

Environmental Audit

Aims:

- To ensure consistent environmental standards are met by organisers and planners of orienteering events.
- To improve access opportunities through enhanced relationships with conservation bodies and landowners by showing a highly responsible attitude to the environment.
- To build a data bank that can be used to evaluate the environmental performance of orienteering.

Introduction:

Approaching conservationists with some kind of environmental audit of past and current events in hand is likely to create a favourable impression as it will be real information, and show that we are monitoring ourselves. British Orienteering has established an environmental benchmark for events, including the recording and reporting of lasting signs that the event has taken place.

Environmental Standards for Orienteering Events

- * Orienteering shall operate within any legal environmental standards, and also within any framework agreed with third parties.
- * No significant damage to animals, plants, landscape or archaeological features shall result from an orienteering event.
- * Any temporary damage, such as plant trampling, should no longer be discernable after 3 months in the worst case.
- * No litter, equipment or extraneous material shall remain once the area has been vacated.
- * Where an event area contains organisms or features of special conservation interest, the event organisers will be supportive of management concerns, and assist the relevant authorities where possible.
- * Event personnel will record the event's performance against these standards.

The aim is to make this a useful exercise, building a large data bank with time, but ensuring that it is easy to complete, as part of the normal process of holding an event.

This document should be used in conjunction with the outline version of The Environmental Guidelines for Organisers and Planners.

For larger events, the services of an 'environmental controller' might be considered - this should be someone who is reasonably knowledgeable, and independent of the event organisers.

Before the event:

1. Research and record environmental issues affecting the event.
2. Record steps taken to address them, including contacts, meetings and correspondence.

3. Walk the suggested routes, and note the location of further features which could be vulnerable (flora, birds, bogs, boundaries) and if necessary modify the route or find ways to protect such features
4. Note down the status of vegetation at controls that are likely to be more heavily used, or are in sensitive areas (e.g. marshes)
5. Note down the status of the parking and assembly areas, the start and finish and routes there to. Agree these with the landowner.
6. Take photographs where they might be useful
7. Offer local conservation bodies the opportunity to attend the event, and/or to put on a display on the day.
8. Plan the recycling of drinks containers and also of drinks cans and other recyclable materials from on-site vendors.

Immediately after the event

9. Note down any changes to the status of heavily used areas (parking, assembly, start, finish).
10. Ensure that all areas used are clear of any rubbish, orienteering equipment, tapes, tags, markers and so on
11. Take new photographs as a visual comparison to be included in the report.
12. Tour the site with the landowner, and get him or her to sign off your status report.
13. Check on the integrity of out-of-bounds areas, heavily used routes and controls.
14. Close off entry points to potential new paths.
15. Check a few examples of sensitive sites and note impacts and changes.

2 to 4 weeks after the event

Visit the site and key controls again and seek to identify any lasting signs that an event had taken place. Take photographs where appropriate. In the event that signs remain after 4 weeks, this should be noted, and the area re-visited after a further 60 days.

Further visits may be warranted where impacts remain visible in sensitive areas, if only to show that they were, in fact, temporary.

Prepare a brief report

Be honest about reporting findings as it will be appreciated far more than any whitewash, particularly if lessons can be shown to have been learned and acted upon.

Submit copies to British Orienteering and the local conservation body office (where appropriate), providing opportunity for any observations on this report or from other independent sources.

This should include:

- * The use made of the British Orienteering Environmental Guidelines and audit process.
- * The event details
- * Number of competitors
- * Number of vehicles
- * Environmental issues encountered, solutions and observations of effectiveness.
- * Pre- and post-event descriptions and comparisons.
- * Comments of relevant landowners, conservationists or bodies.

