



Waterland Outdoor Pursuits

Bushcraft & Survival

Procedures 24/11/2016

WATERLAND RISK MANAGEMENT

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The site is privately leased from the Cotswold Water Park and is part of Waterland Outdoor Pursuits. There is a young broadleaf copse at the south end of a field which is used for the majority of activities. There is no public access to the area itself but footpaths run adjacent to three of the four boundaries and a road runs adjacent to the fourth. The boundaries are marked on the north, east and west boundaries by mature hedgerows and on the south side by a wooden fence and a layer of hazel and hawthorn.

Due to previous development by the Bushcraft leaders some structures are present including two fire pits with benches, a wood stores and assorted semi permanent shelters. A pathway has been cleared through the site.

Flora and Fauna: The woodland itself is very young and consists mainly of field maple, hazel, horse chestnut and hawthorn. There is also silver birch, ash, sweet cherry, larch and lime present. There is an area of brambles that has been left to provide wildlife habitation in the northwest and northeast corners of the woodland site. The soil is mainly clay and gravel in keeping with the local area. The surrounding field is grassland which is kept mowed to provide for camping areas. Mature hedgerows provide additional habitats.

Interesting features: Young variable woodland with good management potential. Site is within Country Park which in turn is within the Cotswold water park - an area consisting of 140 lakes formed from gravel extraction. The adjacent lake to lake 32 is given over as a nature reserve with bird watching areas.

Shooting: No access/ not applicable

Debris: No public access. Woodland is solely managed by Bushcraft Leaders and debris is limited to that from woodland management and group sessions.

Dogs: No Public access but potential for dogs to enter site. No faeces present.

Access: Via Waterland Pursuits main site. From private car park there is a short walk down a gravel path alongside Lake 32 to a gate on the northern boundary of the field. Gate is closed for duration of sessions.

Vehicles: Private site so only authorised vehicles permitted to enter car park at any time.

Water: Fresh Water Lake on walking route and continues adjacent to FS area. Run-off ditch within field boundaries in SE corner.

Telephone access: Mobile phone signal on 3 mobile, O2, EE and Vodaphone with no issues. Nearest landline is approximately 300m from working site. Provision for leaders to have radios linked to Waterland site if necessary.

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Main Concerns:

- Site is visible from one side via public path - small risk of interference both with groups and site when not in use.
- Immature woodland with low level trees. Careful management needed to ensure future development.
- Lack of woodland resources. Bushcraft Leaders need to source wood from surrounding areas.
- Enclosed area promotes trip hazards from previous groups. Inability to rotate group access.

Positives:

- Area is restricted and private. Easy to manage groups.
- Area has been developed and cleared for use by groups and is managed solely by Waterland staff.
- Ability to make long term plans and develop area. Woodland management can be incorporated into programmes.
- Site is rural and surrounded by managed lake and woodland with varied habitats and conservation programmes in place providing potential to expand activities.
- Waterland site is staffed by trained first aiders and provides access to nearby kitchen facilities, toilets and changing areas.

Recommendations:

- Woodland management plan to be completed to ensure sustainability.
- Policies and procedures to be followed at all times.
- Site to continue to be checked before each session.
- Country park rangers to inform of any available woodland materials from surrounding areas.
- Careful management of group size and frequency and / or alternative sites sourced.

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Small Axe Use

	HAZARD / HARM	PEOPLE AT RISK	EXISTING MEASURES		NEW MEASURES	WHO? WHEN?
1.	Unsafe use – blade slipping/ bouncing	Group	Tool talk at initial introduction and subsequent competence and knowledge checks. Gloves off. Where will the blade go if it slips? Safe working distances. Good, clear communication when working in pairs.		Close supervision by BC leaders.	Bushcraft leader to guide activity.
2.	Transportation and storage: Injury	Group/ leaders	Axe kept sheathed when not in use and kept in locked box for transportation to and from site. Group briefed on storage during session – return to designated place when not in use.			Bushcraft Leaders
3.	Loss or theft	Group/ leaders	Close monitoring of Axe, equipment counted in at the end of every session.			BC leaders to ensure each group has a designated tool area.
4.	Equipment failing	Group/ Leaders	BC leaders to ensure equipment is maintained. Axes to be cleaned and stored correctly. Any issues to be reported to BC leader who will decommission if necessary.		Students shown how to clean and store tools and encouraged to take responsibility.	BC leaders

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Blind Folds

	HAZARD / HARM	PEOPLE AT RISK	EXISTING MEASURES	Blindfolds	New Measures	WHO? WHEN?
1.	-Trip or slip -walking into objects -head injury - injury from sharp objects	Group/ leaders	Briefing to explain how to lead a blindfolded person safely, how to communicate effectively and the dangers to watch out for. Clear guidelines as to the activity area. BC leaders to check for any hazards before activity.			Bush Craft leaders
2.	Blindfold tied to tight	Group/ leaders	Variety of sizes available. Explanation of how to adjust blindfolds.			BC leader to demonstrate and check

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Bow Saw Risk

	HAZARD / HARM	PEOPLE AT RISK	EXISTING MEASURES	Bow Saw Risk	NEW MEASURES	WHO? WHEN?
1.	Unsafe use – blade slipping	Group	Tool talk at initial introduction and subsequent competence and knowledge checks. Gloves on non- sawing hand. Where will the blade go if it slips? Safe working distances.		Group leaders to follow safe practice and provide extra eyes for activity.	Bushcraft leader to guide activity.
2.	Transportation and storage: Injury	Group/ leaders	All saws kept sheathed when not in use. Bow Saws kept in locked box for transportation to and from site. Group briefed on storage during session – tool station.			BC leaders
3.	Loss or theft of saws or guards	Group/ leaders	Bow Saws counted in and out by BC leaders. Saws kept at designated tool station for each group. BC leader to stress importance of replacing guards to protect blades and avoid loss in leaf litter.			BC leaders to ensure each group has a designated tool station.
4.	Equipment failing	Group/ Leaders	BC leaders to ensure equipment is maintained. Saws to be cleaned and stored correctly. Any issues to be reported to BC leader who will decommission if necessary.		Students shown how to clean and store tools and encouraged to take responsibility.	BC leaders

Collection Of Natural Materials

	HAZARD / HARM	PEOPLE AT RISK	EXISTING MEASURES	Collection of natural materials	NEW MEASURES	WHO? WHEN?
1.	Lifting Materials: Muscle strain/ back injury	Group/ leaders	Individuals shown to bend knees and not back for all lifting activities. Group encouraged to work within their own physical limits and ask for help when needed. All leaders to use correct lifting techniques			BC leaders to demonstrate
2.	Fungi and toxic plants: Poisoning	Group/ leaders	All care will be taken to avoid areas where toxic plants grow. Group will be reminded not to eat anything they find if necessary. Handwash will be used before eating/drinking.			BC leader. Site risk assessment
3.	Insects and plants: Stings Anaphylactic shock	Group/ leaders	All leaders to be aware of any allergies to bites or stings in the group and in the use of epi pens. Where possible avoid area with stinging plants or insects. Explain what dangers to look out for.			BC leader. When planning activities
4.	Carrying sticks: knocks scratches	Group/ leaders	BC leaders to remain alert to over – exuberance when carrying sticks. Group shown to watch out for themselves and others when turning with long sticks.			BC leader to demo.

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Fire And Cooking Procedures

	HAZARD / HARM	PEOPLE AT RISK	EXISTING MEASURES	Fire & Cooking Procedures	NEW MEASURES	WHO? WHEN?
1.	Starting the fire	Group/leaders	Fire Policy and procedures. Fire to be lit using fire steels. BC leader to supervise fire lighting. Any lighters to be removed from group before session. Group members to be shown the appropriate way to light fires with reinforcement each session.		Any subsequent new members of group will be shown how to safely light fire. Peer group to provide input to show understanding.	BC leader to supervise
2.	Once fire is alight: Slipping Tripping	Group/Leaders	Fire pit constructed by BC leaders. Safe distance between fire area and raised benches. Group versed in how to stand, kneel and move around to prevent falling towards the fire area. No running. No bags or other trip hazards inside fire circle.		Safe position constantly re-enforced. Ensure group leaders follow guidelines to set correct example.	BC leader to monitor
3.	Fire spreading	Group/Leaders	Fire pit placement and soil type considered during site construction. Fire kept well within the boundaries of the pit. No burning sticks to be removed from fire. Water bucket kept by fire at all times. Fire to be fully extinguished before BC leaders leave site.			BC leader to monitor at all times
4.	Burns from cooking incl. Kettles, burning wood, hot water	Group/Leaders	Implements provided to remove hot items from fire. BC leader to demonstrate safe practice and supervise any cooking activities. Groups will not crowd firepit – max. 4 involved in cooking.			BC leaders to supervise at all times

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5.	Toxic fumes and explosions.	Group/ Leaders	No un-natural items to be placed in the fire. Bin to be provided and leaders to ensure that it is used. Groups informed of environmental impact of burning plastics etc.			BC leaders and leaders to monitor at all times.
6.	Burns from handling/ eating hot food.	Group/ Leaders	BC leader will inform all that food will be hot when taken from the fire. Food not to be handled with bare hands. No grabbing of food from the fire – designated roles.		Plates and/or rolls etc to be used.	BC leader to monitor food distribution

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General Welfare Risk

	HAZARD / HARM	PEOPLE AT RISK	EXISTING MEASURES	General Welfare Risk	NEW MEASURES	WHO? WHEN?
1.	Pre- Existing Medical Issues	Group	Group leader to ensure medical forms are completed and handed to BC leader before the start of sessions. All leaders to be aware of any allergies or medical considerations. Direct consent to be given by parent for any medication needed – BC leaders will not administer but may witness group leader doing so.		Records kept and referred to before each session. Severe medical conditions to be assessed on an individual basis.	BC leader, Parents and group leader. Before sessions
2.	Inappropriate clothing including footwear.	Group/ Leaders	Group Leaders informed of appropriate clothing before sessions and to provide extra clothing if necessary. Footwear and clothing to be visually checked before sessions. BC leaders to provide extra if possible. Session curtailed if necessary.		If weather changes BC leader to recheck students clothing.	BC leader, Parents and group leader. Before and during sessions
3.	Accident or health problem occurring.	Group/ leaders	BC leaders trained in First aid. Appropriate first aid kit to be carried on all sessions including burns dressings. All leaders to be aware of where first aid kit is kept. Mobile phones and/or radios to be carried at all times. BC leaders to take the lead in any incidents. Group/leaders to inform of any incidents. Any accidents or near misses to be reported in incident book.		Medical info to be carried by leaders. Awareness of any food/ common allergies.	BC Leader.

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Use Of Knives

	HAZARD / HARM	PEOPLE AT RISK	EXISTING MEASURES	Use Of Knives	NEW MEASURES	WHO? WHEN?
1.	Unsafe use / knife slipping: cuts	Group/ leaders	Thorough tool talk on first introduction. Competence and knowledge check at each session. Working practices to be explained – where will the blade go if it slips? Knives sharpened and maintained well. No gloves.			BC leader
2.	Transportation and storage: injury	Group/ leaders	All knives kept sheathed/ closed when not in use. Knives kept in locked box for transportation to and from site. Group briefed on storage during session.			BC leader to supervise
3.	Loss or theft	Group	Knives counted out and in by Bushcraft Instructor. Knives kept safely on person or at tool station when not in use.			BC leader. Session paused to deal with any missing tools.

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Leaving The Ground (Falls From Heights)

	HAZARD / HARM	PEOPLE AT RISK	EXISTING MEASURES	Leaving The Ground	NEW MEASURES	WHO? WHEN?
1.	Falling – head injury	Group/leaders	Helmets to be worn if working off the ground. BC leader to check helmets before activity.			BC leader to ensure
2.	Group lifting - injury	Group/leaders	Ensure everyone is aware of their role and how to lift safely. Clear instructions for timing of lift.			BC leader and/or appointed group leader
3.	Falling – being dropped	Group/leaders	Group to understand how to communicate if they need to put person down. Activity area should be appropriate without sharp objects on the ground			BC leader before and during activity
4.	Ropes loosening/ failing	Group/leaders	All ropes to be checked regularly. Ensure competence in knot work before proceeding with activities involving important knots. Reiterate if necessary.			BC leader

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Use Of Loppers

	HAZARD / HARM	PEOPLE AT RISK	EXISTING MEASURES	Use Of Loppers	NEW MEASURES	WHO? WHEN?
1.	Unsafe use – blade slipping	Group	Tool talk at initial introduction and subsequent competence and knowledge checks. Gloves on for large loppers. Where will the blade go if it slips? Safe working distances.			BC leader to guide activity.
2.	Transportation and storage: Injury	Group/ leaders	All loppers kept sheathed when not in use. Loppers kept in locked box for transportation to and from site. Group briefed on storage during session – tool station.			BC leaders
3.	Loss or theft	Group/ leaders	Loppers counted in and out by BC leaders and kept at designated tool station for each group.			BC leaders to ensure each group has a designated tool station.
4.	Equipment failing	Group/ Leaders	BC leaders to ensure equipment is maintained. Loppers to be cleaned and stored correctly. Any issues to be reported to BC leader who will decommission if necessary.		Students shown how to clean and store tools and encouraged to take responsibility.	BC leaders

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Use Of Pruning Saw

	HAZARD / HARM	PEOPLE AT RISK	EXISTING MEASURES	Pruning Saw	NEW MEASURES	WHO? WHEN?
1.	Unsafe use – blade slipping	Group	Tool talk at initial introduction and subsequent competence and knowledge checks. Gloves on non- sawing hand. Where will the blade go if it slips? Safe working distances to be adhered to.		Group leaders to follow safe practice and provide extra eyes for activity.	BC leader to guide activity.
2.	Transportation and storage: Injury	Group/ leaders	All saws kept folded when not in use. Pruning Saws kept in locked box for transportation to and from site. Group briefed on storage during session – tool station.			BC leaders
3.	Loss or theft of saws	Group/ leaders	Pruning Saws counted in and out by BC leaders. Saws kept at designated tool station for each group.			BC leaders to ensure each group has a designated tool station.
4.	Equipment failing	Group/ Leaders	BC leaders to ensure equipment is maintained. Saws to be cleaned and stored correctly. Groups aware of how to lock/ unlock pruning saws. Any issues to be reported to BC leader who will decommission if necessary.		Students shown how to clean and store tools and encouraged to take responsibility.	BC leaders

Rope Risk Problems

	HAZARD / HARM	PEOPLE AT RISK	EXISTING MEASURES	Rope Risk Problems	NEW MEASURES	WHO? WHEN?
1.	Rope Burn	Group/ leaders	Gloves to be worn if needed. Adequate clothing or padding to be used if ropes are tied to a person for activities. Group prompted to consider rope burn during activities.		BC leaders and leaders to always use gloves if appropriate to set an example.	BC Leaders/ Group leaders
2.	Trip	Group/ leaders	Ropes will be brightly coloured. Groups will be made aware not to lay ropes in a position where they will be tripped over.		BC leaders to advise groups	
3.	Entanglement	Group/ leaders	Leader carries a knife at all times. Activities involving long lengths of rope to be carefully supervised		BC leaders to supervise	
4.	Catching neck	Group/ leaders	Within immature woodland setting care to be taken that ropes are not placed at inappropriate height. All suspended ropes to be brightly coloured		BC leaders to supervise	

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Shelter Building

	HAZARD / HARM	PEOPLE AT RISK	EXISTING MEASURES	SHELTER BUILDING	NEW MEASURES	WHO? WHEN?
1.	Shelter collapse: injury	All in / near shelter	Correct ratio of Leaders to students. Guidance and encouragement on how to appropriately build shelters. Remaining shelters to be checked for disrepair before following sessions.			BC leaders guiding aspects of activity
2.	Eye Injury	Group/ leaders	Group informed to watch out for protruding branches when constructing shelters.			BC leader
3.	Knots loosening	Group/ leaders	Group to have completed knot tying activities to ensure correct knowledge. Supervision and refresher of skills if necessary. Activity guided by BC leaders.			BC leader
4.	Head injury	Group/ leaders	Group advised to move sensibly and not run in and out of shelters.			BC leader/ group leaders
5.	Obstruction	Group/ leaders	Group briefed on placement of shelters to avoid blocking pathways / causing an obstruction to future activities.			BC leaders

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Weather Conditions

	HAZARD / HARM	PEOPLE AT RISK	EXISTING MEASURES	Weather Conditions	NEW MEASURES	WHO? WHEN?
1.	Weather Report	Group/ Leaders	Leaders aware of weather report before session. Cancel sessions when weather is severe and if it will pose a risk to group. Liaise with group leaders re: safe transport to site and curtail if necessary.			BC leaders and group leaders Before group arrives
2.	High Winds	Group/ Leader	Groups will not enter the woodlands when the winds are high due to falling branches, fire and safe working issues. BC leaders daily site check. Inform group at earliest possible opportunity of curtailment.		Group to be removed from the woods if high winds blow up during session.	BC Leaders
3.	Sun	Group/ Leaders	Group advised of appropriate clothing for weather conditions. Leaders advised to bring sun cream for group. BC leaders to have sun cream available for groups use. BC leaders will not apply sun cream.		BC leaders to ensure regular drink breaks. BC leaders to advise group on dangers of sun and encourage group to use sun cream.	BC Leaders, Leaders and parents. Before and during session
4.	Rain/ cold/ snow	Group/ Leaders	Group advised of appropriate clothing for weather conditions. Leaders to provide extra if necessary. Daily site check to be aware of new hazards. eg. Mud, flooding, covered trip hazards.		Erect tarps to cover seating/ working areas and use sheltered areas if necessary.	BC Leaders, Leaders, Parents and Group