

Risk Assessment: Campfires and Cooking

Venue	Rewilding Adventure Site, Dunsdale	Completed by:	Morgan Lax	Date:	14th April 2025	Review Date:	14th April 2027
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Description of site / activity / tools:

For some the campfire is a *nice experience*, whilst for other it is a necessity of sustaining themselves in a woodland setting. It is observed that trainee Forest School practitioners are precluded from using fire until they are qualified; and the management of fire is something which receives great emphasis during training. It is remembered that Forest School views fire and cooking as a communal act which is an addition to a programme; whilst bushcraft has it as one its central priorities and a necessity for cooking and maintaining heat during colder weather. Indeed, there is the possibility of those engaged in bushcraft activities may congregate around a fire during darkness. Also included in this risk assessment is the use of the Kelly Kettle due to it being allied to fire and cooking.

	Hazard	Harm	People at Risk	Existing Control Measure	Likelihood (1-3)	Severity (1-3)	Rating LxS (1-9)	New Control Measure Who? When?	Comments
1.	In experienced leader	Fire site not managed correctly	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit suitably experienced leaders Use of <i>Site Specific Fire Site Management</i> policy to induct inexperienced/unqualified freelance staff 	1	3	3		
2.	Clothing catching alight	Burns	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire site introduction Explanation of the fire site layout (three circles) Demonstration/Explanation of moving around the fire site Advise the wearing of non-flammable clothing/natural fibres (this is included on Equipment List) Tassles/ties/necker chiefs tucked away Long hair out of the way (tied back, inside hat or tucked behind ears)- this is particularly important if using tinder bundles Fire blankets available Advise to <i>Stop, Drop and Roll</i> Fire Water Available First aid kit to hand Fires mainly to be lit in designated fire site (established hearths or brick circles) 	1	3	3		

3.	Fire is too/becomes large	Burns	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire management explained • Verbal warning of risk • Instructors to monitor the size of fuel • Fire Water Available • Instructors to extinguish fire if it becomes dangerous • Fires (in camp) to remain within hearth area • Instructors to be present and monitor fire (unless experienced group/parents present) 	1	3	3		
4.	Handling hot pots and pans	Burns	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal warning of the risk • Heat resistant gloves to be used • Pan grips and lid lifters available • Fire Water Available • First aid kit to hand 	2	3	6		
5.	Carrying hot pots and pans	Burns to self & others/ damage to property (benches/tables)	All/ equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal warning of the risk • Heat resistant gloves to be used • Check route is free from trip hazards • Ensure there is a place/trivet/board to put the pan down • Encourage participants announce <i>"walking with a pan"</i> 	1	3	3		
6.	Handling and loading the fire	Burn	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heat Resistant Glove available • Mainly adults to handle/load the fire • If children loading the fire then there is close supervision • Anything that is alight is to be kept within the hearth area • Caution when using tongs (avoid burning log <i>flipping</i> onto hand) 	2	2	4		
7.	Fire during dry periods	Forest Fire/Burns	All/ Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judgement of the risk by instructors • Avoid the use of fire during dry periods • Fires kept in fire site/hearth/stone circle • Avoid fires on coniferous forest floors • Locate fire sites on earth/sand/fire bowls • Dampen ground surrounding the fire site if needed • Fire water available • Fire blanket available 	1	4	4		

8.	Falling into fire	Burns	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire site management • Exit the fire site to the rear • “Go Round the Outside” if fire site is small • Remove trip hazards from fire site • Use of <i>Respect Position</i> to tend the fire 	1	4	4		
9.	Boiling water/ pouring from kettle	Scolds	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal warning • Water being boiled is tended • Remove water at first sign of boiling • Use of well-maintained pots/pans • Controlled pouring • Heat resistant gloves available • Avoid holding the cup that water is being poured into 	1	3	3		The kettles that are used are e of pressed aluminium, but the spouts are cast steel, and do get heated when on the fire- as a result- the water can re-boil/bubble as itis being poured.
10.	Spitting embers	Burns/Damage to cloths	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal warning • Avoid manmade fibre clothing • Use well-seasoned wood • Avoid woods known to spit or cause embers (Chestnut or sap bearing woods) 	1	1	1		
11.	Tarp/Tent Catching Fire	Burns/ Damage to equipment	All/ Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camping tarps and tents located away from fire/fires away from tents & tarps • Fire tarp to be in high set up • Limit the size of fire under a tarp 	1	3	3	•	
12.	Contaminating food	Food poisoning	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal warning • <i>Clean hands/dirty hands</i> routine • (See <i>Hygiene Risk Assessment</i>) 	1	2	2		
13.	Smoke inhalation	Breathing difficulties	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal warning • Avoid smoky areas • Use well-seasoned wood • Monitor the wind direction and get people on the up-wind side of the fire • Fires in open air 	1	2	2		
14.	Consumption of alcohol around a fire	Falling into fire	Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal warning of the increased risk • Alcohol consumption limited by participants so as to avoid being inebriated • If alcohol is consumed the individual will be informed that they are expected to remain safe • It is expected that staff will not consume alcohol during activities 	3	3	9		The consumption of alcohol is often seen during the evening of bushcraft events. However, the consumption of alcohol is discouraged during any activities. If participants choose to consume alcohol they do so knowing that they are taking responsibility for themselves and that that they are expected

									to still be safe
15.	Participant Lighting a fire elsewhere/away from Rewilding as a result of the experience	Injury, damage and reputational risk	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four rules of fire discussed with groups under 18 years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can only have a fire with an adult present ○ Must have the permission of the land owner to star a fire ○ Can only light fires in a safe location ○ Must have a means of extinguishing the fire before lighting it 	1	3	3		
16.	Ground Oven/ Dakota Fire Pit	Falling into fire/burns	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal warning • All participants aware of location of fire pit • Other activities to avoid the area of ground oven/Dakota fire pit • Fire pits only to be used in broad leaf woodlands (where there is wet earth ground layer, as opposed to needle beds) 	1	3	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider installing barrier • If large group, fire to be tended 	Due to the nature of these fires there are additional risks beyond those already identified above
17.	Placing/removing Kelly Kettle from base	Burns from chimney	User	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal warning • Demonstration • Handle horizontal • Heat resistant gloves available 	2	3	6		
18.	Kelly Kettle falling over	Scolds from spilt water/burn on hot surface	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal warning • Demonstration • Kettle used on level surface • Use of <i>exclusion zone</i> 	1	2	2		
19.	Kelly Kettle boiling	Scolds	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal warning • Demonstration • Use of <i>exclusion zone</i> • Kettle is used with the bung removed • <i>Blast zone</i> identified/spout pointing that direction, or used within existing hearth/brick circle • Kettle is tended throughout • Group made aware that a Kelly Kettle is being used • Other activities to avoid the area of the Kelly Kettle 	2	2	4		
20.	Carrying Hot Kelly Kettle	Burns/ Scolds	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See '<i>Carrying hot pots and pans</i>', number 4 above 	1	3	3		

21.	Pouring water from Kelly Kettle	Scold	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal warning • Demonstration • Pouring at arm's length • Pour using the bung chain • Advise that the receiving cup to be elevated where possible • Avoid holding cups that are being poured into • Heat resistant gloves available 	2	3	6		
Comments/Concerns: This risk assessment will be reviewed in the event of any incident or near miss in order to be fully informed for the future. It is not an exhaustive list, and is written with experience of FS and bushcraft activities in mind and the incidents (or lack of) that have been encounter in the preceding 11 years.					Recommendations: For bi-annual review- due March 2027				