

Special Use Guidelines



PURPOSE

The Tasmanian bushwalking community's connection to bushwalking in the Cradle Mountain- Lake St Clair National Park has a long history and an immense importance to many Tasmanians.

For some, it spans a number of generations and 'traditional' walking experiences. The Overland Track (OLT) special use guidelines acknowledge traditional or off-OLT bushwalking activity and enable the bushwalking community to undertake walks that use only a small part of the OLT without payment of the Overland Track booking fee - when these guidelines are applied.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE OLT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

By 2005, the popularity of the Overland Track (OLT) resulted in overcrowding of walkers and limited hut availability at times, along with some associated environmental issues. This generated complaints from walkers and sharpened the focus of park managers on the need to establish a management system for the area that provided walkers with an improved wilderness experience and managed human use pressures.

The OLT Management System was developed in consultation with a range of stakeholders. In implementing it, the intention is that individual walkers, the bushwalking community, and Parks staff all play a part in looking after the OLT, including the outstanding wilderness, natural and cultural values of the area.

The OLT Management System has three general rules that apply each year from 1 October to 31 May:

1. maximum daily departure numbers apply;
2. walkers travel north to south; and
3. a booking fee applies for each walker undertaking the OLT.

Central to the purpose of the OLT Management System is to provide for 'sustainable use' that maintains the outstanding wilderness, natural and cultural values of the area with walker fees returned to contribute to maintenance priorities.

Jump forward to the current day and the benefits of the OLT Management System are evident. Track condition assessments indicate steady improvement; campsite conditions show a reduction in environmental damage; and exit surveys of OLT bushwalkers indicate generally positive experiences.



TAKING THE SIDE TRIP UP MOUNT OSSA, OVERLAND TRACK, CRADLE MOUNTAIN-LAKE ST CLAIR NATIONAL PARK.



HISTORIC PELION HUT (BUILT 1917), OVERLAND TRACK, CRADLE MOUNTAIN-LAKE ST CLAIR NATIONAL PARK.



**EVENING AT NARCISSUS BAY, OVERLAND TRACK,
CRADLE MOUNTAIN-LAKE ST CLAIR NATIONAL PARK.**

SPECIAL USE GUIDELINES

The OLT Special Use Guidelines apply from 1 October until 31 May each year. Their purpose is to enable the bushwalking community to enjoy walks that use only a part of the OLT without payment of the Overland Track fee – when these guidelines are applied. Walkers are requested to support these guidelines in a spirit of cooperation that helps protect the experiences of all walkers and the environment:

Walks that are considered appropriate within these guidelines:

- o Cradle Valley > Rodway > Cradle (incl day walks to Barn Bluff / Waterfall Valley).
- o Arm River > Pelion > Arm River (incl day walks to Mt Ossa/ Proteus, Pelion East, Pelion West, Oakleigh) return via Arm River.
- o Mersey Valley > Lees Paddocks > Kia Ora > Junction Lake return via Mersey Valley.
- o Mersey Valley > Junction Lake > Never Never > Lees Paddock (not staying overnight at Kia Ora)
- o Circuit of Arm River Track > Pelion > Pelion Gap south to Kia Ora and out Lees Paddock track (not staying overnight at Kia Ora).
- o Lake St Clair > Narcissus > Pine Valley varied overnight/ day walks from Pine Valley.
- o Narcissus > Traveller Range via Du Cane Gap (but no further north than Du Cane Gap)
- o Varied and less used tracks and routes that encounter the OLT not listed may also be consistent with these guidelines - please check with PWS staff if in advance.

If undertaking these walks you should accept the following requirements:

1. Bushwalkers intending to use part of the OLT for the purpose of undertaking walks within the special use guidelines, should not walk more than one overnight segment; note the exceptions to this are listed in the special use guidelines under “walks that are considered appropriate”. Any alternative walk plans of more than one segment that are not detailed above must be discussed with the PWS (see point 5)

2. All walkers shall respect each other. Ensure OLT fee paying walkers have preferential hut use by camping when staying at an OLT hut node location. This reduces potential overcrowding in huts and allows fee paying walkers access to the huts. Of course, access to huts for safety needs is an accepted priority for all walkers.

3. Note that the Waterfall Valley non-OLT camp platform can be booked via the Cradle Visitor Centre; occasional use of old Waterfall Valley Hut is acceptable if the non OLT camp and OLT camping platforms are full.

4. Apply ‘Leave no trace’ bushwalking practices.

5. As a courtesy, undertake best endeavors to notify PWS staff in advance of undertaking the walk. This communication will allow PWS Track Rangers to be aware of walker plans, clarify consistency with OLT special use guidelines, assist with planning walks in advance and resolve issues in advance, if need arises.

Please advise a contact name and phone number, number in party, planned route, departure and likely return date.

EMAIL: OVERLANDTRACK@PARKS.TAS.GOV.AU

PHONE: 6165 4254 (note this phone number operates during business hours and will be forwarded to a messagebank at other times).

Walks not requiring communicating with or notifying PWS, are Pelion Hut area stays with walks to the greater Ossa – Proteus area, Lees Paddocks to the Never Never without a hut node stay, Never Never to Narcissus, Narcissus to Du Cane Gap without a Windy Ridge Hut stay and the greater Barn Bluff area without a Waterfall Valley Hut or platform stay.

This guideline will be reviewed after each summer season and modified to resolve any issue(s) causing compliance issues or impacting on the experience and sustainability of the track.

