



MEDIA RELEASE

Handy Tips for Finke Desert Race spectators

The Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts is asking spectators to this year's Finke Desert Race to leave their motorbikes at home.

NRETA's Natural Resources advisory services officer Dave Waterson said the Finke Desert Race crosses the scenic and fragile central Australian landscape and it was vital that spectators don't destroy it.

"This means leaving your motorbikes or any other mechanical vehicle at home unless you are actually competing in the race," Mr Waterson said.

"The Finke Desert Race crosses some of the most scenic land in the Red Centre but it is important it remains this way."

"We are not being spoil sports, but unnecessary driving or riding over sand dunes can damage the vegetation that holds them together, spoiling their future use and enjoyment by wildlife and people."

Mr Waterson said other tips for spectators this year included campers bringing their own firewood and taking home the rubbish they brought with them.

He said several 2005 campsites were left with rubbish and broken glass all over the ground.

"This rubbish not only spoils the scenery but also takes a long time to break down in the desert environment," Mr Waterson said.

"Every campsite should be left clean and tidy this year to ensure camping will be allowed in future.

"People can deposit their rubbish at the collection bins adjacent to the old Alice Springs Airport, on the Old South Road, as they head home.

"It is also important people bring and use their own firewood as firewood is getting scarce after 30 years of the Finke Desert Race.

"Dead trees provide a home for many animals and removing trees and shrubs for firewood exposes central Australian soils to erosion from wind and rain."

Mr Waterson also reinforced Bushfire NT's message for people to keep their campfires under control as the loss of pasture from bushfires affects the livelihood of pastoralists and the productivity of properties people camp on.

He said it was vital campfires were kept away from grass and shrubs and completely put out and covered when people left their campfire.

"It is important visitors recognise most of the campsites along the Finke track are on pastoral properties," Mr Waterson said.

“Please respect other people’s land and property, as camping is a privilege, not a right.

“Let’s show the landowner’s that people can be responsible when camping at Finke this year, by looking after the environment and leaving your camp how it was when you arrived.”

Ends

Media Note – For more information contact Dave Waterson on 8951 9208.

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