

# Tree Climbing and Camping Responsibilities and Ethics

Tree climbing as a profession, sport and hobby is growing in popularity and the question of how we safely and responsibly interact with trees and forests is important to address.

Big Canopy Campout actively encourages people to spend time in forests, showing our combined appreciation for these areas in an annual event each year and connecting the growing number of people dedicated to protecting native old growth forests worldwide.

We believe that connection to our natural world is central to how we respect and ultimately protect it.

This document is written by Tree Walkers as a guide to responsible tree climbing and camping and what to consider when planning your event.



**Only climb into trees if you are trained and qualified to do so.**

If you are interested in learning how to climb trees get in touch to ask about possible training options in your local area.

**[hello@bigcanopycampout.com](mailto:hello@bigcanopycampout.com)**

To the community,

The forest is a common property and belongs to everyone equally, which predetermines our responsibility both to each other and to the forest.

Often, we are the first human beings who touch a branch at a height of 40-50m, stepping on its century-old moss carpet, so our experience of this virgin world of tree canopies must be done with respect for the ecosystem that exists there. The goal is to feel “at home” but not forgetting that we are guests here.

## LOCATION

Choosing a location is central to your campout. Ensure you do your research and that you have permission to camp in the area and follow all local rules for the area you are in.

This will vary depending where you are in the world - look at local legislation!



### **Considerations when choosing a location**

Park/Private Forest camping permissions

Animal breeding seasons

Fire restrictions

Parking Options

National parks and areas of special scientific interest often have the most beautiful places to camp and the most impressive trees however they often impose restrictions and it's important to get all this information before embarking on your campout.

It is worth to remember that the microclimate created in native old growth forest is very fragile and any intervention in the ecosystem can threaten the existence of unique species of plants, birds, insects and animals specific to that tree, species, area etc

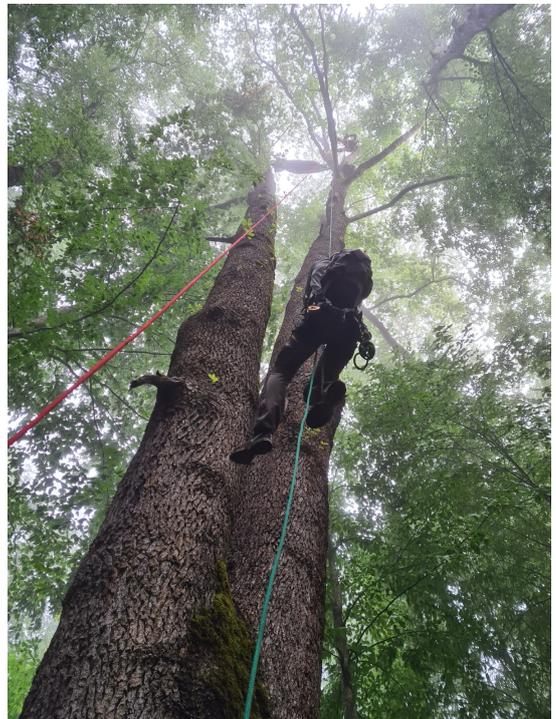
Location around the chosen tree is also related to their habitat. Therefore, the responsibility of any camper/climber is to minimize the consequences of his presence in the forest. This applies to any debris on the trails, at the location, on the tree itself (stationary anchor points, marks, rope and other equipment left). The preservation of the undergrowth and the root zone, which is extremely sensitive to soil compaction should be taken care of, so check where you can safely park vehicles.

## CLIMBING A TREE

Climbing any tree, you get to experience another habitat, another world. Unlike other climbing practices, trees are living structures and require care.

In many indigenous cultures forests are 'kin' and treated with the same consideration of care and respect as we would other humans. For example permission is asked and gratitude given before and after climbing trees.

A person can show respect for the tree with their attentiveness to possible impact from climbing, considering the risks, assessing the state of health, development history, and before starting to climb, decide whether it is reasonable to do this in principle.



Current legislation does not regulate how to climb trees respectfully and therefore there are no enforced consequences to damaging trees when climbing (cutting/breaking/pruning/etc). This is your responsibility.

## **Considerations before you climb**

Be sure to use a cambium-savers to preserve the bark of the branch and trunk.

Spikes and other devices that penetrate under the bark and leave mechanical damage are strictly forbidden.

Avoid cutting or breaking off branches that interfere with your climb or camp. There is always some other routes to climb to bypass them or trees to camp under..

If a tree looks too dangerous to climb without removing dead wood, it's better to leave it to professional arborists and look for a safer tree.

Do not leave stationary anchor points, ropes, hammock strings etc in the canopy and along the trunk. The tree grows not only upwards, but also expands in diameter.

You should avoid climbing Champion/Veteran Trees without specific permission as such trees are often the largest and oldest representatives of their species.

## FLORA AND FAUNA

The canopy of one tropical rainforest tree contains up to 4,000 living organisms. Could you imagine that you are the 40,001?! Please take care of other creatures!

When climbing along a tree, try to be as careful as possible, we want to minimise damage.



### Considerations

You should not choose areas where endangered species of plants, birds or animals live in the canopies.

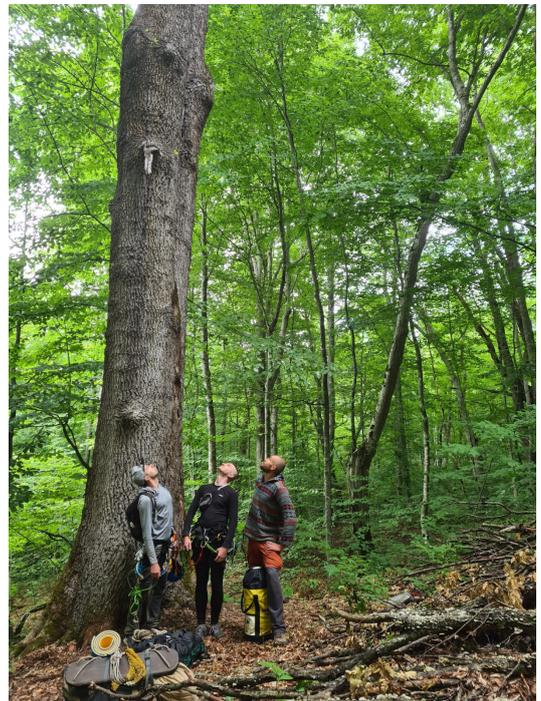
Avoid climbing a tree where a wild animal has a nest or hollow. Often this can be detected at the stage of visual inspection of the tree, using binoculars.

Never feed a wild animal or take the youngsters from the nests. Do not touch eggs in the nest or the chicks - many birds just leave the nest after such contact.

## PEOPLE

It is worth to realise that you are not alone in the forest.

Attentiveness and tact in relation to other visitors of the forest, show best practices and keep your campout tidy and clean. We are here to show our appreciation and celebrate these places.



## Considerations

Be considerate of noise pollution such as loud music from the tops of the trees and communication between the group.

For security reasons, keep belongings with you in the tree or packed into ground tents.

Be careful of falling objects from trees ESPECIALLY if you have ground campers below.

Have designated rubbish points to collect everything over the weekend.

Being under a tree can be dangerous for ground team or bystanders.

Take care of each other. Avoid camp-in at the root/crown zone of the climbing tree.

**Have fun, take care of yourselves and our forests! See you in the trees :)**