

**NATIONAL PARKS  
ASSOCIATION OF  
THE A.C.T. INC.**



**BULLETIN**

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NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF THE A.C.T. INC.

"A National Park for the National Capital"

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AIMS AND OBJECTS OF THE ASSOCIATION

- Promotion of National Parks and of measures for the protection of fauna and flora, scenery and natural features in the Australian Capital Territory and elsewhere, and the reservation of specific areas.
- Interest in the provision of appropriate outdoor recreation areas.
- Stimulation of interest in, and appreciation and enjoyment of, such natural phenomena by organized field outings, meetings or any other means.
- Co-operation with organizations and persons having similar interests and objectives.
- Promotion of and education for nature conservation and the planning of land-use to achieve conservation.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Your editor finds himself at a disadvantage. At about the same time as the 'Bulletin' goes to press, we will be having the 'where are we going?' meeting. Perhaps the Association will take on a new direction, perhaps it won't. But it is a pity that this issue cannot reflect any new feeling that may emerge.

Copy for this Bulletin has come in quite heartening quantities, but I have noticed one disquieting point - all items except one were contributed by your hard-working committee.

In my opinion the Bulletin's main function is to provide a place where members of the Association can inform other members of any activities that they consider to be of general interest. Thus I welcome any contributions about NPA walks, family rambles in the bush, holidays, or conservation issues anywhere in Australia that any member has come to hear about.

Ideally contributions should be about 300 words - about half a page - but they can of course be longer. Remember, this is your Bulletin, and it needs your help to remain healthy.

Deadline for the next issue - 1st February, 1974.

## NEW IDEA AT ARALUEN

On Saturday 20th October, some fortunate members of NPA gathered at North Araluen on the property of Keith Green and four other men, who have bought some orchard land and a large tract of very steep and rocky slopes bordering Major's Creek. This flows over into a deep cleft at the northern end of Araluen Valley.

The falls are about 150 ft - according to the only member of the party who managed to reach them. They may eventually be more accessible than at present since Keith and his friends intend to make a walking track all the way.

So far the combine has cut 5 miles of track in the area and intends to extend this to 20 miles as soon as time and energy permit.

The camp site was most attractive: flat grassy areas surrounded by bush with a clear stream nearby and a few mandarin trees with sweet fruit for our taking.

On Saturday afternoon we walked up and around the western slopes of a valley on a well made track with many points from which vistas of the main valley opened out.

Sunday was spent following Major's Creek up towards the falls, but most of the party were stopped at a small fall after rock hopping and walking for 2 hours.

This excursion will be repeated soon, and Keith has assured us that we will always be welcome at Araluen. If possible in the future the camping area will be extended, facilities will be provided, and eventually some cabins may be built and the area will be a place to walk and enjoy with no interruptions.

## EXPEDITION TO MOUNT CLEAR

It was to have been a weekend pack walk for the younger members who wanted something more energetic. But as it turned out only four souls with an aggregate age of over two centuries attended. All were determined and doggedly aggressive that they each would carry their own tents and share neither utensils or food.

The week earlier had been a bad one for weather, and in spite of promises of clearing up before the end of the week, right up to Friday night it remained gloomy and wet. Saturday however turned out to be a sparkling day, and after an initial rendezvous at Tharwa, we proceeded on to the Clear homestead turn-off along the Adaminaby Road, just past the Naas Creek bridge.

An enormous sign threatening all the due processes of the law to trespassers greeted us at the road junction, but, armed with an official authority to enter the leased land to light a fire with care and caution, we climbed or crawled under (according to leg length) the fence on either side of the double-padlocked gate. Presumably the lessee held a key to one padlock and the Department's rangers the other.

A short walk brought us to the deserted homestead, and after a demonstration of water divining with a piece of fencing wire, we followed the Long Grasses Valley up to the point where a fire trail commenced on the other side of the boundary fence. A reasonable climb up the zig-zags of the trail and a walk across the tops brought us to lunch, and from then on to Sam's hut (shining new galvanized iron) near a freely-flowing stream. Here we became once again aware of man's impact on the environment when we sighted a toilet cistern mounted above a large granite boulder. On the other side and connected to the cistern by a bashed and battered flushing pipe was the pan - all fully workable and completely in the open, the only problem being that water had to be carried to the cistern from the creek about a hundred feet away.

Crossing the grassy areas each side of this creek was quite an experience. Probably the excessively rainy period has caused a greater run-off under the grass, and the roots had lifted from the earth. The grass had remained as a solid mass floating on the water - walking on it was like being on a trampoline or feather bed.

Another climb followed to short cut the meanderings of the creek, and to meet it near the start of the long flat which was to be our night camp. Selection of the camp site was a little difficult because of the extensive flow of water through the grass, but a site under some trees with plenty of wood and a small side stream was ideal.

Pitching camp, we then followed up the flat on an exploratory ramble, found a fire trail, and followed it over the A.C.T. border ridge. Plenty of wildlife and flowers.

Next morning, after a relatively easy ascent up a ridge behind the camp we met the fire trail of the night before. This would take us along the ridge to Mt. Clear.

A wonderful view from the top of the Murrumbidgee Valley lay before us - the Tinderries and all the ranges and mountains to the south and west. A good deal of discussion on the names of the various features to the west preceded our early lunch before we set off straight down the mountain in line with a woolshed several miles to the west. Further discussion ensued as to whether it was 'our woolshed', and it was decided that it was, with a minority dissenting opinion.

Once again on the flats below, crossing Naas Creek was almost a problem with its heavy flow, but was nevertheless negotiated without incident despite its apparent depth and speed. The woolshed problem was solved as the houses were just hidden by being too close to the adjoining hill. Then in reverse - which was Mt. Clear on the ranges to the east, the tops looking much flatter from below? Once again a dissenting opinion, even though (to some) the trig (survey control point) could be seen. Back at the cars, binoculars settled all doubts; but not entirely as one member could see two trigs through binoculars, when there was only one there when we were on top of the mountain.

The verdict, a most enjoyable weekend and once again proving the old bush walking adage 'never stay home because it has been raining'.

*Reg Alder*

#### BLACK MOUNTAIN WITH FLOWERS

'Off Belconnen way at gate on left side' said the Bulletin, so off we drove without great hope that we would find the assembling point from such vague directions. (Surely there must be many gates on the left side of Belconnen Way?) But luck was on our side. A certain black Volkswagen shooting across all three lanes of traffic from the direction of the median strip heralded the spot, and there they were - nine or ten cars, and an assembled throng of 35 people.

'There are six new members on this trip' Ian Currie told us; gratifying interest indeed. Also there, just back from England, was Past President George Chippendale. After a short talk from George the group moved off led by the youngest member (an avid bush walker and natural historian of 15 months of age). It was a day made for gentle walking and looking at flowers, gloriously warm and clear. The recent unending rain had also ensured a particularly prolific spring flowering this year. *Leucopogons* (meaning white bearded), violet *Hardenbergias*, *Grevilleas*, wattles, orchids, all were in flower.

We noted various enthusiastic photographers in strange positions, while children chattered and ran around, obviously thoroughly enjoying themselves.

Straggling over a wide front our band of enthusiasts slowly followed tracks leading to the top of Black Mountain. Whether or not they reached the summit this correspondent cannot tell. The youngest member had decided that she had had enough, and demanded to be taken home.

*Brian Lee*

#### PUFFING UP MOUNT TAYLOR

Some 25 souls gathered by the reservoir in Torrens at the base of Mount Taylor with the firm resolve to scale the peak. We eyed the track that led straight to the top, concluding that climbing shouldn't take us too long. It should be very pleasant way of spending a dull, but muggy, afternoon.

After a few minutes waiting, Ron Evans, our leader, decided it was time to move, so off we went - all that is except the youngest member who decided that she was not going to be carried in a papoose. *She* would walk. But after splitting your correspondent's ear drums for a minute or two she gave up the unequal struggle, and settled down to enjoy the ride.

But what's this? We aren't climbing the mountain, we're walking round the bottom. 'We won't climb the short route', says Ron Evans, 'it wouldn't take long enough'. So we walk round until we can see the Tuggeranong Valley before striking up the ridge.

The hillside is amazingly green - we trudge through paddocks shin deep in clover. The winter's copious rain has certainly had its effect.

About half an hour after leaving the cars the fittest climber reached the summit, and there straggled out for half a mile were the rest of us puffing and panting up the steep slope.

The view from on top remained magnificent as ever, although a slight haze cut down visibility a little. One might have expected a National Parks group to be looking westwards towards the Brindabella ranges and the Murrumbidgee - the unspoilt side. But no, we practically all stared out over the city of Canberra that stretched out before us. Yes, we conservationists are human after all!

Showing our human frailty once more we all elected to take the short way down. So 15 minutes later we were in the car and on the way home.

*Brian Lee*

## NATIONAL PARK AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AND SERVICE

The commission and service will have a range of functions. It will be responsible for planning, development and management of a number of existing and proposed national parks and wildlife reserves in Australian territories such as the proposed Gudgenby National Park in the A.C.T. and the proposed Kakadu National Park in the East Alligator River area of the Northern Territory.

It will also be responsible for undertaking a broad ecological survey of Australia to identify additional areas which are highly significant for wildlife preservation and which may be suitable for reservation as national parks and reserves.

There will be a three man commission to be responsible for the management and operation of the national park and wildlife service.

The Minister said that he would establish an Advisory Council consisting of representatives of relevant departments and organizations to further advise on the care and management of national parks, wildlife reserves and the preservation of wildlife.

The commission and service, in conjunction with the Department of the Environment and Conservation, will develop co-operative programmes with the States in the field of national parks and wildlife; including the ecological survey mentioned above, monitoring population of wild flora and fauna (especially those which are endangered species) and training and education of Park Rangers.

An initial allocation of \$500,000 has been set aside in the budget for the acquisition of land to extend or create new wildlife reserves and parks in the States.

*From press statement by Dr. Cass  
(30/9/73)*

## SEARCH FOR MUNGO MAN

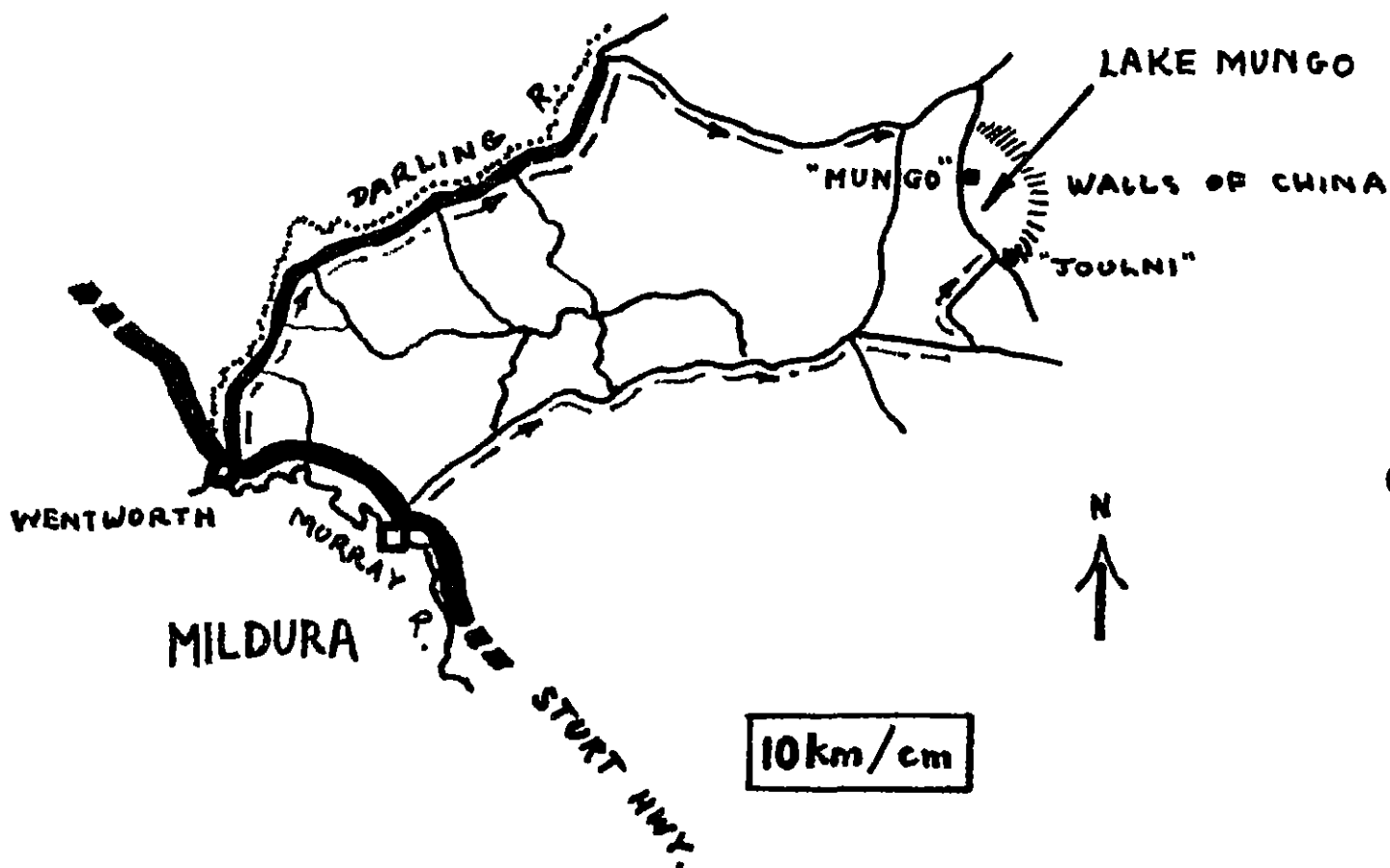
Lake Mungo is an ancient dried up lake located in New South Wales about 70 miles from Mildura and 80 miles from Balranald (see 1:250,000 map sheet Pooncarie, reference S1 54-8 Series R502). It is reachable from either one of these centres by car, although the red sand country roads involved would be difficult after heavy rain. As the Lake is part of private land holdings, permission to visit needs to be sought from the graziers of either nearby Joulni or Mungo Stations.

Lake Mungo is roughly five miles in diameter with a long sand dune thirty or more feet high running around about half of its circumference on its eastern side. This dune, called the Walls of China, was perhaps fifteen feet higher in ancient times and was used by the aborigines as a place to live when the Lake was full. Erosion of this dune by wind and rain had exposed a remarkable density of aboriginal artefacts in the form of fire places, a cremation site, hand tools etc. Studies of

these artefacts have indicated that the Aborigines were in the area as long ago as 30,000 years B.C., and probably longer. Archaeologically, therefore, this site is of great importance because it represents the earliest proven presence of man in Australia.

Our visit was made in a small party (complete with two excited school children) to coincide with a large scale excavation investigation of the dune by Professor J. Mulvaney.

After a long high-speed drive across the Hay Plain we arrived at Mildura which we planned to use as a centre. The next day we set out for Lake Mungo and, after some back-tracking near the end of our journey, located the main party at the southern end of the Walls of China.





What a fascinating sight it was! The near-white sand of the dune stretched around and into the far distance encircling the vast utterly flat green floor of the Lake. Dotted along the dune were small areas of uneroded soil standing proud of the surface by a few feet, rather like a toy version of the rock pinnacles of Monument Valley in Arizona. Here and there were the remains of ancient fire places in the form of localised collections of blackened residues. These also could be raised up relative to the surrounding sand due probably to the hardening action of the original heating. Underfoot were the shaped stone tools and shell fish used and eaten by the original residents.

We unloaded our car and joined Professor Mulvaney's group to view the way modern archaeological excavation proceeds. A mechanical shovel had produced a wide trench across the dune by removing some five feet or so of over-burden, and hand work with brushes and small shovels had taken the excavation down to lower levels - and thereby to earlier times : the search was on for Mungo Man. We, ourselves, got out our radioactivity measuring equipment to test background levels in the ancient fire places. These determinations are part of our thermoluminescent dating studies in this area. The technique is new, absolute, and particularly applicable to fired ceramics or baked mud from old fire places.

In this way we busied ourselves during our stay, talking with the archaeologists about the new dating technique. Although scientists themselves, they seemed fascinated by the ticking of the portable monitor.

The continuing feeling one has while one is there, however, is the eerie connection the place has with the undisturbed and distant past. This feeling is added to by the vastness of the scene, the quietness, and the apparent lack of human habitation. One thinks of those long-ago black fellows sitting by the edge of this large isolated lake and wonders what thoughts they had about the sun and the night sky above. A dream time to be sure in a place of dreams.

*Allan Mortlock*

#### NATIONAL ESTATE COMMITTEE OF ENQUIRY

Representatives of the Association, Mr. Watson, Mr. Lee, Mr. Banks and Dr. Burbidge attended a hearing of the Committee of Enquiry on 4th October. The discussions were informal. Members of the Enquiry had not read the NPA submission and Mr. Watson felt some visual aids would have been advantageous. A lot of the discussion dealt with the proposed Gudgenby National Park, and areas surrounding the A.C.T. Jervis Bay was dealt with briefly. Considerable interest was shown in environmental impact statements generally.

Unfortunately the NPA submission is too long to reproduce here. Dr. Burbidge made a separate submission, which follows on Page 10.

## KOSCIUSKO: FIRES AND GRAZING

Next time you drive up to Kosciusko here is a landscape feature for you to look out for.

Just before passing through Daner's Gap you come to the Kosciusko Hotel (now called the 'Lakeside Inn') on the right hand side of the road. The hills around you are fairly bare, except for the occasional skeleton of a dead snow gum. Up the hill on your left is an area of snow gum woodland. This is the hotel's water catchment, which has been fenced for the 35 years.

Before 1939, similar snow gum woodlands covered all the bare areas that now surround you. Very hot bushfires swept the area that year, and the hotel management fenced off the catchment almost immediately afterwards. Outside the catchment, farm stock grazed until 1958 when all stock was banned from the Park. The woodland regrew within the fenced catchment, but still, 15 years after grazing ceased, very little snow gum grows in surrounding areas.

Dr. Alec Costin of CSIRO has found that snow gums can recover from hot bushfires by sending up suckers from their lignotubers. Sheep and cattle find these shoots very palatable, but they only have to graze them once or twice to kill the trees.

Surely this photograph must clinch any argument about banning grazing from the National Park!

*Brian Lee*

## NANCY BURBIDGE'S SUBMISSION

For many years a large proportion of submissions requesting authorities to take appropriate action to protect and conserve areas as National Parks or Reserves have been prepared by private community organisations.

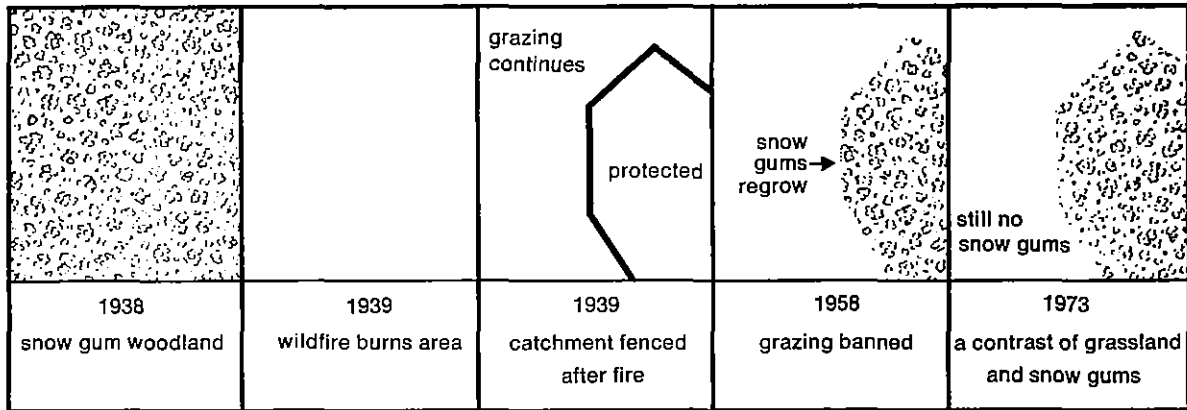
With the recent growth of public interest in environmental matters there has been a corresponding development of governmental capacity to carry out ecological studies and to prepare impact statements. The professional and financial resources available to public authorities give them a marked advantage over local associations. Nevertheless the complexity of each extensive and intensive investigation may delay and prevent rapid action. Consequently there remains a need for well informed and well sustained public concern.

Unfortunately no satisfactory criteria exist for the use of citizens wishing to submit proposals or for local authorities to consult when considering such submissions. It is believed that provision of a set of guide lines would aid communication on these community issues.

The following are suggested as an attempt to provide a basis for such guide lines:-

(cont. Page 12)

What fire and grazing do to snow gums



Courtesy 'Rural Research'



Grazing following a bushfire has prevented snow gum regrowth outside the Kosciusko Hotel catchment.

Photo: Colin Totterdell May 1973

*Environmental:*

- Scientific - Biological  
Geomorphological  
Ecological  
Special factors (e.g. archaeological)  
Educational
- National - Significance to National Estate
- Local - Significance in relation to local conditions

*Social:*

- Relevance to needs of adjacent population centres and/or tourist centres.
- Relevance to educational needs at local school levels.
- Features of special interest (scenic, historical, seasonal floral displays, bird song etc.).
- Other features contributory to human enjoyment of natural phenomena.

*Economic:*

- While short-term "economic" procedures may appear to oppose conservation proposals, consideration should be given to long-term advantages in such matters as public and community health (which require public expenditure) and possible income from tourist trade and other matters where profits from development will later be cancelled by costs to the community.

WE MEET DR. CASS

*Nancy Burbidge*

On Wednesday, October 10, 1973, the Committee held a working luncheon at the home of the President with the Minister for the Environment and Conservation, Dr. Moss Cass. The Permanent Head of his Department, Dr. Don McMichael, and his Special Adviser, Dr. Peter Ellyard, were also present. A wide range of topics was discussed.

It is clear that the recently established National Park and Wildlife Commission and Service will manage the proposed Gudgenby National Park in the south of the A.C.T., the proposed Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territory, and possibly a marine park if one is established on the Barrier Reef. Much legislative action has to take place but in the meantime it seems likely that through co-operation between the Departments of the Environment and Conservation and Capital Territory, planning and land acquisition for the Gudgenby National Park will continue.

The major topic was the role of voluntary organizations such as the National Parks Association of the A.C.T. We have previously informed the Minister that this was to be debated at the General Meeting of the Association in November. Well-informed voluntary organizations are seen to be of vital importance to progress in conservation and environmental matters, by informing the general public (and politicians) and presenting

a strong case, in particular to those opposing a course of environmental improvement. The advantage of an Australian National Parks Association co-ordinating action from all States, was discussed. Priorities for money to be spent on acquisition of land for national parks will have to be determined, and an Australia-wide voluntary body could assist with advice.

We also discussed the relative merits of specializing our interests in national parks, or pursuing the wider aims of both national parks and conservation in general. The Minister and his colleagues suggested that it would be better to pursue the narrower aim of national parks only, and leave the wider conservation issues to other societies.

Finally, we discussed the possibility of the Association receiving grants from the Department of the Environment and Conservation. Some money will be available for research projects to be undertaken either by or under the sponsorship of voluntary organizations. We were advised to submit proposals to the Department. Grants for administrative purposes would not be available. Dr. Cass said that his Department was encouraging the Australian Conservation Foundation to establish office and library facilities in large centres for the use of voluntary conservation bodies. Suitable centres have not yet been chosen but places other than the capital cities should be considered.

The Committee wishes to express its appreciation to the Minister for his thoughtful approach to this meeting. All those present agreed it had been a valuable exchange of views.

*Bill Watson*

#### PUBLIC LECTURE

Dr. Don McMichael, Permanent Head of the Department of the Environment and Conservation, has agreed to give the 1974 Public Lecture on Thursday, 28th March.

#### NEW LIBRARY BOOKS

Australian Rainforest Trees. W.D. Francis. (3rd edition, AGPS: Canberra 1972).

Environmental Impact Statement for Googong Water Supply Project. (NCDC: Canberra 1973).

#### NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following - Mrs. J. Cotterill, Mrs. E. Hopkins, Mr. & Mrs. T.W. Plumb, Miss B.M. Chivers, Mr. A.A.C. Morgan, Mr. & Mrs. G. Brand, Mr. H. Johnson, Professor & Mrs. C.W. Allen, Dr. D.F. Hebbard, Miss T. Smits, Mr. M.J. Shegog & family, Mr. & Mrs. J.E. Ward, Mr. & Mrs. R.J. Emerton, Mr. S. Newton, Mr. & Mrs. C.R. Barker, L. Abercrombie, C. Beltz, J.G. O'Loughlan, J.R. Goodman, A. Davey.

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION - OUTINGS SUMMARY

DECEMBER

1	Saturday	Kiandra	Camp
2	Sunday		
10	Sunday	Christmas party at Blue Range hut	

JANUARY

20	Sunday	Smoker's Flat	Walk
26			
27	Long Weekend	Kosciusko	Camp
28			

FEBRUARY

2	Saturday	Westbourne Woods	Walk
10	Sunday	Hell's Hole	Walk
16	Saturday	Mount Scabbie	Camp
17	Sunday		
24	Sunday	Major's Creek falls	Walk

Members of the public are welcome. Most walks are suitable for people with families. Anybody interested should phone Mr. Ian Currie on 958107 (work) or 958112 (home).

## NPA OUTINGS

### DECEMBER

1st, 2nd, Saturday, Sunday

Kiandra

Walk into nine mile diggings (6 miles)

Meet at Kiandra chalet at 10.30 a.m.

Leader - Andrew Fordham 818451 (w)

Possible transport of tents and packs to camping area.

Sunday walk to Tabletop Mountain.

10th, Sunday

Christmas party

Barbecue tea

At Blue Range hut, 3.30 p.m.

Contact Bill Watson 816601 (h)

Ian Currie 958107 (w) 958112 (h)

### JANUARY

20th, Sunday

Smoker's flat

See hanging bog

Meet at junction of Tharwa Road and Corin Dam Road

9.30 a.m.

Leader - Laurie Adams 465813 (w)

26th, 27th, 28th, Saturday, Sunday, Monday (Long Weekend)

Kosciusko

See the flowers

Meet at Canberra Alpine Club Lodge at 9 p.m. Friday

or 11.00 a.m. Saturday

Leader - Norma Price 496905 (h)

Maximum number 30. Please contact Norma before

Friday 18th.

FEBRUARY

2nd, Saturday

Westbourne Woods

Walk through arboretum

Meet in front of Old Forestry Building, Cnr. Banks and  
Schlick St., Yarralumla at 2 p.m.

Leader - John Banks 816641 (h)

10th, Sunday

Hell's Hole

Easy 3 mile walk in the Googong Dam area

Meet at Googong letterbox on Burra Road from Queanbeyan  
10.30 a.m.

Leader - Moya Proust 957800 (h)

Ian Currie 958107 (w) or 958112 (h)

16th, 17th, Saturday, Sunday

Mount Scabbie

Camp near hut and walk up Mount Scabbie

For details ring Julie Henry 485130 (h)

Ian Currie 958107 (w) or 958112 (h)

24th, Sunday

Major's Creek Falls

Easy 2 mile walk to top of falls

Meet at Major's Creek Village (via Briadwood), 10 a.m.

Leader - Andrew Fordham 818451 (w)

CAMPERS! PLEASE LET LEADERS OR OUTINGS SECRETARY KNOW  
YOU WILL BE COMING BY WEDNESDAY OF PREVIOUS WEEK.



## PROPOSED OUTINGS

### MARCH

2nd, 3rd, Saturday, Sunday  
Pebbly Beach

9th, 10th, 11th, 12th (Canberra Day holiday Tuesday 12th)  
Warrumbungles  
If interested contact Ian Currie by end of January

16th, Saturday  
Tidbinbilla  
See Echidna habitats

23rd, 24th, Saturday, Sunday  
Mount Franklin

\* \* \* \* \*

## MEETINGS

### DECEMBER

No Meeting

### JANUARY

No Meeting

### FEBRUARY

21st, Thursday  
George Chippendale  
Organization of conservation bodies in England  
Room 1, Griffin Centre.