

MEDIA RELEASE

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TRAIL BIKE RIDERS URGED TO KNOW THE RULES

Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) Forest Officers patrolling State Forests during the school holidays report the area is popular with trail bike riders, but are concerned by the damage that some riders have caused by leaving the properly built tracks or roads.

DSE Trail Bike Project Officer Adrian Parker said young riders and their parents must make sure they know their responsibilities before they start up their bikes.

"If you want to ride on public land, you must have a licence, your bike must be registered, and you must stay on the formed roads," Mr Parker said.

"The wet weather has softened the ground, which suits trail bike riders, but also makes it more susceptible to damage. Riding off the track causes environmental damage which sometimes can only be repaired by closing off the area for rehabilitation," he said.

"The Bald Hills in Kingower State Forest have taken a beating from thoughtless riders in the past few weeks, with erosion, damage to vegetation, and several complaints from the public."

The Bald Hills area is of particular concern, as trail bike damage is becoming more widespread.

"In recent years, DSE has spent thousands of dollars on rehabilitating an area of steep ground that had been used as an illegal hill climb for trail bikes," Mr Parker said.

"Now our patrols are finding that irresponsible riders have begun using at least five new sites nearby, cutting up the ground and threatening large sections of the hills with erosion," he said.

"These hills are very easily eroded, due to the low level of vegetation."

Mr Parker said DSE understands that now is a great time to ride.

"With the ground losing that hard-baked quality brought on by the drought, it is a great time for a licensed rider to visit the forests of Central and North Western Victoria," Mr Parker said.

"And the legal track network in the Kingower State Forest has some good steep sections where riders can enjoy riding their bikes," he said.

"But breaking up open ground and cutting new trails through the bush is unsustainable – nature just can't replace it as fast as irresponsible riding can destroy it."

DSE has warned that routine patrols in the Kingower State Forest and the surrounding area will continue, and riders must take the three basic rules seriously.

"Licensed rider, registered bike and stick to the legal tracks – anything else damages the forest you came to enjoy, and can cost you a fine. Riders who do the right thing are very welcome to ride in State forests across Victoria," Mr Parker said.

DSE invites members of the public to report any irresponsible riding in State Forests on 136 186.

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