

State Series Events and Prescribed Burning of Forest in Victoria

In May 2012, BK were planning to run a State Series event at Sailors Falls just south of Daylesford. We have recently found out that the area is also due for Prescribed Burning in April/May.

Parks Victoria advise that the area is a high priority on their to burn list so their aim is it will be done earlier rather than later.

BK are planning that in this case we will relocate the event due on Sunday 20th May.

Prescribed Burning in Victoria (Info supplied DSE and Parks Vic)

- Total square km burnt will increase considerably during the next few years particularly during Autumn and Spring. This is also the best orienteering weather.
- Check out the following website. It gives current DSE plans for next season www.dse.vic.gov.au/fire-&-other-emergencies/planned-burning-an-introduction/fire-operations-plans-approved
- The process of planning a Prescribed Burn is completely weather dependent. It may vary by weeks earlier or later. DSE advise me that they cannot confirm the exact date an area will be burnt until 24 to 48 hours prior to the burn. This also means an area may be burnt on the weekend of a planned bush event.
- A burnt area will be closed for up to two weeks after the burn because of the danger of weakened or falling timber.
- They MAY only burn part of an area on a particular day and then come back one or two weeks later to burn the rest.
- The normal application process to DSE/Parks to run an event should go ahead. They recommend supplying alternative dates or even alternative locations on the same application and they will contact you with more info closer to the event date.

State Series Events

As an organisation we need to consider safety of our customers as first priority.

Two years ago part of the BK map at Jim Crow was burnt in April. Four months later in August we ran a scheduled State Series event there. Most courses did go through the burnt areas. There was minimal regrowth and the ground was still very slippery and dirty. Comments from many people was that they did NOT enjoy the experience.

Question for All Club Committees

Do you relocate the event or not? Also when do you make this decision?

- If the burn is due in Spring and your event is in Autumn, no problem. The event can go ahead as normal.
- If the burn happens in the weeks before the event weekend, **and you decide to go ahead** then remember
 - All control site tags that have already been checked by course setter and controller will be gone (burnt out)
 - Tracks that you may have planned to drive on to assist putting out control stands and water drops may not be possible due to lots of extra fallen trees.
 - If the wind gets gusty during the event there is a good chance of more fallen timber.
 - Parking should not be under trees in a recently burnt area.
 - Running through a burnt out area is an experience but BK believe that many people just do not like it.
- If the burn is due to happen on the weekend of the event. DSE may not confirm this till the Friday. In this case the event will need to be cancelled. As organisers, we will need to rely on the O Vic website and contact with clubs to make sure everybody knows.

Recommendations

- Safety is greatest priority
- If an event is cancelled it is very hard to reschedule in the same year due to a packed OV bush calendar
- BK believe any event should be relocated in the event of a planned burn. This may mean the use of a map belonging to another club.

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