

Trialling foot cleaning stations in Kosciuszko NP for biosecurity hygiene: How much do bushwalkers use them, what influences their use, and how do they respond to the cleaning stations?

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Summary Recreational users of public lands can carry weed seed and other material on footwear, clothing and equipment. Cleaning stations are often used to reduce such biosecurity risks. Such biosecurity hygiene footwear cleaning stations were installed at Thredbo and Charlotte Pass in Kosciuszko NP, together with signs exhorting walkers to use the station. Between April 2019 and April 2021, we evaluated the use of these stations through intercept surveys with bushwalkers and covert observation of bushwalkers. We surveyed 1148 bushwalkers and made 17736 covert observations. Fieldwork was affected by bushfires and COVID, resulting in delays from 2019. This research builds on previous surveys prior to the installation of the cleaning stations. Our goals in this research were to gain insights into the extent to

which KNP users (bushwalkers) will use installed cleaning stations and into their willingness or lack thereof to use cleaning stations; to determine barriers and facilitators of hygiene practice; to understand other factors that may shape users' decision to clean or not clean; to identify the extent of variability in hygiene practice across users; to test messaging (injunctive versus descriptive) to users regarding use of the stations; and to obtain feedback from KNP walkers regarding the implementation of footwear cleaning equipment in KNP. In this paper we present results from the survey and analysis to date and discuss insights from this research for future use of footwear cleaning stations.

Keywords Biosecurity hygiene; behaviour; public lands; prevention; recreation