



# Northern Rivers Dirty Wheels Mountain Bike Club Inc.

## SOCIAL RIDE POLICY

### 1.0 Introduction

Northern Rivers Dirty Wheels Mountain Bike Club Inc. (NRDW) is a not for profit organisation based in the Northern Rivers Region of the Far North Coast of NSW. It promotes and encourages Social Rides of different types, often involving a mix of existing members, non-members and riders of varying competency including beginners. A Social Ride can include mountain bike riding on sealed or unsealed surfaces, gravel roads, fire trails, single track, open or rocky ground, and can involve maneuvering through or around obstacles such as fallen or narrowly spaced trees, creeks, mud, rocks, man-made structures and other technical trail features. Given the nature of mountain biking, accidents of varying levels of severity are inherent.

This document is intended to:

- Foster an understanding of the responsibilities of individual riders participating in NRDW Social Rides;
- Provide a resource for understanding the requirements that should be followed to organise and / or participate in safe and fun Club Rides, on both open and closed trail networks, and
- Minimise risks to all parties associated with NRDW Social Rides.

There are three types of Social Ride:

- Group Ride
- Club Ride – Closed Trail
- Club Ride – Open Trail

### 2.0 Group Rides

A 'Group Ride' is a ride that:

- Is unsanctioned and (other than showing the ride on the Club Calendar as a "Group Ride") is independent of NRDW;
- Is arranged by others and referred to as a "Group Ride";
- Requires individual riders to be FULLY self-sufficient;
- Provides **no** assistance from NRDW in terms of rider briefing, safety, advice or navigation;
- Requires no MTBA membership or day licence to attend, and
- Places no obligation, responsibility or liability on the ride organiser, other riders, NRDW, or it's Executive.

### **3.0 Club Rides**

A 'Club Ride' is a ride that:

- Is a sanctioned ride organised by NRDW;
- Is referred to on the calendar as a "Club Ride" or "Dirtmasters (Junior) Ride"
- Offers membership of MTBA (day licence acceptable);
- Is organised and conducted generally in accordance with this Policy, and
- Is carried out on either an 'Open Trail' or 'Closed Trail'.

NRDW is committed to ensuring an appropriate risk management approach is applied to all Club Rides. NRDW expects club members and other participants to also be committed to riding safely, within their abilities to ensure not only their own personal safety, but also that of other club members, participants and the general public. NRDW also expects participants to treat each other with respect and in accordance with "MTBA's Code of Conduct – Members and Affiliated Organisations" and the "NRDW Member and Participant Protection Policy".

### **3.1 Definitions & Responsibilities**

#### ***Open Trail***

- An 'Open Trail' consists of trail(s) and/or road(s) that is/are open ended in nature and continue for considerable distance (increasing the likelihood of becoming separated from other riders).

#### ***Closed Trail***

- A 'Closed Trail' consists of trail(s) and/or road(s) that are self-contained, such as a BMX track, pump track, jump park or trails within a small to medium sized property that generally form a loop or circuit (with minimal chance of becoming separated from other riders).

#### ***Rider***

- Riders do not have to be NRDW members. An MTBA day permit can be purchased on the day of the Club Ride, however this is optional. Purchase of a day permit provides a non-MTBA member with public liability and personal accident insurance for the duration of this activity. By not purchasing a permit, a non-MTBA member rider is not covered by the MTBA insurance policy for public liability or personal accident cover and engages in this activity at their own risk and is responsible for any expenses should the rider be held liable for a negligent act or suffer personal injury.
- Riders must attend the rider briefing to be considered a Club Ride participant.
- Riders are required to have a well maintained bike suitable for the type of trails being ridden. NRDW reserve the right to insist that riders with poorly maintained or unsuitable bikes be excluded from the ride for the safety of both the rider and other participants.
- Riders are responsible for riding within their own abilities and being safe and courteous to other riders and the general public. Riders must ensure they have the technical skills required to safely ride at the venue before setting out.
- Riders are not permitted to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Should a rider decide to leave the Club Ride while it is still in progress, it is their responsibility to advise the sweep. Having done so, they are no longer part of the Club Ride.
- Parents or Guardians of children participating in Club Rides are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of their children. NRDW requests that children are accompanied by their parent(s) or guardian(s) in order to mitigate risk and to provide support to their child if required.

### **Lead Rider**

- For a Closed Trail Club Ride the Lead Rider:
  - Must be an experienced rider, designated to lead the group on a sighting lap of the trails only if required;
  - Must be familiar with the area and likely trail conditions;
  - Shall carry a mobile phone (or UHF Radio if reception is likely to be intermittent), and
  - Shall communicate with the 'Sweep' as required.
- For an Open Trail Club Ride the Lead Rider:
  - Must be an experienced rider, designated to lead the ride from the front of the group;
  - Is responsible for the navigation of the group during the ride;
  - Must be familiar with the area and likely trail conditions;
  - Shall carry a trail map which identifies more than one exit from the area (not required if in mobile range and suitable maps can be obtained online);
  - Shall carry a mobile phone (or UHF Radio if reception is likely to be intermittent);
  - Shall communicate with the 'Sweep' as required;
  - Is responsible for not allowing riders to pass them;
  - Shall ensure a rider is left at any junction encountered to direct subsequent riders which direction to take, and
  - Must stop at the end of a trail to wait for the remainder of the group, unless agreed otherwise with the 'Sweep'.

### **Sweep**

- For a Closed Trail Club Ride, the Sweep:
  - Must be an experienced rider, designated to circulate the trails and be in the general vicinity of the Club Ride participants;
  - Shall do "head counts" at the beginning and end of rides, or maintain a sign-in / sign-out register;
  - Shall carry a mobile phone (or UHF Radio if reception is likely to be intermittent);
  - Shall communicate with the 'Lead Rider' as required, and
  - Shall be responsible for signing off the Pre Ride and Briefing Checklist.
- For an Open Trail Club Ride, the Sweep:
  - Must be an experienced rider, designated to ride at the rear of the group;
  - Is responsible for not allowing riders to fall behind them;
  - Controls the amount of rest at trail junctions;
  - Shall do "head counts" at the beginning and end of rides;
  - Shall carry a mobile phone (or UHF Radio if reception is likely to be intermittent);
  - Shall communicate with the 'Lead Rider' as required, and
  - Shall be responsible for signing off the Pre Ride and Briefing Checklist.

### **First Aid Officer**

- Shall have an "Apply First Aid" Certificate, similar or higher qualification.
- Shall be prepared to administer assistance to an injured rider if required.

- Only one first aid officer is required for rides containing multiple parties, provided they are in relatively close proximity to each other.

#### **Legal Facility**

- Means any facility that is legally able to be used for mountain biking and may include private or public facilities. The club will not conduct 'Club Rides' that are carried out illegally. If in doubt, ask well in advance during the ride planning process.

#### **Working With Children Check**

- For all Dirtmasters (Junior) Rides, at least one NRDW Organiser involved must have a current Working with Children (WWC) Check.

#### **First Aid Kit**

- The 'First Aid Kit' shall be checked by the 'First Aid Officer' (or someone eligible to hold that position) prior to each ride for completeness and to ensure items therein are not outside any expiry date shown.
- In addition to common First Aid Kit items, the kit shall include a wide compression bandage for use in the event of a snake bite.
- A First Aid Kit is required for each riding group during a Club Ride.

#### **Spares Kit**

- A spares kit is required for each Club Ride and can be shared amongst groups if riding in close proximity. If separated by a significant distance, multiple kits should be used. It shall contain the following items:
  - 2 tubes, 27.5" (these can be used for 26 - 29" wheels in an emergency situation)
  - Patches;
  - Multi tool with chain breaker;
  - Cable ties;
  - Chain links (9, 10, 11, 12 speed);
  - Pump;
  - Torch, and
  - Emergency sustenance to aid struggling riders if required (e.g. lollies).

#### **Personal Safety Equipment**

- Riders are responsible for ensuring that they are comfortable with their own level of safety equipment. As an absolute minimum, NRDW requires the following:
  - Cycling helmet, approved to Australian Standards, and
  - Covered footwear.

#### **Personal Locator Beacon**

A Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) is required to be carried during the Club Ride if there is poor mobile phone communication available or if it will be difficult to provide emergency services with an unambiguous location. If the ride is split into two or more parties where there are multiple sweeps and lead riders, (e.g. kids and adults) the larger of the groups shall carry the PLB. The groups must remain in relatively close proximity to each other.

### 3.2 Risk Assessment

The sport of mountain biking contains an element of risk. Potential risks associated with a Club Ride have been identified and assessed in relation to **Table 1 – Risk Matrix**, where grade 1 is of the highest risk and grade 6 is of the lowest risk.

RISK MATRIX		Consequences			
		Severe	Serious	Moderate	Minor
Likelihood	Certain	1	1	2	3
	Likely	1	2	3	4
	Unlikely	2	3	4	5
	Very Unlikely	3	4	5	6

**Table 1 – Risk Matrix**

These risks are tabulated below in **Table 2 – Potential Risks**. Appropriate control measures have been identified to preferably remove the risk or if that is not practicable, minimise the risk level.

Specific Risk or Activity	Consequence	Risk Rating	Control Measures	New Risk Rating
Rider crash	From minor injury to death, however, mostly cuts and abrasions.	1	Advise riders of the anticipated level of difficulty and to “Ride within their abilities”. Appropriate Personal Safety Equipment to be worn by riders. Carry First Aid Kit(s) & PLB	3
Snake / spider bite or stings	Rapid onset of symptoms and potential death.	2	Do not provoke animals. Apply appropriate first aid techniques if bitten or stung.	4
Slips, trips & falls	Rider may suffer injury due to uneven and/or slippery ground or rough terrain.	3	Riders should wear good quality covered footwear and take care when navigating terrain on foot.	5
Becoming lost as a group (Open Trail Network)	Extended exposure time in outdoor areas resulting in possible exposure to extreme heat and /or cold.	3	Lead Rider must carry a map of the local area and guide the group for the duration of the ride (Not required if maps can be obtained on mobile phone). Rides to be scheduled for completion at least an hour before sunset, unless intended as a night ride.	5
Losing a rider(s) from the group (Open Trail Network)	Extended exposure time in outdoor areas resulting in possible exposure to extreme heat and /or cold.	3	Ensure Lead Rider and Sweep have clearly defined roles and communications links. (Refer Definitions and Responsibilities Section).	5
Bushfire	Rider(s) could suffer burns and/or smoke inhalation.	3	Ensure the Lead Rider has a map identifying at least one alternate exit from the area. (Not required if maps can be obtained on mobile phone).	4
Electrical or Hail Storm	Rider(s) struck by lightning / hail	3	Do not carry out ride when storms are occurring or likely.	6
Extreme climatic conditions	Heat stroke, dehydration, hypothermia.	2	Shorten ride duration or do not carry out ride if extreme climatic conditions are expected.	6
Falling trees or limbs	Rider(s) struck by falling debris.	3	Do not carry out ride in treed areas if extreme wind is expected.	5

Wild animals or stock	Rider(s) attacked, charged or trampled by animal.	4	Do not provoke animals. Give way to stock and horse riders on trails.	5
Road riding	Rider(s) could be struck by another road user, including vehicles, motorcycles or pedestrians.	2	Remain clearly visible and ride as a group. Riders to obey all road rules including the use of appropriate lighting after sunset.	4
Other				

**Table 2 – Potential Risks**

### 3.3 Ride Advertising / Publicity

Club Rides ride shall be scheduled on the official Club Calendar at <http://www.dirtywheels.org/upcoming-events/>

Members shall be notified via email and / or Facebook, where the ride particulars will be disclosed. Suggested details may include:

- Location
- Discipline (XC, Trail, AM, DH)
- Briefing time
- Ride away time
- Expected level of difficulty and ride duration
- Any additional safety gear required (e.g. AM / DH rides may require full face helmets)
- For Dirtmasters Rides, a parent or guardian must accompany their children.

### 3.4 Rider Briefing

Items to include in the rider briefing are:

- Welcome riders.
- Advise that riders are required to sign an attendance register.
- Advise of the availability of MTBA Day Permits.
- Anticipated level of difficulty and ride duration. "Ride within your ability".
- Please obey all road rules & ride together as a group where traffic flow may be affected.
- You must wear a helmet approved to Australian Standards. Covered footwear is also essential. Other safety equipment is left to individual rider's discretion.
- Advise name of and point out First Aid Officer.
- Advise name of and point out Lead Rider. He/she will ask the person second in line to stop and direct riders where to go. If you are asked to do this, please do so as requested. Please do not go ahead of the Lead Rider.
- Advise name of and point out Sweep. He/she is carrying basic spares and first aid kit if required. The sweep will always be the last rider and won't leave anyone behind.
- Head counts – Advise riders not to leave the group without first advising the Sweep.
- Are lights advised? (Only mention if they are)
- Any other items that may interest the group such as fun parts, tough climbs.

# Northern Rivers Dirty Wheels Mountain Bike Club Inc.

## Club Ride Checklist (Must be fully completed before ride can proceed)

Ride Date:	Ride Location:
<b>Part A - Pre Ride Checks</b> (Complete during ride planning process, several days before ride day)	
The nearest hospital is located at:	
The First Aid Officer is:	
The Lead Rider is:	
The Sweep is:	
Has the first aid kit been checked for completeness? (Snake bite bandage included)	Yes / No
Will ride be finished at least an hour before dark?	Yes / No / NA
Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) tested and working?	Yes / No
Is the ride venue / course legal?	Yes / No
Map for Lead Rider of alternate exits? (Open Trail Network)	Yes / No / NA
Spares kit checked and complete?	Yes / No
Mobile coverage acceptable? (If not use UHF radios – fully charged)	Yes / No
Have sufficient ride details been made available?	Yes / No
<b>Signed / Dated (Part A)</b>	
<b>Part B – Post Briefing Checks</b> (Complete following rider briefing, immediately before start of ride)	
Advised riders of all items in briefing notes (Page 6)	Yes / No
First Aid Officer is qualified?	Yes / No
Lead Rider is familiar with trails / route?	Yes / No / NA
Lead Rider has Map (if required)?	Yes / No / NA
Sweep is experienced?	Yes / No
Lead Rider & Sweep have appropriate communications devices as well as each other's phone numbers if required?	Yes / No
Group has First Aid and Spares Kits?	Yes / No
Climatic conditions acceptable?	Yes / No
Rider head count (Start)?	
Riders that left during the ride?	
Rider head count (End)?	
<b>Signed / Dated (Part B)</b>	