

# **Orienteering and Your Land**

## ***Information for Landowners***

### Orienteering

Orienteering is a navigation sport where the competitors, on foot, endeavour to complete a course of designated points in the fastest possible time. In ACT the sport is controlled by the Orienteering ACT Inc and events are arranged by one of our member clubs.

### The Map

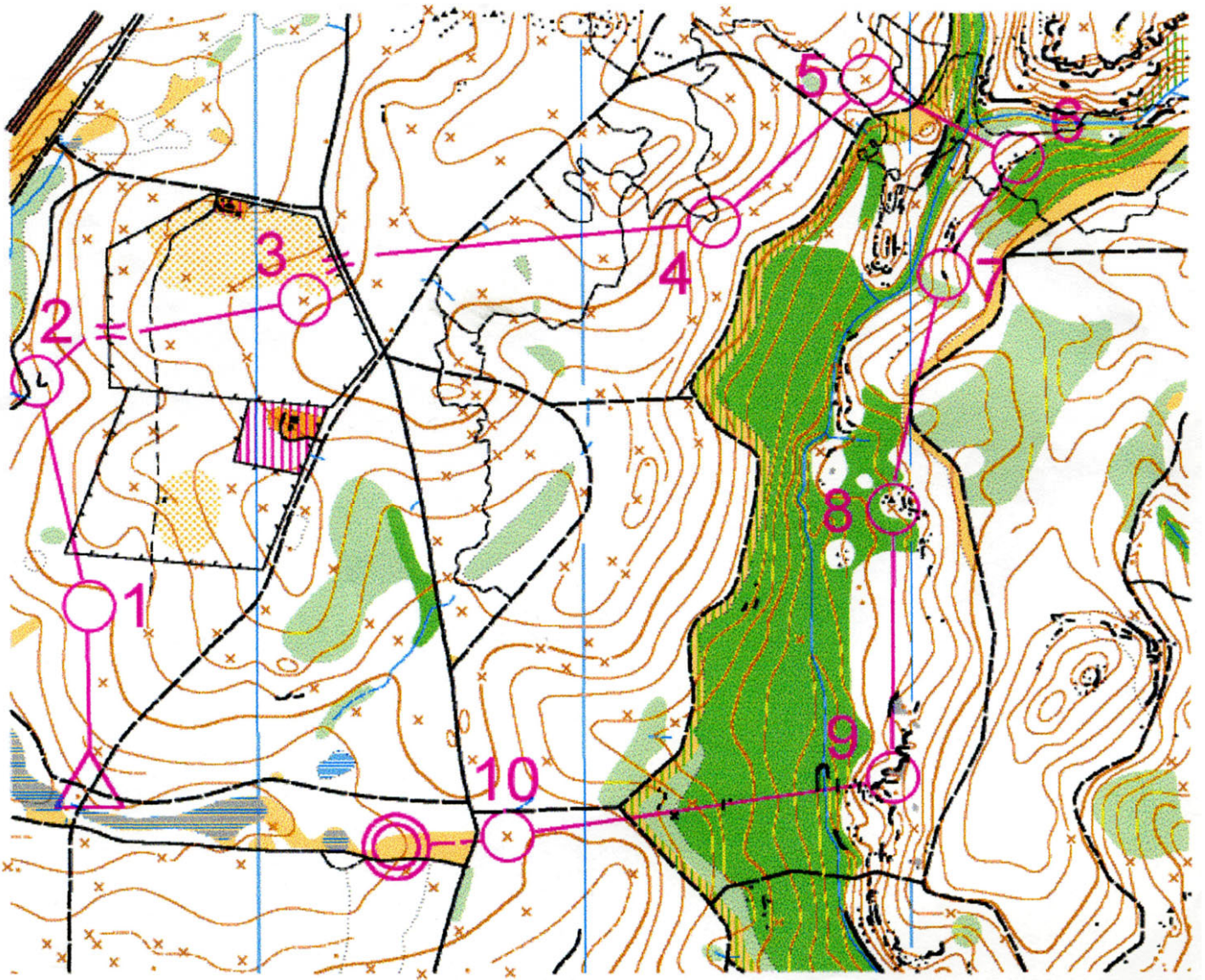
Orienteering requires a large map, which is produced by orienteers themselves from a ground survey, carried out with the landowner's permission.

A typical orienteering map is shown below. Mapping in such detail gives us a thorough awareness of your land so that we can use it in a controlled and responsible way. Landowners often find our map has other valuable uses.

### The Course

A typical course is printed on the map. The circles indicate control features (checkpoints) that competitors must visit in numerical order. Between controls, competitors choose routes they think best, using marked crossing points where directed to do so. Areas, which the landowner declares out-of-bounds, are marked on the map and avoided in the course setting. Only one course is shown on the example. The other courses are designed in a similar manner but use different control features so that the competitors are dispersed over the permitted area.

Courses are designed to avoid areas with livestock and to avoid damage to fences, etc



### Impact

Orienteers are environmentally conscious people. When we plan an event, we avoid sensitive vegetation, bird nesting sites, and any other special areas. Those who visit such an event are generally struck by the dispersed nature of the competitors; how few they seem and how quietly they go about their sport. We prohibit orienteers from bringing pets, guns, collecting firewood, lighting fires, etc. All refuse is removed.

### Numbers

Orienteering is a sport for under 10 year olds to the over 80s but they don't all do the same length of course. A range of different length courses is offered - from around 5 courses to 20 depending on the size of the event, ranging in length from 2 to 15 km. Competitors start at 2-minute intervals on each course. These competitors go off in different directions as they take their own chosen routes to their different controls. Start times are spread over 2 to 4 hours so that many competitors will have finished before others have started.

It is expected that a maximum of 50% of the total number of competitors would be in the area at the peak time. This, and the different courses, means that the competitors are well dispersed within the competition area. It is not surprising that visitors remark on how few competitors there appear to be.

Orienteering is not a spectator sport and, apart from event officials and a few family members, the numbers coming to the event are the same as those who are competing. The first use of an area for a major event might attract 500-800 competitors, but subsequent events would involve only 100-200 competitors, with numbers dropping in latter years of use.

### The minimal impact on vegetation

A number of reports have been produced which comment favourably on the impact of orienteering on the countryside. Some of these describe observations made before, during and up to a year after a major event. These reports examine the way the sport conducts itself and look at the impact of the event on the flora, fauna and the infrastructure (fences, litter, etc). In general, these reports have referred to:

- the good behaviour of orienteers,
- the responsible way the sport is organised,
- the minimal impact on vegetation,

- the quick disappearance of any marks of passage in practically all terrain,
- the minimal disturbance to wildlife, and
- orienteers respect property and do not leave litter.

### Quotes

"We would like to thank everyone concerned for leaving the place so tidy. People wouldn't know such a large event had been held here." A farmer.

"I was very much aware of the care taken in conservation and, having visited the site again and found virtually no trace of your having been there, feel that this is excellent commendation for the sport of orienteering." A bushwalker.

### Our Commitment

OACT is committed to helping country people sustain their rural lifestyle. Your land is our "arena". Without it, orienteering would not exist.

Orienteers help regional economies. When an Orienteering event is held in your district, we purchase accommodation and patronise your clubs, pubs, restaurants and other food outlets, service stations, chemists, supermarkets, etc.

For major events OACT encourages local service organisations to supply the catering.

### Public Liability Insurance

Through a national policy arranged by Orienteering Australia, OACT has substantial Public Liability Insurance to cover all of its activities.

### Summary

- Controlled and responsible - these are the key words of orienteers' use of land.
- Our orienteering events are held on a day agreed with you, the landowner.
- You know where we will be (and not be) going on your land.
- There is no mass occupation of your land - just a controlled and responsible use for no more than once per year.