signage, safety and minimal impact messages on fire trails, trailheads and walking tracks. Safety and minimal impact	Limited directional signage, safety and minimal impact messages on fire trails, trailheads and walking tracks. Safety and minimal impact	Signs to identify sites and directional signage on network of tracks and trails.	Directional signs at key access points and junctions. Directional signs to key recreation nodes. Routes/ tracks marked for specific activity.	All trailheads and visitor facilities signposted. Orientation maps at key points.

## Appendix 4: Inventory Of Recreation Settings In ACT Natural Areas

<b>NAMADGI NATIONAL PARK</b>			
<b>Site</b>	<b>Site Characteristics</b>	<b>Elements</b>	<b>Condition of Infrastructure/Sites</b>
<b>Orroral Valley Campground</b>	High use natural camping area with minimal facilities and access form sealed road	Camp sites Toilets Creek Water BBQs	Facilities unaffected by fire; Staged refurbishment and upgrading over time; circulation and erosion control could be improved
<b>Honeysuckle Creek</b>	High use, high quality camping area with disabled facilities	Camp/van sites Amenities including disabled Walking tracks Information BBQ shelter Gas BBQs	Facilities in good condition and unaffected by fire
<b>Mt Clear</b>	Low use natural camping area with minimal facilities and access form sealed road; higher use at peak times	Camp sites Toilets Creek Water	Facilities unaffected by fire; Staged upgrading over time; could provide for campervans
<b>Tidbinbilla Tracking Station</b>	High use day use area adjacent to previous tracking station ruins	Disabled access toilets Day use facilities BBQs	Updating of day use facilities consistent with toilet standards would enhance the site; high quality interpretation and appropriate use of tracking station ruins needs to be considered
<b>Yankee Hat trailhead</b>	Trailhead to walking track to aboriginal site	Parking, toilet and signage	Significant upgrading potential to provide quality trailhead and day use area
<b>Namadgi Visitor Centre</b>	ACT Parks Namadgi Visitor Centre on sealed road	Information Centre, retail and displays; Toilets Car parking Day use Trailhead for short walks	Structure unaffected by fire Regular updating of information required Additional loop walking track potential
<b>Australian Alps Walking Track</b>	ACT end of Vic-ACT 650km walking track	Maintained track with signage at standards appropriate to land zoning	Part of track affected by fire; regular routine maintenance as per walking track standards
<b>Bicentennial National Trail</b>	ACT component of Queensland to Victoria horse riding trail	Maintained track with signage at standards appropriate to land zoning	Part of track affected by fire; some re routing required
<b>Glendale</b>	High use day use area adjacent to key access corridor through Namadgi	Toilets BBQs Day use facilities	Day use facilities destroyed by fire Site redesign and redevelopment required

<b>MURRUMBIDGEE RIVER CORRIDOR</b>			
<b>Site</b>	<b>Site Characteristics</b>	<b>Elements</b>	<b>Condition of Infrastructure/Sites</b>
<b>Point Hut Crossing</b>	Medium use day use facility on river	Parking BBQs Day use facilities	Facilities unaffected by fire; dated facilities need redesign and upgrading
<b>Pine Island</b>	High use site adjacent to river	Extensive Parking BBQs River swimming Picnic tables Walking track Toilets	Landscape severely impacted by fire; some facilities destroyed Circulation and erosion control need to be improved as well as site amenity and sense of place
<b>Kambah Pool</b>	High use site adjacent to river	BBQs River swimming Picnic tables Toilets Shelters Walking track	Landscape severely impacted by fire; some facilities affected; Dates infrastructure and site management requires redesign and total refurbishment
<b>Angle Crossing</b>	Low use site adjacent to river crossing on road with increasing level of use	No facilities	Increased use suggests need for simple day use facilities
<b>Cotter Precinct</b>	High use multi site precinct with range of visitor nodes	Parking Day use BBQs Walking tracks Playground Hotel/kiosk site Toilets Natural campsites	Many of the site elements have been affected by fire; total site review and redevelopment required
<b>Uriarra</b>	Medium use day use and camping area adjacent to river on Uriarra Road	Parking Toilets Natural campsites	Landscape amenity affected by fire; Upgrading and refurbishment of site to contemporary standards appropriate

<b>ACT FORESTS</b>			
<b>Site</b>	<b>Site Characteristics</b>	<b>Elements</b>	<b>Condition of Infrastructure/Sites</b>
<b>Deek's Forests Park</b>	High use day use area	Parking toilets Playground Trailhead for range of tracks	
<b>Blue Gums</b>	Camp site within locked forest accessible with permission	Toilets Camp sites Water BBQs	Landscape amenity affected by fire; Upgrading /refurbishment for increased use if area available to recreation
<b>Dairy Farmers Lookout</b>	Lookout site not publicly accessible by vehicle	No facilities	Landscape amenity affected by fire; Upgrading for increased use as day use area and lookout if area available to recreation
<b>Narrabundah Hill</b>	Neighbourhood recreation area	No facilities	Landscape amenity affected by fire; Upgrading for increased use if area available to recreation
<b>Molonglo George</b>	Medium use day use area	Parking Toilets Playground Walking tracks BBQs	Unaffected by fire Refurbishment consistent with plan Investigation of camping
<b>Molonglo – Blue Tiles</b>	Low use camp site accessible on foot or with permission and key	Toilets Natural camp sites	Unaffected by fire
<b>Kowen Homestead / depot</b>	Low use camp site and day use accessible with permission and key	Day use facilities	Unaffected by fire; Upgrade to provide camping opportunities and event staging areas
<b>Murray's Corner</b>	High use day use area adjacent to Tourist Route 5	Toilets Shelters BBQs	Landscape affected by fire Upgrading to high quality day use area; consider potential for camping
<b>Concrete Crossing</b>	Low use day use area	Picnic facilities	Areas severely affected by fire including huts destroyed; facility development dependent on future land use
<b>Willow Flat</b>	Low use day use area	No facilities	
<b>Laurel Camp</b>	Camping/hut use	Hut	
<b>Tidbinbilla Hut</b>	Camping/hut use	Hut	
<b>Woods Point Reserve</b>	High use camping area	Toilets Camp sites Picnic facilities BBQs Information Walking track	Landscape affected by fire; Staged upgrading over time
<b>Gibraltar Falls</b>	Low use day use area	Toilets Parking Walking track Picnic table	Landscape affected by fire; redesign for improved amenity and risk management required
<b>Blue Range</b>	High use camping area and day use	Picnic tables Camp sites Hut Cycle course	Landscape affected by fire; facility development dependent on future land use
<b>Blundells Flat</b>	Low use destination	No facilities	Areas severely affected by fire; facility development dependent on future land use
<b>Sherwood</b>	Low use destination and walking track	No facilities	
<b>Condor Hut</b>	Low use hut site	No facilities	

### **CANBERRA NATURE PARK**

The Canberra Nature Park Management Plan contains comprehensive information in regard to recreation sites and is not reproduced.



