

# NPA BULLETIN

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION A.C.T.



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Aboriginal stone arrangement – Gudgenby Nature Reserve

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## PRESIDENT'S FORWARD

### Black Mountain

Once again the Black Mountain Reserve is threatened with an incursion which will affect its natural values. You may have read in the press of proposals to build a gondola system on the mountain and seen the call for comments on the draft environmental impact statement. An NPA committee has been responding to this EIS and we are vigorously opposing the gondola proposal as a development which will destroy the peace and beauty of the Black Mountain Reserve. Your support is needed also to fight this proposal.

Since the reserve was proclaimed in 1970 it has been under almost constant threat from alien developments. After a protracted and often bitter struggle the communications tower was approved and built. Power lines, roads and tracks have cut across the reserve and nibbled away at its integrity. Now we are faced with a proposal which will have a major, almost catastrophic, effect on the appearance of the Mountain; to the great detriment of its aesthetic values. The proponent of the gondola system has claimed in the EIS that the impact of the system on the reserve will be minimal and that because there are other man-made features in the Reserve, this one will not make much further impression. It is further claimed that the role of inner city reserves must inevitably be given over to multiple use concepts because the land will be always be subject to competing uses.

We respect these assumptions. Black Mountain forms a vital part of the 'mountain and lake' design philosophy on which Canberra is based and for which it has become justly famous. If we value this concept we must resist proposals such as this which would seriously impair this visual environment. There is no reason why Black Mountain, and our other surrounding hills and mountains cannot remain essentially in their natural state. It depends on ourselves, our attitudes and preferences how these areas will be developed. Let your voice be heard against this, or any other similar proposal, to destroy this part of our natural heritage.

### '21 Today'

1981 marks a milestone in the history of the National Parks Association of the ACT. This year is the 21st anniversary of the formation of the NPA in Canberra. On the first of March, 1960, a public meeting was held in Canberra to inaugurate the NPA. At that meeting a provisional committee was formed under Dr Carrick to bring the NPA into being. The secretary of that committee was the late Dr Nancy Burbidge, who went on to become President

of the NPA and who was architect of many of the NPA's early achievements.

It is ironic that two of the issues which were highlighted in the first annual report are again prominent within the NPA. One is the Black Mountain Reserve about which I have just written above. In 1961 the details of the issues were different, the siting of the TV towers, roads, and the Botanic Gardens; the principles, however, were the same - the need to preserve the beauty and integrity of the reserve. The other issue was Westbourne Woods. At that time Lake Burley Griffin was being planned and a new home for the Royal Canberra Golf Club was needed. It was eventually decided (the exact details are somewhat murky) by the NCDC and the then Department of the Interior to offer the Club the use of Westbourne Woods. The NPA fought this proposal and tried hard to save the many fine plantings of Australian and exotic trees for public use and enjoyment.

We failed in that endeavour. The only consolation being the right to visit the area - with prior permission - to study the trees in their environment, a right we have exercised ever since, our last visit being as recent as last March.

The Woods are again under threat. This time the Golf Club wishes to extend their lease into the Nursery Bay area (within the Yarralumla Nursery) to enable them to construct new playing areas. Not only will this mean a loss of a further area to the public, along with its pine trees and lawns, but in realigning their fairways within the present area the Club proposes to remove some 220 trees. This would be a great loss to Canberra. Many of these trees date from the 1920s and are some of the earliest plantings by Weston to select varieties for plantings in and around Canberra. They are now fine mature trees and a walk around this area is not only a delightful ramble but an education into the form and habits of many trees from all over the world, including many Australian trees not indigenous to this area. These plantings have great historical, educational, scientific, and recreational value. They have been proposed for inclusion in the National Register by the Australian Heritage Commission. We cannot afford to lose any part of such a valuable resource. If you value this area make your protests known now.

The NPA has been involved in many other local and regional issues through the years - Tidbinbilla, Gudgenby, Jervis Bay, Kosciusko, Murrumbidgee and many others. In these we were sometimes successful, others less so. We have always however adhered to the principles set out in our aims and will go on fighting the conservation cause in our local area. As the two issues mentioned above show, we cannot rest on our laurels but must retain vigilance even over past issues, and need your continued support and enthusiasm to continue the battle.

A final word before I close: we hope to make this 21st annual meeting a special occasion both to review past achievements and plan further enterprises for the years ahead. We would like to see as many people as possible to that meeting to make it the occasion it deserves. We would especially like to see as many old and original members as possible to honour their achievements. Please come along to celebrate and participate in the future work of the Association.

### ORGANISED SOUTH-WEST TASMANIA

Ten NPA friends - the Esau family, Babette Scougal, Fiona Brand, Harriet Michell and the Webster family, joined together for their annual holiday this year with a visit to the south-west wilderness area of Tasmania. As we are not vastly experienced 'tigers of the bush' and having among our number, two children, we took advantage of a commercial venture 'Tasmanian Wilderness Tours', to introduce ourselves to the great south-west. This organisation is run by Bob Geeves who, when not running s-w treks and base camps at Cox's Bight, is a farmer, and a colonel in the army reserve. The advantages of an organised tour were that we did not have to worry about purchasing, carrying and cooking the food or carrying tents. Thus when we did the trek, we were reasonably confident of our ability to manage an 11kg pack over seven days and about 100 kilometres. The main disadvantage perhaps, was the lack of freedom to deviate from a laid-down timetable.

But I am jumping ahead - before going to the south-west we all spent a few days in Hobart. In these days between Christmas and New Year, Hobart was alive with holiday makers and a festive atmosphere. The yachts which had competed in the Sydney/Hobart yacht race, were all moored in docks along the water-front and presented an attractive sight. We mostly did our own, touristy-type thing - a coach tour to historical Port Arthur; a tour to Mt Nelson and Snug; visits to the art and craft shops in the Salamanca area (old converted water-front warehouses); the beautiful Botanical Gardens; a harbour cruise to follow the King of the River Race; watching a street parade or the Birdman competition; and participating in a 'craft happening' which involved carving designs or slogans on unfired bricks - later to be fired and then laid as a path in a children's park.

On 3 January we flew (in two groups) to Cox's Bight in a Cessna 206. We drew lots for who was to take the early flight, though I couldn't see that it made any difference anyway - but I was wrong: Those of us who took off at 9.30 am flew over the mountains - it was overcast and we ran into a couple of rain squalls but

the flight was mostly smooth and we had some good views of the closer mountains - we could see the famous Precipitous Bluff and the most distant irregular, lumpy, outline of Federation Peak. Safely landed on the firm sand at Cox's Bight beach, we were shown around what was to be our base camp for a week, with its communal eating area, sleeping tents, bush toilet and shower facilities and store and kitchen tent. Mr Geeves' eldest son, Phil, and a friend, Lyn, looked after us during the first week.

Meanwhile, the wind was increasing and there was no sight or sound of the next flight until about 1.30 pm. They had had to hug the coast and endure a very bumpy trip and looked and felt pretty groggy. Later that afternoon we went for a stroll along the beach to a small headland called Pt Eric. Climbing this little hump of land, we had a good view up and down Cox's Bight in both directions. That evening we enjoyed a lovely meal of roast lamb and roast potatoes - the food at the base camp was very good but once fresh supplies ran out, the diet was less inspiring. We soon noticed that the soil everywhere had a real spring to it - being peat. When the wind blew hard, the trees heaved and rocked in the ground - it was quite strange to see so much movement in the ground.

On Sunday the wind still blew with tremendous force. We had planned to climb onto the New Harbour Range but it was postponed and instead we went for a walk along the full length of Cox's Bight. With the wind behind us, this was not unpleasant. Looking back there was an impressive sea and landscape. The sea was a rich turquoise green and the wind whipped the spray from the crests of the waves and curled it back and also sent eddies of sand chasing across the surface of the beach in a symmetrical design. Rising behind, was the dark outline of the New Harbour Range and more distant ranges veiled in a curtain of rain. We found a sheltered little rocky cove for a barbecue lunch. Coming back along the beach, we met the full force of the wind and when an icy shower of rain splattered in our faces, we took shelter behind a big sand dune and boiled a billy of tea.

On Monday most of us did an energetic day walk, climbing up the New Harbour Range with beautiful views of Cox's Bight and south towards New Harbour and the South-West Cape and inland towards Bathurst Harbour and Port Davey. The wind had dropped and it was a lovely day. On Tuesday we did a morning walk to Folly's Pimple and at lunch-time met up at Pt Eric with Lyn, Kevin and Harriet (who had stayed in camp) and had another enjoyable barbecue lunch. After lunch a number of us females were persuaded by our ardent water nymph, Fiona, to go for a swim. We went further up the beach, cast off our gear and made dash for the breakers. However, looking back I saw some of the party were holding back, huddled in a

little group on the shore, gazing at a large creamy coloured object. This, on closer inspection, seemed to be a sea leopard (rather than a seal) - he had a spotted belly, well-defined head and sharp teeth. He did not look too healthy about the mouth and nose. We did not know what his trouble was or how to help him. Later, Bob Geeves told us that seals come ashore for a few days sometimes as a cure for sea lice in their fur. They roll around in the sand and this gets rid of the lice. When we walked up the beach about five days later at the commencement of our pack walk, there was no sign of the sea leopard so we hoped he had swum away feeling better than when we had seen him.

The next part of our stay was a pack walk to New Harbour where we camped for two nights. This was a good introductory pack walk for us all in the area, and particularly for Kevin, our most junior member being 9 years 11 1/2 months. Just before we reached New Harbour, we passed through a delightful belt of rain forest - a dim green twilight world of moss-covered logs and rocks, and beautiful tree ferns. New Harbour was really lovely and the camp site ideally located in the trees just off the beach. In the evening - long southern evenings when the sun did not set till 9 pm and the twilight lingered on till nearly 10 pm, we were able to meander up the beach enjoying the peace and remoteness - though we were not completely alone as three fishing boats came into the bay and anchored there overnight. Also, in the distance, we could see the strong beam of the Maatsuyker Island lighthouse.

On the middle day, our most hardy and energetic walkers did a long day walk across to Ketchum Bay and back via Hidden Bay. The rest of us had a day of leisure and Lyn took some of us around the rocks looking for crayfish. We were equipped with a large, ring net but despite keenness and patience, nothing was caught. That evening was incredibly tranquil and as the sun sank behind the hills, the sea took on a pale, milky appearance and later still, a rosy glow tinted the sea and touched the few wispy clouds that had drifted across during the afternoon. In the night it rained, and it rained steadily so that the ground sheets that had been carelessly left sticking out of tents, channelled the water inside and there was some wet gear and grumbling in the morning. We packed up between showers and set off for a rather damp walk back. The south-west was now showing us that we should not have been deceived by the kindness shown to us so far and that its rainfall of 100 inches a year was no fairytale. The first sign of moisture and the leeches were out, waving around hungrily for any succulent passing walkers and they nabbed a few! We decided to press on all the way back to Cox's Bight without stopping for a lunch break. This made for rather a long slog for us all and Kevin grew rather weary as the clouds began to disperse, the sun shone through and it became hot and steamy. Still we

all made it back to camp by about 1.45 pm. We spend the rest of the day having hot showers and sorting out which gear to take on the pack walk to begin the following day. It was important not to have too much weight but as we did not have to carry tents or food (apart from a lunch item each) we could take a luxury item such as a camera or book.

Bob Geeves arrived on the afternoon plane and another of his sons, Mick, was to arrive Saturday morning. Bob and Mick were to be our guides for the south-west track. They would carry the tents; the food had been air-dropped in November and then pre-positioned in concealed places along our route by Bob.

During the night there was a thunderstorm and after that the wind strengthened so that by morning it was blowing very hard, like the previous weekend. We were all packed up and ready to go but there was no sign of any plane to bring our other leader. All day a westerly gale swept across from Bathurst Harbour, whipped across Freney's Lagoon and burst forth through the entrance of the creek onto the beach near our camp. Finally we resigned ourselves to the fact we would be a day late starting our epic walk and had thus lost the 'rest' day designated for the middle of the week. There were mumblings and grumblings of disappointment and discontent and little groups took to wandering the beach in an aimless fashion, seeking sheltered corners or gathering driftwood for the fire. Overnight the wind dropped and next morning in our eagerness to be on our way, we set out walking along the beach before the plane arrived. Leaving the beach, the track plunged across a really boggy plain - there is plenty of mud in Tassie - rain or fine it never dries up. Sinking up to one's ankles was nothing and Nicki and Philip both managed to go in a lot deeper. Our first camp site was Louisa Creek. It was a beautiful creek with the sun shining on the tea coloured water which became accustomed to seeking when we filled our billy cans.

Another lovely sunny day on Tuesday and we tramped across more boggy plains - the plains looked most attractive covered in heath-type plants, small banksias and small white flowering tee-tree but are less attractive if you wander off the track - the vegetation all being rather scratchy and about knee high. We had lunch at Louisa River and then began to climb the Ironbound Range. We climbed to a saddle some 500 metres up and here erected our tents at 'Wind Tunnel campsite'. Bob Geeves disappeared off the track and came back with some large iron fence posts to use instead of our light tent poles and also special large tent pegs. All these precautions were rather alarming, though it was hard to envisage terrible weather on that calm sunny afternoon. We sat at our lofty campsite and watched a peaceful sun sink into the sea out across Louisa Bay, and fortunately, the weather stayed fair.

We were off on the track by 7.25 am

the next day for the longest walking day of our week - about six hours actual walking. The weather was still glorious and we were soon up on the highest part of the Ironbound Range with magnificent views all around - as Harriet said, there cannot be too many places left in the world where one can admire such a scenic 360° view of a world with no sign of man's interference and development. We had a good rest to admire the splendid panorama - after all - this is why we had come to the wilderness - to see, feel and absorb some of its uniqueness and beauty. Over the top and then we started on the descent through the myrtle forest. It was like descending a steep staircase, the steps being uneven and rocky and intertwined with masses of tree roots and plenty of mud too, of course. A lot of concentration was needed on where to place one's feet - this was so for most of the walk. A lunch break and then down, down, down again and finally a short stretch across a plain and we arrived at a small pebbly beach - Little Deadman's Beach. Here we had a sock, boot, trouser washing session, spreading our assortment of clothing about on the pebbles in the sun and then a person washing session in the creek followed by a swim in the sea among the rocks in a calm pool-like area.

It was that evening, after our meal while sitting on the rocks gazing out to sea that a fishing boat came in and anchored quite close. 'Are you O.K. for supplies?' called out the skipper. 'Yes, we bellowed back. More shouted conversation followed and we were offered some fish. We were delighted at the prospect but thought we had better check with Mick, our cook. He was less keen and said we had nothing to cook fish in and no spare magazine. This information was relayed to the boat and the obliging and kind-hearted fisherman sent across (with his kids in the dingy they were using to put down their cray-fish pots) eight large Trumpeter fish, a frying pan, large lump of fat and bottle of Worcestershire sauce. Later, after negotiating with Mick, he also sent across three loaves and some butter. So the multitude on the rocks were fed with eight fishes and three loaves (though we actually saved the bread, which was frozen, for our lunch the following day). We had a delicious fresh fish supper and were able to return the utensils to the boat the next morning.

The next day, after crossing a couple of headlands we came to Prion Beach. It was a superb, four-mile stretch of sand with dazzling blue sea and sky. However, by the time we reached the other end, it felt like a desert - the heat shimmering across the surface of the sand, and feet beginning to get really sore. We then waded across the New River Lagoon and now we had a fine view of the spectacular Precipitous Bluff. We climbed an enormous sand dune and lunched among the scrub - the March flies were beginning to get really troublesome and we were relieved to reach our campsite at Osmaridian Beach mid-afternoon. However, there seemed no relief from the heat and flies. We went

down to the beach and scrambled over a small headland as Bob Geeves had told us there was a rock pool on the other side. It was actually just a very tiny cove, the entrance protected by a large rocky outcrop so that the water formed a calm inviting pool. At last, breath-taking icy cold relief. Our evening meal was the usual fare of packet soup followed by Rosella dehydrated meal and then canned fruit and instant pud. We had our meal down by the creek where it was slightly cooler. The night was hot and we were all bothered by mosquitoes.

Thursday dawned overcast, humid but somewhat cooler. The walk took us through more open type of forest of the lower altitudes, following a trail through dark, rubbery-leaved ferns and on glancing upwards we could see the lofty white flowering leatherwood trees. After a couple of hours we reached Surprise Beach where we spent sometime before proceeding to Granite Beach. Here the creek drops over the cliff in a lovely waterfall. All the previous day when it had been so hot, we had promised ourselves a lovely shower but now that we were there, the weather was considerably cooler, the water icy cold and we were warned we would have to keep our boots on as the rocks underneath were so sharp - the cold shower rapidly lost its attraction.

Friday we made another 7.30 am start as this was another longish day with about five to six hours walking. We climbed up over South Cape and then down to Black Hole Bog. The lunch spot was in the midst of some black charred burnt-out scrub - the result of careless walkers the previous year.

Our final day we began to encounter signs of 'civilisation'. After a scramble over a headland, we encountered a barking dog who belonged to two surfies out in the sea on their boards. The track then followed around the shoreline over rocks and pebbles and past an impressive rock structure known as 'The Fire'. The walking was rather slow but interesting. We then climbed up onto Coal Cape and set off inland across the plain that cuts across the neck of the peninsular of South-East Cape. Here, while we were stopped for a rest and refreshment, a party of day trippers went by. Gazing at their clean jeans, bright footwear, crisp shirts and dapper sunhats, we were conscious of the contrast with our mud plastered feet and legs, dirty crumpled clothes, lank hair and general grimy appearance. 'Don't they make you feel grotty?' remarked Maxine - they certainly did. It was a sad fact, however, that as the people became cleaner in appearance the bush became dirtier with empty bottles by the creek and other litter about.

About half an hour before the end of the walk, it began to rain quite steadily and we felt quite peeved that we would not, after all, be able to brag that we had no rain on the notoriously wet south coast track. We emerged at Cockle Creek, Recherche Bay at 12 noon. This was a

little holiday resort at the end of the road - about 80 miles from Hobart. The Geeves have a holiday cabin there and we were welcomed by Mrs Geeves and an array of cans of beer and soft drinks. Afterwards we went inside where a lovely salad lunch had been prepared. There was also a birthday cake with candles for Kevin, whose 10th Birthday it was. It was a celebration and a delightful conclusion to our walk. Later, the minibus arrived to take us all back to Hobart. It was a tight squeeze fitting all of us and our packs into the bus. When we stopped at a craft shop on the way, rather than unload the bus, the passengers popped out of the windows.

Back in town we all spruced ourselves up and went out for a meal. We flew back to Canberra the next day feeling fighting fit and refreshed of soul.

Judith Webster.

### OUTINGS

Regular Bulletin readers will know that the Association organises weekly outings throughout the local region. These outings as designed (hopefully) to give members a wide choice of outdoor activities. The aims and objects of our Association includes one which says - 'stimulation of interest in, and appreciation of, (such) natural phenomena by organised field outings, meetings, or any other means'. As far as field outings are concerned, the outings committee, currently led by John Webster, tries to fulfil this object with the regular outings program.

Recent discussion in the Outings Committee coupled with a very variable response to recent outings have prompted committee members to ask: are we providing the right sort of program for members? apart from the negative vote of non-attendance at outings, the committee has received little feedback from members about activities. We would like to hear from members with their comments on the outings program, do's, don'ts, and how to's. The outings program is, or should be, designed to suit you, the members. Let us hear from you - bricks, bats or bouquets.

Currently the program includes outings such as:

1. one-day walks from easy, short to longer, medium;
2. weekend walks over a range of distances and difficulties;
3. field nature trips - usually half-day or day trips, but can be overnight; and
4. local barbeques, get-togethers, etc.

There may be other activities, or the same ones differently organised, which members want, let us hear from you. The current membership of the Outings

Committee is:

- . John Webster (Convenor)
- . Babette Scougall
- . Beverley Hammond
- . Les Pyke
- . Frank Clements
- . Reg Alder
- . Ian Currie
- . Neville Esau

Any or all of these people would be glad to hear from you.

The Outings Convenor is seeking a committee replacement for Cla Allen who has had to retire due to ill health. Cla was our chief short and easy walks organiser and by all accounts a very popular one. If any member feels that they can take on this task - a not very onerous one - please contact the Convenor of the Outings Sub-committee, John Webster, on 476769.

Neville Esau.

### ARE WE AT THE CROSSROADS?

At our General Meeting on 19 March, 1981, Dr W.D.L. Ride addressed members and visitors on the growth and awareness of the conservation issues as they applied in our developing continent and drew the simile that it was like travelling along a road where at various points there were crossroads where some, more perceptive than others, could hazard a guess where they might lead. He then posed the query: Are we at such a crossroad today? His talk was based on his paper, 'Background to Conservation in Australia' presented to the Nature Conservation Council of New Zealand in 1979.

It is most unlikely that our European forefathers considered when they settled here that they were threatening our unique flora and fauna. Britons at that time were used to a stable environment at home which had imperceptibly come to terms with them. In historic times there were bears and wolves and man by his nature had a duty to kill such animals and so changes were deliberate and understandable. As a colonist he would bear no ill-will against inoffensive Australian animals and did not conceive that they would suffer irreparable harm from acts not intentionally directed against them.

Settlers came here to a land with a congenial climate, but the land was not capable of supporting them without the importation of animals and plants to provide the food they were used to. In the early stages the settler was a predator too, until beef and mutton became plentiful. Some native species were found to be destructive to crops and deliberate killing followed in the areas immediately around settlements.

Settlements broke out of the coastal plains and the developing pastoral



industry demanded vast areas to be cleared. Similarly agricultural settlement spread too, often hand-in-hand with the timber getters.

From the very beginning the more educated Australian recognised the strangeness and scientific interest of the biota, even if he considered it impoverished and of little practical value. Even within 50 years of settlement it became apparent that the emus and kangaroos were becoming extinct as a consequence of settlement, but although noticed, caused little concern.

In the mid-19th century concern, began to be shown about the welfare of the flora and fauna. It began imperceptibly and spread unnoticed until there were enough concerned persons to support each other without public ridicule. The literary works of Dr George Bennett give some indication that the conservation movement started about 1850. He wrote that several species had been exterminated by 1860 and unless the hand of man could be stayed, many other species would exist only in the pages of the naturalist. He drew attention to the pest eradication properties of birds and the necessity to protect them to maintain the balance of nature. John Gould, in his book published in 1853, drew attention to the need for legislation to preserve many species before they disappeared and considered short-sighted the introduction of the productions of other climes whose forms and nature are not adapted to bring here. The move to establish exotic animals became widespread at that time and had Vice-Regal and other eminent support, which resulted in the formation of an acclimatization society in 1861 with the aim to stock the continent with products of the animal kingdom from every temperate region in the world. Thus there was a conflict even then with the introduction of exotics which were damaging the biota faster than the legislative provisions were protecting it.

In the third quarter of the 19th century some began to see clearly where the road was leading. Charles Darwin in his new evolutionary theory told of the ecological consequences and of how plants and animals function as communities bound together by a web of complex relations. He showed how easily its stability could be altered by introductions and noted that no country could be named in which all the native inhabitants were now so perfectly adapted to each other and to the physical conditions under which they lived. The practical consequences of Darwin's theories took a long time to take hold, but by 1890 they had begun to emerge as a new force in conservation in Australia. Then, coincident with the beginning of the recreational national park movement, they found expression in the concept of conserving by reservation. Professional biologists recognised that communities of organisms must be preserved as units from the disturbances that could only lead to

their eventual destruction as a consequence of the evolutionary processes set in train by introductions.

Baron von Mueller, in a speech in 1890, made clear his understanding that native plants and animals were in competition with man for land, and saw that the solution for their preservation was to exempt selected areas from competition. In 1893 the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science gave its support for the Game Laws and made recommendations for the establishment of 'closed reserves'.

The concept that different animals and plants were characteristic of different parts of Australia was well-established by the time the reserve movement started. As far back as 1863, John Gould had outlined the concept of an Australian environment with different faunal elements in the tropical, arid and temperate regions. The lack of action to obtain reserves in remote areas at the time was due less to lack of awareness than to expediency. It was no doubt considered then that the case for more urgent reservations may have been jeopardized by including areas where there seemed no likelihood of damage and where no one wished to go.

In the first 50 years of the 20th century little need was felt for representative reserves, but during that time a swelling call developed for National Parks. Concern for wildlife emerged as a great public movement. This was not accidental, but came about through deliberate steps by a dedicated minority to create a public attitude, especially among children, in support of the conservation ethic. Education departments gave strong support to such movements as the Gould League of Bird Lovers and persuasive writers played leading roles. By the end of the 1950s, public attitudes were sufficiently defined and outspoken for politics and officialdom to accept proposals for reserves that were not primarily for recreational use. Great agricultural developments with the opening up of vast areas with modern equipment and techniques and the political climate that used phrases like 'a million acres a year' produced an effect favourable to conservation all over Australia.

In 1958 the Australian Academy of Science established committees to examine the state and extent of reservations in Australia and to make recommendations. Their recommendations became one of the primary causes leading to the comprehensive reserve planning characteristic of all parts of Australia in the 1960s and 1970s. Today there is a wide coverage of the continent by large reserves and their security depends now on the maintenance of public attitudes which caused their establishment. Questions on location and size can still be debated before we can be satisfied.

To be effective, representative reserves should have a sample of the whole biota throughout its variety and range. Not enough was known in the late 1950s to plan on direct knowledge, it is doubtful however that one can hope for such perfection on a continental scale. Accordingly, the only basis was to select on biogeographical and ecological principles and then to test it by subsequent surveys. The strong climatic contrast between the north and south, the gradient from coast to centre, together with the recently lost connection with Papua-New Guinea produced the marked tripartite division of flora and fauna that was recognized by Gould from mammals a century earlier. In the late 1950s a large amount of land remained suitable for reservations even though most environments capable of supporting viable pastoral or timber industries were already committed. Awareness of the insidious changes brought about by grazing on natural pastures, the planning of softwood forests and clear felling only then became a great public concern. However, there was still good potential reserve country even if leases were occupied and whether such land could even become reserves depended on the relative strengths of the industries and the popular movement.

In recent years much use has been made of concepts drawn from island populations to determine the size of sustainable reserves. Basically, reserves can be considered to be islands within a sea of alienated or altered land. A general relationship is found between island size and the number of contained species with due allowance being made for the time of separation as species diminish in number until stability for the area is reached. Terrestrial reserves are not strictly islands and can continue to draw components into their systems from the surrounding countryside. The firebreak and fence line which separates the reserve from another environment can continue to sustain many species from either side of the fence. Still, it does provide a rule of thumb indication of the safe size for a reserve.

Today most supporters of conservation in Australia would hold that the aim of reserves should be to retain portions of the biota in the state which our founding fathers found it. Commonsense tells us that evolution did not commence in 1788, nor did it finish then. Even a decision to do nothing will bring change. Our continent has undergone vast changes since being separated from Antarctica, and from then on carried fauna and flora through a great range of climate regimes and physical changes. The changes have been progressive, slow and inexorable. Men entered Australia many thousands of years ago and from that time introduced new evolutionary stresses, particularly with the use of fire and introduced animals, right across the continent. Natural events also produced wildfires particularly with the onset of aridity and the spread of sclerophyll flora. Fire

frequency of the sort witnessed by the first settlers was maintained by human effort as is grazing pressure from flocks and herds today. The removal of the aboriginal fire routine has produced new changes and even the re-introduction of control burning is not necessarily leading back to the fire regime of 1788.

In our own time, our forefathers believing that they were behaving responsibly, introduced many organisms and deliberately turned them wild, while at the same time nurturing sheep, cattle, wheat, grasses, pines and clover and so creating a new environment at the expense of the original biota. Organisms have been released for biological control and others inadvertently liberated, and if not already established to their limits are spreading through the biota like ripples on a pond.

Today the progressive changes set in motion by several waves of human invaders have spread into the Australian biota. What is our choice now? Is it sensible to consider reverting to 1788 or to maintain the status quo? Should we make up our minds to allow the changes to go on with little interference from man, while at the same time keeping an eye on the ecological health of species whose health is of particular interest to us so that, where necessary and by appropriate action, we can restrain threatening changes in the ecosystem that maintain them.

Whatever our aim, the knowledge that any decision (including the decision to do nothing) will bring change requires us to accept responsibility to gain knowledge and apply it towards a defined end. Those in the past have made their choices responsibly with regard to conservation according to the knowledge prevailing at the time and changed as new knowledge was found. Education caused knowledge to flow and brought changes in the mode, whilst education and politics together resulted in action.

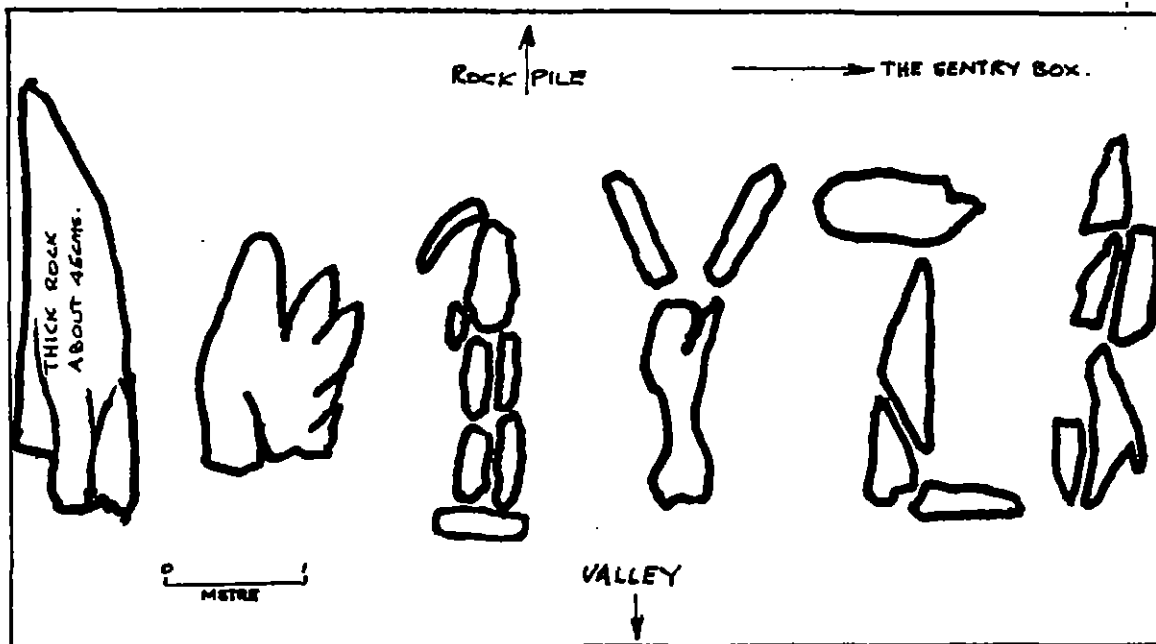
Today as a result of the great knowledge that we have of the principles and practice of management of natural communities, and because we have now planned and set aside large reserves, we are discerning that both action and inaction will produce changes in these lands. We now have a clearer path where action leads and can no longer drift from one to another. Each step is now a consequence of a choice and has become a crossroad.

This lecture was supported by a selection of slides showing the wide range of the Australian biota and by the use of a twin projector, maps and charts showed their corresponding location.

Abridged from the paper as presented to the Association.

Reg Alder





### ABORIGINAL OR EUROPEAN?

Six hundred metres above the Naas Valley on Sentry Box Hill just before the ridge swings away to join that leading to the Sentry Box is a puzzling arrangement of natural and man-placed rocks.

The rocks are arranged as shown in the diagram and have been placed to combine with the natural rocks on a relatively small flat area of sloping rock when compared with the other larger slabs in the area. A pile of large rocks obscures views to the south but otherwise there is a large sweep around all the main mountains of the bottom end of the Gudgenby Reserve and beyond. Sentry Box, Mt Scabby, Mt Kelly and Mt Gudgenby predominate majestically to the north-west and in the other arc to the east many large mountains loom large in the distant vision.

The arrangement starts initially from a large, long, near square sectioned rock which has a small contained area of natural rocks behind which could have served as a podium overlooking the arrangement. The rocks align exactly along their major axis across the valley to the Sentry Box. The next rock is also large and maybe could be man-handled into position but it would be a struggle, it is naturally grooved deeply into fanciful shapes to which, with imagination, various objects it resembles could be suggested. Next follow the four parallel lines of rocks, definitely the work of men, made up from smaller pieces, some of fanciful shape and easily positioned. On the two centre lines of rock other rocks have been added to form crude Y and L shapes. The two pieces forming the top of the Y have been broken from one piece of rock. The broken edges look relatively new but with a lack of knowledge as to how long a rock

would take to show signs of weathering, the age of the break could only be a guess. All the rocks are heavily coated with lichen plants of the same appearance as those on the surrounding flat rock. Lichens are very slow growing plants and any damage caused may take a considerable time for the plant to re-establish itself. Lifting the smaller rocks shows no growth underneath and the rock base bleached to a much lighter colour than that of any surrounding exposed surface and similar to that under other non-arranged rocks in the vicinity. The area of the base rock around the top of the section has been bleached to an area longer than the present broken rocks, which could indicate that at one time longer rocks could have been there or there has been some movement of rocks.

Nearby is the charcoal remains of a small cooking fire. How long it has been there would be hard to guess as the carbon of charcoal is durable and very inert at ordinary temperatures. The charcoal of ancient fires provides the basis for carbon dating and by this method an approximate age could be determined. In the present drought cycle there are no nearby soaks of water. On the flat slabs about half a kilometre to the south are other stone arrangements which have been attributed to aborigines, and may show that they had water nearby. Further piles of rocks and arrangements, which may be aboriginal, can be found around the top of Sentry Box Hill.

Examination of sun tables which show the angle of the sun at various times of the day at each month for a number of latitudes shows that in mid-winter the sun when viewed from the site would set very closely over the Sentry Box. More accurate measurements would be necessary to determine if this could happen having regard to the altitude and relative

heights of the site and Sentry Box. Since it is known that the aborigines gathered to visit the tops of the ranges in summer for feasting on the aestivating bogong moths, it is unlikely that they would remain in the area when the moths had gone. Hence, there would probably be little prospect of the aborigines waiting up at 1,700 metres in mid-winter for the sun to set over the Sentry Box unless it had some very special significance to them. Still, the fact that, if it did, maybe of some importance.

The 'initials' are not common in European names nor is the formation of the 'letters' of the usual printed shape and proportion. It is unlikely that they would have been a surveyor's mark as they are not at the top of the ridge nor is there an uninterrupted view all around. Aboriginal stone arrangements, peckings and paintings usually take the form of straight lines, circles, human, animal and bird forms, arrows, feet and hand marks, the and marks in the arrangement are unusual. If the Y mark is looked at upside down it could conceivably be aboriginal, although I haven't seen this particular design in any aboriginal art book. It is unlikely that a bushwalker would have camped on this exposed rock slab when there was a much softer bed in the grass under the trees near the summit about 200 metres away. Someone may have brewed a lunch-time billy of tea there as the rock pile at the back would have provided some shelter from southerly winds.

Having written at length about this unusual arrangement, it seems as if it might have been European, but was it aboriginal? It will probably depend on whether you look at a Y as an  $\Delta$ , the looks the same from both ways. The most probable viewing would be as a  $\Delta$ , i.e., looking with your back to the rock pile over the arrangement to the valley and mountains beyond. I will leave it at that for you or someone else to decide.

The arrangement is European, having been started by one juvenile group and completed by other persons one could be expected to have known better, it has been left to mystify and exercise the minds of all who traverse the top of the mountain. The mountain tops should be left as they are found and not become a wasteland of pseudo-neo-aboriginal relics. This article has been written to document the existence of and to give an explanation for the arrangement.

Reg Alder

#### THE BASIS FOR MANAGEMENT OF THE KOSCIUSKO NATIONAL PARK

Mr Bruce Leaver, Director of the South-East Region of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, spoke to the Association at the General Meeting of 19 February, 1981, on the management processes of the Kosciusko National Park.

National parks are public lands and the Director of National Parks and Wildlife has a statutory responsibility for their management, in response to the range and expectations held by the community. Community values are subject to change, which means managers should be conservative in approach for it is much easier to provide new developments at a later date than it is to remove what a future generations may consider inappropriate.

Examples of the above approach are:

. Charlotte Pass Village - development was encouraged by past government policy, whereas it is appreciated that it is built in an area of critical conservation importance with its unique glacial features, pygmy possums, 400 year old e. a. pauciflora and is the cause of pollution in Spencers Creek. Suggestions that it be removed in 2015 at the end of present lease obligations raised a storm of protest.

. The proposal to remove 18 of some 200 huts in the park raised an avalanche of protest whereas there was only limited pressure to build further huts and there were some proposals for Norwegian-type lodges at various remote locations.

Constraints imposed by past and present use patterns and facilities may be presently incompatible with current attitudes and these impose limitations to future management of the park. The National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974, requires a plan of management to be prepared for each park and for the public to be involved in its preparation. In addition for the Kosciusko National park many other government departments and other authorities have an involvement, some examples are: SMHEA, SPCC, Shires (health), Soil Conservation, DMR, Police, Health Commission, County Councils, Forestry Commission. Others having responsibilities through lease and licence arrangement with the provision of facilities also have an involvement.

The relationship between the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the community is important in the management of a park since the community sees value in protecting the outstanding scenery or natural features. Different values are placed on the same features, graziers would consider an inverted tree lined frost hollow ideal for grazing, whereas others would find it a beautiful natural feature. National Parks are also a very European-centred view which has evolved in response to an industrialised, urbanised, affluent society. Like any anthropocentric concept imposed over a natural system it is not surprising that there are widely differing perceptions about values and management of that system in a national park.

National parks are one part of the regional pattern of land use, which includes cities, towns, agricultural land, mining areas, timber production areas,

recreation reserves and so on. Management of national parks aims at minimising the impact of use on the natural and cultural resources within the area. Other areas accept some degree of environmental modification. National parks provide for only a limited part of the range of uses available in an area and should not be expected to fulfil the same functions as nature reserves, State recreation areas, recreation reserves, forestry areas and many other categories.

In Kosciusko, consistent with values placed upon it, protection of its special features must be given high priority. The Act provides for "...the encouragement and regulation of the appropriate use, understanding and enjoyment of each national park...by the public". There will always be the difficult task of balancing conflicting expectations for use and protection, a balance which cannot be prescribed and requiring an awareness of changing expectations in the community. A plan should cover the range and number of opportunities for people to share the experience of Kosciusko but at the same time not create artificial features or promote usage of particular features in a way that destroys natural or cultural values.

The community's use of the park will cover camping, horse-riding, bicycle touring, caving, hand-gliding, vehicle touring, walking, skiing, fishing, climbing etc., at the same time not giving priority to any one user group, e.g., back country walkers should accept some areas being prescribed for four-wheel drive use. The Service accepts that there is a very wide range of ability within the community and the NPWS is concerned that its policies appear to effect the very young, the very old, the infirm, the poor, those with young families and favours the wealthy, the fit, the conservationist fringe and so on. Facilities provided should minimise or avoid any discrimination for or against sections of the community on the basis of physical, social or economic handicap. Decisions made to enhance use opportunities for any one group should not be at the expense of others, in municipal services more day users could make greater use of facilities than those staying overnight.

Management must respond to the values held in the community, some ascribe values only if they are useful for something while others ascribe values to the same resources for their own sake, irrespective of the use by man. Kosciusko includes the head waters of three main rivers and constitutes one of the most important protected water catchment areas in Australia which provides water for cities and towns, irrigation and off-peak electric power. It provides large areas of aesthetic appreciation with snow-covered ranges, the area above the tree line, glacial lakes, rugged gorges, forested mountain ranges and the broad

expanses of wooded hills and open valleys. Examples of natural features in glacial areas, limestone caves, waterfalls and cliffs are generously provided for aesthetic appreciation and education. There are many examples of natural processes, the prehistoric features of aboriginal sites, historic features, homesteads, huts, yards, fences, relics of early mining and many other interesting relics and finally as providing opportunities over a wide range for recreation in nearly every conceivable manner.

The management of the park requires objectives and these could be summarised as follows:

- to preserve and protect outstanding scenery and natural features;
- to protect mountain catchments;
- to conserve wildlife;
- to protect natural features, communities, landmarks and special scientific sites;
- to maintain the natural environmental processes as far as possible;
- to preserve and protect Aboriginal sites and historic features;
- to protect recreational opportunities and wilderness values;
- to encourage scientific and educational enquiry into environmental features and processes, prehistoric and historic features and Park-use patterns;
- to encourage appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of natural and cultural features and recreational opportunities by the public;
- to provide the broadest possible range of opportunities for use and experience of the Park, consistent with other objectives;
- to protect the Park against the damaging effects of fire, erosion, environmental pollution and other disturbances;
- to seek the most efficient provision of facilities and allocation of management resources possible; and
- to co-operate with communities, local government councils and other organisations in the Park region to co-ordinate environmental planning and resource management.

A broad range of opportunities for use will be provided wherever possible, but in resolving any conflicting values, the primary objective of protecting the outstanding scenery and natural features of the Park will be emphasised; if this is not done the essential character of the Park will progressively be destroyed.

Mr Leaver asked the Association and members to give their full consideration to the new draft plan of management for the Kosciusko National Park when it is issued for public comment.

Adapted from the speaker's notes by  
Reg Alder

## ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

The environment has an immense influence on the lives of all Australians. We live in a very ancient land with a quite fragile ecological balance, for most of our country is not fertile, with a climate which is difficult for plant and animal growth. Yet we must depend on this land for the air we breathe, for sustenance and material comfort, as well as for spiritual fulfilment. If we are to live full and enjoyable lives, then the environment must be maintained in a state which will allow those objectives to be achieved....

People are loath to accept that they, as consumers and inhabitants of the earth, are ultimately responsible for the state of the environment. Even now after nearly two decades of intense public discussion of environmental damage resulting from modern technology, a significant proportion of the population would probably opt for continued economic growth at any price. Another faction would expect to continue at about our present level of development with the expectation that technical innovation will solve the problems of environmental degradation. How many people would opt to concentrate on conserving, even improving the present environment, if this meant a drop in their standard of living?

(K.R. Shepherd - Managing the Forested Environment - public lecture ANU August 1979.)

## EFFECT OF SETTLEMENT ON TREE LIFE

In many districts the sound of the axe has been loud in the land, and the noise of crashing trees has been the note of progress. In many properties the destruction of tree life has been entirely unjustified and often the landowner has not left sufficient shade and shelter trees for the needs of stock. Forest lands have been exploited and destroyed, and the development of forest policy has had to face many difficulties.

Close stocking and the rabbit pest have resulted in the gradual destruction of tree life. Seedlings are destroyed and further growth is made difficult by continual trampling preventing the formation of suitable seed-beds. Rabbits destroy mature plants by ring-barking them, apart from eating seed growth. It is therefore common to find very little development of seedlings and young growth of most woody shrubs and trees in areas subject to continuous stocking. Indeed, when travelling around New South Wales, one is impressed by the almost total absence of young trees or seedlings in

most districts where settlement has taken place. The trees left in many paddocks are becoming aged and unsuited for the provision of efficient shade and shelter. A great deal of planting will be necessary in many parts, although much could be done by encouraging natural regeneration through the exclusion of stock from selected portions. 'The Trees of New South Wales' - NSW Department of Agriculture.

## ATLAS OF AUSTRALIAN BIRDS

The Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union advises that four expeditions to map the distribution and breeding distribution of Australia's birds have been programmed and interested persons are invited to participate in this research towards the compilation of 'The Atlas of Australian Birds'.

The expeditions are of three weeks duration and the cost, including food and transport, is approximately \$550 from the point of departure. Locations and dates are 10 June, Sandover (NE of Alice Springs); 5 July, Tanami (NW of Alice Springs); 29 July, Barkly Tablelands (NE of Tennant Creek); and 23 August, Western Northern Territory (SW of Katherine). Further details may be had from the Association.

## MEMBERSHIP

### New Members

We welcome the following new members: Fiona Arthur, O'Connor; Maurin and Philip Bell, Cook; Isobel Crawford, Yarralumla; Steve Camkin, Duntroon; Alan and Barbara Cox, Lyneham; Erika Haas, Kambah; Ken and M. Eldridge, Garran; Dand J. Franklin, O'Connor; Anthony Garr, Lyons; P.E. Jorm, Northbourne; Diana Lloyd, Campbell; Ted and Pat Macarthur, Farrer; Bill, Ben and Daniel Nicol, Spence; Kivill MacKenzie, Canberra City; Mark O'Connor, O'Connor; Jean and Geoff Pettit, Deakin; Janet Twigg-Patterson, Dickson; Geoffrey and Denise Robin, Hughes; F. and L. Roberts, Hughes; B. Rodway, Evatt; Joan Reilly, Weetangera; Natalie Staples, Turner; Sonia Tidemann, Dickson; Veronica Waugh, Yarralumla; David Williamson, Spence.

### Renewals

Bill and Phyllis Adams; Laurie Adams; Alan and Doris Anderson; Gath Abercrombie; Dr and Mrs R. Beidleman; John Banks; N.N. Blandford; Francis Christie; Allen Curtis; Jennifer Czajar; Dr P. Cooper; Jean and

Ken Crawford; T. & T. Corp; Dr Lincoln Day; Neil and Susan Donoghoe; Mr and Mrs Elliott; Betty Garvin; Phil Goddard; Brian and Pat Hammond; Anne Heard; C. and M. Hunter; Greg and Maureen Hartung; Peter and Robin Judge; Jean Klovdahl; Dirk Kroon; Margaret Kennedy; Ken and Margaret Key; Vic and Elizabeth King; L. Lawrence; Frances Lyons; Margaret and Ken May; Kath Moriarty; Donald and Susan Moss; Gillean and Graham O'Loughlin; Ruth and David Pfanner; Alan and Pam Ray; C.R. Samundsett; L.A. Stirling; Richard and Betty Scott; J.P. Whitford; Edna and Bill Watson. John and Kath Holtzapffel, Rosemary Hooke, Mr and Mrs G. Hughes. Betty and Lindsay Brand.

#### LETTERS

#### Development of the Franklin and Lower Gordon Rivers

A letter has been sent to the Premier of Tasmania expressing gratification at the temporary shelving of proposals for hydro-electric development of the Franklin and Lower Gordon Rivers. The unique natural values of the area were again stressed together with argument that the benefit from additional power derived from the scheme would be small in comparison to the mainland increase in power by the end of the century and hence the alternative of power sharing should be considered.

A further letter was sent to the Minister for Home Affairs and the Environment proposing that the Federal Government could facilitate the transition of South West Tasmania to a national park by holding an enquiry into the future of South West Tasmania and having the area included in the World Heritage List.

To: Regional Director  
South East Area, National Parks and Wildlife Service

The National Parks Association of the ACT has for some time been concerned with the status and management of the Scabby Range area. As you know this area is bordered on three sides by existing parks or reserves and is itself highly deserving of national park status. Members were dismayed during a recent walk in the area to discover a new fire trail in the vicinity of Mt Scabby despoiling what was otherwise an excellent natural area.

We have heard informally that this area will eventually become part of a park or a reserve. Can you provide additional information on these proposals? In particular what are the proposed boundaries for such a park or reserve, will it be contiguous with existing reserves and what management status does the area currently enjoy?

We would be pleased if you could help us with these queries. The future of this

area is of great concern to our Association.

To: The Chief Mining Warden  
Seltrust Mining Corporation  
Application for Exploration Lease -  
10 February, 1981

I am writing in connection with a Notice under Section 38 Mining Act 1973 (as amended) appearing in the Financial Review of Thursday, 27 November 1980. This notice advises that Seltrust Mining Corporation had lodged an application for an exploration licence at Wollongong over an area of approximately 256 sq. km. (including Ph of Endrick, Corang, Wog Wog, Burrill). The south-east corner of the area applied for is situated about 27 km. due west of Ulladulla.

In accordance with the provisions of the Mining Act, the National Parks Association of the ACT lodges an objection to the granting of the exploration licence. The area of the application includes a substantial portion of the Morton National Park. The National Parks Association is of the belief that both the activity of mining and the activity of exploration for minerals is incompatible with the purpose and intention of the National Park. Such activity is not congruent with the proper and appropriate use for which the Association confirmed and endorsed this belief at the Seventh Annual Conference of the Australian National Parks Council held in Canberra on 20-21 September 1980. ANPC now has an agreed policy to oppose mining either in or under national parks and to oppose any mining exploration or mineral prospecting in national parks.

The National Parks Association also believes that the portion of the western boundary of the park which runs through the area of application has not yet been finalized to fully encompass the natural and archaeological features which ought to be included within the park. No exploration for minerals should take place in this area until it has been fully evaluated for national park purposes.

As most of the area of the application for the exploration licence is environmentally significant, the National Parks Association of the ACT requests that the application be not granted.

(A similar letter was sent concerning another application by the same corporation for a mining lease 8.3 km. south-east of Braidwood.)

To: National Capital Development Commission - 30 March, 1981  
Ainslie-Majura Reserve, and Proposed Motor Racing Circuit, Majura Valley

The proposal that a Motor Racing Circuit should be built in Canberra, and be situated in the Majura Valley, has been

discussed by the NPA Committee. Our particular interest is in the effect such a raceway could have on the Ainslie-Majura Reserve and I have been asked to write to you for information on the following points:

1. Have the exact boundaries of the Reserve been determined? If so, can you provide NPA with a map showing these, or any other relevant information?
2. Has the Reserve been formally declared and gazetted? If so, I should be glad to know the effective dates?
3. Has a specific site been proposed, or selected, for a raceway near the Reserve? If so, exactly where is it to be? What roadmaking would be involved?
4. If the raceway were to be built near the Reserve, bearing in mind the inevitable noise and fumes that would come from the race track, from the traffic of spectators, and the parking areas, we believe that the peace and quiet of the Reserve must suffer, and that the flora and fauna may well be adversely affected. We believe this would be a loss not only to our own members who have enjoyed the quiet walks from one mountain to another, but to a great many other residents and visitors to Canberra.

The NPA Committee will appreciate your comments on the above points. As I think some of my questions may equally concern the Department of the Capital Territory, I am sending a similar letter to the Secretary of the Department.

To: National Parks and Wildlife Service,  
South East Region - 6 April, 1981

NPA has recently had brought to its attention an area near Tumut known as Micalong Swamp. One of our Committee members, John Banks, recently inspected the area together with a NPWS ranger naturalist.

From this inspection and subsequent information we have learned that this area is a valuable example of an upland peat swamp, that it is of particular prehistoric and present-day botanical interest, and that the whole swamp area is rich in aboriginal relics and may be important as a prehistoric site.

We understand that the future of the area is precarious. It is vulnerable to erosion and is rapidly being overrun by pine plantations. We have been told that preliminary action has been taken which could lead to an application to mine the area for gold. An earlier interest in mining the peat seems to have been abandoned. The area is currently being grazed, and is being infested with brambles and other noxious weeds.

Can you advise us whether NPWS is taking any particular interest in this area? It would seem that urgent action to proclaim it as a nature reserve or historic site is necessary to protect the swamp area from further incursions, and to preserve its natural beauty and its botanical and archaeological resources from further depredation. If you can enlighten us on any of these points we should be grateful.

To: Department of Home Affairs and the Environment - 1 April, 1981  
A Proposed Aerial Gondola System for Black Mountain, Canberra. Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

The following text is an abridged version of the Association's letter.

The NPA of the ACT is opposed to a gondola system and regards it as a regressive step in the management of the reserve. A gondola system will not in any way enhance the qualities of the reserve for conservation, recreation, education or aesthetic appeal.

Black Mountain is a significant focal point and an essential component in the planned concept of the city. A gondola system by its prominence will seriously degrade natural values and the symbolism of the mountain of the conservation values in the design of the city.

The visual impact of the gondola system is seriously understated particularly for route A. With masts of 24 metres the system will be well clear of trees and in some areas will need to be lopped. Existing roads and tracks at ground level are generally obscured by trees. Present power lines are confined to the foothills whereas the gondola system moving from base to summit will be clearly visible over a wide area. The proponent regards the visibility of the system as an advantage in favour of route A. The aesthetic impact of each of the routes is unacceptable.

Despite safeguards nominated, the impact of construction would be considerable, particularly on the longest route A which traverses the steepest slope. Disturbances would be difficult to stabilise particularly on rocky slopes lacking a continuous understory of plants and grasses to bind the soil. The upper portions of the area is considered by the National Botanic Gardens EIS on their proposed extensions to be too steep and fragile to be disturbed. The conclusions by the proponent on p6 over a disturbed Botanic Gardens are therefore not correct. The estimate of soil removed for each mast seems very low and additional quantities would represent a major disturbance at each site.

The construction of the top site of a building 30mx14mx6m and extending over the edge of the mountain would be a major disturbance, cause further loss of flora



and degrade the natural aspect of the mountain. Existing structures at ground level are largely hidden.

In route A five masts would be in the new extension of the Botanic Gardens and their presence would not be compatible with the Gardens management concept and would degrade their recreational potential. The Gardens are a highly compatible form of land use and every effort is made to preserve the natural tree canopy whereas the gondola system would compromise the policy, layout and extension of the Gardens both aesthetically and functionally as well as seriously disturbing its tranquillity.

The most effective means of transport to Black Mountain is by ACTION bus. As the largest number of visitors is at the weekend, ample buses would be available together with city parking areas. No additional roads or parking areas would be needed and a cheaper service would be provided.

Comments on other points in the EIS drew attention to comparisons with other systems, but were not applicable as they did not intrude into reserves; aerial gondola systems are more in keeping with a carnival area as the draft EIS mentioned some routes are having a 'short time ride' and 'unaesthetic views'; proposed changes are already too high and would most likely rise before the project was completed; disturbances would increase risk of infection by the fungus *Phytophthora cinnamomi*; the system would be a great intrusion into the aesthetic use of the Reserve and Gardens.

The letter concluded with a summary of the points raised.

### SKI TOUR IN AUGUST

- Map Reference, Jacob's River  
1:100,000, Sheet 8524

Day ski tour for beginners who can perform basic slow movements on cross country skis. Route is along easy, mainly sheltered ridge to 'The Brindle Bull' east of Dead Horse gap and/or along the fire trail. Practice periods on various slopes will be available.

Beginners should hire waxless cross country touring skis, stocks and boots in Canberra or in Cooma. Carry lunch and drink in a light, securely fitting pack. Wear clothing similar to that for high country walking in winter; mittens/gloves essential.

Drivers should plan to arrive at Dead Horse Gap between 9.30 am and 10.00 am. Park at the Gap or near the fire trail 200m east. Anti-freeze, chains, spade, extra food and dry clothing required in cars.

Allow at least three hours plus 1/2 hour if hiring skis on the way. The aim will be to depart for home about 5.00 pm.

Weather may cause alteration to plans, but do not be deterred by less than perfect outlook!

Leader: Charles Hill, 958924.  
Prior notification needed.

**NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF  
THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY INC.**



**ANNUAL  
SUBSCRIPTIONS  
ARE NOW DUE**

WANTED: NEW OFFICE BEARERS

It's not too early to remind members that a new Committee has to be elected at the Annual General Meeting. We will be looking for, at least, a new Secretary and a new Publicity Officer. Sheila Kruse has announced that she wishes to step down from the office of Secretary in August, and Harriet Michell has resigned from the Committee owing to pressure of other concerns.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the National Parks Association of the Australian Capital Territory Incorporated will be held on Thursday, 20 August 1981, at 8 p.m. in room 1, Griffin Centre, Bunda Street, Canberra City.

Business:

To receive from the Committee a report on the affairs of the Association, together with the audited Statement of Accounts for the year ended 30 June 1981.

- \* To elect:  
President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Secretary, Publicity Officer, and six Members of Committee.
- \* To appoint an Auditor.
- \* To transact any business that may properly be brought before the meeting.

Nominations are called for the twelve positions listed above. Nominations in writing should be signed by the nominee, the proposer and the seconder, and should be in the hands of the Secretary before the commencement of the Annual General Meeting.

.....

NOMINATION FORM

Position ..... 1981-1982

Nominee: (name) .....

(signature) ..... (date).....

Proposer (signature) ..... (date).....

Seconder (signature) ..... (date).....

## NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OUTINGS

Please notify the leader by the previous Wednesday of your intention to go on any weekend outing.

The Committee suggests a donation of 3 cents per kilometre (calculated to nearest dollar) be offered to the driver by each passenger accepting transportation. Distances quoted, for one way only, are approximate and for guidance only.

There have been changes in dates from the previous programme.

All persons joining an outing of the National Parks Association of the ACT do so as volunteers in all respects and as such accept sole responsibility for any injury howsoever incurred and the National Parks Association of the ACT, its office bearers and appointed leaders are absolved from any liability in respect of any injury or damage suffered whilst engaged on any such outing.

Missing from our program this time are Cla Allen's regular monthly outings. Cla is taking a well-earned rest from leading walks, and the outings committee would like to express their thanks for his popular efforts in the past, and hope to see him out on some of our walks.

### PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DATES FROM THE PREVIOUS PROGRAM

June 6-8 Queen's Birthday  
Leader: John Webster 476769. Murramarang: Car Camp  
A weekend in the Murramarang National Park on the South Coast. 170 kms drive.

June 6-8 Queen's Birthday  
Leader: Reg Alder 542240 Mt Corang, Mt Tarn  
Monolith Valley: Pack Walk  
An interesting walk covering some of the main features of the Budawang. 140 kms drive.

June 14 Sunday  
Leader: Les Pyke 812982 Smokers Flat Area: Walk  
Ref: ACT 1:100,000  
Meet: Eucumbene Drive-Cotter Road 8.30 a.m. 50 kms drive.  
A medium walk in the country towards Mt McKeahnie from the Corin Dam road.

June 21 Sunday  
Leaders: Margaret Aston (887563) & Betty Bird Watching: Lake George  
Campbell.  
Meet: Canberra Airport Car Park, 9 a.m. 60 kms drive. An easy walk at the southern end of Lake George to study some of the birds in the area.

June 28 Sunday  
Leader: Alan Mortlock 812335 or 492805 (Work) Paddy's River: Walk  
Ref: ACT 1:100,000  
Meet: Junction Eucumbene Drive and Cotter Road, 1 p.m. 25 kms drive.  
A visit to the old iron mine near Paddy's River. Bring afternoon tea.

July 5 Sunday  
Leader: Ross Carlton 863892 Gibraltar Rocks: Walk  
Ref: ACT 1:100,000  
Meet: Eucumbene Drive-Cotter Road 9 a.m. 50 kms drive.  
A medium/long walk up to the rocks overlooking Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve.

July 11-12 Saturday/Sunday  
Leader: Volunteer required. Upper Clyde River: Car Camp  
Contact: John Webster for details 476769. 140 kms drive.  
A weekend camping beside the upper reaches of the Clyde River. Some exploratory walks possible.

July 18-19 Saturday-Sunday Ski-Touring Instruction  
 Leader: Babette Scougal 487008 Beginners' Workshop - Guthega.  
 A weekend of ski-touring instruction by a professional instructor. Not  
 suitable for children under 12. Cost about \$48. Snow camp beside cars at  
 Island Bend, or your own accommodation arrangements. Numbers are limited.  
 180 kms drive.

July 25 Saturday Woods Reserve: Barbeque  
 Contact: Outings Convenor for details, 476769.  
 A mid-day barbeque at Woods Reserve, off the Corin Dam road. Bring your  
 own food, etc. Followed by a short walk in the afternoon - if sufficient  
 support.

August 2 Sunday Mt Clear: Walk  
 Leader: Frank Clements 317005 Ref: ACT 1:100,000  
 Meet: Monaro Highway-Mugga/Road 8.30 a.m. 60 kms drive.  
 A medium walk around the Mt Clear area in the Gudgenby Nature Reserve.

August 9 Sunday Pierces Creek/Tidbinbilla: Walk  
 Leader: Reg Alder 542240 Ref: ACT 1:100,000  
 Meet: Eucumbene Drive-Cotter Road, 8.30 a.m. 30 kms drive. A medium  
 walk from Pierces Creek to Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve.

August 15 Saturday Beginners Ski-Tour  
 Leader: Charles Hill 958924  
 See note elsewhere for details. Some previous experience useful.

August 22-23 Saturday/Sunday Folly Point: Pack Walk  
 Leader: Les Pyke 812982  
 Meet: Contact leader for details. 150 kms drive. A relatively easy  
 pack walk to Folly Point in the Budawang area, which affords good views  
 over the region, and a pleasant camp site.

August 30 Sunday Nursery Hill: Walk  
 Leader: Neville Esau 864176 Ref: ACT 1:100,000  
 Meet: Monaro Highway-Mugga Road, 8.30 a.m. 50 kms drive.  
 A medium walk to Nursery Hill, overlooking Nursery Swamp, in the Gudgenby  
 Nature Reserve.

September 6 Sunday Yankee Hat: Walk  
 Leader: Charles Hill 958924 Ref: ACT 1:100,000  
 Meet: Monaro Highway-Mugga Road, 8.30 a.m. 50 kms drive. Another  
 visit to one of the peaks overlooking the Gudgenby Valley. Rough going  
 near the top, and a steep descent.

September 13 Sunday Budawang Access: Walk  
 Leader: Contact Babette Scougal for details, 487008. 150 kms drive.  
 An exploratory walk in the Budawang area, Southern Moreton National Park.

September 19-20 Saturday/Sunday Middle Creek: Pack Walk  
 Leader: Frank Clements 317005  
 Meet: Contact leader for details. 65 kms drive.  
 A medium pack walk in the Middle Creek-Mt Kelly region in the southern ACT.

#### NATIONAL PARK VALUES

Conservation itself does not aim to make economic use of resources but is often concerned with resources which might otherwise be put to economic use and, by conserving these, it may serve a function of keeping them available for future economic use if required for that purpose.

Moreover, conservation in the broad concept of national parks is frequently associated with the economic development of tourism and educational facilities.

Alligator Rivers Study - a review report, 1977. Discussion on Kakadu National Park, p. 96.

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY INC.

Inaugurated 1960

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Annual Subscription Rates

1 July - 30 June:	Family members \$10	Student members \$3
	Single members \$ 8	Corporate members \$5

For members joining between:

1 January - 30 June:	Half specified rate
1 April - 30 June:	Fifteen months' subscription

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 organised field outings, meetings or any other means.

Cooperation with organisations and persons having similar interests and objectives.

Promotion of and education for nature conservation and the planning of land-use to achieve conservation.

# National Parks Association outings summary

## JUNE

6-8	Queen's Birthday	Murramarang	Car Camp
6-8	Queen's Birthday	Budawangs	Pack Walk
14	Sunday	Smoker's Flat	Walk
21	Sunday	Lake George	Bird Watching
28	Sunday	Paddy's River	Walk

## JULY

5	Sunday	Gilbraltar Rocks	Walk
11-12	Sat-Sunday	Upper Clyde River	Car Camp
18-19	Sat-Sunday	Guthega	Ski Touring
25	Saturday	Wood's Reserve	Barbeque

## AUGUST

2	Sunday	Mt Clear	Walk
9	Sunday	Pierces Creek	Walk
15	Saturday	Kosciusko	Ski Touring
22-23	Sat-Sunday	Folly Point	Pack Walk
30	Sunday	Nursery Hill	Walk

## SEPTEMBER

6	Sunday	Yankee Hat	Walk
13	Sunday	Budawangs	Walk
19-20	Sat-Sunday	Middle Creek	Pack Walk

## GENERAL MEETINGS

Held at 8.00 p.m., Room 1, Griffin Centre, Bunda Street, Civic.

June: Thursday 18, 1981 - Mark Butz, Field Naturalist/Ranger, National Parks and Wildlife Service, S.E. Region, 'Investigation of New Parks and Nature Reserves in NSW'.

July: Thursday 16, 1981 - 'Give the Trees a Chance', a film on Terania Creek produced by Gene Kendall; Narrator: Jack Thompson. By courtesy of Native Forests Action Council.

August: Thursday 20, 1981. Annual General Meeting and Election of Officers. 21st Birthday Celebrations.