

**Harcourt Mountain Bike Park Proposal  
Scoping Study and Reference Framework May**

Appendix 4.

Public Land Mountain Bike Guidelines 2012

# Public Land Mountain Bike Guidelines



June 2013



*Healthy Parks  
Healthy People®*

Department of  
Environment and  
Primary Industries



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# Part One – Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction & scope

Mountain biking has emerged in Victoria over the past three decades to become an increasingly popular and well recognised recreation activity. Mountain biking is the riding of purpose built bicycles to explore and enjoy parks and forests. The two primary mountain bike riding styles undertaken on public land are downhill and cross-country. Detailed definitions of these styles (and others) are provided in the [Glossary](#). In summary:

- Downhill riding involves a point-to-point ride that is predominantly downhill on tracks that are usually single-track with technical challenges. The higher levels of risk and development and maintenance costs mean that only a limited number can be supported on public land and will be considered on a case by case basis.
- Cross-country riding involves riding point-to-point or on a circuit and includes both uphill and downhill sections. Cross-country is generally the most sought after and appropriate style of mountain biking on public land, due to the nature of the environment and the impact of the riding style.

In Victoria, public land such as State forests and parks provide some of the best settings for mountain biking and there is an increasing demand by mountain bike riders to access existing suitable tracks and to develop new ones. The Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) and Parks Victoria (PV) have recognised the need to provide more designated, suitable and safe mountain biking opportunities for the growing number of people participating in mountain bike riding, particularly in proximity to Melbourne and other major population centres.

On DEPI and PV estate, cycling (including mountain biking) is allowed on all public roads managed by DEPI and PV and on many management vehicle only tracks, subject to specific requirements in the park/forest management plan. There are also a number of areas that have specifically designed mountain bike tracks, and a number of areas where existing tracks, although not specifically designed for mountain biking, can be legally used.

Like many outdoor recreation participants, mountain bike riders are seeking to be provided with opportunities that meet their desired experience. In response to the limited authorised and desirable mountain bike opportunities available, unauthorised mountain biking on walking tracks and the creation of unauthorised tracks has occurred in some parks and forests, particularly those located near towns and suburbs. There are also external economic pressures to develop mountain biking facilities in Victoria.

Some walking tracks appropriated for mountain biking and poorly-designed user-built tracks can present greater risks for riders than tracks designed specifically for mountain biking, and can lead to conflict with other visitors. Due to the way these tracks are developed, DEPI and PV are unable to provide direction on, or contribute to, the design of many of these tracks. In some instances, this can lead to extensive local damage to sensitive environments and cultural sites.

Well planned and designed mountain bike tracks and networks, in conjunction with community education, can provide a variety of opportunities for riding in natural settings. This can lead to opportunities for connection to nature, education and promotion of environmental stewardship, as well as enabling physical activity as part of healthy lifestyles. Mountain biking can be provided as a tourism product (potentially incorporating licensed tour operators) and is a growing sector that regional tourism bodies are identifying for development projects.

Currently there is no statewide strategy to guide the provision of mountain biking opportunities on public land and no specific tools to support public land managers to make informed decisions in response to mountain biking groups seeking support to construct tracks. Proposals are often received from mountain bike groups in between normal management planning cycles and this can constrain DEPI and PV into a reactive approach to managing mountain biking, rather than working with groups to plan an approach.

## 1.2 Purpose & application

The purpose of the Public Land Mountain Bike Guidelines (guidelines) is to assist public land managers to manage mountain biking as an appropriate and sustainable activity on public land. The guidelines also provide advice on how to assess, plan and develop mountain bike opportunities in a sustainable manner. They are intended to provide a consistent approach to planning and managing mountain biking activity in areas managed by DEPI and PV, including parks, reserves and forests. This will include a transparent process for assessing mountain bike proposals and clarity of the management objectives of different areas of public land.

The guidelines will assist public land managers to make informed and consistent decisions about mountain bike tracks that are unacceptable for environmental, cultural heritage, social or safety reasons. They are intended to facilitate more efficient management of mountain bike tracks and to provide a clear and sound basis of decision making on tracks at a local level.

The guidelines do not provide a plan for where, how and when mountain biking opportunities should occur on public land in Victoria, nor do they make any commitments about increasing investment in mountain bike facilities. They do, however, provide the basis for reviewing existing and proposed tracks, by providing criteria against which the tracks should be measured. They will enable public land managers to make informed and transparent decisions on the track networks that will form part of our sustainable network and highlight those that will be targeted for rehabilitation and closure.

For the purpose of the guidelines, 'public land managers' refers to DEPI and PV staff and 'public land' refers to land managed by DEPI and PV. The guidelines are mandatory for DEPI and PV and may be relevant or useful to managers of other public land.

## 1.3 Guiding Principles

The guidelines have been developed based on a set of guiding principles to provide a high level check for public land managers when assessing or planning for mountain bike opportunities. Any proposals and decisions regarding mountain bikes should be consistent with the following guiding principles.

- ❖ Mountain biking is an appropriate activity on many areas of public land and provides visitors with opportunities to enjoy being physically active and interacting with nature.
- ❖ Mountain bike opportunities cannot be provided on all areas of public land and demand will be considered in a regional context, including consideration of any economic benefits at a local or regional level.
- ❖ Public land managers will work with the mountain bike community to ensure that mountain bike opportunities meet the range of experiences sought by riders, where appropriate.
- ❖ Public land managers will facilitate access, where appropriate, for mountain biking through the provision of suitable facilities.
- ❖ The provision of mountain bike facilities will consider the impact of mountain bike activities on public land environmental and cultural values, and will consider the needs of other public land users. Protection of these values will potentially foster a greater appreciation of these values in the areas where mountain bikers ride.
- ❖ Public land managers will seek the support and assistance of the mountain bike community, other key stakeholders and interested parties in the planning, delivery, maintenance and ongoing resourcing of mountain bike opportunities. Mountain bike opportunities will only be provided where they are sustainable in a financial and resource sense. Where possible, preference will be given to mountain bike experiences that utilise appropriate existing tracks.
- ❖ Trails, or sections of trails, used for mountain biking that are considered unsuitable, unnecessarily duplicate trails or have an unacceptable level of impact on public land values will be closed and rehabilitated. Such management actions will be communicated to, and undertaken in consultation with, the mountain biking and wider community.

## 1.4 Legislation context

It is important that public land managers refer to current legislative and planning tools (including any relevant Regulations and relevant approved recommendations from the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC), the former Land Conservation Council (LCC) and Environment Conservation Council (ECC), when determining if mountain biking is allowed on the land being managed. Other important legislation to be aware of includes the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.

An important detail to be aware of is that the definition ‘**vehicle**’ in land management regulations is the same as the definition of vehicle in the Road Safety Act 1986. The Land Conservation (Vehicle Control) Regulations 2013 apply to motor vehicles and classes of vehicles (of which mountain bikes are one).

Specific sections of legislation relating to cycling on DEPI and PV land are provided at Appendix One.

A **Legislative Framework** has been developed to assist public land managers with identifying if the regulations are specific to land tenure and whether they allows cycling – it is provided at Appendix Two. An abridged version of this information is outlined in Table 1 for the land categories managed by DEPI and PV.

**Table 1 – Permissibility of cycling by land category**

Legislation / Regulations	Is cycling allowable?
National Parks Act 1975 and National Parks (Park) Regulations 2003	Yes, Except in a Wilderness Park, Wilderness Area or area set aside as an area where bicycles are prohibited or restricted.
Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978	Yes, Unless regulations state otherwise or in an area set aside as an area where bicycles are prohibited or restricted.
Forests Act 1958 and Forests (Recreation) Regulations 2010	Yes, Unless regulations state otherwise or in an area set aside as an area where bicycles are prohibited or restricted.

### Overlays and zoning

In addition to legislation, national and state parks have a management plan prepared to assist in articulating the vision, goals, outcomes, measures and long-term strategies for each park. Management plans are prepared in consultation with the community and guide the future management of the park. A key part of the management planning process includes zones and overlays which provide further prescriptions for management within defined areas. Some zones are defined through legislation, such as Reference Areas, while others are set through the management plan, such as Conservation Zones.

## Set asides

Most land management regulations utilise 'set aside' areas to tailor regulations to enable flexible or tailored application of the regulations. A set aside is an option for managing specific activities or access within a specified area by delineating the area and the conditions under which the activity or access may take place.

Set aside determinations are a major means by which the management actions in approved management plans may be implemented. If adequately sign posted, set asides are enforceable and breaches of condition etc may be penalised.

In most areas, cycling in all forms is not prohibited unless areas are 'set aside' through a set aside determination to prohibit or restrict cycling. Each set aside needs to be consistent with an approved management plan or supported by appropriate community consultation. DEPI and PV have existing processes for establishing set asides, including guidance on determining the process required, when and how to initiate a set aside outside the management planning cycle, the signage required and enforcement provisions that will be available.

For areas under the National Parks Act, set aside determinations are delegated by the Secretary of DEPI to the Chief Executive of Parks Victoria and the delegation must be consistent with any approved management plans and approved recommendations of VEAC.

For further advice contact:

DEPI – Land Division's Strategy Branch.

PV – Manager Park Planning and Procedures.

## 1.5 Risk management

Like many outdoor recreation activities, mountain biking carries some risks that are generally expected by users, and can contribute to the enjoyment of the activity. Recognition of these risks and their sources to ensure that they are mitigated effectively can minimise the level of impact to the health, safety and welfare of mountain bikers and other users.

A risk assessment should identify and analyse all reasonably foreseeable hazards that could cause injury when mountain biking within the context of the particular track. This assessment will help public land managers to clearly develop an action plan to mitigate identifiable risks.

Risks to the environment should also be taken into account when planning and managing mountain bike tracks. These risks include the environmental impact of track construction and maintenance with damage such as vegetation removal, redirection of water flows etc. There is also the risk of inadvertently introducing weeds or pathogens that are carried on machinery or by cyclists.

A management program (which includes the management of risk) should be developed where an authorised track network is being maintained. This can help prevent accidents or mitigate their

impact, and is fundamental to managing a track network responsibly. A management program involves monitoring, assessment, response and reporting elements.

For DEPI, all authorised tracks should be GPS'd using the Recreation Facilities Database Data Dictionary and entered in the Recreation Facilities Database. For PV, all authorised tracks must be entered into the Asset Information System. This will ensure these tracks are assessed at the prescribed frequency and risks are identified and appropriately mitigated. Reports may be generated from the DEPI and PV asset management systems as required.

**Technical Trail Features (TTFs)** provide additional difficulty to mountain bike tracks and can be elevated structures or moulded earthen material. The DEPI and PV Facility Manuals should be referred to when assessing fall heights and determining if handrails are required for structures. It is also important to refer to International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) resources (eg IMBA's Guide to Building Sweet Singletrack has a comprehensive chapter on TTFs).

Basic areas of risk relating to mountain biking to be considered include:

- Appropriate design and construction of the track;
- Adequate inspection and maintenance of the track;
- Management of unacceptable hazards and identification and implementation of an appropriate risk treatment (on-site and through media forms, eg internet); and
- Anticipation of foreseeable activities and taking of reasonable steps within the constraints of available resourcing to protect visitors.

Key mountain biking risk management considerations include:

- Identifying staff and potential mountain bike club members that could support the agreed risk management approach in the park/forest;
- Ensuring the appropriate style of mountain biking is provided for;
- Communicating effectively with riders about the environment they are in and encouraging a respect for that environment;
- Ensuring any infrastructure on the track is appropriate for the intended use of the track;
- Utilising the **IMBA Principles of track design and location** and identifying the construction methods that are most appropriate;
- Identifying and removing unacceptable hazards to riders and other visitors;
- Developing an effective communication plan (including a sign plan);
- Implementing a track difficulty rating system (refer to the **IMBA Trail Difficulty Rating System**);
- Establishing rules for mountain bike track use/etiquette and how these will be communicated to riders and other visitors (refer to the **IMBA Rules of the Trail**); and
- Ensuring mountain biking is included as an activity in the park/forest emergency action plan.

## Liability

As with other recreation activities, DEPI and PV may be liable for injuries mountain bikers could incur when riding on tracks and structures, even if they are not recognised by public land managers as authorised mountain bike tracks. This highlights the importance of being aware of unauthorised

tracks so that appropriate assessments can be undertaken. This will enable DEPI and PV to mitigate obvious risks identified through assessment and may result in a closure.

It is important that legal and risk advice is sought if staff are in doubt of liability concerns.

If you are unsure how to assess the risks of tracks, please contact :

- your relevant land management risk assessment team.

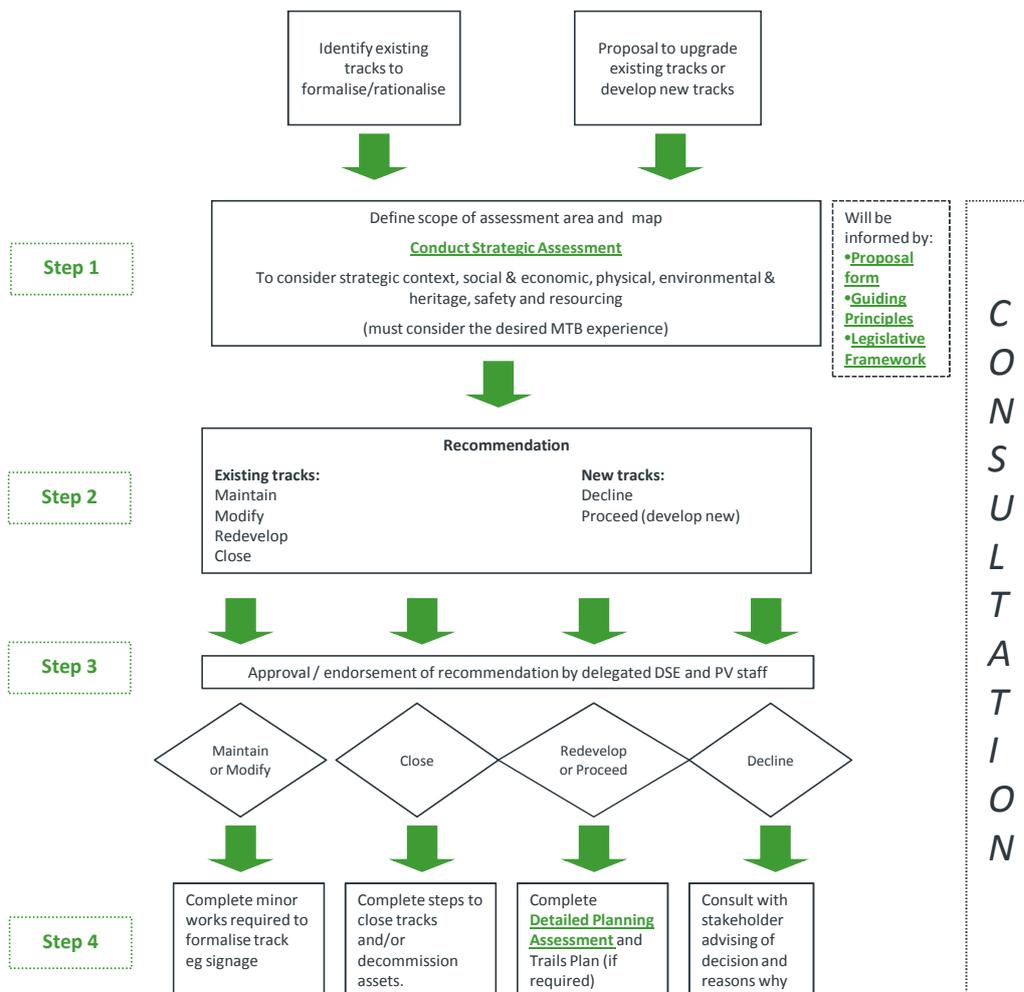
# Part Two – Applying the guidelines

## 2.1 Assessment process overview

Well planned and designed mountain bike tracks and networks can provide a variety of opportunities for quality mountain biking experiences in natural settings and allow for protection of natural and cultural features in other areas. The assessments are a tool for public land managers to enable standard and consistent assessment of proposals and tracks for mountain bike use on public land.

The assessment process to guide public land managers to enable mountain biking on appropriate areas of DEPI and PV estate is outlined in Figure 1. The process applies to both existing tracks (authorised or unauthorised) and proposals for new tracks.

Figure 1 Mountain bike appropriateness assessment process



**Step 1** is to conduct a [Strategic Assessment](#) (see Appendix Three) to consider the strategic context, any social and economic impacts, any physical, environmental and heritage impacts and safety and resourcing factors. This step will be informed by the [Guiding Principles](#) and the [Legislative Framework](#) (see Appendix Two), and may be informed by a [Mountain Bike Opportunity Proposal](#) (see Appendix Five).

**Step 2** is to make a recommendation for the track or track network. It is important to remember that if assessing a track network, multiple recommendations can be made (eg close 3 tracks, maintain 2 tracks and modify 1 track).

**Step 3** is for the recommendation to be approved or endorsed by a delegated public land manager. The approver will be determined based on the risk and financial delegations of DEPI and PV.

**Step 4** is to complete the required action for the approved recommendation. This may lead to undertaking minor works to formalise a track, closing a site or track (and decommissioning any associated assets), undertaking a [Detailed Planning Assessment](#) and a trails plan (if required) or consulting the proponent of the unsuccessful proposal.

It is important to ensure sufficient resources are allocated to complete each step. It may prove valuable to allocate resources to undertake a specific number of Strategic Assessments and Detailed Planning Assessments (as required) in one year, taking into consideration that ad hoc proposals may also be received, requiring additional resources.

## Part Three – Managing specific mountain biking issues on public land

### 3.1 Shared use tracks

Shared use of existing tracks by mountain bike riders and other recreational users of public land occur commonly. The practice of directing mountain bike riders to management vehicle only track networks as a solution to providing satisfactory mountain biking experiences does not always work for the rapidly developing needs and expectations of mountain bike riders (often because they have a preference for single-track). This has, in part, led to unauthorised mountain bike tracks being constructed and used or mountain bike riders using existing tracks constructed for walking.

There is no simple answer to the question of whether tracks should be shared use, single use or preferred use. It is often tied to other management issues such as user conflict, the environment the track is in and risk management. It is important that all issues and views are considered when determining if a track will be shared use or not.

There are many benefits to providing shared use tracks, including:

- Encouraging understanding, respect and sharing between different user groups;
- Providing a cost effective management approach by requiring fewer tracks, less maintenance, monitoring and staff resourcing; and
- Providing an efficient use of available space by allowing more tracks for more people to use and enjoy and also having less impact on natural and cultural features than many different, single use tracks.

If a shared use track is the approach to be taken it is important to ensure appropriate information, education and communication (eg signage or pre-visit) is provided, particularly advising which users have right of way and informing visitors of others they may come across on the track.

#### Single use tracks

There are examples of the benefits of providing single use, or preferred use tracks, including:

- Avoiding overcrowding on popular tracks. Separating visitors can help to ensure all visitors can enjoy the type of experience they are seeking;
- Specific mountain bike tracks, such as technical cross-country or downhill tracks. These types of tracks are most successful when they are specifically designed for mountain bikers as they do not provide for enjoyable experiences for other users. Speed can also make it dangerous for shared use;
- Nature appreciation tracks that are most suitable for birdwatchers or hikers and provide visitors with the seclusion they desire to view and absorb the natural environment; and
- Walking tracks where the use is established and popular. These tracks should be retained as single use walking tracks to ensure the experience is preserved.

Mountain bike *single-track* (both *cross-country* and *downhill*) is desirable for mountain bike riders because it allows a more intimate experience of the natural setting, a better connection between

the rider and the environment, and relatively high levels of technical challenge at relatively low speeds, which can reduce the actual risk by increasing the perceived challenge.

If a single use track is the approach to be taken it is important to discuss with all park users and the community any advantages and disadvantages associated with it and ensure visitors are not displaced unnecessarily.

For further information and advice contact:

DEPI – Statewide Recreation & Tourism Coordinator.

PV – Team Leader Recreation Planning.

### 3.2 Closure of inappropriate or unsafe mountain bike tracks

Mountain bike tracks may be closed permanently or temporarily. DEPI and PV have procedures to guide staff on the process for closing tracks once a decision has been made and approved to do so.

Common examples where mountain bike tracks may be closed include:

- Following completion of a [Strategic Assessment](#) and a 'close' recommendation being approved;
- Following completion of a risk assessment, where it has identified that an unacceptable risk cannot be addressed;
- Following weather events (eg storm, flood, fire);
- Following advice of a severe weather warning (eg Total Fire Ban day, rainfall, wind gusts);
- Seasonal or permanent closures (eg sites susceptible to *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, areas with high rainfall and poorly draining soils); and
- Unacceptable environmental damage has occurred, caused by over-use or inappropriate use.

Public land managers should ensure a [Strategic Assessment](#) is completed and a recommendation to close is approved before permanently closing mountain bike tracks. This will support a transparent and consistent process being followed across the state. A range of issues should be considered when closing a mountain bike track, including:

- Are revegetation works required?
- How will access to tracks be blocked to discourage riders?
- Is continued use a real possibility? It can become resource intensive for public land managers to monitor and undertake compliance.
- Timing – when is a good time to close a track? How long will it be closed for? Will it be an annual occurrence?
- Communication with users – this should include information about why the track is being closed, for how long and informing and promoting other tracks that are nearby (if applicable). Information and education must be sustained to ensure users are aware of, and respect, the track closure.

It is important to keep in mind that unauthorised mountain bike tracks may continue to be constructed and used by riders, even if they are closed by public land managers. Current use often indicates there is a demand for mountain biking in the area. One of the best ways to ensure that a

closed track will remain closed is to create a more attractive replacement and/or engage with mountain bikers about the reasons for closure. Public land managers should engage with local riders and/or groups and discuss with them the reasons for closure and work together to create a replacement or identify the nearest authorised track riders can use. Working with groups can help to solve a variety of what may currently be seen as management issues.

For further information and advice contact:

DEPI – Statewide Recreation & Tourism Coordinator.

PV – Team Leader Recreation Planning.

### 3.3 Maintenance of mountain bike tracks

All tracks that are provided for recreational use require maintenance. Maintenance of mountain bike tracks is critical and requires good planning and resourcing. There are four main types of maintenance to consider:

1. To maintain the classification or level to which the mountain bike track was constructed and intended to be used;
2. To maintain or improve the visitor experience;
3. To maintain the associated infrastructure; and
4. To minimise environmental impacts.

Examples of these types of maintenance and the required resources, including time, financial costs, equipment and occupational health and safety requirements can be obtained through the contacts provided at the end of this section.

Many trails will require ongoing vegetation management along a trail corridor. This could be as little as regular brush cutting to manage seasonal grass growth, through to trimming of trees and shrubs. Vegetation can be used to create choke points and create a sense of enclosure and tightness, which is a means to control speed and provides a riding experience that many may enjoy. In other circumstances low level vegetation may be kept at waist height and above or be removed to provide sight lines.

Partnerships with mountain bike groups can be advantageous to support track maintenance and can significantly assist public land managers in reducing the time and cost needed to complete track maintenance. If this is an approach being considered it is important to identify formal accountabilities for elements of track maintenance. This can be achieved through a works contract or volunteer agreement (further information on working with user groups can be found in section 3.6). It is important to note that the Victorian Government does not allow for core services such as track maintenance to be delivered through sponsorship.

A maintenance program should be established to ensure appropriate works are undertaken and also be supported by periodic assessments to inform maintenance work.

For further information and advice contact:  
DEPI – Statewide Recreation & Tourism Coordinator.  
PV – Team Leader Recreation Planning.

### 3.4 Information, education & compliance

DEPI and PV have a role in encouraging compliance with legislation and parks and reserves regulations using information, interpretation and education principles. Where required, non-compliance can be backed up by the enforcement of relevant regulations.

Information and education can take many forms including signage, interpretation, park and forest notes/brochures, social media and staff patrols. Signage, local media and pre-visit information are effective tools to inform users of where they can mountain bike, where they cannot and why. The DEPI Sign Manual and PV Signage Manual are available to support staff in identifying appropriate signs to install.

Users often create their own mountain biking experience if one is not available in the area they wish to ride in. This is particularly prevalent in urban interface areas and can lead to various management issues, with public land managers often being left having to take a reactionary approach. Of concern are tracks that are constructed without authorisation from public land managers, particularly those that involve built jumps and those in particularly sensitive environments.

The use of electronic media (in particular social media) by public land managers can be a powerful means to monitor and mitigate unauthorised mountain bike track construction and use. Social media is often the forum used to promote tracks, working bees and events. It is important for staff to be aware of these forums and how they are used. They can also be used to communicate public land principles and provide information about where authorised mountain bike tracks are located. Parks such as the You Yangs Regional Park have successfully been using this tool to promote track re-openings and advise of track closures and weather events.

Engaging with mountain bike individuals and groups when they are in the park/forest or meeting with local mountain bike groups or local store owners can be a positive first step in building a relationship and being able to pass on information to help educate users about the impacts of unauthorised tracks and where mountain biking may be most appropriate. This can also lead to increased understanding by both public land managers and mountain bikers about the experiences being sought.

In Australia and other countries, IMBA advocates for mountain biking. IMBA discourages unauthorised track construction and encourages a spirit of trust and cooperation between riders and public land managers. Utilising IMBA's Rules of the Trail is a positive step in ensuring consistency in how mountain bikers receive information and education.

Tour operator licences can assist staff with compliance through the inclusion in the licences of general/location and specific conditions as well as reference to the Adventure Activity Standards.

As for many recreation activities, targeted, dedicated compliance can have effective value and impact; it is important that public land managers understand the time required in undertaking it and the relevant legislation and regulations applicable to enforcement for the different land tenures. There are no specific compliance provisions relating to mountain biking. Although there are regulations that apply to the impacts of mountain biking, there are none specific to mountain biking as a recreation activity. For example, 'set aside' determinations can be utilised to prohibit cycling. However, set asides should be considered after undertaking information and education measures and should be relative to the risk currently impacting on the public land area. Some of the available additional enforcement provisions through regulations for the land categories managed by DEPI and PV are outlined in Table 2 below.

**Table 2 – Some available enforcement provisions for land categories managed by DEPI and PV**

Legislation / Regulations	Regulatory controls
National Parks Act 1975 and National Parks (Park) Regulations 2003	<p>Regulation 13 prohibits the cutting, felling, picking, removing, taking, destroying or damage to any flora or other vegetation, whether alive or dead.</p> <p>Regulation 15 prohibits interfering with archaeological or historical remains.</p> <p>Regulation 16 prohibits interfering with rocks or similar natural objects.</p> <p>Regulation 30 prohibits the erection or construction of a structure in a park.</p> <p>If a set aside is completed using Regulation 40 to prohibit bicycles in specific areas of a park, then it is an offence for bicycles to be in the area of the park which is set aside. The areas where cycling may be prohibited may be specific tracks or larger areas of a park.</p>
Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978	Section 13 enables regulations to be written for the care, protection and management of the land. Check individual reserve regulations for more detail.
Forests Act 1958 and Forests (Recreation) Regulations 2010	For forest reserves or parks, if a set aside is completed using regulation 31, then it is an offence for bicycles to contravene the set aside. The set aside may relate to specific tracks or larger areas of the forest reserve or park.
Land Conservation (Vehicle Control) Act 1972 and Land Conservation (Vehicle Control) Regulations 2013	<p>Two key features of the regulations are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to include off-road access areas;</li> <li>• Ability to restrict or prohibit vehicles or classes of vehicles from areas of public land (eg it is possible to prohibit mountain bikes from areas where they are causing unacceptable damage).</li> </ul>

Legislation / Regulations	Regulatory controls
Safety on Public Land Act 2004	Section 4 enables public safety zones to be declared in State forest for public recreation activities and the maintenance of public safety.

Other examples of enforcement provisions should be investigated on a case by case basis with advice from relevant compliance management staff within DEPI and PV.

For further information and advice contact:

DEPI – Compliance Support Group.

PV – Manager Compliance and Manager Visitor Services and Tourism.

### 3.5 Use of cameras and counters for research and monitoring

Cameras and/or counters for research and monitoring purposes provide useful information for public land managers when assessing mountain bike activity as accurate estimates of use from local users or public land managers can often be highly inaccurate.

The following examples are from the You Yangs Regional Park and are provided as a guide to various types of cameras and counters available.

- **Pedestrian counters** can be utilised along track to determine usage and connectivity. This can be particularly useful for networks of many tracks. Motion sensor counters can be mounted within movable bollards and rotated between trail heads and reset on the 1st of every month. When an event is on, counters can be checked the day before and after to give an indication of the number of passes on that track. Counters can be used on tracks which have connecting/intersecting track by placing counters on both ends of the trail to determine what is the most used/popular route being used. This can help identify and prioritise works for maintenance or construction.
- **Car counters** can be utilised at car park entrances to determine numbers entering various car parks and the park. A passenger loading is then applied to the count. Visitor research staff can supply the passenger loading figure, which is based on the park’s demographics and park usage characteristics.
- **Fluker posts** provide an opportunity to observe change over time through static photo points. The purpose is to monitor the visual condition of specific sections of tracks over time by having researchers, land manager and park users take digital pictures by positioning their digital cameras on the fixed Fluker Posts and submitting them to a central database. The visual effective of track usage, design, repair, weed infestation and general erosion can be monitored over time.
- **Scout or other surveillance systems** can be used on sections of track, where information is wanted to understand how it is being ridden. This may include direction, whether a Technical Trail Feature (TTF) is being used, if it is too difficult (eg are most people walking, rather than riding?), if it is being avoided (eg are most people going around the TTF?). The images are useful to determine if the track design is working, needs modification or not

effective. These types of systems can also be used for compliance, which must be in accordance with approved organisational procedures.

For further information and advice contact:

DEPI – Statewide Recreation & Tourism Coordinator

PV – Team Leader Recreation Planning

### 3.6 Working with user groups

DEPI and PV both have an established and rewarding history of working in partnership with community groups, including volunteers. Existing partnerships between DEPI, PV, mountain bike clubs and individual volunteers have achieved a mutual understanding of mountain biking issues in some areas and have helped reduce unauthorised mountain biking and track construction. In particular, DEPI and PV have a strong relationship with Mountain Bike Australia (MTBA) and the International Mountain Bicycling Association Australia (IMBA-AU).

Building on this work and developing partnerships with additional mountain bike clubs will support creating experiences that can be enjoyed by visitors. It is important to keep in mind that establishing and maintaining a productive relationship with a user group requires time commitment from public land managers. Whilst it is important to form relationships with mountain bikers as the primary user group, it is also important to engage with other users (including the outdoor education sector) and traditional owners (including Registered Aboriginal Parties as they can assist with any potential cultural heritage and Native Title implications) where they may be impacted by proposals or developments.

There are many benefits of public land managers working closely with user groups, including:

- Long term certainty for the management and maintenance of tracks;
- Support for track management (including closures if they are required);
- Advocacy for the park/forest natural and cultural values and opportunities for educating user groups about land management practices;
- Potential partnership opportunities to plan, develop and maintain mountain bike tracks; and
- Potential partnership opportunities to pool financial and labour resources to achieve the objectives of both public land managers and mountain bikers.

Once a relationship has been established, it may be advantageous to both parties to formalise the relationship to ensure that regardless of personnel changes, the intent will remain in the future. PV has an existing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with MTBA. This shows a joint commitment to the statewide relationship between the organisations. MoUs are generally used for peak body relationships, with other tools available for more local relationships.

If a local group is wanting to work with DEPI or PV by holding events, maintenance working days, trail planning or modifications to existing trail, this may be a point at which it would be useful for them to establish themselves as a formal group. This may be as a friends group, forming a trails committee or working group (with a terms of reference) or by affiliating themselves with MTBA as a formal mountain bike club in Victoria.

The following tools may then support the work being undertaken by the groups and DEPI and PV:

- Volunteer agreement or form (under Volunteer guidelines);
- Services or works agreement;
- Sponsorship agreement;
- Jointly signed letter; and
- Lease, licence agreement or permit.

Please ensure you contact the following contacts for further information and advice about the above tools (particularly for clarification regarding the differences between liability for friends groups and other groups using a works contract):

DEPI – Statewide Recreation & Tourism Coordinator.

PV – Manager Strategic Partnerships, Manager Visitor Services & Tourism and Legal Counsel.

### 3.7 Events

Competitive mountain bike race organisers are attracted to parks and forests for similar reasons mountain bikers are. Mountain bike race events can attract significant numbers of visitors to parks and forests and encourage people to return for further visits. They can be a positive way to encourage awareness and understanding about the park and forest system across Victoria and can also promote an increased understanding about appropriate mountain biking opportunities on public land.

Events can also provide a boost to local economies and tourism, which may lead to local communities supporting mountain biking in the park/forest. However, it is important that events are planned for and managed consistently and that they do not unacceptably impact on natural and cultural values.

Many areas managed by DEPI and PV are used as venues for a variety of mountain bike events. Demand by mountain bikers and a range of companies in relation to the conduct of events on public land is increasing both in number and complexity. There is also an increased demand for mountain bike orienteering, adventure / multisport and endurance (24 hour) events on public land. It is recognised that events are not appropriate at all locations and need to be managed in a manner which do not unacceptably impact on natural and cultural values and recreation opportunities for all users.

Both DEPI and PV have policies and procedures to support staff with receiving and working through event applications, permits and associated fees. Specific considerations for mountain bike event permits include:

- Capacity of track (eg riders per metre – track length/number of riders on track at any one time) and associated infrastructure;
- Expected number of spectators;
- Sufficient number of marshals and organisers for crossing points;
- Application of event fees consistent with DEPI and PV fee guidelines;

- Requirement for insurance for participants and public liability;
- Requirement for traffic management and safety plans; and
- Weather – alternate routes for sections of track that are not suitable when wet.

Events may lead to increased use of the track network in the future. This may be a positive effect that is being sought and encouraged, however if it is not something that is sought it is important to consider the capacity of the number of riders allowed at events (both for the initial event and subsequent events).

Events currently occurring on unauthorised mountain bike tracks should not continue until a [Strategic Assessment](#) has been completed and approved. This will determine if the track or network is appropriate for mountain biking and then a decision can be made if events are appropriate.

For further information and advice contact:

DEPI – Statewide Recreation & Tourism Coordinator.

PV – Manager Commercial Planning.

# Appendices

## Appendix One – Legislation relating to cycling on DEPI and PV land

Some notable sections of legislation relating to cycling on DEPI and PV land include:

### *National Parks Act 1975*

Sections 17(2)(a)(i),(ii) and (v) and (c) and 18(2)(a)(ii) and (iii) and (c) are some of the relevant sections regarding management of parks under the *National Parks Act 1975*.

### *National Parks (Park) Regulations 2003* provides

Regulation 19 makes it a penalty for a person to enter into or remain in a prohibited access area and for a person to enter or remain in a restricted access area unless in accordance with the determination of the Secretary under which the area is set aside.

Regulation 20(1) prohibits a person leaving an identified track for walking or riding if the Secretary has erected a sign or notice on that track requiring persons to remain on the track.

Regulation 28 states that a person must not engage in any activity which is likely to cause danger to other persons or animals.

Regulation 40 allows areas to be set aside prohibiting or restricting access for vehicles or certain classes of vehicles (bicycles are defined as vehicles (as defined under the *Road Safety Act 1986*) for the purposes of the Regulations). It is an offence for a person in charge of a vehicle to enter into or remain in an area in contravention of the determination.

Regulation 41 refers to the parking of vehicles in accordance with signs and so that they will not cause an obstruction. Regulation 50 enables conditions to be established for areas set aside.

### *Forests Act 1958*

Section 20 allows for areas in State forest and forest reserves to be set aside for recreation. Section 21(eb) allows access to roads, tracks and tramways to be restricted. Section 50 allows for areas of State forest to be set aside as a reserve and for regulations to be made in respect of that reserve.

### *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*

Section 4 sets out the public purposes for which Crown land may be reserved.

Section 13 enables regulations to be written for the care, protection and management of Crown Land reserves.

Management must be in accordance with the purpose of reservation.

Some land reserved under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* is managed as State wildlife reserve, pursuant to the *Wildlife Act 1975*.

The *Reference Areas Act 1978* (Vic.) restricts access to reference areas to research, management and emergency operations purposes.

If a road has been declared under section 3 (2)(a) of the *Road Safety Act 1986* (Vic.) the definition of vehicle as ‘a conveyance that is designed to be propelled or drawn by any means, whether or not capable of being so propelled or drawn, and includes bicycle or other pedal-powered vehicle...’ is relevant.

The definition '**vehicle**' in various Acts including the *National Parks Act 1975* and the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* is the same as the definition of vehicle in the *Road Safety Act 1986*.

**Definition - vehicle**

*means a conveyance that is designed to be propelled or drawn by any means, whether or not capable of being so propelled or drawn, and includes bicycle or other pedal-powered vehicle, trailer, tram-car and air-cushion vehicle but does not include railway locomotive or railway rolling stock;*

The Land Conservation (Vehicle Control) Regulations 2013 are made under section 3 of the *Land Conservation (Vehicle Control) Act 1972* apply to motor-vehicles (ie cars, 4WD vehicles, trucks, buses etc) and other classes of vehicles (including mountain bikes).

The *Safety on Public Land Act 2004* provides for public safety in State forests by providing for the establishment and enforcement of public safety zones (typically for less than twelve months). Public safety zones may be declared for the purposes of public recreational activities or for the maintenance of public safety.

## Appendix Two – Legislative Framework

The definition ‘**vehicle**’ in land management regulations is the same as the definition of vehicle in the Road Safety Act. This definition includes motor vehicles (e.g. 2 wheel-drive and 4WD vehicles), motor cycles, trail bikes, as well as non-motorised vehicles such as bicycles (including mountain bikes) etc.

The Land Conservation (Vehicle Control) Regulations 2003 only apply to motor-vehicles (i.e. cars, 4WD vehicles, trucks, buses etc).

Applicable legislation / management guidelines	Land category	Is cycling allowable?
<b>Land declared under the Reference Areas Act 1978</b>		
Reference Areas Act 1978	Reference Areas (Note: the underlying land status of most Reference Areas is National Park or State Park)	No
<b>Land managed under the National Parks Act 1975</b>		
National Parks Act 1975 and National Park (Park) Regulations 2003	Wilderness Parks and Wilderness Areas	No
National Parks (Park) Regulations 2003	National Parks State Parks Coastal Parks Marine and Coastal Parks Historic Parks National Heritage Parks Lighthouse Reserves and other parks (refer to Schedules 3 and 4 of National Parks Act)	Yes, unless in areas set aside ** as areas where bicycles are prohibited or restricted***  **Refer to Set Aside Determination (O: PVGroups/Set Asides) and approved management plans. *** ‘restricted’ refer to time / seasonal restrictions
<b>Land managed under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978</b>		
Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 Relevant approved VEAC / LCC / ECC recommendations	Coastal Reserves (type of Conservation Reserve) Nature Conservation Reserves – including Wildlife Reserves (no hunting), Flora and Fauna Reserves, Flora Reserves (no regulations)	Yes, unless regulations stipulate otherwise Section 13 of the Act enables regulations to be written for the care, protection and management of the land.

Applicable legislation / management guidelines	Land category	Is cycling allowable?
	Natural Features Reserves (includes Scenic Reserves, Geological and Gemorphological Reserves, Bushland Reserves, River Murray Reserves, Streamside Reserves)	However, generally Crown Land Reserves are unlikely to have specific regulations pertaining to cycling. Check individual reserve regulations^ for current detail.
Crown Land (Reserves) (Nature Conservation Reserves) Regulations 2004 (apply to 158 scheduled Nature Conservation Reserves)	Nature Conservation Reserves (158 reserves which have regulations)	Yes, unless in areas set aside as areas where bicycles are prohibited or restricted.
Crown Land (Reserves) (Metropolitan Park) Regulations 2011 Crown Land (Reserves) (Albert Park Reserve and Albert Reserve) Regulations 2008.	Metropolitan Parks	Yes, unless in areas set aside as areas where bicycles are prohibited or restricted.
Yarra Bend Park Regulations 2008	Yarra Bend Park	Yes, unless in areas set aside as areas where bicycles are prohibited or restricted.
<b>Land managed under the Forests Act 1958</b>		
Forests Act 1958 Forests (Recreation) Regulations 2010	Forest Park and Forest Reserves  State Forest	Yes, unless in areas set aside as areas where bicycles are prohibited or restricted.  Regulations apply to State Forest, <b>Forest Parks</b> including: Otway Forest Park, and <b>Forest Reserves:</b> Delatite Arm Reserve, Murrindindi Scenic Reserve, Sylvia Falls Scenic Reserve, Stevensons Falls SR, You Yangs Regional Park, Thomson River Forest Reserve and Tarago River Forest Reserve.  Forest reserves: Reg 31 Vehicles – managing body may set aside areas where vehicles <b>may be driven</b> or may only drive in a specified direction or at not more than a specified speed.

Applicable legislation / management guidelines	Land category	Is cycling allowable?
		Forest Parks: Reg 44 areas may be set aside by Secretary where vehicles <b>must not be driven</b> or where they must not be driven except in a specified speed or direction
<b>Land managed under the Wildlife Act 1975 and Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978</b>		
Wildlife (State Game Reserves) Regulations 2004	State Game Reserves – Wildlife Reserves (hunting permitted)	Yes, unless in areas set aside as areas where bicycles are prohibited or restricted
<b>Land managed under the various Acts/regulations</b>		
Water Industry Act 1994	Reservoir Parks	Yes, no regulations, however, lease conditions may prohibit activities/works. Refer to lease with Melbourne Water (contact Legal Counsel).
Various: underlying legislation may include Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978, Forests Act 1958	Historic and Cultural Features Reserves (includes Historic Areas, Historic Reserve)	Yes, no regulations set, however, refer to LCC recommendations for permitted/restricted activities.
Various: Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 Forests Act 1958 LCC recommendations	Regional Parks	Yes, no regulations set (NB Draft regulations being prepared for 6 regional parks) NB does not apply to You Yangs RP.
Various sets of regulations	Dandenong Ranges Gardens	Various – refer to regulations
Port Management (Local Ports) Regulations 2004	Piers and Jetties	Yes, if bicycles are permitted through areas set aside under the regulations.
Land Act	Unreserved Crown Land	Yes
Various legislation	Committee of Management Land	Yes, unless prohibited under regulations.

Notes:

Reserves:

Conservation reserves, whether gazetted or not are managed in accordance with the legislation and the government-accepted LCC/ECC/VEAC recommendations. Refer to the Conservation Reserves Management Strategy (PV 2003) for detailed management objectives.

^Several parks and reserves have individual sets of regulations including Buchan Caves Reserves, Coolart, Dandenong Ranges Gardens, Dandenong Police Paddocks Reserves etc : PV staff can refer to [O: PVGroups/Regulations for further information](#).

## Appendix Three – Strategic Assessment

A Strategic Assessment can be applied for all existing, unauthorised mountain bike tracks and networks and all proposals received by DEPI and PV. A Strategic Assessment should be completed for all existing, formal mountain bike tracks and networks if modification/upgrade works are proposed.

The objectives of this Strategic Assessment are:

- to assess the viability of proposals to upgrade an existing mountain bike track or network or develop a new track or network; and
- to assess the viability of formalising or rationalising an existing mountain bike track or network (both formal and informal).

The track or network will be assessed against criteria related to the Guiding Principles to determine the appropriateness of providing for mountain biking as a recreation activity at a defined site.

### *Proposals for new tracks or facilities*

Proposals for a new mountain bike track or network that are initiated by groups or individuals should be first discussed with the land manager and then submitted using the '[Mountain Bike Proposal Form](#)' (for external proponents) (see Appendix Five) and be accompanied by detailed plans, maps and supporting information.

The Strategic Assessment will support staff to make a recommendation in relation to a proposal to proceed or be declined. If a recommendation to 'proceed' is approved, a requirement is triggered to undertake the next stage, a Detailed Planning Assessment (see Appendix Four) to support decision making regarding the technical design of the track or network and the maintenance requirements and partnerships to be put in place to maintain the track network.

### *Existing tracks*

The Strategic Assessment will support staff to make a recommendation for an existing track or network (both formal and informal) to be maintained, modified, upgraded or closed. If a recommendation of 'maintain' or 'modify' is approved, staff can organise to complete the necessary work to formalise the track. If a recommendation of upgrade is approved, a requirement is triggered to use the Detailed Planning Assessment to support decision making regarding technical design and future maintenance arrangements.

Existing tracks should be assessed by park or forest staff using information that is available and their local knowledge.

When completing the Strategic Assessment, staff should consider all possible impacts (both positive and negative) which are likely to be caused by, or currently being caused by, mountain biking, as well as an analysis of the significance and acceptability of those impacts. Each identified impact is to be categorised as minor, moderate or major. In order to determine the likely significance of the impact staff should consider the extent and nature of the impact. It is important that the broader track network and all associated infrastructure be considered when undertaking the assessment.

### Site Details

Park/Forest Name		
Land Manager(s)		
Track(s) Name		
Track ID / Asset No.		
Length of track network	Existing: New:	Total:

### Assessment Type

<input type="checkbox"/>	Land Manager review of existing tracks to formalise / rationalise
<input type="checkbox"/>	Proposal to upgrade existing tracks or develop new tracks

### Brief description of track or track network, type of mountain biking and why this assessment is being undertaken

(**Attach a map** defining the area being assessed, including the trail head and any associated infrastructure, and identifying the track or track network being assessed as well as its connections to any other nearby existing networks)

## Legal Permissibility

Use the Legislative Framework (Appendix Two) as a reference to complete this section and contact Legal Counsel if unsure of anything. If cycling is not allowable, the Strategic Assessment should not continue.

It is important to determine if the mountain bike track or network will move into land not managed by DEPI or PV (eg water authority, local council) as this may require negotiation with the landowner.

Applicable legislation / management guidelines	Land category	Is cycling allowable?	Comments
<i>Eg. Yarra Bend Park Regulations 2008</i>	<i>Eg. Yarra Bend Park</i>	<i>Eg. Yes, unless in areas set aside as areas where bicycles are prohibited or restricted.</i>	<i>Eg. The current approved Set Aside permits cycling in XXXXX (describe areas). Does the set aside need to be revised?</i>

## Assessment criteria

Key questions to consider	Yes / No	Potential impacts or risks (positive & negative)	Is the impact(s) minor/moderate/major? (if moderate or major, it is mandatory to complete the next column)	Proposed mitigation action (or further work/investigation required)	Satisfied (Yes / No / Maybe) (can the impact be adequately addressed?)
<b>Strategic Context</b>					
Are you aware of any documents that restrict mountain biking in the park/forest? (eg government policy, regional tourism plan, regional/local plans or strategies)					
Is mountain biking in the park/forest consistent with relevant PV/DEPI park/forest management plan?					
Do the park/forest management objectives enable mountain biking?					
Is the trail network (if completed as proposed) likely to draw riders from a					

Key questions to consider	Yes / No	Potential impacts or risks (positive & negative)	Is the impact(s) minor/moderate/major? (if moderate or major, it is mandatory to complete the next column)	Proposed mitigation action (or further work/investigation required)	Satisfied (Yes / No / Maybe) (can the impact be adequately addressed?)
local, regional or statewide catchment?					
<b>Social and economic</b>					
Is there a mountain biking group associated with the track network?					
Is there a demand for mountain biking as a recreation activity in this area?					
Are there existing and popular mountain bike tracks nearby?					
Is the track network and broader area used by other visitors? (eg horse riders, walkers)					
Does the track network conflict with other recreation opportunities?					
Is there any evidence to estimate likely future levels of use of the track network? (can also use existing knowledge of park, visitors & anecdotal evidence)					
Given the estimate of likely levels of use by riders and the catchment the track network is likely to draw from (ie local, regional or statewide), will the track network contribute to existing or generate new economic benefit to nearby communities/businesses?					
Are there potential partners to support the track network? Who are they?		<i>List potential partners</i>	<i>Indicate anticipated level of support</i>	<i>Indicate any further work/investigation required</i>	
<b>Physical, environment and heritage</b>					

Key questions to consider	Yes / No	Potential impacts or risks (positive & negative)	Is the impact(s) minor/moderate/major? (if moderate or major, it is mandatory to complete the next column)	Proposed mitigation action (or further work/investigation required)	Satisfied (Yes / No / Maybe) (can the impact be adequately addressed?)
Does the track network go through any sensitive park/forest management zones or reference areas?					
Is mountain biking likely to result in unacceptable impacts on soil quality or land stability?					
Is mountain biking likely to result in unacceptable impacts on a waterbody, watercourse, wetland or natural drainage system? (eg is the track located close to a waterway?)					
Has/is any vegetation to be cleared or modified?					
Does the current or proposed trail location unacceptably threaten any significant flora and fauna values? (refer to species Action Statements) Under 'potential impacts or risks', detail: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• any listed species present</li> <li>• status of the EVC (eg least concern, endangered) and if a native vegetation assessment and potentially an EPBC referral is required.</li> <li>• If any treaties apply? (eg Ramsar)</li> </ul>					

Key questions to consider	Yes / No	Potential impacts or risks (positive & negative)	Is the impact(s) minor/moderate/major? (if moderate or major, it is mandatory to complete the next column)	Proposed mitigation action (or further work/investigation required)	Satisfied (Yes / No / Maybe) (can the impact be adequately addressed?)
<p>Does the current or proposed trail location unacceptably threaten any significant cultural sites or values? Are there any registered Aboriginal sites? Is there an existing CHMP, CHP or CHA / is one required? (It may be appropriate to conduct a desktop assessment at this point) Are the views of the Traditional Owners or indigenous community known?</p>					
<p>Are there significant heritage sites or values? Are there any registered heritage sites? Is there an existing Heritage Conservation Plan?</p>					
<p>Is the site susceptible/at risk to damage from <i>Phytophthora cinnamomi</i> or other pathogens (eg Myrtle Rust)?</p>					
<b>Safety</b>					
<p>Are there existing or proposed Technical Trail Features or other built structures?</p>					
<p>Are there any known or identified risks?</p>					

Key questions to consider	Yes / No	Potential impacts or risks (positive & negative)	Is the impact(s) minor/moderate/major? (if moderate or major, it is mandatory to complete the next column)	Proposed mitigation action (or further work/investigation required)	Satisfied (Yes / No / Maybe) (can the impact be adequately addressed?)
(eg public risk, risk of injury to visitors, easy access to extreme trails)					
Have there been reported and/or known incidents related to this track or network?					
<b>Resourcing</b>					
Are the estimated costs to construct the track and associated infrastructure known?					
Are the estimated costs to maintain the track and associated infrastructure (per annum) known?					
Are there any known or estimated savings in closing the track?					
Are there any known or estimated savings in formalising the track?					
Can the public land manager fund the construction/ongoing maintenance of the track network? Are local (eg District level) resources available?					
Does the sustainable management of the track network require others outside of the public land manager to contribute to construction/ongoing maintenance?  If YES, what options are proposed for resourcing the above costs?					

Key questions to consider	Yes / No	Potential impacts or risks (positive & negative)	Is the impact(s) minor/moderate/major? (if moderate or major, it is mandatory to complete the next column)	Proposed mitigation action (or further work/investigation required)	Satisfied (Yes / No / Maybe) (can the impact be adequately addressed?)
(eg Friends Group, outsourced management, charge/retain revenue from rider use fees charged etc)					

### Recommended option(s)

Using the information from the assessment criteria table, provide a brief justification for or against each option.

Attach a map/plan of the area assessed, identifying which tracks are being recommended to be maintained, modified, redeveloped or closed. Include estimated costs for each option.

### Existing trails:

<input type="checkbox"/> Maintain	<input type="checkbox"/> Modify	<input type="checkbox"/> Redevelop	<input type="checkbox"/> Close

### Proposed trails:

<input type="checkbox"/> Proceed	<input type="checkbox"/> Decline

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**Approval**

DEPI approval	Parks Victoria approval	
For all recommendations	For recommendations to:  Maintain, modify or redevelop an existing unauthorised mountain bike track <b>or</b> Redevelop an existing authorised mountain bike track <b>or</b> Proceed with a proposal for a new mountain bike track	For recommendations to:  Maintain or modify an existing authorised mountain bike track <b>or</b> Decline a proposal for a new mountain bike track <b>or</b> Close an unauthorised or authorised mountain bike track
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Endorsed</b>  District Manager  .....  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Approved</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Endorsed</b>  Regional Director  .....  General Manager Regional Services	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Endorsed</b>  District Manager  .....  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Approved</b> Regional Director

Regional Director .....  	..... Director Visitor and Asset Strategy and Planning ..... <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Approved</b> General Manager Visitors and Community .....	.....
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## Appendix Four – Detailed planning assessment

A Detailed Planning Assessment is undertaken only when an approved Strategic Assessment indicates it is required and it has approval to proceed in a DEPI Regional Business Plan or PV Regional Action Plan. There may be cases where the timing of a project warrants undertaking a Detailed Planning Assessment before it has been included in such a plan; this will be at the discretion of a DEPI Regional Director and/or PV Regional Director.

The objectives of the Detailed Planning Assessment are:

- to provide a checklist of key questions to public land managers and contractors to consider when assessing in more detail the proposed site of a new mountain bike track or network or one that is to be upgraded; and
- to ensure a consistent approach is undertaken to assess in detail natural and cultural values, costs and on-ground requirements to proceed with mountain bike tracks or networks

### *Upgrade*

Where the Strategic Assessment has recommended a track or network be upgraded, the land manager should have an understanding of the level of works required to do this. If a track or network is being upgraded to a specific IMBA trail difficulty rating (eg green circle, black diamond) expert support will be required. There are DEPI and PV staff with training and experience in mountain biking who can assist with various elements of detailed planning. Contact your statewide recreation planning staff for more information. Trail design companies can be engaged to complete an audit of a track or network or to develop design plans for tracks or networks.

### *New*

Where the Strategic Assessment has recommended a new track or network proceed to the Detailed Planning Assessment stage, the land manager should work with the group that initiated the proposal to determine the level of works proposed. As with a proposed upgrade, expert support may be required to undertake the detailed assessment. If the new proposal is of a large enough scale or complexity, a detailed trails plan may be required to support assessment of the proposal.

It is critical that the questions are answered as comprehensively as possible as they will have implications for construction and maintenance costs and likely other impacts. Allowing sufficient time and resources to properly plan the track or network will achieve the best outcomes for the long term.

## Checklist for staff or contractor

Key questions to consider	Comments	Satisfied / Not Satisfied
<b>Overall track concept</b>		
<p>If there is a group associated with the proposal, are they affiliated with with a peak body (eg MTBA, IMBA-AU)? (affiliation with a peak body can indicate they have received professional instruction in sustainable trail design, construction and maintenance and also indicate their commitment to upholding these principles)</p>		
<p>Undertake focussed assessments of any further work/investigation required as a result of the Strategic Assessment. Further work/investigation may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council Building Permit</li> <li>• DPCD/Council Planning Permit</li> <li>• Land capability assessment</li> <li>• EPA approvals</li> <li>• Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act requirements</li> <li>• Native Vegetation Offsets Assessments</li> <li>• Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act – referral/permit</li> <li>• Cultural Heritage Management Plan or Cultural Heritage Permit</li> <li>• Heritage Victoria Approval</li> <li>• Heritage Risk Assessment</li> <li>• Fire Danger/Hazard Assessment</li> <li>• Water corporation consents/agreements</li> <li>• Power Authority/Supplier consents/agreements</li> <li>• Telecommunications Authority consents/agreements</li> </ul>		
<p>How much use is the track receiving or expected to receive? (seek available evidence to support figures – eg existing track use counts, figures from comparable network elsewhere, survey of riders, relevant research etc)</p>		

Key questions to consider	Comments	Satisfied / Not Satisfied
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will it get more use – if so, how will it get this additional use and where?</li> <li>• Does night riding occur and what are the impacts?</li> </ul>		
<p>Is the overall design of the track or network appropriate for the type and number of riders it intends to attract?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it a sustainable design?</li> <li>• What design and construction methods will be employed when building and/or maintaining the track? (refer to <a href="http://www.imba.com/resources/trail-building">www.imba.com/resources/trail-building</a>)</li> <li>• Will it provide enjoyable riding experiences?</li> <li>• Is the riding experience consistent along the length of the track (does it flow, or is it stop/start?)</li> <li>• Is the track network sufficient for reasonable rider needs or is the offer inadequate and likely to lead to unauthorised track proliferation – leading to increased environment impacts and conflicts with other users?</li> <li>• Is shared use appropriate?</li> </ul>		
<p>Does the structure/layout of the track network work well?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it the best use of the space available?</li> <li>• Are the tracks too dense?</li> <li>• Have natural features been best utilised?</li> <li>• Does the track have good sightlines?</li> <li>• Could sightlines encourage unwanted shortcuts?</li> </ul>		
<p>Does the track network make use of existing car parks, toilets and day use infrastructure, or due to likely levels of use and conflict with other users does it require its own separate supporting infrastructure? Have these considerations been factored into the resourcing considerations for this network (refer Resourcing section below)?</p>		
<b>Connectivity and accessibility</b>		
<p>How does the proposal or existing track connect to the existing track network (if applicable)?</p>		

Key questions to consider	Comments	Satisfied / Not Satisfied
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does it provide good access to and/or serve as an important connection to the wider track network?</li> <li>• Does the track(s) link to others and are they used in the same way and of similar grade?</li> <li>• Is the track(s) a loop?</li> </ul> <p>Does the track(s) have single trail heads or multiple branches and entry/exit points?</p>		
<p>Is the track a section of a network or a single loop or a point to point?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it long enough to fulfil the purpose and demand?</li> <li>• If a network, does it provide for varying skill levels and segregation?</li> </ul>		
<p>How important is this track to others in the network?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it the spine, or a connecting track?</li> <li>• Is it a loop?</li> <li>• Does it offer a unique or special experience (eg grade or feature)?</li> </ul>		
<p>Are TTFs appropriate to the intended grade of the track?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are alternative “B lines” available to allow riders to avoid difficult sections/TTFs?</li> <li>• Are these sections appropriately signed?</li> </ul>		
<p>Is the track used for events or intended to be used for events? If yes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does it link into other tracks?</li> <li>• What is the direction?</li> <li>• Is it exclusive use for the event?</li> <li>• Where do other users go?</li> <li>• What is the volume of use during events?</li> <li>• Who are the events run by?</li> <li>• Is there room/ability for event car parking, supporting infrastructure, portable toilets etc?</li> <li>• Will events demand more than the proposed or existing network?</li> </ul>		

Key questions to consider	Comments	Satisfied / Not Satisfied
<b>Trail head – entry/exit</b>		
Does the trail head entrance point prevent inexperienced riders from unintentionally accessing tracks beyond their capability? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a choke/funnel point?</li> <li>• Is there a qualifier for grade/test of the hardest elements at the start of the track?</li> </ul>		
Is speed an issue on entrance or exit to the track?		
Is the trail head sign posted to capture all users?		
Is there existing and adequate supporting infrastructure (toilets, car park, shelters etc)?		
Is there reasonable access for emergency vehicles close to the trail head?		
<b>Track intersections</b>		
Does the track intersect or link with tracks of similar grades? (ie you don't want a green circle graded track running into a black graded track)		
Does the track cross any vehicle roads?		
Does the intersection require braking (due to the need to change speed or change in direction/cornering)?		
Is the intersection sign posted to capture all users?		
<b>Industry standards and sustainable design</b>		
Is the track a consistent grade (eg IMBA grading)?		
Does the track follow IMBA design principles, including managing for safety and risk?		
Does the track meet IMBA classification standards (width/grade/TTFs etc)?		

Key questions to consider	Comments	Satisfied / Not Satisfied
How is speed managed? (eg TTFs, sightlines, tightness, gradient change?)		
Does the track have areas where multiple desire lines have been created?		
Does the track utilise the available natural/historic features, rock slabs, view points, old snig/logging tracks, aqueducts?		
Has any maintenance been undertaken on the track (if existing)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By who?</li> <li>• How often?</li> <li>• With what means?</li> </ul>		
<b>Resourcing</b>		
Have the costs of constructing and maintaining this track or network and associated infrastructure been properly estimated? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are they?</li> </ul>		
Can the public land manager fund (including labour) the construction/ongoing maintenance of this track network?		
Have partners been identified to assist with likely track construction and future ongoing maintenance costs? If yes, what specifically have these partners committed to do; is the offer sustainable; what if these partners disappear in the medium to longer term; is there an agreement in place?		
Is the track or network and associated infrastructure funded? Should it proceed to a funding bid? (eg BEREC bid, RDA/RDV grants, local community grants)		

\*It is worth noting that the majority of single-track developed from 2000 to 2010 took place whilst Victoria was in drought. Ensure mountain bike tracks are constructed to withstand likely future weather conditions.

Recommended option:

<input type="checkbox"/> Proceed	<input type="checkbox"/> Decline
<i>Complete a project summary, attaching the two completed assessments, maps, trails plan (if applicable) and discuss any governance issues to consider.</i>	

Approval

- Approved
- Not approved
- Please discuss

.....  
DEPI District Manager / PV District Manager

.....  
DEPI Regional Director / PV Regional Director

## Appendix Five – Mountain bike opportunity proposal template

The Department of Environment and Primary Industries and Parks Victoria have developed this template for mountain bike track proposals to help support a consistent approach to the information being submitted for proposals and also to how they are reviewed and assessed using the Public Land Mountain Bike Guidelines. The template covers off the key elements to consider when developing a proposal and can be discussed with local staff.

### Introduction

*Include information about:*

- *Who has prepared the proposal and why?*
- *Is there a mountain bike group/club associated with the proposal?*
- *Where the proposal is to be located (eg which park/forest)*
- *Who are the top 5 stakeholders involved and are there any strategic documents it aligns with (that you know of).*

*Attach a map or multiple maps clearly identifying the proposed track network and any associated infrastructure. Include information about:*

- *What experience will mountain bikers have?*
- *What tracks are proposed?*
- *Will the tracks be single use or shared use?*
- *What type of mountain biking is proposed?*
- *Where is the trailhead located?*
- *Are the tracks point to point or loops?*
- *What is the length of the individual tracks and the track network as a whole?*

### Social and economic values

*Include information about:*

- *Are there other visitors to the site?*
- *Who are they and could there be any conflict with them or possible overcrowding?*
- *What is the expected future use of the site by mountain bikers?*
- *Is the site expected to draw mountain bikers from a local, regional or statewide catchment?*
- *Are any new economic benefits to nearby communities/businesses expected?*

## Safety

*Include information about:*

- *Are any Technical Trail Features proposed?*
- *Are any other structures proposed?*
- *Are there any known or identified risks (eg public risk, risk of injury to visitors, easy access to extreme trails)?*
  - *Are they manageable?*
  - *Do you have resources to mitigate and/or manage them?*

## Facilities

*Include information about:*

- *What associated facilities are required to support the proposed tracks?*
- *Is there a need for signage, car parking, toilets, shelters, picnic tables?*
- *If events were to be held, would additional facilities be required?*

## Resourcing

*Include information about:*

- *Any further planning tasks required and who will be responsible for undertaking them.*
- *Cost estimates for the planning tasks.*
- *How the track(s) will be constructed and who will be responsible for construction.*
- *Cost estimates for construction.*
- *What type of management will be required and who will be responsible for managing the track(s) once constructed.*
- *What type of maintenance will be required and who will be responsible for undertaking the ongoing maintenance.*
- *Prior knowledge/skills in mountain bike track building/design/maintenance.*
- *Cost estimates for management and annual maintenance.*
- *Are there any project partners that may be able to assist with any of the above?*

## Timeframe

- *Include information about:  
How long it will take to complete the project.*

## References and links to other processes / documents

### **IMBA-AU**

<http://imba-au.com/>

### **MTBA**

<http://www.mtba.asn.au/>

### **IMBA publications and references**

Trail Solutions: IMBA's guide to building sweet singletrack

Managing Mountain Biking IMBA's Guide to Providing Great Riding

<http://www.imba.com/resources/>

IMBA Principles of track design and location

IMBA Trail Difficulty Rating System

<http://imba-au.com/imba-news/1893-2012-tdrs>

IMBA Rules of the Trail

<http://www.imba.com/about/rules-trail>

### **VEAC website; LCC & ECC recommendations**

<http://www.veac.vic.gov.au/>

### **Example of signage supporting shared use trails**

<http://www.stromloforestpark.com.au/about/etiquette.php>

### **Fluker posts**

<http://www.slideshare.net/towbike/you-yangs-cradle-001-presentation>

## Glossary

**Armouring** – reinforcement of a track surface with rock, brick, stone, concrete or other type of paving material.

**Cross-country (XC)** – involves riding point-to-point or on a circuit and includes both uphill and downhill sections. It includes a broad spectrum of terrain from management trails to single-track, and may include technical challenges suiting a wide range of skill levels. Rides can be anywhere from an hour to several days. Cross-country is generally the most sought after (and appropriate) style of mountain biking on PV and DEPI estate. This is due to the nature of the environment and the impact of the riding style.

**Downhill** – riding involves a point-to-point ride that is predominantly downhill. Tracks are usually single-track with technical challenges. Downhill mountain bikes are generally too heavy for serious climbing, so riders usually travel to the start of the descent by car or ski lift, requiring supporting infrastructure. Downhill tracks generally require greater armouring and more frequent maintenance to protect the environment than cross-country tracks as they descend more steeply. They also present a greater risk to participants than cross-country tracks.

The higher levels of risk and development and maintenance cost of these tracks mean that only a limited number can be supported on public land. However, proposals for downhill tracks will be considered on a case by case basis. Good examples of downhill tracks on DEPI and PV land include Bowden Spur at Kinglake National Park, Stockyards area at You Yangs Regional Park and Mt Taylor track at Mt Taylor State Forest.

**Free riding** – involves riding tracks or doing stunts that require more skill and involve more technical features than cross-country. Some free riders prefer riding in stand-alone challenge parks or skills areas, while others prefer technical challenges in cross-country rides. Free riding encompasses a number of other styles such as downhill, north shore (riding on elevated tracks made of interconnecting bridges and logs) and slopestyle (combining stunts and tricks).

**International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA)** – IMBA is a non-profit educational association whose mission is to create, enhance and preserve great mountain biking experiences. Its website ([www.imba.com](http://www.imba.com)) provides good information on trail building, research, risk management and other information relevant to mountain biking.

**Single-track** – narrow tracks that wind through bushland or open areas. The majority of mountain bike riders prefer to ride single-track.

**Technical Track Feature (TTF)** – an obstacle or design element on a mountain biking track that improves trail flow or adds difficulty in order to challenge the skill of trail users. TTFs are an important part of mountain biking trails and are meant to enhance the mountain biking experience. Typically, a mountain bike rider has the option to ride or bypass a TTF. Works constructed solely for

the purpose of enhancing trail safety or access (e.g. a bridge crossing a stream) or to ensure ecological or commemorative integrity are not considered TTFs.

**Trials/Dirt jumping/4X** – trials riding involves hopping and jumping bikes over obstacles, without a foot touching the ground. It can be performed either off-road or in an urban environment. Dirt jumping involves riding bikes over shaped mounds of dirt or soil to become airborne. Dirt jumpers prefer dedicated jumping areas. 4X is a relatively new style of riding where four bikers race downhill on a prepared, BMX like, track, simply trying to get down first.