

## GRADES OF WALKS

There are very few flat walks in the Blue Mountains. We have inherited a superb network of walking tracks, but many of them are not maintained to a high standard.

On walks both in and outside the Blue Mountains there may be steep climbs and many steps and you may encounter hazards such as uneven, loose and slippery surfaces, creek crossings, and obstacles such as fallen trees and rocks.

### Be prepared for sudden weather changes.

It is not easy to grade walks. What is easy for some is difficult for others. The following is a guide. The distance of the walk and the expected weather conditions need to also be considered by individual walkers.

Be aware of your own capabilities.

**Grade 1.** Fairly flat walk on roads, fire trails and walking tracks.

**Grade 2.** Fairly flat, but with some rough and/or steep sections, possibly some natural obstacles and some steps.

**Grade 3.** May include rough/steep sections, many steps, a steep climb and descent, natural obstacles, some off-track walking.

**Grade 4.** May include more of the above, with a greater degree of difficulty.

**Grade 5.** We occasionally arrange a walk considered most suited to experienced and very fit walkers. It is likely to include some or all of the following: rough/steep sections, steep climbs and descents, many steps, natural obstacles, off-track walking.

### Contact the leader or walks convenor, before attending:

- If this is your first walk
- If you have any doubts or questions
- If the walk is limited in numbers and booking is required.

## PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT:

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society Bushwalking Group practises minimal impact bushwalking.

*Minimal impact bushwalking means do nothing. Take nothing but photographs. Leave nothing that shows where you have been.*

## PACK IT IN, PACK IT OUT:

Carry a bag for your rubbish. If you find litter left along the track, please remove it.

## TREAD SOFTLY:

Use existing tracks. Don't take shortcuts or cut corners on zigzag paths—shortcuts cause erosion. Avoid easily damaged places such as swamps and fragile rock formations. Respect wildlife, large and small.

Membership Enquiries:  
Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.  
PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782  
Phone 4757 1872 Fax 4757 1753  
Email: [bmcs@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:bmcs@bluemountains.org.au)  
Website: <http://www.bluemountains.org.au/>

*The roar of the waterfall filled our ears as we descended the path between drenched rocks and dripping trees, through swirling mist which hid the valleys and just as rapidly revealed them.*

*Then, leaning on the rock wall at the end we waited for the cloud to tear apart to show us the waterfall, now deafening us with its fortissimo drumming.*

*The rain had paused, mountains appeared and disappeared, then the waterfall leaped out at us like a tiger.*

*Safe on our rock, we marvelled until the rain and cloud descended once more...*

*(Grace Bayley "Take it Slowly", 1993)*



## BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY BUSHWALKING GROUP

# Bushwalkers' Guide



Photo: BMCS Bushwalkers in Blue Gum Forest, September 2003

## **WATCH YOUR SAFETY:**

Be equipped for the worst possible conditions you may encounter, and be aware of the weight.

## **YOU WILL NEED:**

Suitable Non-slip Footwear    Backpack  
Hat    Raincoat    Warm clothing

Water: 1 litre minimum, more in hot weather  
or for long/hard walks

A snack and lunch for all-day walks

Basic First Aid Kit: 2 triangle bandages, 2 elastic  
crepe bandages, a space blanket, paper and pencil,  
bandaids, personal medication

Small Torch and Matches (for all-day walks)

Whistle

Additional items may include sun screen, field  
guides, map, trowel, toilet paper  
(make your own list)

## **FITNESS:**

Are you fit enough for the walk? Will you be  
affected by any physical limitation? Inform the  
leader and discuss any doubts before the walk.

The leader can refuse participation to anyone  
he/she considers may present a risk to themselves  
or other participants.

## **BEFORE THE ACTIVITY:**

Be there on time. Be prepared to start on time.

Hold an introductory circle. Leader will advise  
details of the walk. Be prepared to follow 'Plan B'  
for weather changes, bushfire threat, etc.

Bushwalks will only proceed with four or more  
adults. A large group may be split into two or more  
groups with leaders, if necessary.

Leader will appoint a **last person**.

All participants must fill out the walk  
attendance sheet. Participants agree to remain with  
the rest of the party during the activity and not to  
leave the walk without advising the leader.

If necessary, leader will arrange car convoy and  
count the number of cars.

## **DURING THE ACTIVITY**

### **Leader will:**

- Have a head count before you start walking.
- Have regular drink and rest breaks to allow  
walkers to regroup. Before you start again have a  
head count to make sure that everyone is there.
- Ensure everyone is comfortable with the pace and  
conditions and that slow or tired walkers are not  
left behind. It's easier for fast walkers to slow  
down than slow walkers to speed. If you have to  
stop and wait, don't start walking as soon as slow  
walkers catch up. This is very demoralising.
- Always wait at a track junction for the walkers  
behind.

### **Walkers:**

- Stay together. Be prepared to follow the leader's  
instructions.
- Stay behind the leader. You may go the wrong  
way!
- Stay in front of the last person or you may be left  
behind. If you need to leave the track for a  
comfort stop, tell the last person.
- Don't allow yourself to become separated from  
the group. If you have any difficulties such as  
pace, blisters, shortage of water, advise the leader  
or last person immediately.
- If you've lost contact with the people in front of  
you, don't go off in the wrong direction—stop  
and wait.
- If you've lost contact with the people behind you,  
tell the leader.
- Stay well back from the edge of cliffs or long  
drops (a body length is recommended, more for  
children).

## **AT THE END OF THE ACTIVITY**

Ensure that all participants have arrived at the  
finishing point.

Thank the leader.

Drive away when sure that all cars start.

**MEMBERSHIP:** Membership of BMCS  
Bushwalking Group is restricted to members of  
Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc. An  
annual bushwalking levy to cover insurance is  
payable.

**VISITORS:** Visitors may take part in walks  
subject to the leader's approval and sign an  
acknowledgement of risk waiver every time they  
attend activities. Visitors are limited to three  
walks.

**CHILDREN:** Children under 16 years of age  
must be accompanied by a responsible adult who is  
a member. Ratio of children to adults needs to be  
considered.

**POTENTIAL LEADERS:** Our bushwalking  
activities rely on a pool of willing and able  
volunteer leaders. Talk to the leader or walks  
convenor about leadership skills. Ask the leader if  
you can assist with navigation for part of the trip to  
increase your confidence. A more experienced  
leader can help you lead your first walk.

## **INJURIES AND OTHER INCIDENTS:**

If any injury or other incident occurs, tell the  
leader. The leader will make note and have this  
countersigned by another responsible walker. The  
Walks Convenor will be notified as soon as  
possible and a Notice of Injury form completed.

## **EMERGENCY, Minor or Major:**

The leader will consult two other responsible  
walkers, decide on a course of action, especially if  
the group is to be split up or there is to be an  
enforced overnight stay in the bush, and appoint  
these two as his/her deputies. The leader will tell  
the group what the situation is and if necessary  
declare all property, food, first aid, torches etc.  
common property to be allocated and used as the  
leader deems fit and proper to the best group  
advantage.

Any mobile phone calls, distress messages, etc,  
should be made by the leader, to avoid confusion  
with relatives, police or search and rescue  
personnel.