



LEAVE THE HUT CLEAN AND SECURE

Check the fire is out, restock dry firewood and close the door and windows securely. Don't leave emergency food stores in the hut, they clutter up the hut and encourage rats.

Pack to minimise rubbish, don't take potential rubbish such as bottles, cans and excess packaging. Don't bury any rubbish. It is often dug out by native animals and may harm them.



GOT TO 'GO'?

Use a toilet or take a walk – at least 100 paces from hut and campsites. Dig 15 cm deep and cover well.

Where no toilets exist, bury your toilet wastes in a hole 15 cm deep, at least 100 metres from the nearest watercourse or hut. In high use areas without toilets, plan to carry out your toilet waste.

Collecting water

Collect water from upstream of the hut to avoid possible pollution. Boil water for at least five minutes or use a filter to avoid stomach bugs and stop them spreading to new areas.

Wash at least 100 metres from watercourses

Alpine waterways are easily damaged. Detergents, toothpaste and soap, even biodegradable types, harm aquatic life. Use sand, gravel or snow to wash up, rather than detergents.



RESPECT HERITAGE

Huts contain evidence of its past and the people that built and used them. Huts were also often located in areas which were used as camp sites by Aboriginal people, so please do not do anything to disturb the environs around huts.

PEOPLE WORKING TOGETHER

The practices outlined in this brochure apply to all natural areas and are essential to the protection of most sensitive environments such as coastlines, rainforests and alpine areas. The Australian Alps are particularly fragile and require your care and protection to survive.

With the assistance of Department of the Environment and Heritage, land managers in the ACT NSW and Victoria are developing cooperative approaches to managing Australia's alpine national parks. This publication is part of the cooperative management to protect Australia's alpine areas.

The Australian Alps national parks include linked conservation reserves stretching from the outskirts of Canberra through the Snowy Mountains of NSW to near Mansfield and Licola in Victoria. They are:

- Namadgi National Park and Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve (ACT)
- Kosciuszko and Brindabella national parks, Scabby Range and Bimberi nature reserves (NSW)
- Alpine, Mt Buffalo, Baw Baw and Snowy River national parks and Avon Wilderness (Vic).

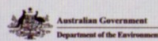
INFORMATION

Visit our website

www.australialps.environment.gov.au

The Australian Alps Liaison Committee acknowledge the assistance of the Kosciuszko Huts Association, the Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs, Victorian High Country Huts Association and others in preparing this code.

People working together to care for the Alps



Huts Code for Visitors

11000 1/2008. Printed on environmentally friendly paper. Photos by Helen Evans, David Oldfield, Mark Hallam & Henrick Wahren. Design by DesignEdge 02 6248 0636.



VISITING THE HUTS

The Australian Alps has around two hundred historic huts.

With some dating from the 1860s, the huts come from every era of European history in the Australian Alps. They were built for simple shelter by graziers, gold miners, foresters, government workers, skiers and bushwalkers.

These huts represent part of the rich cultural heritage of the Alps and the huts need to be managed to ensure their survival. You can protect the huts by following the suggestions in this code. Our huts will then continue to provide a unique perspective into the heritage of the Australian Alps.



LEAVE NO TRACE



HUTS ARE FOR TEMPORARY SHELTER

ONLY not for accommodation, as their special values can be easily destroyed.

Enjoy visiting the huts, but do not use them for overnight accommodation as their cultural values can easily be destroyed. In Victoria some huts are not available for public use.

Leave the hut as you would like to find it. If you must use the fireplace, check the fire is out, and close the door and windows securely.



NEVER RELY ON REACHING A HUT

Plan for every situation, take shelter before you get wet and tired.



KEEP FIRES SMALL AND WITHIN EXISTING FIREPLACES.

Never leave a fire unattended and ensure it is out before leaving.

If you must have a fire, never leave it unattended and ensure it is out before leaving. If you need to light a fire to keep warm, make sure you keep it small and within an existing fireplace.

Huts have always been left unlocked, stocked with matches and a small amount of dry firewood and kindling. People generally looked after each other. They needed to if they were to survive the rigours of mountain life. This tradition, maintained today, has helped many people in trouble and will undoubtedly help more, maybe even you.



USE A FUEL STOVE

Use a fuel stove for cooking and reduce your use of firewood.

Using fuel stoves for cooking reduces firewood consumption around huts. Some areas are designated fuel stove only. Escaping fires will severely damage the delicate environment, and firewood can be scarce or even non-existent above the treeline.



LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Log books may help save your life, please fill them in

If you fill in the book stating the details of your journey, number in the party and intentions, it may assist in search and rescue operations. If the log book is full, please inform the park service responsible for the hut and it will be replaced.



*...a film of fire, rippling
all over the roof,
like something
out of the movie
'Backdraft'*

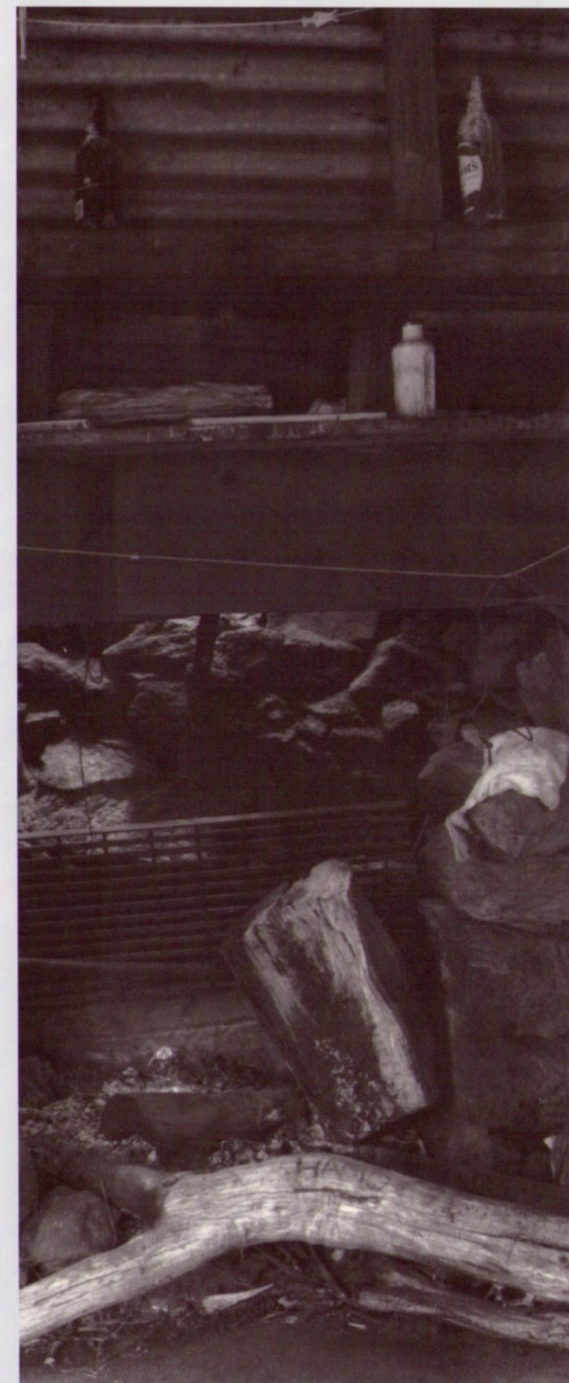


FIRE SAFETY

Two visibly shaken young men entered Namadgi National Park's visitor centre on the 13th of July 1994 to report a fire. Rowley's Orroral Valley Hut in Namadgi National Park had burnt down.

"When we got to the hut in the afternoon there was no firewood for miles. We walked way over to the creek to get wood. Must have been about four kilometres of walking and two hours searching. It was a freezing cold night so we put lots of wood on the fire to keep warm. There was a large piece of wood someone had dragged out the front of the hut so we put it on the fire.

I woke up at what must have been around midnight and saw a ribbon of flame licking over the end of the mantle piece. This blue and red flame didn't really look like fire, like an oxy torch at the lip of the mantle piece. The tin in front of the fire looked like it had melted. We put that out, then noticed a small gap at the top of the wall cavity glowing and realised the inside of the wall was burning. I thought "hooly dooly" and ran down to the creek about a kilometre away. When I got back there was a film of fire, rippling all over the roof, like something out of the movie 'Backdraft'. We grabbed all the gear we could and dragged it outside and the heat was incredible. It only took about two minutes to burn then we spent the whole night wandering around mopping up because we were worried about starting a bushfire. Looking back, the log we put on the fire must have been too big.



NEVER RELY ON REACHING A HUT

When mountain weather closes in huts can be difficult to find. Ensure you are equipped to camp out as blizzards can occur any time of the year. In severe weather, take shelter early before you get wet and tired.

On the 13th July 1972, Graham Edenborough died a tragic death in a snow cave while trying to reach a hut. Greg Retallack, Graham's companion, later recorded this account of the events leading to the death.



*Our feet and hands
were frozen and
the cold relentless.*



*His body stiffened
against me as I tried to
drag him to my own
cave.*



"We woke early on the 13th July and set off in still conditions with fresh snow flakes gently falling. Graham was so hot he stopped to take off his jumper. We rounded a long ridge running south of Jagungal, where the wind first hit us with a sudden icy blast. We were about halfway to Mawson's Hut and pushed on. By the time we skied down the valley we were wet through on the windward side. Climbing up a creek on Cup and Saucer Hill the wind was to complete the job, so that we were now wet all over. Eventually we came upon the Valentine River which we could recognise by its distinctive ice pools. We followed it south trying to locate our landmarks. The poor visibility affected our sense of scale. Wet and demoralised we headed east before the wind. The strategy here was to ski over the range out of the strong westerly wind, into the tree line and perhaps to Alpine or Kidman's Hut.

The wind was unbearable at the crest of the ridge so we decided to dig snow caves behind a huge rock. The caves were half completed when the weather cleared to the east, the wind and clouds still gusting in from the west. This short view showed us Burrungubuggee Creek and to the left, the Bulls Peaks and to the right the Big Brassy. Alpine and Kidman's Huts were in easy reach, down the valley and out of the wind. Our feet and hands were frozen and the cold relentless. We decided to ski down. At very worst we could bivouac in the trees and perhaps make a fire on the snow.

I skied one leg of about 200 yards and then turned and fell, losing a ski downhill. I chased after it madly and when I found it, I waited impatiently for Graham behind a snow bank only three hundred yards from our old snow caves. Graham always took pains to stay ahead of me. What was he doing? Was he in trouble?

Leaving my skis, I ran up the bank and found him trying to stand up after a fall. His socks were down and his legs cut by ice. He could hardly talk. 'Did you ski down here?' – came out slowly as if he were drunk. It was exposure – there was no doubt. I helped him down, carrying his skis to where I had left my own gear behind a snow bank. He seemed completely incapable of doing anything to help himself. I dug a shallow ditch in the snow and put him in his sleeping bag and bivvy bag. I was now feverish with activity digging a snow cave with a fry pan, building a wall with excavated snow, feeding Graham biscuits and trying to reassure him. I tried to elicit some intelligible response from him.

When all attempts failed and the snow cave was half finished I became really worried and dragged Graham inside. He was impossible. His body stiffened against me as I tried to drag him to my own cave. He kept trying to crawl out and after a while I let him. He lay outside in his sleeping bag staring at the sunset in the valley below beyond our reach, while I dug his cave deeper. When it was done I tried to drag Graham back inside.

He resisted every effort and it was only when I lost my temper completely that I could muster enough strength to force him inside the cave and out of my way. I was exhausted and very alone and quickly set about digging my own cave. It was not really big enough. I felt shooting cramps in my legs whenever I knelt. I had never had cramps in the body before and began to worry about myself. Soon I was in my own sleeping bag and bivvy bag, my pack at my head over the entrance. Graham's head was in my lap and I tried to warm him. He was in deep sleep breathing heavily. I was jubilant. We were both alive.

It was dark when Graham started moving. He was punching me and moving his legs as if skiing. He moaned and cried 'Help' and 'Greg' while I pleaded with him to stop moving, conserve heat, answer me sensibly. He gave a final moan and was still."