



Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc

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Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow

Date: 01 August 2018

Manager
NPWS Planning Evaluation and Assessment
P O Box 95
PARRAMATTA NSW 2124

Dear Sir/Madam

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society is a community based volunteer organisation with 800 members. Its mission is to help conserve the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains, and to increase awareness of the natural environment in general.

We strongly object to all three proposed amendments to the plans of management for Far South Coast Parks, Kosciuszko National Park and Mummel Gulf National Park and State Conservation Area that seek to allow horse riding in wilderness areas. Additionally we are particularly concerned for other Wilderness areas in NSW, particularly in the Blue Mountains, which may be next in this destructive process. These proposals set a worrying precedent that diminishes the value of our Wilderness areas.

We do not agree that horse riding is an appropriate form of recreation in wilderness, and it is equally inappropriate within our National Parks. Horse riding cannot be deemed self reliant as it is reliant on a horse and the infrastructure required to support that horse. This activity is not compatible with the Wilderness Act, 1987.

We are concerned that horse riding will impact on native vegetation. The likelihood of soil compaction, trampling, the spread of weeds and introduction of pathogens such as Phytophthora are totally unacceptable. These can then have further impacts on fauna.

The three alleged safeguards: riding on existing tracks and trails, camping at designated campsites, and compliance with the NPWS horse riding code will not protect wilderness or threatened species as these controls are voluntary and can

be ignored and compliance control is very likely non-existent due to the decreasing NPWS staff levels and budget.

Between 2014 and 2016 horse riders were part of a wilderness trial, but that did not moderate the behaviour of some. Monitoring cameras were destroyed and stolen, a dog was taken into Deua National Park and brumbie running occurred in Kosciuszko National Park. Future horse riding allowed through these amendments will enable more vandalism, theft and animal cruelty on top of negative environmental impacts and loss of wilderness values.

Again, due to NPWS staff cuts and budget restraints, we fear that damage caused by horse riding in Wilderness areas will not be remediated. Weed invasion, soil erosion and loss of threatened species in remote wilderness will never be reversed, as funds to do so will never be made available.

With this proposal and the recent change where wild horses in Kosciuszko National Park have become protected, it appears horses are now sacrosanct within many National Parks. How far are these ridiculous laws and amendments going to go? How many other National Parks will be opened to horse riding and horse protection? As previously said, we are particularly concerned that Blue Mountains Wilderness areas will be next. A vocal horse riding culture exists in nearby areas.

Can the National Parks and Wildlife Service please return to its prime responsibility, that is, the protection of flora and fauna within our precious reserves?

We call on the government to reverse its decision allowing horse riding in Wilderness areas.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Madi Maclean". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a period at the end.

Madi Maclean
President
Blue Mountains Conservation Society
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