

Mt Hood Orienteering (MTHD) is committed to conducting events in an environmentally responsible manner and encourages environmental awareness and responsibility among its members.

MTHD adopts the following Environmental Policy governing its orienteering activities for the purpose of protecting the natural resources of the venues it has permission to use.

## **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

**Common use areas** - Areas designated for group activities such as pavilions, parking areas, etc.

**Event** - Any regularly scheduled MTHD orienteering activity. Multiple consecutive day activities are considered to be a single event. This does not include educational seminars, individual training exercises, or non-regularly scheduled activities.

**Land Manager** - the primary interface with MTHD concerning issues of land use. Land managers may include park superintendents, state officials, private landowners, etc.

**Load-carrying capacity** - The ability of the land, vegetation, and wildlife to withstand orienteering activity. This will be a function of the number of orienteers, the nature of the terrain, seasonal conditions, etc. The MTHD standard with regard to load-carrying capacity will be that no observable impact will be present one year (one seasonal cycle) subsequent to the event.

**Season** - Spring, summer, fall, winter

**Venue** - Any location used for orienteering activity. Venues include state, county, and local parks, game lands, private land, etc. For parks with multiple maps, each separately mapped area constitutes a separate venue.

## **A. MAP MAKING**

1. When conducting site-selection for future maps, permission should be obtained from the appropriate land managers to ensure that the area of interest can be used for orienteering events. As part of the permission process, the land managers should be informed about the nature of orienteering so that an educated decision is made about the use of the land. They should be specifically asked about off-trail usage and designated environmentally sensitive areas.
2. Where appropriate, designated environmentally sensitive areas may be labeled sensitive on the map as part of the map-making process.

**B. EVENT SCHEDULING**

1. Regularly scheduled events should be coordinated so that venues are rotated and not used more than twice in one season. A minimum of one month's time should be allowed between consecutive events in a venue.
2. Non-regularly scheduled orienteering activities are also expected to comply with the guidelines outlined in this policy, with the exception of item B.1.

**C. COURSE DESIGN**

1. The Event Director is responsible for ensuring that courses are designed with the following environmental considerations in mind.
2. These guidelines apply to all courses although they are particularly applicable to the intermediate and advanced courses which rely heavily on off-trail navigation and the use of common controls.
3. Prior to designing courses for an event, the Course Designer should check with venue officials to review environmental considerations.
4. In addition to any specific guidelines for a given venue, adherence to the following general guidelines will help ensure minimal environmental impact:
  - a. Control Site Selection:
    - Designated environmentally sensitive features should be avoided, not used, or not used in certain seasons unless the flag can be hung such that the approach to and exit from the control does not have a negative effect. Examples: wetlands (marshes or swamps), seasonal plantings (crops), seeps, springs, erodible banks of ditches and streams, wildflower patches, moss or lichen covered features.
    - The use of a single control site for multiple courses will increase the number of orienteers near the control. This practice should be minimized or avoided if it causes the estimated load-carrying capacity of the terrain to be exceeded.
    - Historical markers/sites should not be used for control locations without park permission.
    - Control sites should be field-inspected by the Course Designer prior to final selection for use on a course.

**b. Route Choice:**

- During the course design process, consider areas where route choice would cause a large number of participants to converge. Where convergence would result in a concentration of orienteers greater than the estimated load-carrying capacity of the terrain, adjustments should be made.
- Consider the expected number of participants. What is appropriate for a small local event may not be appropriate for a large "A" event.
- Avoid legs that involve selection of a route that crosses environmentally sensitive areas.
- If necessary, participants can be routed to a specific stream crossing, fence crossing, etc. to avoid causing damage.
- It may be appropriate to delineate small, sensitive areas with streamers.
- In areas where there are large indigenous animals, such as deer, attempt to design courses that flow in one direction so that the animals can easily escape and not feel threatened by participants coming from various directions.

**5. Start and Finish Selection:**

- a. Depending on the number of event participants, if venues are used more than once during the year, different assembly, start, and finish areas should be considered for each event. If this is not possible, common use areas should be used (picnic pavilions, gravel paths, etc.).
- b. When selecting an event center, consider impact and availability of trash receptacles and restrooms.
- c. Remember that the start area, "GO" control, and finish area will see the heaviest concentration of orienteers; only robust areas should be used.

**D. EVENT MANAGEMENT**

1. When necessary, information should be posted and instruction given alerting participants to environmentally related conditions and rules.
2. It is the responsibility of the Event Director to ensure that the event center is left as clean or cleaner than it was found prior to the event. The registration, start, finish,

and parking areas should be policed at the end of the event to remove any trash or litter.

3. It is the responsibility of the Event Director to ensure that all controls, streamers, water jugs, paper cups, etc. are promptly removed from the control locations. Preferably, this should be done the same day as the event.
4. In the unlikely event that any damage to venue resources or facilities occurs, it is the responsibility of the Event Director to inform the appropriate land managers.
5. When appropriate, field studies may be conducted to study environmental impact.

#### **E. MEMBERS AND PARTICIPANTS**

1. Each orienteer is responsible for safeguarding the environment.
2. Venue resources should be respected and left for the enjoyment of others. It is never appropriate to pick flowers, harass wildlife, tamper with landmarks, collect artifacts, etc.
3. Each orienteer should clean up after him/herself. Trash should be disposed of in appropriate receptacles or "packed out."

#### **F. EDUCATION**

1. Issues of environmental awareness related to orienteering should be included in educational sessions involving people being introduced to the sport and other instructional clinics held by MTHD.
2. Educational events that are not part of a regularly scheduled event are expected to comply with all environmental guidelines with the exception of B.1 (scheduling frequency) since they are generally conducted on an on-demand basis.