

# Best Practice Guideline: tourism & recreation use

## preamble

Recreation in natural areas is an excellent tool for reconnecting people with the environment. Besides the important educational function it is also a possible income stream and there are several opportunities that can be developed without compromising the conservation integrity of the area.

When tourism or recreational uses for an area are investigated, the most important aspect to take into consideration is the objective for why you want to encourage public use of your land. A few key questions to ask yourself are:

- Is it really necessary to develop the land?
- What features are available for/would be of interest to users?
- Who are your target groups/markets?
- What sort of activities would be suitable?

These recreational use types must not be in conflict with other uses. For example mountain biking on roads and tracks, but not along walking footpaths, or quad biking should not be accommodated near bird-watching sites.

Management of tourism related activities should be in relation to biodiversity and the ecosystem.

It must be remembered that once your land is to be used by the public, you will need to implement some degree of management/access control. The degree to which this is needed depends on the type of activities allowed as well as the numbers of people to be accommodated.

## impacts of activities

- All activities will have some degree of impact on your land.
- The more people that utilise the site and the higher the impact of the activity, the bigger the impact on the environment will be. This must be considered in the planning stages.

- Cumulative impacts become more apparent either over time or due to intensive usage e.g. the effects of light motorised watersports on a waterbody and surrounding area, or noise and light pollution or some research methods (like intensive plant collection).
- Where rules, regulations or conditions need to be in place, make these known via signage and/or leaflets at access points.

### infrastructure, facilities & services

Before any building or developing can take place, you will need to develop a Tourism and Recreation Management Plan (or a Conservation Development Framework – CDF). This needs to include the design of the development as well as the position of access routes, infrastructure and other facilities. It should also outline the potential impacts and the management thereof.

Long term monitoring is necessary in relation to the impacts of tourism on biodiversity and adaptive management should be applied.

Certain uses, activities and facilities might trigger listed activities in the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) and require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for which you will need to contact an Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP). For more advice or guidance on any of these issues, refer to the website [www.capegateway.gov.za](http://www.capegateway.gov.za) or consult CapeNature or your local municipality.

### possible infrastructure, facilities & services that can be considered

For more information on the development of these, consult the *BPG: Sensitive Development*.

#### *Pathways and hiking trails*

- Pathways and hiking trails involve a low impact and are the simplest means to encourage people to experience the natural environment.

#### *Overnight accommodation*

- Accommodation facilities could be investigated. These could be in the form of campsites, chalets/bungalows or a guesthouse.
- Before developing these facilities, the footprint must be considered as well as their access to services - see *BPG: Sensitive Development*.

- Also, NEMA might require that an EIA be conducted.

### Access

- If allowing public access, this will need to be controlled or monitored.
- Roads may need to be built or existing ones improved - see *BPG: Sensitive Development*.
- Frequently used roads will require ongoing maintenance to prevent erosion.

### Health and Safety

- Depending on the activities accommodated health and safety precautions might have to be considered. This is particularly important where water sport activities are allowed.
- Dangerous areas must be signposted.
- For fire precautions see *BPG: Fire Management & Prevention*.

### Game

- If you are considering stocking the area with game, potential waterholes and feeding stations might need to be installed. These might affect where your other development is placed.
- Consult CapeNature for more information on permits, stocking rates, required fences, etc.

### Services

- For many tourism related activities general services are required.
- Water use should be examined as well as the use of gas or electricity. This will affect any accommodation development.