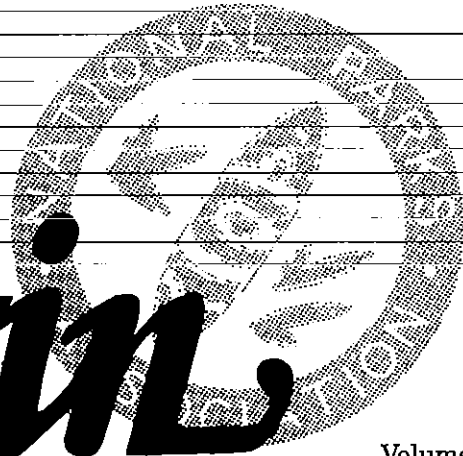


NPA Bulletin



Volume 32 number 2
June 1995

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION (ACT) INCORPORATED



Australian Alps Walking Track

The Boboyan pine plantation

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Cover

Photo by Fiona MacDonald Brand
Heritage Week KHA and NPA walk to Bushfold Flat.
Matthew Higgins addresses the group about the history of George and Russel Read's hut.

National Parks Association (ACT) Incorporated

Inaugurated 1960

Aims and objects of the Association

- Promotion of national parks and of measures for the protection of fauna and flora, scenery, natural features and cultural heritage 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 and cultural heritage by organised field outings, meetings or any other means.
- Cooperation with organisations and persons having similar interests and objectives.
- Promotion of, and education for, conservation, and the planning of land-use to achieve conservation.

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Phil Bubb	248 6769(h); 275 8028(w)
Steven Forst	251 6817(h); 279 1326(w)
Doreen Wilson	288 5215(h)
Max Lawrence	288 1370(h); 272 2032(w)

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The NPA (ACT) office is located in Maclaurin Cres, Chifley. Office hours are:
10am to 2pm Mondays
9am to 2pm Tuesdays and Thursdays
Telephone/Fax: (06) 282 5813
Address: PO Box 1940, Woden ACT 2606

Contribute to your *Bulletin*

Contributions of articles (news, descriptions or fiction), black-and-white photographs and line drawings are keenly sought for the *Bulletin*. Please label photographs with the name of the subject, the name of the photographer and the date. Leave contributions at the office or phone the editor, Roger Green, on (06) 247 0059. The editorial fax is (06) 249 7373.

Articles by contributors may not necessarily reflect Association opinion or objectives.

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Letters to the editor

Sightseers a problem for climbers

I would like to respond to Ian and Margaret's 'another interpretation (of the history of Brandy Flat Hut), which will doubtless draw someone's fire' (Letter to the Editor *NPA Bulletin* March 1995).

Certainly no single group should determine management policy *as a whole*. But if that group is the original and most significant user of a small area within the whole and if their usage is of a special nature and includes relatively low impact and caring activities, their views should be given detailed consideration.

The problem is the old one of expanding usage destroying the original values. The

large increase in usage by sight-seers, whose knowledge of climber activities is near zero, is causing problems. A hut would certainly attract more sight-seers and cause greater problems.

Problems of safety arise because sight-seers arrive on top of the rocks, above the climbers. Already large rocks, the size of 20 litre drums, have been dug up out of the ground and rolled over the cliffs, past and over the most popular climbs, which are obscured from the top. When I reported this to the rangers I received a 'let's wait and see' response.

There is an increase in litter and erosion of the access walking track and the access road. Climbers now have increasing problems with the security of their gear.

Given the above I would not be surprised that more than a 'few, presumably non-representative individuals' hold strong and valid feelings on this matter.

Yours sincerely
Grahame Muller

Volunteers available

We are a group of SCUBA divers who are committed to actively preserving the underwater life of our oceans. Because we are a relatively young group, with limited resources, we have decided to spend some time caring for other areas of the environment in general, until we are able to care for the ocean in particular.

We currently have a group of up to 20 volunteers who are prepared to assist with any projects which are consistent with our organisation's philosophies. If you are in need of volunteers to help you with projects which involve conservation, working towards a cleaner environment, environmental preservation or similar goals, we'd love to offer our services to you.

We are not affiliated with any company or other environmental group.

Please feel free to contact Kahren Evans, Ambassadors of the Ocean, PO Box 1129 Tuggeranong ACT 2900, phone 292 5773, for further information.

Yours sincerely
Kahren T. Evans

On Canberra Day NPA operated a stall to publicise our activities and make contact with new members. A display of photos in the tent drew attention to our work in Namadgi on track-making and the Orroral Homestead and to the other wonderful resources we have in national parks around the ACT. Doreen Wilson's efforts in setting up the stall and organising a duty roster were rewarded as interested people walked through the tent for most of the day and we had a number of genuine membership enquiries. Photo by Reg Alder



The Australian Alps Walking Track project

Origins of the project

Members of the Namadgi sub-committee of the NPA of the ACT got together in April to initiate a Namadgi-oriented project for 1995. We chose the then almost-completed ACT portion of the Australian Alps Walking Track. Our aims were to be more positively involved in Namadgi activities, to contribute more local items for our partly ACT Government-funded *Bulletin* and also to introduce more Namadgi outings to our walks program. With this in mind five members (Frank Clements, Stephen Johnston, Les Pyke, Babette Scougall and Nicki Taws) met with great enthusiasm to study maps and discuss the project. We are hoping that other members of the Association will take it from where we leave off and continue the articles and walks, either further along the alpine track or other walks within Namadgi National Park.

In very general terms, the ACT section of the Alpine Track starts at the Namadgi Visitor Centre in the north-east, climbs to the Mt Tennent summit road, follows the Booroomba Creek to the Booroomba Rocks carpark, goes past the Honeysuckle Creek tracking station site, over a ridge and down to the Orroral tracking station site, along the Orroral Valley to the Cotter Hut Road, and through the Cotter Valley to finish at Murrays Gap in the south-west.

While this 58.3 kilometre (according to John Siseman's book and Len Haskew's pedometer) ACT stretch could best be walked as a four-day packwalk, we decided to divide it into three parts—the first two parts as one-day walks so that a larger number of members can participate, the third section as a two or three-day packwalk. Part 1 is from the Visitor Centre to Booroomba Rocks carpark (see below); Part 2, from the Booroomba Rocks carpark to Orroral Valley (to be in the September issue of the *Bulletin*); Part 3, from Orroral to

Murrays Gap (to be in the December issue of the *Bulletin*). In writing up the walks we will include not only a description of the features and conditions encountered along the way but also possible side or alternative routes. Will our enthusiasm last long enough to complete the task we have set ourselves?

Some background information about the walking track

The Australian Alps Walking Track has had a long gestation period. The idea of a long-distance track was first floated in the 1940s, then picked up and put down by various individuals and organisations until the late 1960s, when the Victorian Ministry of Tourism together with the Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs started working towards

establishing their Victorian Alpine Walking Trail (later Track) from Mt Erica to the Murray River. Over the years the Victorian track changed and grew and, since the addition of the NSW and ACT extensions, has been renamed the Australian Alps Walking Track. Our ACT section is the last part of the tri-state venture to be established. The challenging 655-kilometre track generally follows the highest ridges and plains of Australia's rugged south-east country and is expected to be as significant as the Bicentennial Trail.

The track is intended for experienced bushwalkers skilled in the use of map and compass and capable of self-reliant navigation. Few track markers are used; in fact, much of the track is not formalised, and the policy for the wilderness areas is **not** to use markers at all.

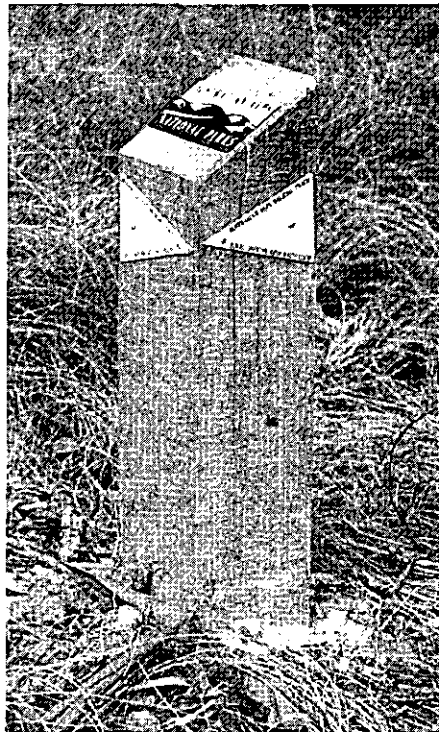
Anyone attempting to walk the track, or parts of it, needs to take particular care in planning the trip. Many sections take in the remotest traverses including the country's highest mountains where conditions are unpredictable throughout the year.

Namadgi Visitor Centre to Booroomba Rocks carpark

This is a through walk, so walkers must start with a car shuffle or a key exchange arrangement. (One hill on the dirt road to the Booroomba Rocks carpark is extremely steep and may prove difficult for two-wheel drives.)

Maps required for this one-day walk: 1:25 000 Williamsdale and Corin Dam

Even though we have provided a sketch map of the general area (see page 6), detailed contour maps will be required on the trip. Marker posts are installed at intersections only. In between there is little to guide you and, as the walk is new,



The style of marker post used along the Australian Alps Walking Track

some stretches of the path are barely discernible.

Suggested reading: *Over the hills and Tharwa way* by Ian Fraser and Margaret McJannett. This little gem of a book details three sections of this first day of the alpine track—*Walk 1* describes from the Visitor Centre to part way up Mt Tennent (the Cypress Pine walk), *Walk 2* covers the Mt Tennent summit road stretch and *Walk 23* covers the track from Booroomba carpark to the Mt Tennent-Bushfold Flats fork on the fire trail. The only part Ian and Margaret haven't described in their book is from the top of the Cypress Pine walk to where the alpine track intersects the Mt Tennent summit road.

Officially, the Australian Alps Walking Track begins next to the Namadgi Visitor Centre. However, as the ACT Parks and Conservation Service's policy is to lock the gate to the Centre at 4.30pm, it is probably wiser to leave the cars in a small grassy space on the other side of the Naas Road from the entrance to 'Riverview'. The Cypress Pine walk starts at the small gate through the fence line where the overhead transmission line crosses the Naas Road.

The Cypress Pine walk is along a well-prepared, nicely graded path, which has become well defined with regular use. Regular tall black posts with metallic arrows guide you along the way, past the pines, she-oaks and other dry forest vegetation. This attractive, though mostly up-hill, walk ends at a large slab of rock with a sign 'Lookout 100 m' to the side. A caution—I have been told that this rock slab is extremely slippery when wet.

Across this open rocky flat you will see the first of the shorter, less-obvious Australian Alps Walking Track marker posts. They are made of treated timber, yellowish in colour, with the Alps Track emblem on top and an anodised grey or blue (depending on which way the sun strikes it) arrow on the side, pointing the way. You will find the 'confirming' marker post some metres further along the track beyond the rocks among the scrub. We found that some

of these posts blended in with the surroundings and were easy to walk past without noticing them at first, but you soon get your eye in (except where the tussock grass has grown taller than the post!). Although this is the most recently established section of the track, it is already clearly defined and easy to follow. Volunteer groups have placed logs and rocks across the path to aid walkers and control erosion. Members of our Association, in conjunction with rangers from the ACT Parks and Conservation Service, spent a weekend working on some of this section and Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers spent a week establishing the Booroomba Rocks end.

The track is up-hill all the way, with grades much steeper than the Cypress Pine path. Even with a light day-pack on, you will find it one of those relentlessly long, grinding climbs where you need to start slow and keep to an even steady plod. For people who have decided to walk the ACT portion of the alpine track as a straight four to five day stint, the climb with a heavy pack would be a hard one. However, there is the occasional side track to a rocky outlook where you can take a breather and enjoy the views back to the Murrumbidgee and Gudgenby rivers and Tuggeranong and beyond.

For the really energetic there is also a track leading down to Folly Hollow and the Tennent homestead complex to the north, but this will add at least another one-and-a-half hours onto the trip as well as an extra climb back up to the track. The Tennent property at one stage took in most of Mt Tennent, including the summit. Grazing capacity was very low; much of the property could only support one sheep per five acres.

A row of cheeses (wooden stepping stones) signals that you are approaching the next intersection. The arrow on the marker post directly ahead points left, and you

continued over

Birds seen along the track in April

From the Magpie-larks, Willie Wagtails and Superb Fairy-wrens at the start, to the flock of Gang-gang Cockatoos greeting us with their 'creaking gate' call at the Booroomba Rocks carpark, an abundance of bird life was evident. Above the treeline on the northern slopes of Mt Tennent small flocks of migrating honeyeaters, predominantly Yellow-faced and White-naped, flew over almost continuously during the morning. They were headed resolutely in one direction (east it seemed) but with frequent short rests in the canopy. At the lunch stop near the summit road we heard a few more, some stopping to feed—the morning rush was over. A flock of about 50 Red Wattlebirds also gathered up there and took off in the same general direction, all part of the massive autumn honeyeater migration from the Brindabella Range.

A lucky encounter on the path just before the lunch stop was with a pair of Spotted Quail-thrush which flew off with the noticeable whirring of wings and white band on fanned tail characteristic of this species.

Crimson Rosellas skittered noisily through the branches and the Spotted Pardalotes still barracked for Paul Keating (the poor innocents unaware that he is in favour of the destruction of much of their habitat!). A Wedge-tailed Eagle ranged high above, the penetrating call of the White-throated Treecreeper monitored our progress, and a Superb Lyrebird tentatively practised its winter repertoire in the Booroomba Creek gully.

A check through *Birds of the ACT*. An *Atlas* reveals that there would be about 46 species reasonably common along this part of the track, and a further 60 species have less commonly been recorded. Not counting water birds and rarities, this represents approximately three-quarters of the birds of the ACT.

Phyl Goddard

The Australian Alps Walking Track Project, continued from previous page

continue your climb up to the summit road via an old vehicular track which is *not* marked on the 1:25 000 map. This time the grade is more gentle, with even some stretches of downhill to relieve the grind, through attractive, open forest with taller, straighter trees than were on the harsher, drier north-facing side of the mountain. This old track intersects with the Mt Tennent summit road at an open grassy saddle—a nice place for a rest. The alpine track marker post is on the southern side of the summit road, good placement for people coming up from the Visitor Centre but not all that visible at the bend in the road among the tussocks for people coming from the Booroomba end. The confirming post

for those going to Booroomba is further down the road to the right.

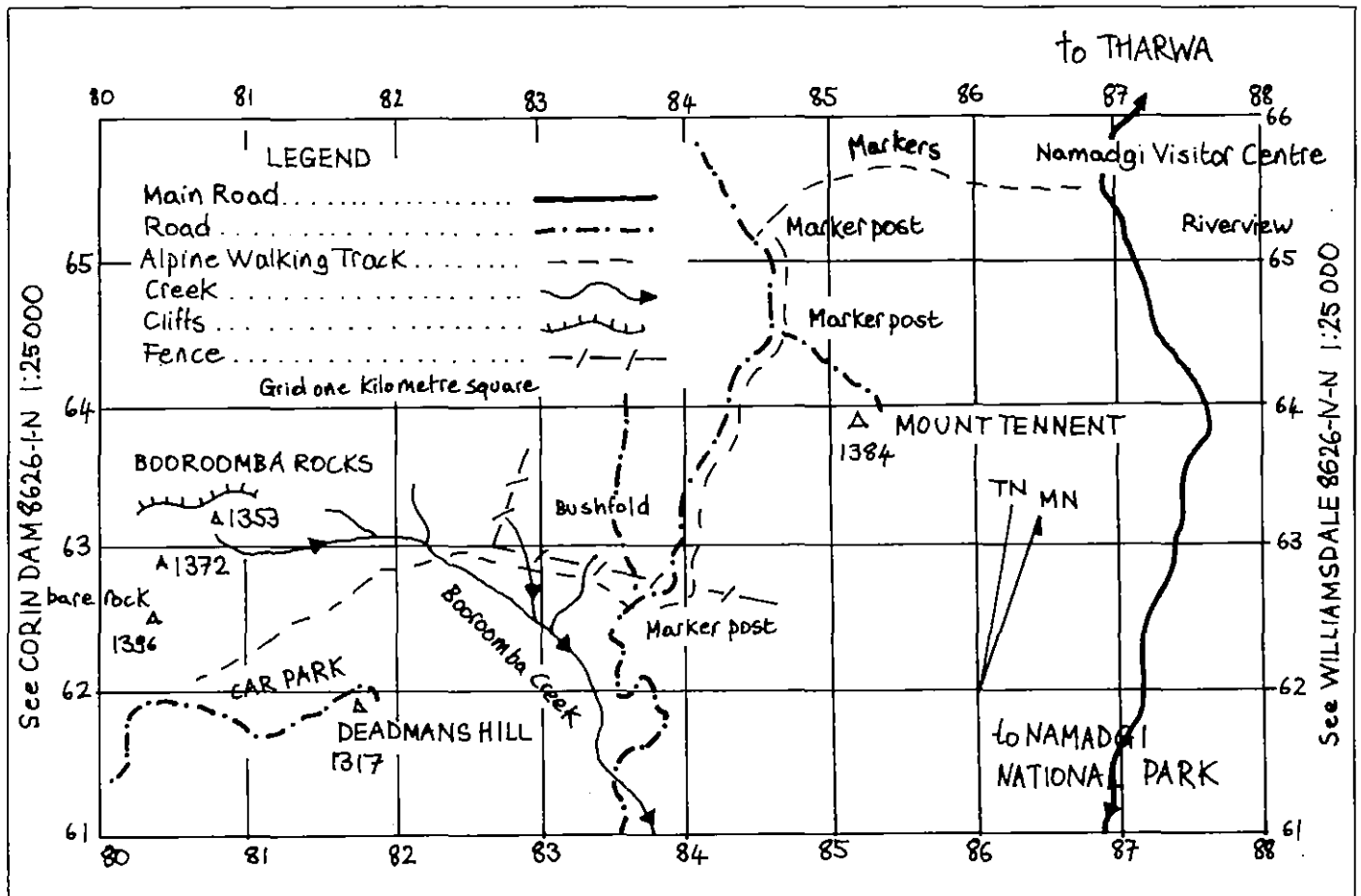
A good place to visit before taking off down the road is the large rocky outcrop to the left of the junction from which wonderful views can be seen. To the north-east is the Murrumbidgee River, the Naas and Tuggeranong valleys, Lanyon bowl, Rob Roy Range and beyond, with the now small Namadgi Visitor Centre in the foreground. To the west, glimpses of the Tidbinbilla Range and Booroomba Rocks can be had. To the north is Mt Taylor with Black Mountain and its tower directly behind, and on the wonderfully clear day when we climbed it in April we could see row upon row of hills into the distance. And all the while, overhead, the magic of the honeyeaters' migration kept us enthralled.

The alpine track has long been regarded as a 'peak baggers' trip, and

for those who would like to bag Mt Tennent it is here they should leave the rest of the party behind and climb to the top for even better views—another 170 metres, all uphill.

This first part of the walk is through dry, north-facing, lightly timbered terrain without much shade, and probably best avoided in mid-summer, or at least requiring a very early morning start. The few creeks crossed are very small and seasonal, therefore, you must take enough water for the day. Booroomba Creek on the western side of the mountain is the first reliable water encountered, and this area has been constantly grazed since the 1880s when Andrew McMahon first took up leases on Bushfold Flats and Honeysuckle Creek.

The Mt Tennent fire trail dips and climbs and winds its way down the mountainside, passing through



Sketch map of walking track from Namadgi Visitor Centre to Booroomba Rocks carpark drawn by Ken Johnson, redrawn by Nicci Haynes.

mainly open grassy forest, past granite boulders and across some narrow exposed ridges where good views to the west can be had. This road was extremely dry in April, and the steep gravelly sections were quite treacherous underfoot. With heavy packs it would have been worse. The road cuts through the dogproof fenceline three times. Watch for the fork in the road that leads into Bushfold Flats, but don't

turn into it, stay on the main road going south. You will soon see the next Alps Walking Track marker post, on the left-hand side of the road, directing you off to the west.

Some metres away from the road is the confirming marker in the open paddock area to the right, part of the Bushfold Flats run which was resumed in September 1994 for inclusion in the national park. Just follow the arrow. This stretch of the

track is perhaps the most difficult part to pick up and stay on. Animal tracks, some of them more clearly defined than the alpine track, cross it in places. The yellow and green tapes that were attached to shrubs and lower branches of trees by the people surveying the track last year help to keep you on it. After going through an old fenceline, the track goes down a dry gully and winds through open dry forest where the

Vegetation along the track

This section of the Alpine Walking Track passes through an interesting range of vegetation types as the route rises up from the plains to sub-alpine levels. At the start of the walk a glance up the slopes of Mt Tennent reveals different greens and blues in the tree cover as the species composition of the forest changes with altitude and aspect.

The walk begins in open grassy woodland, typical of the grazing land of the southern tablelands. The common tree species are Yellow Box *Eucalyptus melliodora* and Blakely's Redgum *E. blakelyi*, with some Red Box *E. polyanthemos* on slightly higher ground. This woodland was previously partly cleared and grazed, as evidenced by the cut stumps and the presence of a number of weeds including Briar Rose *Rosa rubiginosa* and Lambs Tongue *Verbascum thaspus*. Native grasses such as Red Leg Grass *Bothriochloa macra* and Kangaroo Grass *Themeda triandra* are still common despite the previous grazing.

The track begins to climb the lower slopes of Mt Tennent through a forest of the scaly-barked Mealy Bundy *Eucalyptus nortonii*, its bluish leaves contrasting with the dark green needles of Black Cypress Pine *Callitris endlicheri*. In the shrubby understorey there is usually something flowering at any time of the year. The tiny pink and white flowers of Heath Myrtle *Micromyrtus ciliata* are spectacular in springtime. The daisies *Cassinia longifolia* and *Olearia tenuifolia* and Sweet Bursaria *Bursaria spinosa* flower mostly in the

summer through to autumn, while during the winter the tubular green flowers of the Common Correa *Correa reflexa* can be found.

After the creek crossing the Cypress Pines are left behind and the forest consists of Mealy Bundy and the similar looking Broad-leaf Peppermint *Eucalyptus dives*. These are the two main trees forming the somewhat stunted and gnarled forest up to about 1000 metres altitude. The understorey on this dry rocky slope varies between the tall shrubs, Cauliflower Bush *Cassinia longifolia*, Sweet Bursaria and Purple Daisy-bush *Olearia tenuifolia*, and low heathy areas with Beard-heaths *Leucopogon* spp. and Heathy Bush-pea *Pultenaea procumbens*.

Where the track flattens above a large group of granite boulders the forest takes on a more sub-alpine character with the appearance of Candlebark *Eucalyptus rubida* and Applebox *E. bridgesiana*. Candlebark dominates the open grassy forest at the junction of the walking track with the old 4wd track, and the trees are particularly spectacular in autumn as the smooth bark turns all shades of red, pink, orange, yellow, grey and blue as it is shed. The occasional Black Sallee *E. stellulata* can be found along this section, its dark grey, green and yellow bark distinguishing it from the Candlebark. Further along the track Snowgum *E. pauciflora*, Narrow-leaved Peppermint *E. radiata* and the tall white-barked Mountain Gum *E. dalrympleana* start to become common.

The cleared area at the saddle on the Mt Tennent fire trail is evidence again of the previous pastoral history of this part of the park. Weeds commonly

associated with grazing disturbance at this altitude include Briar Rose and Spear Thistle *Cirsium vulgare*. As the fire trail descends the southern slopes of Mt Tennent the vegetation alternates between Candlebark/Broad-leaved Peppermint/Snowgum/Applebox forest in exposed situations and the taller Mountain Gum/Narrow-leaved Peppermint forest on more sheltered aspects.

The track leaves the fire trail and skirts the valley sides through mostly Applebox/Snowgum/Broad-leaved Peppermint forest. Silver Banksia *Banksia marginata* is common through this area, its yellow flowers an important food source for honeyeaters. The track wanders up Booroomba Creek through vegetation typical of the mountain gullies. Tall Manna Gums (or Ribbon Gums) *Eucalyptus viminalis* and Narrow-leaved Peppermints tower over a lush and often dense understorey of Blackwood *Acacia melanoxylon*, Woolly Tea-tree *Leptospermum lanigerum*, Long-leaf Lomatia *Lomatia myricoides*, Hazel Pomaderris *Pomaderris aspera*, and several ferns including tree fern. The deep litter and rich soil of the creekside is ideal for Lyrebirds and scratchings are common along the track.

The trees at Booroomba campsite include several of the common species encountered at sub-alpine levels along the track—Mountain Gum, Narrow-leaved Peppermint, Candlebark and Snowgum. The open grassy understorey makes this a most attractive place to camp.

Nicki Taws

track is quite faint. Watch for the fenceline further ahead to the right. The track more or less follows this latter east-west fenceline. Even though it is labelled 'dogproof' on the Williamsdale 1:25 000 map, it is in fact a boundary fence of normal height, unlike the ones passed on the summit road.

After leaving the corner post of the fenceline, the track goes round a small knoll on the ridgeline then descends steeply into the Booroomba Creek gully. It then criss-crosses the creek seven times. This stretch of the walk is delightful—ferny gullies, small

waterfalls and rock pools, a new outcrop of mossy rocks at every turn, under beautiful tall trees full of birds and sheltered from the wind, but probably cold and damp in winter. The flood debris that is piled high in some corners of the creek sends out warnings against trying to negotiate this path after heavy rain. The heavily timbered slopes of Deadmans Hill to the left and another unnamed one to the right seem to have been protected from the timber getters' axes.

Even though it is uphill all the way to the Booroomba carpark, the track

is mostly a gentle climb along a well-conceived route and was established by the ACT Parks and Conservation Service with the aid of the Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers. It ends at the north-east corner of the carpark, which also has its two marker posts—for walkers starting from the Booroomba end.

The only amenities provided at this joint carpark, picnic and camping ground are metal barbecues. Bring your everything (except water, which is available in Booroomba Creek, but will require boiling).

Babette Scougall

Launch of Australian Alps Walking Track

Walhalla to Canberra—655 kilometres

The Australian Alps Walking Track allows walkers to experience the mountainous heart of some of our finest national parks, including the ACT's own precious Namadgi. The track climbs Australia's highest peaks, crosses exposed high plains, passes through snowgum woodlands and magnificent tall forests as well as visiting areas of significant cultural value.

On Wednesday 12 April, 1995, the completed track was officially declared 'open' by the ACT's Minister for the Environment, Mr Gary Humphries, in front of approximately 40 invited guests. NPA was represented by Babette Scougall and Len Haskew. Other members were in attendance in a private capacity. Also at the launch was the former Minister for the Environment, Mr Bill Wood, who was an enthusiastic supporter of the ACT's involvement during his time in office.

Before Gary Humphries cut the official ribbon, those in attendance heard well known guide book writer, John Siseman, give a succinct history of the track. This was followed by an account by Margaret Krakowsky from Melbourne Parks and

Waterways of her nine-week long hike along the entire track. Margaret advised intending walkers to prepare well. Gill Anderson, from the Victorian National Parks Service, was in charge of marking the track



John Siseman author of Alpine Walking Track related his experiences on the track with Lyn Nelson, Manager Conservation and Wildlife at the opening of the track at the Namadgi Visitor Centre. Photo by Reg Alder

for intending walkers and exhibited examples of current markers and sign boards. She also advised that there will be no marking in recognised wilderness areas and that markers which had formerly been nailed to trees are gradually being removed. Gill is also busily preparing appropriate pamphlets complete with 'mud maps'.

These short addresses were followed by the official opening of the track. Just before wielding the scissors, Gary Humphries issued a challenge to Bill Wood, which was accepted with alacrity, to see which of them could go the most distance along the track in a day. (Perhaps NPA could organise this 'event' and include it in our Outings Program?)

ACT Parks and Conservation Service officers organised the event well and entertained those present to lunch. The occasion was a significant one for NPA as, through its members, the Association had been involved in surveying a suitable route from Booroomba Rocks to the Visitor Centre at Tharwa as well as putting in considerable effort in track construction.

Len Haskew

National Forest Policy

Dear Mr Keating

As your Government approaches its final decision on the issuing of woodchip export licences, the National Parks Association of the ACT strongly urges you not to issue *any* permit for woodchipping in *any* of the 1300 native forests of high conservation value.

Woodchipping of these forests would amount to desecration of Australia's heritage. It would deprive future generations of this widely and highly valued natural asset, as well as destroying the habitat of many species. On a dry, scantily-forested continent, more than half of Australia's tree cover has been cleared since European settlement. Today, only 5 per cent of this land is covered by native forest. No enlightened government could possibly allow this precious legacy to be used for woodchips. No government of any other developed country is felling its native forests for exporting woodchips to another country.

NPA ACT often conducts bushwalks in the native forest areas of the south-eastern region, and many of our 800 members have seen at first hand the beauty and scientific values of the forests, as well as the aftermath of woodchipping activities in, for example, the Eden and Gippsland areas.

The Association would be grateful for your advice on the following points:

- How will the implementation of a new woodchipping policy in 1996 save existing high value forest ecosystems that are targeted for woodchipping this year?
- What is the estimated profit to Australia on each tonne of woodchips exported?

The Association is aware that you have been receiving many letters and representations on this matter. Within the conservation movement there has never been such unanimity on an issue.

Opinion polls over the last decade have shown that the overwhelming majority of Australian citizens want our native forests protected. Most people see this issue as one of inter-generational equity—they want their children to enjoy this unique resource. It is a very great shame that an inept

decision of one of your Ministers has created such a furore and is polarising public opinion.

We ask you to reverse Mr Beddell's decision and to protect the 1300 coupes with no compromise whatsoever.

Yours sincerely

Clive Hurlstone, Acting president, NPA
25 January 1995

Dear Mr Hurlstone

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the Government's National Forest Policy.

I recently outlined the Commonwealth's approach to dealing with future applications for woodchip export licences and to forest policy in general. The approach is consistent with the National Forest Policy Statement (NFPS) and is designed to meet commitments under the NFPS for the sustainable management and use of Australia's forest resources.

The Government wants to achieve, over the next five years, the adequate protection of old-growth, wilderness and other high conservation value forests in a national reserve system, and to ensure that a high value-added wood-products industry can operate sustainably outside these areas.

Over the next five years there will be an annual 20 per cent reduction in the maximum permissible level of export woodchips sourced from areas of native forest, unless those areas are covered by, or there is significant progress towards, a Regional Forest Agreement (RFA). The phase-out does not apply to plantations. Companies which increase their domestic downstream processing capacity, or have a demonstrable commitment to doing so, will have this taken into account when the Government is determining future woodchip export quotas.

In addition, the Commonwealth initially identified a number of coupes (509) that may be required for a future comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system and may need to be protected until a detailed assessment of their environmental values can be made through the RFA

process. These areas are either on the Register of the National Estate or were believed to have high wilderness, old-growth or other conservation values. Assessment of these areas is underway and is due for completion at the end of March. In some cases, these assessments have been completed.

The Minister for Industry, Science and Technology and the Minister for Primary Industries and Energy, in consultation with myself and the Minister for Environment, Sport and Territories, have been asked to develop a strategy to assist the timber industry to move to higher levels of downstream processing and investment.

The Government has also announced a more efficient annual licence renewal process. In future, the Minister for Resources will formally consult with me before making his decision on export woodchip licence applications and my Department will be responsible for co-ordinating the process for advising the Minister for Resources.

The key element to achieving these outcomes is the RFA process. Under current arrangements, the Commonwealth is required to be invited by a state government to participate in a RFA and the Commonwealth Government is encouraging the state governments to do so as soon as practicable.

As a first step in securing a co-operative approach between the Commonwealth and state governments to the sustainable management of Australia's forests, the Commonwealth has developed a position paper on RFAs. This has been prepared following full consultation with the states and most comments received from the States, particularly in relation to the accreditation of states processes, have been incorporated.

The Government remains committed to the adequate protection of native forests and the development of a high value-added sustainable wood-products industry.

Thank you again for writing to me on this matter.

Yours sincerely

PJ Keating, Prime Minister
20 March 1995

PARKWATCH

Timber industry based on softwood plantations

A strategy to assist the transition of a timber industry based on woodchipping to one based on a softwood plantation resource without loss of jobs has been developed by the South East Forests Conservation Council. The strategy involves the transfer of timber workers to the softwood industry centred at Bombala.

All employment in the woodchip industry can be absorbed by the growth in permanent positions in softwood plantation processing. The plantations around Bombala will be harvested by CSR, who will begin construction this year on a modern sawmill and an oriented strand board plant at Bombala.

The phaseout of woodchip exports from the Harris-Daishowa mill is due to be completed in March 1997.

ACTwild, The Wilderness Society newsletter, Autumn 1995

Grant to save Westermans' Homestead

A National Estate Grant of \$11 750 has been given to the Kosciusko Huts Association for the conservation of Westermans' Homestead. Though the Association weather-proofed it a few years ago, the site has since become overgrown with thistles and urgently needs attention. The Association's members are eager to start work on the three year restoration project and are calling for volunteers to help.

Westermans' was constructed around 1916. Built on stone perimeter footings, it is a five-roomed weatherboard house with a timber frame. It has a small verandah at the front and unusual decorative scalloped bargeboards to the gables.

Kosciusko Huts Association Newsletter, Autumn 1995

Permanent protection for remnant vegetation

A biologically significant patch of remnant sub-humid woodland in central western NSW will receive permanent protection as a result of the Genaren Hill Landcare project. The 'Save the Bush' scheme and the Environmental Trust funded the project, which involved the construction of 8.2km of fox and cat proof fence around 390ha of remnant woodland and grassland. A program of fox and cat eradication is now underway and plans have been made to reintroduce bird and mammal species that were once resident in the habitat.

The site will be protected forever under a NSW Conservation Agreement and Plan of Management drafted by the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Newsletter of the Australian Conservation Foundation's NSW Landcare Liaison Officer

Remnant vegetation under threat

Five thousand square kilometres of bush are cleared in Australia every year. Overclearing has resulted in erosion, salinity and reduced productivity. Remnants of original vegetation survive, often in unlikely places such as cemeteries and beside highways, but are threatened by further clearing, grazing, dieback, root rot diseases, fire and poor human management. Including nature conservation, vegetation retention and native tree planting in property planning is a step in the right direction. Groups can undertake activities such as fencing, and control of weeds and feral animals.

Newsletter of the Australian Conservation Foundation's NSW Landcare Liaison Officer

Virus killing frogs

A virus, possibly a species of ranavirus, may be responsible for declining populations of montane stream-dwelling frogs. Fourteen or more species of Australian rainforest frogs have been wiped out or severely reduced in the last 15 years.

The virus can decimate a frog population in only a few weeks, believes Dr Bill Laurance of the CSIRO's Division of Wildlife and Ecology. He suspects that the virus, which may have been brought in to the country with ornamental fish, may be spread by aquatic insects.

Dr Laurance's theory challenges previous explanations, which have included drought, acid rain, ozone depletion, salination, pesticide residues, predation by feral pigs and climate change.

Biolinks, newsletter of the Biodiversity Unit, Department of the Environment, Sport and Territories, March 1995

Tree clearing exceeds planting

At the Fremantle Greening Australia conference, Dr Michael Buxton, Victorian Environmental Protection scientist, said that Australia had one of the highest rates of indigenous tree clearing in the world. Twice as much forest has been cleared as in Brazilian Amazonia and more trees are cleared in Australia each year than are planted in a decade.

Total land clearance between 1983 and 1993 was 5.17 million ha including 1.5 million ha in NSW. Thirty seven per cent of total greenhouse gas emissions resulted from clearing.

The Colong Bulletin, March 1995

Granite's living force

Few other words in the English language convey such a sense of indestructibility as 'granite'. The word connotes an endurance that time and the passage of the seasons will not erode. Yet granite has another quality that we see in Egyptian carvings. There is, in the eyes and the sensuous curves especially, an unmistakable 'living force'. The stone seems to flow, has been shaped by hands that knew the rock could 'live'.

In its natural state granite is a late arrival after volcanoes have been produced by great tectonic forces. We live our lives in terms of minutes and hours, days and years, but a part of us has existed for millions of years and has seen the appearance of the granite and its eventual erosion.

We live with two concepts of time existing side by side, city time and wild time. Wild time cannot sense the hours or the days and so when we encounter wild landscapes we feel as though we are coming home to a scale of time with which, biologically, we are completely familiar. In the wilderness we can glimpse 'deep time'.

Wilderness News, February/March 1995

Restoration of Lake Pedder

The Colong Foundation for Wilderness strongly advocates the restoration of the original Lake Pedder. With its exquisite quartzite beach and backdrop of mountains, Lake Pedder is a landform unique to Australia and possibly to the world. This imposes a responsibility on the Australian Government, the protector of the western Tasmanian wilderness, to restore the 'status quo'.

Professor Peter Tyler and Dr Kevin Kiernan have shown that

the lake's physical features are intact and only a few millimetres of easily dispersed silt covers the beach. Dr Kiernan concludes that no human intervention would be necessary for restoration after drainage of the basin.

Benefits from increased tourism could offset any financial loss due to the restoration. The restored Lake Pedder would become famous as the only case in the world of a lake being drained in order to restore a gem of nature in a World Heritage area.

The Colong Bulletin, March 1995

No time to spare for the Darling

The Darling River system has never been in poorer health. Blue-green algae, irrigation, pollution and salinity are all taking their toll on fish populations, billabongs, lakes and wetlands.

Because water flow in the Darling catchment is limited and variable, governments and irrigators have invested heavily in dams, weirs, diversions and pumps to maintain reliability of supply. Water has been over-allocated without proper regard for ecological consequences and effects on users downstream. Irrigated river systems can be healthy too, but the health of the Darling can only be restored if irrigators make do with less.

Governments are under pressure to redress the over-allocation of water resources in the Darling and to meet their commitments to environmental flows which will not be achieved while irrigators defend their existing entitlements. The future of the Darling comes down to political will. Without action, the Darling will die.

Habitat Australia, February 1995

New NPA members as at 1 May 1995

Glenis & Kim Taylor	Gowrie
Ann Vahey	Red Hill
Lucille Atkins	Ainslie
Jan, Ian, Angus & Craig Macdonald	Curtin
Maude Salvage	Kambah
Douglas & Susan Nancarrow	Reid
Keith Ayotte & Jane Roots	Cook
James & Caroline Golden	Lyneham
Grace Milewska	Calwell

Native Title claims

The National Native Title Tribunal's role is to process claims by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples over Australian lands and waters. The tribunal is not a court and disputed claims that fail to be resolved by mediation will be referred to the Federal Court for litigation.

The NPA has receives notification of Native Title claims. Further information about these claims is available from the NPA office.

For sale

Meindel walking boots (Gortex) B11 size mens 8 1/2. Purchased in Austria 18 months ago for \$200. Near new. Offers. Please phone Beth Browning on 254 3056.

Unfolding Bushfold

'Unfolding Bushfold' was the name of one of the Heritage Week walks organised by the NPA and the Kosciusko Huts Association during April. The walk was designed to give people an introduction to sites of European occupation in this small valley behind Mt Tennent and to also allow walkers to experience some of the natural beauty that is Namadgi National Park. Well before Heritage Week began the walk was fully booked, as was the other NPA-KHA heritage walk which looked at selected forestry sites in the northern Brindabellas.

The Bushfold area is a recent addition to the park. In 1991 the northern part was added to Namadgi when Mt Tennent was incorporated into the park, but the southern end remained an isolated island of grazing until only last year, when the sheep were evicted.

Two standing huts remain today at Bushfold and the first is found as soon as you enter the valley on the fire trail leading up from the Honeysuckle Creek Road. Sections of Bushfold were part of the large Booroomba Station for many years from last century, but in the early 1950s, after John Hyles bought Booroomba, outlying portions like Bushfold were sold off. George Read (originally of Naas and the founder of the Tharwa Store) and his son Russ bought Bushfold in 1953. In 1954 George, with Russ's help, built the first hut that walkers see. Like the other stockmen's huts in Namadgi, this simple corrugated iron structure was used by the Reads for periodic shelter while doing stockwork on the property—they did not live there full time. Then in the mid 1960s Dr Hugh Pearson and his wife Peg acquired the block and the hut, and subsequently it was purchased by the McCormack (or Cormack) family.

The hut has a skillion roof and features much round timber taken from the bush (as do many of Namadgi's huts), and as built had a

rammed earth floor. Last year when I first saw the hut it was still locked and it was not possible to go inside, thus the concrete floor laid by the McCormacks in 1991 was not visible and did not figure in my *Namadgi sites* report being written at the time. Adjoining the enclosed part of the hut is an open section which dates from after the Reads' time. Last year the chimney flue was lying on the ground but our Heritage Week visit discovered that it has now disappeared. It was an unusual piece of bush architecture, consisting of a series of welded 20-litre drums! South from the hut are old sheep yards, while to the north-east is the vestigial remains of what was either a covered sheep pen or more likely a small hay shed.

At the northern end of Bushfold stands Russ's own hut. Built in 1957 it replaced an earlier hut built two years earlier but which was blown down in a windstorm. The chimney stones of the earlier hut remain a short distance down in front of the present hut. The present hut too has a skillion roof and bush timber in the frame, and one of the walls is weatherboard while the others are iron. The most distinctive feature is the enormous height of the building, for it has a very high roof indeed for this sort of building. Inside there are a couple of old fridges and a Bega wood stove in the fireplace. Around the hut there is a range of objects, one of the most interesting being an aged crosscut saw jammed in a tree trunk. Russ built the hut with help from mate Cav Lalor. Russ and his wife Muriel (both of whom, incidentally, now live in Ainslie) used the hut while doing periodic stockwork.

Both huts are fairly straightforward structures which do not really have very high aesthetic values. Yet they play a

part in telling the pastoral story of this part of Namadgi and, in company with the park's other stockmen's huts, are of value in helping park visitors to understand this significant story.

A short distance to the south-east of Russ's hut is the ruin of the single-stand shearing shed built by Russ in 1964. It consists of a range of forms of timber and is of quite some interest, not least for the way that it, in common with other ruins, is a trigger to the visitor's imagination. This site too reflects a key aspect of pastoral use of Bushfold.

Three earlier hut sites were visited during the walk. The first, consisting of scattered hearth stones, was on a block surveyed in 1884 for Duncan McKeahnie; at the time the hut was valued at £35, which was a fairly substantial amount for a hut then. Charles McKeahnie (the McKeahnies were the owners of Booroomba) later acquired these blocks and had a scrub lease across George's Creek, which in 1906 had a slab hut. While this site was visible in the 1970s, Russ, Muriel, Namadgi ranger Vivien Raffaele and I could not locate it amongst the regenerating ti-tree last year and no attempt was made to find it on the Heritage Week walk.

Not all early huts were frequently occupied, for some were built not so much to shelter a stockman but simply to satisfy land regulations which required the landholder to occupy the selected block.

The second hut site that was seen during the Heritage Week walk was one belonging to the McMahan family. Brothers Martin and Tom McMahan selected several blocks in northern Bushfold early this century and a slab hut was built on a block surveyed for Martin in 1902. Today, fallen corner posts, collapsed chimney stones, bottles and other pieces of timber mark the site. Evidence survives of where the slabs were attached to the corner posts. The survival of timber from the hut makes this site a particularly interesting one in the context of Namadgi hut ruins



Russel's shearing shed and yards at Bushfold Flat. Photo by Fiona MacDonald Brand

generally. A salt trough made from a hollowed log formerly lay nearby, according to Russ Read, but it has now entirely rotted away. NPA and KHA member Babette Scougall is researching aspects of the McMahon's family history and I look forward to the results of this important work.

The third hut site visited during the walk (which made a very pleasant lunch stop on what was a perfect autumn day) was the Dunns'. At the turn of the century, brothers Jack and Bob Dunn, with their sister Annie, owned Tennent

Homestead at the northern foot of Mt Tennent. Just beyond the northern end of Bushfold, at a spot which became known as Dunns Flat, they also had a small hut which they used while working on this part of their property, which was at some distance from their homestead. According to Roger Hobbs' recent conservation plan on Tennent Homestead, the hut was built some time after 1903 but before 1918; Dunns were resumed in 1920. It was slab and had a shingle roof, although there was some iron in the structure too.

Dunns' Hut either collapsed or was burnt. Today the site is marked by the usual funereal mound of chimney stones. Nearby there are two dams excavated by the brothers; whether they did the job by hand or with horse-scoops is not definitely known, though I suspect the latter, at least in the case of the lower dam which would have been pretty heavy work with pick and shovel. Laurie Tong (whose family had Tennent for some years up to the 1980s) has told me that Dunns actually used to take a horse and cart from the homestead up to the hut—they must have skilfully picked their route around the rough face of the mountain.

These ruin sites, subtle though they are, are significant for indicating the pattern of settlement, and also for the insight they give into earlier lifestyles. They are also very evocative of a sense of the past. One could be excused, if judging only by surviving huts, for thinking that our mountain hinterland was almost wholly unoccupied, but once you start to observe the numbers of these hut sites you soon see that there was a real community of people among the big hills that we now collectively call Namadgi.

The walk allowed time to savour some of the natural delights of the park—views toward the Booroomba Rocks area, the extensive forests that extend out from the Bushfold clearings, the rounded granite boulders and slabs, the migrating honeyeaters winging their way out before winter, and the perfect peace of the bush on a windless day. And then there was the utter delight of Blue Gum Creek which, despite the drought, still ran with crystal, cool mountain water. Its river stones and ribbon gums combined to make a really lovely spot.

Matthew Higgins

(Acknowledgment: the historical information above is from *Namadgi sites*, compiled in 1994 by the author with National Estate Grants Program funding and sponsorship from the Kosciusko Huts Association)

Draft statement of principles and action of Environment Subcommittee of the NPA of the ACT Inc

Second revised draft 12 December 1994

Introduction

The Environment Subcommittee of the ACT NPA believes that while reacting promptly where necessary to government initiatives, the association should maintain a proactive approach to nature conservation in the ACT and south-east region focusing on:

1. areas of high conservation significance that are not adequately protected in the reserve system
2. the adequacy of management of high conservation areas that are within the reserve system
3. national issues such as catchment protection, biodiversity, ecotourism, bushfire management, weed and feral animal control which affect the ACT but where our action is motivated as much by the need to support national conservation initiatives as to address ACT concerns
4. publication of high quality guides to fauna and flora and significant natural areas in the ACT and nearby region

1. Areas of high conservation significance that are not adequately protected in the reserve system

The committee believes the following areas require better protection within the sub-regional (ACT and nearby parts of NSW) reserve system:

- (i) native grasslands
- (ii) remnant lowland woodland
- (iii) remnant riverine environments
- (iv) remnant native vegetation in the Queanbeyan district

- (v) remnant artificial and natural vegetation corridors.

While numerous environmental studies have been carried out within the ACT, there appears to be no current unified guide to the location and tenure of areas of high conservation significance outside the reserve system. Without such a guide it is extremely difficult for the ACT Government and community groups to establish priorities for reservation and plan appropriate action. The principal reason for the urgency is because areas may be committed to urban development without adequate assessment of their nature conservation values and because long-term rural leases may be renewed for areas where reservation for nature conservation is warranted. This deficiency has been recognised by the Plants and Animals Reference Group in the *ACT State of the Environment Report 1994*. The group's conclusions and recommendations provide a broad action plan for nature conservation in the ACT in the short and medium terms.

Suggested action

- Lobby the ACT Government to establish as a priority and as recommended in the *ACT State of the Environment Report 1994*, a locational inventory of fauna and flora in the ACT including the tenure of those areas, drawing on existing information and focusing most urgently on areas outside the reserve system.
- Lobby the ACT Government to prepare, on the basis of the inventory, a program for reservation of significant areas currently outside the reserve system.

- Pending the above, the NPA ACT research officer to undertake a project, drawing on existing research and the knowledge of community groups, that identifies key areas needing protection.
- Drawing on that work, the NPA to establish which area(s) (no more than two to three recognising the limitations of the association's resources) require the most urgent action.
- The NPA to publicise, in cooperation with other community groups if appropriate, the significance of the identified areas and their need for reservation through means such as:
 - lobbying ACT politicians
 - organising walks to the areas
 - articles in the *Bulletin*
 - media publicity.

The Environment Subcommittee recognises that important unreserved natural areas in the region to the east of the ACT are under as much if not greater threat. It further recognises that the size and influence of conservation group(s) operating in that region are very limited. The Monaro region appears to be something of a conservation 'blind spot'—for example, the nearest NPA NSW branches are based at Milton and Bowral.

The Environment Subcommittee recognises that the NPA will only receive funding from the ACT Government for ACT initiatives. Nevertheless we believe the NPA should, within the limitations of those priorities and its resources, take an interest in and have an involvement with certain priority conservation issues in the immediate region in cooperation with the Conservation Council of Canberra and the South-East

Outings' program

June-October 1995



Outings guide

- Day walks** carry lunch, drinks and protective clothing.
Pack walks two or more days, carry all food and camping requirements. CONTACT LEADER BY WEDNESDAY.
Car camps facilities often limited or non-existent. vehicles taken to site can be used for camping. BOOK EARLY WITH LEADER.

Other activities include nature rambles, environmental and field guide studies and ski tours.

Walks gradings

Distance grading (per day)

- 1 - up to 10 km
- 2 - 10 km to 15 km
- 3 - 15 km to 20 km
- 4 - above 20 km

Terrain grading

- A - Road, firetrail, track
- B - Open forest
- C - Light scrub
- D - Patches of thick scrub, regrowth
- E - Rock scrambling
- F - Exploratory.

The walks program contains additional information. If necessary, contact the leader.

Third Wednesday of every month
Phone Phyl Goddard on 254 8279(h) or NPA office on 282 5... for details

10-12 June Long Weekend Pack Walk 2AB
Quilty's Mountain Ref: CMW Budawangs
Leader: Steve Forst Phone: 279 1326 (w) 251 6817 (h)
Contact leader by Wednesday for detail of two and a half day pack walk. A late lunch at Braidwood Pub on Monday. Easy-medium pack walk to a base camp on the Endrick River. Visit Styles Pass, the Bora Ground and Round Mountain. 340 km \$68 per car.

18 June Sunday Walk (with CBC) 1BE
Booroomba Rocks circuit Ref: Corin Dam 1:25000
Leader: Murray Dow Phone: 257 4371
Contact leader to book. Joint walk with Canberra Bushwalkers. Follow the rock climbers' tracks around Booroomba to the North, around the buttress, and scramble up the descent gully, finishing on the summit of ACT's Uluru. Interesting plants and great scenery. 70kms \$14.

24 June Saturday walk 2/A/B/C/D/F
Mt Coree and Devils Peak Ref: Cotter Dam 1:25000
Leader: Mathew Higgins Phone 247 7285
Contact leader for bookings and details (because numbers are limited). Crunch frost in the northern Brindabellas this winter. Climb Coree from around Blundells Flat, then descend to Coree Creek flats and head north to Devils Peak. Some very good views and very steep climbs, walking both on and off track. About 14 kilometres, needing an early start. 90kms \$18 per car.

25 June Sunday walk 1/C/E
Billy Billy Rocks area Ref: Corin Dam 1:25000
Leader: Mick Kelly Phone: 241 2330(h)
Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. From Square Rock car park, walk through open forest to Billy Billy Rocks, a spectacular pile of boulders overlooking Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. If time permits, the area towards the boulder at GR709686 will be explored. Total climb about 200m; distance 9kms. 60kms \$12 per car.

1 July Saturday walk 2/A/B
Lake George escarpment Ref: ACT 1:100000
Phil Bubb Phone: 248 6769(h) 275 8028(w)
Meet at car park off Northbourne Ave. at Southwell Park (about 100 m north of corner) at 9am. An exploration mainly on fire trails of the Crown land which is the western escarpment of Lake George. A chance to view from above an area many of us drive through often. 75kms \$15 per car.

8 July Saturday walk 2/A/B
Alpine Track Extension Ref: Williamsdale & Corin Dam 1:25000
Phone: 2487008(h)
Leader: Babette Scougall
Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. Walk the first day of the newly extended Alpine Track from the Namadgi Visitors Centre to Booroomba Rocks car park, mostly on track or marked paths. 65kms \$12 per car.

9 July Sunday outing 2/A/B/D/E
Southern Highlands Ref: Southern Highlands tourist map
Devonshire Tea Phone: 279 1326(w) 251 6817(h)
Leader: Steven Forst
Contact leader by Wednesday for starting time. Meet just north of the Dickson lights on Northbourne Avenue. A drive visiting scenic spots in the Southern Highlands around Bundanoon and Fitzroy Falls, interspersed with stops at some of the Devonshire tea houses in the area. The trip will go ahead whatever the weather conditions. 300kms \$60 per car.

16 July Sunday walk 2/A/B/D/E
Nursery Swamp Ref: Rendezvous Creek 1:25000
and Nursery Hill Phone: 241 2330(h)
Leader: Mick Kelly
Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8am. From Nursery Swamp car park, the track climbs to Nursery Creek and continues to the swamp proper. The ascent of Nursery Hill will be scrubby with areas of dense bush and no track. Total climb about 450m and distance 13kms. 80kms \$16 per car.

22 July Saturday walk 2/A
Mt Tennent Ref: Williamsdale 1:25000
Leader: Max Lawrence Phone: 288 1370(h) 272 2032(w)
Meet at 8.30am at Kambah Village shops. A return walk from the Namadgi Visitors Centre to the summit of Mt Tennent, using part of the new Alpine Walking Track extension. A climb of 750m to excellent views of southern Canberra and Namadgi. 40kms \$8 per car.

30 July Sunday walk 2/A/C
Orroral Valley circuit Ref: Corin Dam 1:25000
Leader: Mike Smith Phone: 286 2984(h) 248 3624(w)
Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30 am. A walk from the Orroral gate along the Cotter Hut Road until the saddle at the weather station. Climb to unnamed rocky peak 1339m for lunch and exploration. Continue on to Sawpit Creek and return along valley track via site of Rowley's Hut. Total 400m climb. 250kms \$50 per car.

5 August Saturday walk 4/A
Red Hill to Mt Taylor Ref: Gregory's Street Directory
Leader: Stephen Johnston Phone: 254 3738(h)
Contact the leader by Wednesday to reserve a place on the walk. There is a short car shuffle. An energetic but very scenic circuit along the ridgeline of Canberra's southern dress circle-Red Hill, Mts Davidson, Sheaffe, Stanley, Wanniasa and Farrer ridge to Mt Taylor.

12 August Saturday Ski tour 2/A
Four Mile Hut Ref: Mt Selwyn ski touring map
Steven Forst Phone: 279 1326(w) 251 6817(h)
Contact leader by Wednesday. A day trip to Four Mile Hut for lunch, either from Kiandra or Selwyn Quarry, depending on the snow and the views of the party. 300kms \$60 per car.

13 August Sunday walk 2/A/C/D
Mt Booth Ref: Michelago 1:25000
Leader: Max Lawrence Phone: 288 1370(h) 272 2032(w)
Meet at 8.30am at Kambah Village shops. A walk from the Gudgenby end of the Brandy Flat fire trail to Mt Booth and return. Mt Booth is a solid climb of 600–700m but rewards walkers with a splendid view over the southern part of Namadgi. 100kms \$20 per car.

20 August Sunday walk 3/A
Aboriginal Paintings,
Rendezvous Creek Ref: Rendezvous Creek 1:25000
Leader: Frank Clements Phone: 231 7005(h)
Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. From Boboyan Pines carpark, the walk is to the axe grinding grooves on Middle Creek and around the ridge to the paintings on Rendezvous Creek, returning across the paddocks. 100kms \$20 per car.

26 August Saturday walk 2/B/C/E
Blue Gum Hill (Mt Lincoln) Ref: Corin Dam 1:25000
Leader: Stephen Johnston Phone: 254 3738(h)
Phone the leader to reserve a place on the walk. A medium–standard off–track walk to the rounded, rocky bump you can see throughout Canberra, via the beautiful Jumbuk Flat. There are granite slabs on the mountain's northern ridge, and eucalypts and prostanthera that are believed to grow only in this area. Great views from the summit. 60kms \$12 per car.

2 September Saturday Walk 2/B/C/E
Hill 1409 Ref: Corin Dam 1:25000
Leader: Stephen Johnston Phone: 254 3738(h)
Phone the leader to reserve a place on the walk. A medium–standard off climb through alpine ash and over large granite tors to Hill 1409 with its large north easterly cliff-line, which can be seen from Canberra. 60kms \$12 per car.

3 September Sunday Ski Tour 2/A
Perisher Valley Ref: Kosciusko 1:50000
Leader: Mike Smith Phone: 286 2984(h) 248 3624(w)
Contact the leader by the preceding Wednesday for details. An easy to medium ski trip in the Perisher area visiting the Porcupine for views into the Thredbo valley. Then proceeding to Charlottes Pass for lunch or shortening the trip by returning via Betts Camp. The exact trip will depend on snow conditions and the weather. 400kms drive \$80 per car.

9–10 September weekend ski tour 3/A
Broken Dam Hut Ref: Mt Selwyn ski touring map
Steven Forst Phone: 279 1326(w) 251 6817(h)
Contact leader by Wednesday. An overnight ski trip to Broken Dam Hut from Kiandra or Selwyn Quarry, depending on the snow conditions. 300kms \$60 per car.

9–10 September weekend pack walk 1/D/E/F
Tianjara Creek Ref: Sassafras 1:25000
Leaders: Pat and Eric Pickering Phone: 2862128h
(A joint walk with the Family Bushwalkers.) Contact leaders a week in advance. A further exploration of Tianjara Creek following last years walk in this area. Hope to get a close-up view of the waterfall from its base and spend more time in the magnificent cliff line. 500kms \$100 per car.

10 September Sunday walk 1/A/C
Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve Ref: Tidbinbilla 1:25000
Leader: Lyle Mark Phone: 286 2801(h)
Meet at Kambah Village shops at 9.30am. An easy-paced 6 km walk, partly on tracks, near Mt Eliza. Lots of Xanthorrhoea Australis and two interesting granite formations. Very suitable for beginners and amblers. 60kms \$12 per car.

17 September Sunday tour
Queanbeyan Conservation Ref: Gregorys Street Directory
and Cultural Sites
To be led by: Monaro Conservation Society
Inquiries: Stephen Johnston Phone: 254 3738(h)
Meet at 8.30am beside the swimming pool in Moore Park, Antill Street for a half day tour of Queanbeyan's significant conservation and cultural sites. A great opportunity to gain a better understanding of things on the other side of the border and meet enthusiastic members of the Monaro Conservation Society. Finish the tour with lunch beside the Queanbeyan River.

23–24 September work party
Namadgi National Park
Leader: Len Haskew Phone: 281 4257(h)
Contact leader by Wednesday to express interest and find out more about the work planned. This is an opportunity to demonstrate how much members value Namadgi National Park by doing your bit to help maintain and improve it. Attend either day or both.

30 September, 1–2 October long weekend pack walk 1/A/B
Mt Talaterang Ref: CMW Budawang
Leader: Stephen Forst Phone: 279 1326(w) 251 6817(h)
Contact leader by Wednesday for details. After a long drive, an easy pack walk of 2.5 hours over flat terrain to a camp site at the top of Nyanga Falls (no sleepwalkers please!) A solid day walk to the top of Mt Talaterang through some scrub. 500kms \$100 per car.

30 September, 1–2 October long weekend pack walk 1/DE/F
Jillicambra Mountain and Myrtle Creek Ref: Belowra
1:25000

Leaders: Pat and Eric Pickering Phone: 286 2128(h)
(A joint walk with the Family Bushwalkers.) Contact leaders a week in advance. Drive to the junction of the Tuross River and Woila Creek. Follow the Tuross to Myrtle Creek and camp. Could be some wading necessary. Second nights camp will be on the upper reaches of Myrtle Creek. There will be a 500m climb to Jillicambra with its splendid rock formations and views. Return to the cars 850m below via a five kilometre–long spur. 200kms \$80 per car.

ADVANCE NOTICE November eight day pack walk

Ettrema Gorge Ref: Touga, Nerriga, Yalwal 1:25000
Leader: Stephen Johnston Phone: 254 3738(h)
Members interested in joining the Victorian National Parks Association eight day walk to this rugged sandstone wilderness should phone the leader for details. All off track with plenty of rock hopping, scrambling, climbing and scrub bashing, but the scenery and isolation is ample reward. 375kms \$75 per car.

Points to note

Please help keep our outings program alive by volunteering to lead outings. New leaders are welcome. The outings covenor is happy to suggest locations suitable for a walk if you do not have something in mind yourself. Feel free to send in suggestions for outings to the association's office as soon as you think of them, with a suggested date.

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 injury or damage suffered whilst engaged in any such outing.

The committee suggests a donation of TWENTY cents per kilometre DIVIDED BY THE NUMBER OF OCCUPANTS in the car, including the driver, (to the nearest dollar) be offered to the driver by each passenger accepting transport. Drive and walk distances quoted in the program are approximate distances for return journeys.

Region, the NSW NPA and local conservation groups.

Suggested action

- Environment subcommittee to meet representatives of the Monaro Conservation Society to discuss areas for possible future cooperation.
- Maintain regular contact with the Queanbeyan office of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.
- Guided walks or tours organised to areas of high conservation significance in the Monaro region which need protection.
- Monaro Conservation Society to be invited to contribute an article to the *Bulletin* on threatened areas in the Queanbeyan region.

2. The adequacy of management of high conservation areas that are within the reserve system

Establishment of a reserved area can be a thoroughly pyrrhic victory if the area is not managed adequately; it becomes a nature reserve or national park in name only. The Namadgi Subcommittee keeps abreast of management issues in the national park. The Environment Subcommittee believes the adequacy of management of the Canberra Nature Reserve and Murrumbidgee corridor is of equivalent significance.

The key to management of these two areas is the long-awaited management plans. It is imperative that we make thorough submissions on those plans when they finally become available and, in the meantime, continue to make the Parks and Conservation Service aware of our interest in their completion.

The primary reason often offered by government conservation agencies for appropriate management initiatives not being undertaken is the lack of resources. While recognising that the ACT

Government, like all governments, faces constantly growing demands on its relatively limited resources, the NPA has a fundamental responsibility to lobby the government in the months leading up to the ACT budget to ensure that adequate funds are provided to the Parks and Conservation Service.

The Environment Subcommittee believes that there is also considerable scope for closer cooperation with Parkcare groups to tap their collective knowledge of management of the nature reserves and to assist them in their work.

Suggested action

- NPA research officer to coordinate NPA submissions on the Canberra Nature Park and Murrumbidgee corridor management plans when they are released.
- Meetings to be sought with Environment Minister and Opposition Environment spokesperson in the pre-budget period to identify areas of the ACT Parks and Conservation Service operations requiring more funding.
- Parkcare activities to be publicised in the *Bulletin*, at least a diary of their activities, to enable NPA members to participate.

3. National issues such as bushfire management, weed and feral animal control which affect the ACT but where our action is motivated as much by the need to support national conservation initiatives as to address ACT concerns

In recognition of the limits to its resources, the NPA ACT must address its core concerns first and foremost. National issues should probably be considered for active support only if they relate to our priority concerns or to issues of pressing national importance for nature conservation such as bushfire

management, feral animal and noxious weed control, Aboriginal management of nature reserves, recreation use of national parks or major national battles such as the Franklin Dam, Fraser Island and World Heritage status for the wet tropics.

We recognise this is a difficult area to decide priorities and there will be disagreement about individual outcomes.

Suggested action

- Maintain active membership of the Australian National Parks Council.
- Maintain close contact with the VNPA and NSW NPA on issues of mutual concern.
- Support financially, if appropriate, the representation of the NPA at significant conferences, seminars or meetings when they relate to our priority concerns or to issues of pressing national importance for nature conservation.

4. Publication of high quality guides to fauna and flora and significant natural areas in the ACT and nearby region

The Environment Subcommittee believes the NPA should maintain its outstanding reputation for publication of high quality, popular conservation books. In doing so, the books must not only promote understanding of conservation in the region but also attract good sales.

Suggested action

- The Environment Subcommittee to develop proposals for consideration by the NPA general committee for publication of a guide to the distribution of fauna and flora, geology, past and present use and management of the Canberra Nature Park, focusing initially on Black Mountain, Bruce and O'Connor Ridges and Mounts Ainslie and Majura.

Listen to the trees

Speech to an anti-woodchipping public meeting

For many of us, when we see working people demonstrating to preserve their jobs as we did at Parliament House recently, our natural instinct is to join them. Many of us, including environmentalists of long standing, have made sacrifices to support ordinary Australians in the face of injustice and exploitation.

So what are we to think when we are accused of trying to deprive ordinary Australians of their jobs? How should we react when we are attacked with such vitriol and fury? None of us wants to see people lose their jobs. Along with many other groups, The Australia Institute has been active in trying to persuade the Federal Government to break the spell of economic rationalism and adopt sensible, compassionate policies that will tackle this country's appalling unemployment problem.

We appear to be caught in a moral dilemma. On the one hand, we are strongly committed to social justice and do not want to see anyone lose their job; on the other, we feel passionately committed to preserving the old-growth native forests of our land. It is a case of social justice *versus* conservation.

But when we start to look closely at the situation of the forests, our moral dilemma is much less severe than we have been led to believe. The employment consequences of reserving more forests are much less serious than the timber industry has been claiming. Let's take a closer look at the impact on employment in the forest and wood products industries of the latest proposal to reserve 509 coupes, although the actual outcome seems likely to be much less—perhaps 140 coupes saved.

The first point is that reservation of the 509 coupes would result in no immediate job losses in the timber industry. State forest management agencies will simply reschedule their

operations in 1995 so that different areas would be logged. Rescheduling is often carried out in response to bushfires or bad weather. The 509 coupes represent around 5–8 per cent of the remaining stands of timber available for woodchip operations. In the longer term this 5–8 per cent decline in the resource would result in job losses in the industry. However, this needs to be seen in the context of the rapid decline in employment in the industry over the last 20 years, from around 55 000 in the early 1970s to under 32 000 now.

It is repeatedly claimed by the industry that this loss of jobs has been due to loss of access to forests due to the campaigning of conservationists. The head of the NSW Forest Products Association said that 'almost every job lost has been because of closure of thousands of hectares of productive forests'. This is absolutely false; it is a statement aimed at directing the wrath of timber workers away from their employers and towards conservationists.

The decline in employment in the industry has been due to massive labour shedding. Big companies have been swallowing up small companies and new technologies in logging and the sawmills have left thousands of workers redundant. In fact, the output of the forest and wood products industry has been increasing, while employment has been falling. This is a very important fact that should be noted at every opportunity. The volume of output of the industry has been *increasing* over the years. So the decline in employment in the forest and timber industry over the last 20 years has overwhelmingly been due to the *commercial* decisions of timber companies rather than the *environmental* decisions of governments.

The fall in employment is going to continue with further restructuring in the industry. It is also

increasingly acknowledged that the original forest management plans drawn up over 20 years ago by the state forest agencies were seriously flawed. The assumption that the whole area of the woodchip concessions could be cut over a 40-year period has turned out to be way off the mark. Regrowth of forests after logging has been well below expectations. A rotation of 120–160 years would be closer to the mark to obtain a sustainable yield.

Thus while decisions such as those to reserve 509 coupes will affect employment in the longer term, the impact on jobs of industry restructuring and changes to forest management plans will be substantially greater. So we must ask ourselves about the alliance we saw on the hill of Parliament last week between the timber workers and the industry. It has been a great public relations victory for the industry to have the timber workers thrust to the forefront.

When we take a closer look at the likely impact of the decision to reserve 509 coupes on timber towns, claims that they are about to turn into ghost towns are shown to be wild exaggerations. Many timber towns now rely more on plantation softwood than on native forests. This includes the four main timber towns of NSW—Oberon, Tumut, Tumbarumba and Bombala.

Bombala, which provided a large proportion of the people who blockaded Parliament House, is more dependent on plantation timber than native hardwood. Plantation timber would, of course, be unaffected by any decision. Indeed, the town will soon experience a boom in employment in the wood products industry as a result of the decision by CSR to locate its big softwood sawmill there. The new mill will provide

alternative employment in the region as the Harris-Daishowa chipmill winds back with the depletion of the hardwood resource.

So what is desperately needed is an industry plan for the timber and wood products industry, one that will manage the restructuring process and promote segments of the industry that are sustainable and which are not going to cause environmental havoc. We can have jobs *and* preserve most of our remaining old-growth native forests. We can have these by a plan that:

- encourages the growth of plantations for softwood and hardwood
- stimulates value-adding activities in the wood processing industry
- increases utilisation of timber, thereby reducing waste.

All of this is entirely feasible economically. The longer the government delays the transitional strategy, the bigger the crunch is going to be in six to eight years time when nearly all of the old-growth will be gone, and the more pressure there will be to log high conservation areas. But because of the utter failure by government we are now in a situation where each year there is a political battle over the renewal of woodchip licenses, all hanging on the Commonwealth's discretion over export licences. Everybody loses, except big investors who will simply take their capital elsewhere when the forests are finally depleted beyond any economic value.

So our moral dilemma—the apparent conflict between social justice and conservation—is not as evident as it first appears. There *is* a way through the morass that will allow both the jobs and the trees to be preserved. Unfortunately, successive governments have been in the thrall of the timber industry which has woven the spell of economics.

There are good scientific and economic reasons to be concerned about the state of our natural environment. Environmentalists

have forced us to confront the question of whether our standards of living can be maintained in a world of finite resources, and to see the damage we are doing to our well-being by pollution of the elements.

But there is a deeper reason for being an environmentalist—something that goes to our very core as humans. The American environmental economist Herman Daly has recently pointed out that humans currently use 40 per cent of the earth's plant growth, mainly from land devoted to crops, grazing and forestry. Seventy years ago we used up only 10 per cent and, if current rates of conversion of land continue, in 35 years we will consume 80 per cent. This represents a transition from a world that was relatively empty of human activity to one that is full, indeed overfull.

Today almost the entire area of the earth's crust is managed by humans; very few areas remain that are wild and impenetrable. Wilderness must now be 'managed' in an attempt to prevent these last areas from being overrun by human activity. Expeditions now venture to Mount Everest to clean up the empty cans left by climbers. Park rangers in the wilderness of south-west Tasmania complain of the litter left by east European tourists.

We hail the great European explorers—Columbus, Captain Cook, Edmund Hillary, Neil Armstrong—but at the same time we cling to the bits of the world that have escaped our physical control or domination by knowledge. We keep alive the stories of the Loch Ness monster and the yeti. We are captivated by the lure of the dolphin, by the image of the untameable stallion, and by the wild woods of Tolkein. So there is a great conflict inside of us: on the one hand we are driven to explore the world, to know it, to turn it to our own selfish ends, on the other we honour and admire it for refusing to succumb. We know that as we conquer nature we are both increased and diminished. Each wilderness tamed, each

species extinguished, each forest cut down means a loss without and a grief within.

The roots of the battle over the forests go back a long way. In the middle of the last century, a great debate over the philosophy of forest management raged among European foresters. On one side were the economists who saw forest management in purely commercial terms. On the other side were a group of foresters known as the sylvan fundamentalists. Perhaps the foremost among the sylvan fundamentalists was a German forester named Professor Phil. Professor Phil's answer to the mechanical calculations of the economists was to proclaim: 'Listen to the trees'.

It seems in all of the bitterness of this debate over woodchipping, we have forgotten this profound truth. When we go to a forest we must be very quiet in order to hear the trees. But if we still our minds and allow ourselves to listen to the trees, the trees will tell us things of great wisdom, things deep in ourselves that we have forgotten.

They will tell us that in times past humans asked permission before taking from the forests.

They will tell us that because of our arrogance and our greed, we have blinded ourselves to our essential connectedness to the natural world.

They will tell us that the earth is being strangled, that there are natural rhythms that we ignore at our peril.

They will tell us that nature provides us not just with material goods but with spiritual nourishment.

So let us say to our political leaders that we do not want to sacrifice these things—our connectedness, our spirit, our future—that we want to win back some of nature's respect for us. So join with us and listen to the trees.

**Clive Hamilton,
The Australia Institute**

Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve

An extract from the policy statement prepared by Nicki Taus for the NPA

The Tidbinbilla Range is the most distinctively rugged section of Canberra's mountain backdrop, with the sharp peaks of Camelback and Mount Domain bordering the great bulk of Tidbinbilla Mountain.

During 1994 several developments indicated that the government had serious intentions of encouraging the growth of a nature-based tourism industry in the ACT. Following the release of the National Ecotourism Strategy in 1993 the ACT Government set up a working group, with representatives from ACT Tourism and the ACT Parks and Conservation Service, to compile an ecotourism strategy for the ACT. At the same time the ACT Parks and Conservation Service was working out a marketing strategy for promoting tourist use of natural areas, and the government commissioned an independent report on the ACT's potential for tourism and revenue generation within parks.

Areas of the ACT identified in these reports as having significant ecotourism potential include Namadgi National Park and Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. The ACT Parks and Conservation Service has indicated its preference for ecotourism developments to be in Tidbinbilla rather than Namadgi.

The prospect of increasing tourism developments in the Tidbinbilla area has highlighted the fact that Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve does not have a management plan, nor an agreed vision for its future. It is essential that a vision and a management plan be agreed upon before the pressure for any developments overwhelms and dictates planning for the reserve.

History of the reserve

The first land for a public reserve in the Tidbinbilla area was set aside in 1939. Around the same time an enclosure was established on nearby land, later incorporated into the reserve, for the reintroduction of koalas to the ACT. Little happened to the reserve until the early 1960s when additional land was purchased and

plans for a national wildlife centre were developed. In 1963 a Tidbinbilla Fauna Reserve Advisory Committee was established which included a number of prominent Canberra scientists. The concepts proposed for the Tidbinbilla reserve included:

- restricting the collection to the national fauna
- displaying fauna in free-range conditions with public access inside the animal enclosures
- providing a series of educational stepping stones from 'total environment controlled buildings', such as a nocturnal house, through pens and enclosures of varying size, to the truly wild animals.

Many of the major structures proposed in the development plan, such as the visitor centre, have been constructed. However, a common vision for the nature reserve has not been shared by all levels of the government and community. The question has been posed: to what extent is the reserve a national park, a nature reserve, a sanctuary, a zoo, a wildlife conservation centre, an education centre, a research centre or a tourist centre?

Current management of the reserve

Although all of the reserve is public land, none of the area is actually designated as nature reserve in the current Territory Plan. The central area is designated as special purpose reserve and the remainder as national park. Special purpose reserves are not given any particular protection under the ACT Nature Conservation Act.

Natural values of the reserve

Sedimentary rocks form the backbone of the Tidbinbilla Range, a sharp, jagged ridge which is in marked contrast to the rounded form of the granitic Gibraltar Range and valley floor.

The geological variety and the range of slopes and aspects within the reserve have given rise to a diverse vegetation which contains a number of species uncommon within the ACT. Sixteen vegetation

communities have been identified, ranging from high altitude snow gum forest, through wet sclerophyll forest with fern gullies, to dry sclerophyll forests with grass trees and cleared areas. Four of the communities (grassland, *Leptospermum* thickets, exotic plantation and native plantation) are the result of human activities, but add diversity of habitat and scenery to the valley floor.

As well as the wildlife introduced to the reserve, Tidbinbilla contains a diversity of indigenous fauna. The wet gullies in particular provide habitat for a large number of bird and animal species, including some of the ACT's less common species.

Approximately 170 bird species (excluding captive species) have been recorded in the reserve. The powerful owl, a nationally threatened species, is known to have territories within the tall forests. The artificial wetlands have increased the range of habitats available and provide good feeding and breeding areas for many waterbirds.

Thirty native mammal species have been recorded within the reserve. This figure excludes captive species, although it does include the koala. The thirty mammal species include 10 species of bats, six species of possums and gliders, and four species of kangaroos and wallabies. Rarer mammals recorded in the reserve include the wallaroo and a record of the tiger quoll in 1963.

Other fauna records from the reserve include three species of fish, nine species of frogs and 29 species of reptiles.

Sites of significance

A number of specific locations in the reserve have been listed as sites of significance. These include:

- Gibraltar Peak
- Mount Domain
- Wet Gully
- Billy Billy Rocks
- Hanging Rock Aboriginal Rock Shelter
- Bogong Aboriginal Rock Shelter.

Cultural values

Archaeologists report that Tidbinbilla was of special significance to the Wolgalu people. The reserve contains the greatest density of Aboriginal artefacts in the ACT outside Pialligo, and was said to be the last refuge of local Aboriginal people outside white settlements. It also contains the oldest human occupation site in the southern highlands and a range of rock shelters, open campsites, bogong moth sites and the remains of a painting. Tidbinbilla Mountain was an important site for initiation ceremonies.

The 150 years of European history in Tidbinbilla have been well documented and are the subject of two books. Several old homesteads and other historic sites are found within Tidbinbilla.

Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve provides a variety of recreational opportunities ranging from picnics, barbecues, scenic driving, nature study and photography to walking, rock climbing and mountain biking. Approximately 18 000 visitors take part in interpretation activities each year. The reserve is seen as having great potential for promoting the ACT as a tourist destination and for generating revenue.

NPA policy

The NPA has produced a policy statement on Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve which is to be presented to the ACT Government. The aims of the policy are to:

- maintain the biological diversity and rich ecological and scenic resources of the Tidbinbilla and Gibraltar ranges
- compensate for the loss of natural resources in the valley zone of Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve by providing and promoting other ecological objectives such as education, scientific study, captive breeding programs and low-impact recreation linked to nature appreciation.

The NPA believes these aims can be achieved through:

- transferring most of the Tidbinbilla and Gibraltar ranges

that are within the nature reserve to Namadgi National Park

- developing a management plan for the valley area which provides secure tenure and promotes appropriate facilities and activities.

Policy details

1. Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve consists of two highly differentiated zones:

- (i) the eastern foothills, slopes and peaks of the Tidbinbilla Range, and the western slopes of the Gibraltar Range up to Devils Gap, conserved in a largely natural state
- (ii) the valley floor consisting primarily of the cleared and semi-cleared land and the forested areas around the animal enclosure.

2. The eastern foothills, slopes and peaks of the Tidbinbilla Range and the western slopes of the Gibraltar Range up to Devils Gap should be included in Namadgi National Park because of:

- (i) the wet sclerophyll forest of high conservation value, containing *Eucalyptus fastigata* at the inland limit of its range, and a number of plant species uncommon in the ACT
- (ii) the faunal value of the wet sclerophyll forest
- (iii) the sites of significance
- (iv) the aesthetic value of the Tidbinbilla Range
- (v) the climatic similarity of the higher sections of the ranges to other parts of Namadgi.

3. The management of this area has been consistent with that of similar areas in Namadgi. Therefore, substantial changes to management would not be required nor would existing access be curtailed. While pine forests are regrettably close to the boundaries of the reserve, the only significant intrusions actually in the area proposed for national park are the Fishing Gap track and the Camelback Fire Trail. Appropriate management will be necessary to protect and maintain the high conservation values of this section, recognising that it is next to a highly modified area which gets thousands of visitors.

4. The remaining area, including the valley floor and north-eastern section of Gibraltar Range, should be designated the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve with the following primary objectives:

- (i) restoration of the degraded former grazing land with extensive planting of indigenous species and control of noxious weeds and rabbits
- (ii) native fauna education
- (iii) natural environment education
- (iv) native fauna research
- (v) native fauna captive breeding
- (vi) nature-based tourism and recreation.

5. The Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve management plan should recognise the need for:

- (i) an emphasis on environmental education, with a particular focus on the importance of Aboriginal heritage and sites
- (ii) environmentally friendly facilities and developments
- (iii) effective control of weeds and feral animals
- (iv) a clear policy for control of kangaroo numbers
- (v) maintenance or upgrading of roads, tracks and car parks.

6. The management plan should not permit:

- (i) camping areas.
- (ii) overnight accommodation facilities.
- (iii) convention facilities.

7. The following developments could be undertaken, with provisos:

- (i) picnic areas, but predominantly in the eastern part of the reserve which can better withstand the impact of large numbers of people, and only after maximum use is made of existing areas
- (ii) food outlet, but only on a modest scale similar to that in the Botanic Gardens, with an emphasis on food eaten on the premises rather than take-away
- (iii) provision of an entrance station to collect an entry fee, but only if the revenue is directed to management of the reserve.

Boboyan pine plantation—removal and rehabilitation

(A copy of this report is available from the NPA office at a cost of \$2.00)

The National Parks Association welcomed the ACT Government's decision to remove the Boboyan pine plantation, thus making possible the rehabilitation of the area to a condition appropriate to its location within Namadgi National Park. Officers of ACT Forests and the ACT Parks and Conservation Service have advised that harvesting the pines should begin in 1995. Nicki Taws, the NPA's research assistant, has prepared an excellent detailed report outlining considerations which are relevant to the rehabilitation project. The report highlights the wide range of issues involved, such as recognising the need for:

- agreement on an overall concept for the development of the area; this agreement should be reached *before* it is rehabilitated
- appropriate technical solutions for many aspects of the task
- long lead times for some components, such as preliminary studies
- positive community attitudes.

Nicki's report is available for anyone to read at the NPA office. A brief summary appears below.

Summary

The Boboyan pine plantation is a *Pinus radiata* plantation approximately 50 kilometres south of Canberra in the Namadgi National Park. The 380-hectare plantation was established by ACT Forests in 1966 before the national park was formed. The pine trees have grown poorly due to site conditions, lack of maintenance and damage from a bushfire in 1983.

Rehabilitation will involve site preparation, revegetation using local native species, and ongoing site maintenance. The logging operation will leave large amounts of pine debris, known as slash, and non-commercial pines on the site which will create a problem for the revegetation. A major part of the site preparation will involve dealing with the slash. Measures include manual or mechanical removal or burning the slash.

Adequate site preparation is essential to achieving successful rehabilitation. Revegetation will involve seeding or planting the prepared site with local native species. Broadcast seeding is the preferred option for large sites due to its markedly lower cost and more natural appearance than planting seedlings. Large amounts of seed will need to be collected from the native forest around the plantation.

Monitoring and maintenance of the site is required for a number of years after the rehabilitation. Monitoring will need to identify areas of failed regeneration, erosion, animal damage or weed invasion, and there must be resources available to treat these sorts of problems.

Agreements between the authorities responsible for removal and rehabilitation of the pines will need to cover:

- roadwork and logging operation standards
- harvesting plan requirements
- site preparation specifications
- removal of pine regeneration from the site
- revegetation specifications
- weed and animal control
- removal of pine wildlings from the surrounding native forest
- commitments to ongoing monitoring and maintenance
- financial arrangements.

Development of a concept for the area

The removal of the Boboyan pines will make available a substantial and accessible area of the park. Before rehabilitation of the area proceeds, its potential within the overall scheme of Namadgi National Park should be examined and a concept for the rehabilitation developed. Factors which bear on this evaluation include the following.

- On its western side the Boboyan pine area is bounded by the wilderness

area of the national park. The rehabilitated area should serve as a buffer zone to protect the wilderness area or at least be managed so as not to encourage activities contrary to the wilderness status.

- The pine plantation contains a network of tracks developed for forest management purposes. Noting their potential value for park management and public access on the one hand, but their intrusive effect on wilderness on the other, consideration needs to be given as to which of the tracks should be retained.
- The Boboyan pine plantation is clearly visible from some major viewpoints in the park such as Boboyan trig at the end of the Yerrabi Track. A clear concept of how the rehabilitated area will appear as part of the parkscape, both in the short term and long term, should be developed.
- The location of the plantation beside the Old Boboyan Road, with ready access to the wilderness area and its close proximity to the Yankee Hat rock shelter, adds to the potential of the rehabilitated area to act as a focal point for visitor use. Parking, rest and picnic areas could be developed at lower costs by making use of existing features. Such developments would need to be balanced against the requirements for wilderness protection and the need to keep visitor numbers to the Yankee Hat site within acceptable levels.

Roading

Upgrading the Old Boboyan Road and the plantation roads must be limited to that which is necessary to perform the removal and rehabilitation operations. After rehabilitation, roads which are not required for management purposes must be closed and revegetated.

Harvesting

Harvesting operations must be conducted with the needs of the rehabilitation in mind. Cutting units in the plantation need to be planned so that site preparation and revegetation

can follow progressively. The harvesting plan must also address the protection of sensitive areas. These areas include Bogong Creek, other watercourses and drainage lines, and patches of native vegetation within the pines. All machinery brought on site for harvesting or rehabilitation must be clean of soil and vegetation so that weed seeds are not introduced.

Both the roadworks and harvesting operations must adhere to the ACT Forests Logging Code of Instructions and the Draft Soil Conservation Principles and Guidelines. Stabilisation of the site, involving the prevention or control of erosion, is essential before revegetation is attempted.

Rehabilitation of the site

Site preparation

In normal operations in ACT pine plantations, logging is followed by site preparation for the next rotation and this is done by mulching the pine debris or slash. However, where the objective is to restore native vegetation to the site, mulching the slash is not appropriate.

The most practical method of removing the slash, killing the conifer seed and providing a suitable seed bed for native seed is by fire.

Fire intensity needs to be sufficient to destroy the pine seed and pine seedlings and provide the benefits to the revegetation of the 'ash-bed effect', including increased availability of nutrients and microbiological changes in the soil. Fire intensity will depend on the amount of slash, its moisture content at the time of burning and the weather conditions during the burn. Options for burning the slash include broadcast burning or windrow heaping then burning.

Different site preparation techniques will be needed in the various vegetation types that make up the plantation. Within the areas of mature pines a broadcast burn of the slash may be the most practical method of site preparation. The pine regrowth, although not able to be harvested, still needs to be removed and rehabilitated. This may involve cutting the trees and broadcast burning or windrowing then burning, depending on the amount of residue. The grassy areas on which pines have never established may be best left as grassland. Particularly

along Bogong Creek, where the harvesting and rehabilitation will inevitably have impacts on the creek, avoiding disturbance to the grassy areas along much of the swamp will help minimise these impacts.

Fertiliser

The application of fertiliser during revegetation is an option for increasing the rate of plant growth. Soils in the area are naturally deficient in nutrients from an agricultural viewpoint; however, the native vegetation is adapted to growing in poor soils. Application of fertiliser will not increase germination rates, although it can increase seedling growth rates in the short term. It will also increase growth rates of weed species, and run-off from a fertilised site has implications for water quality in Bogong Creek. Soil tests are needed to determine whether fertiliser applications are appropriate or necessary.

Weed control

Weed control can be the single most important factor in determining the success of native revegetation on a site. Weed control is most effectively carried out during site preparation and the different methods of control include:

- herbicides
- manual or mechanical removal
- fire.

Herbicides can be an effective means of controlling weeds but their impact on Bogong Creek must be considered. One of the most widely used herbicides in the ACT is glyphosate, marketed as 'Roundup', which affects only those plants which have been sprayed. Any glyphosate which reaches the soil binds tightly to the soil particles. It is not washed from the treatment site and is broken down rapidly by micro-organisms into harmless compounds.

Weeds can be removed by manual or mechanical means which can be very time-consuming and machine or labour-intensive. Effective removal of many weed species depends on removing the root system of the plant so that it does not resprout. Mechanical methods can remove dense stands of weeds but need to be carried out so that the plant roots are also removed. Manual methods are efficient only where weed infestation is low, or where weeds are to be removed selectively from within native vegetation.

The use of fire can be effective in killing small pine trees, but it may not kill weeds such as briar rose and blackberry which resprout from the base. If the rose and blackberry can be killed by herbicides before burning, the use of fire in site preparation would remove the pine and has the added advantage of producing an excellent seed bed for native plant growth.

The stand of the introduced box willow *Salix fragilis* growing in Bogong Creek is considered a weed in the context of the national park. It would be appropriate at the time of rehabilitation to remove the willows by initial poisoning, then cutting and removing the stems, leaving the roots in the ground to cause least disturbance to the creek.

Vegetation establishment

The most appropriate species to establish on the Boboyan pines site are those which occur naturally in the area, and the best source of propagative material is the native vegetation growing within or immediately around the plantation.

After logging and site preparation, revegetation can be carried out by spreading seed directly on the site, or by growing seed and cuttings as tube stock for planting out. Revegetation by seeding also has a more natural appearance than plantings and encourages better seedling growth and survival resulting from a more natural root development. Planting seedlings may be the best option when establishing plants in areas where seed bed preparation is difficult, for example, creek banks or swampy areas.

Maintenance

The revegetation site will require maintenance for a number of years. This will include monitoring to assess the success of native plant establishment, the growth of weed (pine wildlings plus other weeds), the extent of animal damage and erosion.

To be successful, the rehabilitation scheme will need to be managed and financed over a number of years. An appropriate management structure will be required to achieve this and should be established at an early stage.

Prepared by Nicki Taws
for NPA

Are you fuelling the fire of extinction?

Regional firewood consumption

A proportion of firewood being sold in the Canberra region is cut from remnant woodlands in central and western New South Wales. Conservation bodies have been extremely concerned at the reduction of these woodlands to feed the fires of Canberra and Sydney. These woodlands are the homes of many species of animals and birds and provide nesting places for a number of rare or threatened species.

In their wisdom, generations of farmers have left many of these fragile woodlands untouched, as these areas are usually on infertile and highly erodible slopes and hilltops. The rural recession has seen many of these areas demolished to generate emergency income for struggling farmers and their families.

While the debate on the future of wood fires in Canberra goes on and on, firewood cut from these woodlands keeps on streaming into the ACT. Estimates of the amount of fuelwood burned in Canberra and Queanbeyan vary from 100 000 to over 150 000 tonnes per year. To put this in some perspective, if all of this wood was put into a fleet of your average tip trucks, you would have a line of trucks stretching from Canberra to Bateman's Bay and a fair part of the way back again.

Whether you agree or disagree with the existence of wood fires in Canberra, everyone must agree that while we have wood-fires, the burning of wood from plantations (whether hardwood or softwood) offers an ecologically more palatable alternative.

The plantation option

So where can the residents of Canberra and Queanbeyan obtain ecologically sustainably produced firewood?

Contrary to popular opinion, seasoned pine firewood will not block chimneys any faster than hardwood. Any unseasoned or wet wood can cause deposits in the chimney, whether pine or hardwood. Although many people in the region burn pine firewood, the majority of Canberrans appear to insist on burning hardwood, namely eucalypt.

At the moment, the only sizeable sources of hardwood are the firewood merchants. All consumers of hardwood should inquire of their merchant as to where the wood is coming from. If you have your doubts about the firewood you are ordering, you should exercise your right to take your business elsewhere.

For some time, ACT Forests has been researching the idea of growing multi-purpose plantations of eucalypt and acacia for firewood production.

Since 1985, ACT Forests has been conducting research into the species selection and acclimatisation of Australian native trees, both eucalypt and acacia, in the ACT.

In addition to a number of smaller species screening trials, ACT Forests has a number of field-scale fuelwood trials. The most notable of these are an earlier one at Lyneham Ridge (around 25 Ha) and one planted in 1991 in northern Gungahlin (around 250 Ha) using the best available information from local species trials and the CSIRO.

Research to date shows that if ACT Forests was to plant about 5000 ha of hardwood plantation, we would be able to satisfy around 50 per cent of the ACT's current firewood consumption by the time the plantation was 10 years old.

The problem with the majority of hardwood plantations is that they look like straight rows of trees for a very long time. Given the fairly large area of eucalypts which we would need to plant to satisfy a useful proportion of our fuelwood requirements, this could tie up a large amount of land in a

monotonous fashion for little gain. Is there a better way?

Community groups plant millions of trees in open areas, on farms, along roads and as advanced plantings around new suburbs in Australia each year. A large proportion of these plantings have involved someone putting seedlings into the ground and from then on the small trees are left to fend for themselves.

Australia is littered with many examples of places where plantings have failed due to incorrect choice or lack of tending after planting. But with just a little more planning and a little more care and management of the trees after planting, most of these well-intentioned projects could have been successful. The trick is to generate funds which will help pay for the continuing management.

Commercially and aesthetically managed eucalypt landscapes

ACT Forests is looking into a better way of producing fuelwood. Think of a eucalypt plantation where the trees are not planted in lines but are planted randomly or in clumps, where the species and seed provenances have been matched to the target microclimate, where the tree species and colours have been chosen and grouped so as to blend in with and enhance the landscape rather than confront it, where some areas even have an understorey and where one or two trees here and there are extracted in a sensitive fashion from time to time.

ACT Forests is looking at just such a plantation system. It has been named the CAMELS (Commercially and Aesthetically Managed Landscape Systems) project.

CAMELS are a special type of plantation. They start with a forest ecologist and a landscape designer getting together to match groups of trees with the geology and microclimate

within the site to produce a layout which is aesthetically pleasing.

From time to time, selected trees are harvested with minimum disturbance to the other trees on the site. Timber from the extracted trees is sold as firewood. The income from sales pays for tending, protection and continuing management of the plantation.

The use of an area in this way can continue ad infinitum. There never has to be a clearfall, just a gradual thinning out. If necessary, along the way individual trees can be replanted or species can be changed as technology and knowledge about growth and use changes.

Landscaping and careful removing of trees during harvesting will make

CAMELS amenable to a wide range of recreational activities.

Over several decades, a few trees per hectare can be left untouched from one rotation to the next and left to grow into mature trees with high, spreading canopies and nooks and crannies for wildlife. Through such long-term planning, once planted a CAMEL will always have tree cover. This means that as a diverse landscape and a backdrop, CAMELS will become increasingly interesting and visually diverse with time.

ACT Forests has tested over 100 species of eucalypt and several acacias and carried out hardwood and fuelwood field trials in areas throughout the ACT. Growth rates achieved in the latest

fuelwood trial at Gunghalin have been staggering, with some trees exceeding three metres in height over two and a half years.

Where the ACT goes to from here depends on the availability of suitable land—perhaps as a replacement for amenity planting on the outskirts of Canberra or as a joint venture with farmers in the region—and the degree to which the community supports the idea.

In the meantime, watch what you burn. The ash in the bottom of your fireplace may once have been the only thing protecting a family of parrots or reptiles from extinction.

Alan Davey

Wild Agendas Conference

The Wild Agendas Conference will be a conference with a difference. Held on 1 and 2 July at Sydney University, it will bring people in the community together with wilderness experts, bushwalkers, wilderness campaigners and members of conservation organisations.

The conference will have two main streams. Stream one will look at the identification, protection and management of wilderness areas. Stream two will investigate the relationship between wilderness and people. Both streams will focus on Aboriginal perspectives on wilderness.

If you would like more information on Wild Agendas, please contact:

Community Campaigns
179 Sydney Rd,
Fairlight NSW 2094,
phone/fax (02) 948 7862,
email: comsols@peg.apc.org.

Book review

Trees of Victoria and adjoining areas

By Leon Costermans, 5th ed, fully revised 1994, Costermans Publishing. 164pp 15x11cm. Available for \$11.95, only at the Botanical Bookshop.

This is truly a 'pocket book', very compact with a soft, semi-stiff glossy cover, and it will probably stand up to being carried around on bush trips. The contents cover the trees of south-eastern Australia, including all Victoria, south-eastern South Australia and southern NSW.

The book starts with coloured pictures of some types of country, some common eucalypt barks, *Melaleuca* and *Banksia* inflorescences, and fruits of *Casuarina* and *Leptospermum*. The broad natural vegetation regions are briefly defined, followed by descriptions of the relevant species. Each species has from a half to a full page, with clear diagrams of their diagnostic features plus a small but adequate distribution map. Further photographs

in black-and-white accompany some species.

Scientific names are given without authors, and common names are also quoted. The latter are probably Victorian usage, as I note some which are different in NSW, such as *Elaeocarpus reticulatus*, which is 'Blue Oliveberry' in this book, but is 'Blueberry Ash' in NSW, and *Livistona australis* is 'Cabbage Fan-palm' as against 'Cabbage Tree' in NSW. There are probably others, but as common names do vary from district to district, this is not a fault.

This book was first printed in 1966 and has been through several editions and reprints to get to the present edition. The diagrams were also used in Costermans' larger format book, *Native trees and shrubs of south-eastern Australia* (1981)

ACT people should find this a useful book for the local trees.

George Chippendale

Goats, gold, horseshoes and heritage

A packwalk to old gold-mining areas in the Shoalhaven Region of Morton National Park 22-25 April 1995

Participants: Eric and Pat Pickering (leaders), Stephen Johnston, David Hall, Hazel Rath, Kathy Saw, Anne Sulinski.

The decision to visit old gold-mining sites came about after a discussion with Anne Sulinski who had expressed an interest in the gold mining history of the Shoalhaven. Anne is a young architect who has been engaged in a conservation architecture project for the NSW Parks and Wildlife Service.

The plan was to visit Touga Creek, Little and Great Horseshoe Bends on the Shoalhaven, Touga West Trig and Tims Gully. Touga Creek is a major drainage to the Shoalhaven for six significant westerly flowing creeks, including Big Oak Creek. According to my information, there had been a water-race in Touga Creek which commenced near Big Oak Creek. It was built for gold sluicing in the 1890s. The race continued for some eight kilometres to Little Horseshoe Bend on the Shoalhaven where there had been a sizeable sluicing operation.

We started our walk 33 kilometres from Nerriga on the Tolwong Road (Touga 1:25 000, grid reference 388295). We walked in a westerly direction through scrub for just over a kilometre before descending through a gap in the cliff-line down an open spur into Big Oak Creek. Big Oak was dry as a bone and had been for some time. We followed it for two kilometres to its junction with Touga Creek. There was no sign of a water-race.

We rock-hopped along Touga Creek. The smell of feral goats was sometimes overwhelming. There was a regular tinkling of rocks and stones falling from the steep 200 metre high banks of the creek as herds of goats went about their daily routines.

At 4.40pm we were at the junction of Tims Gully with Touga Creek



David Hall and Anne Sulinski inspecting the winch at Great Horseshoe Bend. Photo by Eric Pickering

about two kilometres from the Shoalhaven. We camped in a delightful spot amongst trees on the banks of Tims Gully. Tims Gully was dry but 50 metres away in Touga Creek was a small pool of clean water.

On the second day we continued towards the Shoalhaven. Touga Creek had dropped 200 metres since we first entered it but was now flat and much wider. Three hundred metres from the junction we saw our first evidence of the water-race. Ten metres up on the southern bank on the slopes of Flume Hill a bench had been cut to support the water-race. On the opposite bank some 30 metres across the creek is an outcrop of rock where the water-race continued around the side of Specimen Hill. A wooden-trestle would have supported the water-race as it crossed the creek. We climbed to the water-race on the northern bank and followed it to Little Horseshoe Bend on the Shoalhaven. There it swings away from the creek to an area behind the foreshore.

Little Horseshoe Bend (LHB) is a delightful place. It has a huge sandy beach with clumps of casuarinas

here and there. The beach runs down to a large deep pool backed by the sheer rocky side of Monitor Mountain spur. The river winds around this spur to form the horseshoe shape. There is an outcrop of smooth pink granite near the water's edge. We set up camp and then explored the water-race area behind the beach.

There is much evidence of gold mining activity scattered over about two hectares of dry open terrain with a canopy of eucalyptus trees. There are several large excavations which contain large river pebbles derived from the alluvial material being sluiced. Some of these pebbles are neatly stacked to form retaining walls which would have protected the sluicing area. Several smaller diggings were no doubt the source of alluvial materials for testing. Anne found the remains of a fireplace of rock held together with a mortar of mud. Nearby were the remains of a shovel blade, an iron bolt and a small piece of crockery.

After lunch most of the party set off towards Great Horseshoe Bend (GHB). Hazel decided to have a quiet time contemplating nature in this beautiful place. We would happily have joined her but the opportunity to go to GHB was compelling! We walked and waded a further three kilometres north to our objective which was also the scene of gold mining activity in the 1890s and later. Here the Shoalhaven River curls its way for some two kilometres around Assay Buttress on the south bank and Backbender Buttress on the north bank to form an almost perfect horseshoe shape. The narrow part of the horseshoe on the lower slopes of Assay Buttress is about three hundred metres across.

Chapter 3 of the Budawang Committee's *Fitzroy Falls and Beyond* refers to an attempt made in the 1890s to drain the horseshoe by

building a by-pass tunnel below water-level. To provide power for the drilling equipment a large steam engine was carried by bullock dray from Tolwong to Touga West Trig above GHB. It was lowered over 500 metres down to the Horseshoe by flying-fox. The tunnel was completed but collapsed before it could be put to use. Surprisingly this significant engineering venture is not mentioned in either of the two main historical works on the Shoalhaven—WA Bayley's *Shoalhaven* and RG Antill's *Settlement in the South*.

We could see no evidence of this tunnel. However half way round the horseshoe we found diggings into the western bank of the river and some mining artefacts—braided

steel ropes, pieces of perforated metal and a very powerful highly geared windlass, still in good condition. I wondered whether this could have been part of the flying-fox arrangement for the boiler of the 1890s; it did not look 100 years old. Perhaps it had something to do with hydraulic sluicing at GHB with hoses and water pumps in the 1940s and 1950s. Anne reported later that there were other mining sites and artefacts in the area.

On return to our beautiful camp-site Hazel reported that she had a marvellous time but not quite alone. She had never seen and heard so many feral goats in her life! She showed us a pair of steel bogey wheels she had found near the camp. They were rusted and partly

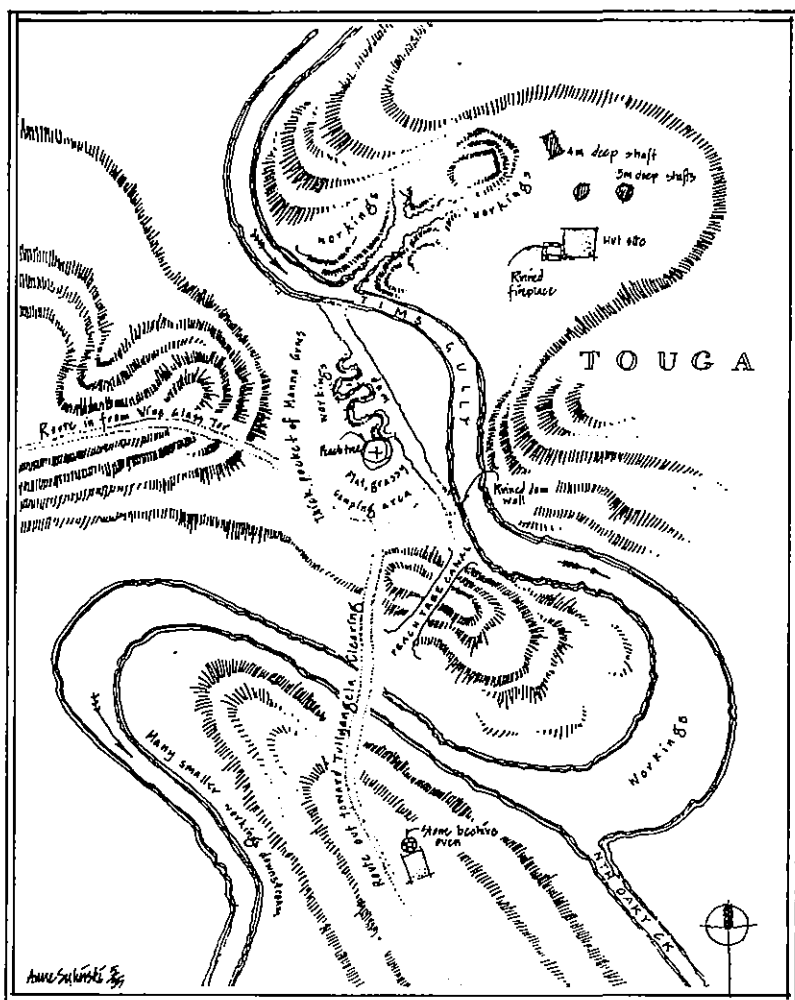
covered in caked mud and river gravels indicating they had been buried for some time. They were about the size and gauge of the wheels on mining handcarts.

The following morning we set off early for the 500 metre climb to Wine Glass Tor. The first section of the climb was steep but provided beautiful aerial views of LHB, our camp-site and Touga Creek, where we had walked the previous day. We were soon on the ridge 400 metres above the Shoalhaven River. We followed the ridge at times quite narrow for two kilometres to Wineglass Tor. The walking was delightful—glorious sunny weather, a canopy of iron bark trees, no scrub and wonderful views of the Shoalhaven. It was just a gentle undulating climb of a hundred metres to the Tor. We stopped on the cliff-top to admire the views of GHB, take photographs and inspect the wineglass formation—a weathered remnant of the former cliff-line.

We left our packs here and did a side trip to Touga West Trig a further two and a half kilometres along this beautiful open ridge. We found no evidence of the flying fox which lowered the steam engine to GHB a hundred years ago—no wire, no pegs driven into rock, no trees with wire, no artefacts.

Returning to our packs, we took another delightful open ridge to Tims Gully, the site of other gold digging activities. We arrived at 3.30pm and set about basic camping chores. Anne set off to investigate mining artefacts. David, Stephen, and I set off towards Sparkes Falls to find water in this dry creek bed. Within a hundred metres of our camp-site we found a pool of clear water. By 4pm we had tents set up, water available, afternoon tea served, and the area investigated!

This section of Tims Gully also has a horseshoe bend which the gold miners drained. They did this by cutting a channel through a three-metre high narrow spur of rock and diverting the water flow. The total length of the by-pass drain known as Peach Tree Canal is 35 metres. It drains 200 metres of the horseshoe. There is another channel a hundred metres long, five metres



Tims Gully Gold Workings. Drawn by Anne Sulinski

wide and two metres deep with a peach tree growing in it. The channel was used to store water for the sluicing operation. At its southern end are the remains of a dam wall. According to RG Antill there were rumours of gold in Tims Gully in July 1872.

Anne led a walk of the area based on her findings of the previous half an hour! She had found the site of major gold-digging activity, many holes, some five metres deep and two to three metres in diameter. Here alluvial material had been removed for sluicing. She also found a fireplace of stones cemented together like the one at LHB. Nearby was a rectangle of level ground where a hut or tent may have been. It had been a stimulating day of walking and exploring! Stephen made the interesting comment that unlike areas such as Ballarat, in this remote area, inaccessible to most people, we were seeing the country as it was when the miners were there.

The next day we started our brief walk-out at 8.30am. We climbed a gentle open spur for a kilometre. We paused to inspect an oven of stone with a flattened area opposite

where a small building of wood or canvas had existed. It had a fine view over Tims Gully. David commented that the partially collapsed oven did not look big enough for the bakery operation associated with the mine as suggested in *Fitzroy Falls and Beyond*.

We walked along the cliff-line above South Oaky Creek, then through beautiful mature eucalyptus forest and some thick scrub. By 11.30am we were at Tullyangela where Stephen's car had been placed in a car shuffle before the walk.

We had enjoyed beautiful weather, seen magnificent wilderness and wonderful views. We saw how feral goats in large numbers are damaging this fragile place—and no doubt changing both its plant and animal ecology in the process. We also gained an appreciation of the methods and workings of the gold seekers of yester-year. We could admire their tenacity in getting themselves and their supplies into such remote areas to seek their fortunes. For our party the walk was a most appropriate an enjoyable activity for Heritage Week.

Eric Pickering

Bill Adams

Bill Adams, member of the NPA for many years, died at home in Canberra early Saturday morning 5 November 1994 at age 85 years.

Bill's interest in bushwalking commenced in 1936 when he walked with the Melbourne Walking Club (MWC). Right from the start Bill fitted in admirably and contributed to the club's active, vigorous and social atmosphere. As a regular bushwalker he was also a keen conservationist, before that attitude became fashionable.

Post-war, Bill came to Canberra, working on the finances of the Australian War Memorial. He stayed with the Memorial until retirement. Back in those (petrol-rationing) days a fairly small group, Bill and Bert Bennett among them, walked and cycled just about every mountain and valley in the ACT and nearby NSW and took in several more-or-less exploratory ventures that even today, with better access, would be considered pretty ambitious.

In more recent times, Bill and with wife Joan became members of the National Parks Association of the ACT. Bill was active as an outings leader and car camps leader. A particular interest was archaeology. Joan regrettably died. Some years later Bill married Phyllis, a Melbourne resident whom he met on an overseas tour. They attended NPA meetings and social occasions.

At NPA annual general meetings for many years, Bill took the chair and conducted the elections for NPA positions.

Bill was a valuable organisation member and a true friend to many in the Association and the MWC.

**Charlie Hill,
with acknowledgments to
Bert Bennett (MWC)**

Ecopolitics IX

Ecopolitics IX will be held on 1, 2 and 3 September at the Northern Territory University in Darwin. This year's Ecopolitics conference will focus on Perspectives on Indigenous People's Management of Environmental Resources.

The purpose of the conference is to provide information and resources, debate and discussion to highlight indigenous perspectives and options that will lead to a change in attitudes, if not a change in government policy.

If you would like more information or a registration form for the conference, please contact Ros Sultan at PO Box 42921, Casuarina NT 0811, phone (089) 205 180, fax (089) 452 633.

Essay competition

St John's Canberra is celebrating its 150th anniversary with an essay competition. The topic of the competition is 'Spiritual values and the environment' and the first prize is \$1000. Anyone under 25 can submit an essay. Essays must be under 2000 words long and typed. The competition closes on 24 June 1995.

Send your entries to The Rector, St John's Canberra, GPO Box 219, Canberra ACT 2601. For enquiries, phone (06) 248 8399.

A single woman in an Aussie hat treks in Nepal

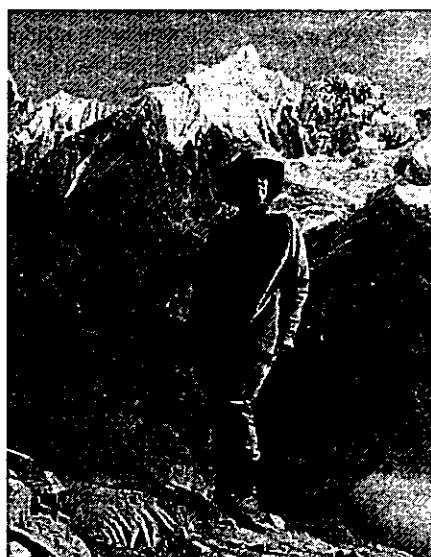
Nepal had been my dream destination for many years. However, I shivered with fear as well as anticipation when I got off the plane which landed at Kathmandu in November. But, as I had gazed at the snow-capped Himalayan peaks visible in the distance, I became breathless with joy and renewed courage. I had planned trekking on my own with a hired porter to the Annapurna Region. In my previous travels I always went with a group of friends; this was my first solo trip. It also was a trip to a completely different culture with quite different customs. **Besides the sheer adventure of such an undertaking it is my hope that, by describing my individual experiences of trekking to Annapurna Circuit and the Annapurna Sanctuary, I could encourage and empower other single women adventurers to engage in similar life expanding, but also safe and inexpensive travels which do not require rock climbing skills.**

Within four days of my arrival in Kathmandu, I was already trekking. I combined two treks: one to Annapurna Circuit—a 21 day excursion that circles the Annapurna Himal—and a second one to Annapurna Sanctuary—a 10 day journey up the Modhi Khola valley. I hired a porter and started my adventure. Over the next five weeks I met hundreds of trekkers from many different countries. Everyone was very friendly and supportive. I never felt lonely or unsafe.

The Annapurna Region—bordered on the north by the Tibetan frontier, on the south by the Pokhara Valley, on the east by the Marsyangdi River, and on the west by the Kali Gandaki River—is a land of extremes. It is the most geographically and culturally diverse protected area in the world, stretching over 2600 square kilometres. The region includes sub-tropical lowlands, oak, rhododendron and bamboo forests, high alpine meadows and windswept desert plateaus. It has Kali Gandaki, the world's deepest river gorge lying some 6900 metres below the world's highest and most scenic mountains. Annapurna I is the eighth highest mountain in the world, reaching a height of 8091 metres. More than 40 000 people of distinct ethnic and cultural backgrounds call

this area home, sharing it with many varieties of domestic and wild animals.

My first trek to Annapurna Circuit led me from one village to another. In the beginning, the foothills and valleys were magnificently green with many colourful flowers. Children and women from the nearby villages were selling juicy mandarins along the trek. Down below, I could hear the rumbling of the Marsyangdi River. The temperature was about 25–30°C. My spirit was also very high, affected by the beauty of the surrounding environment.



Basia Meder at Annapurna base camp

As I ascended the steep trail I passed through terraced rice fields, noticing gradual changes in several ecological zones. The village houses were mostly traditional stone houses with slate roofs. At the highest altitude they were often clustered high on the ridges, just below the permanent snowline. Further down, Buddhist temples, shrines, flags and prayer walls marked some of the entrances and exits to the villages or the local holy places.

Walking every day, often by myself, I enjoyed breathtaking and splendid views of Himalaya peaks—Himaichuli, Ngadi Chuli, Manaslu, Lamjung Himal, Pisang, Annapurnas, Machhapuchhare, Dhaulagiri, Nilgiri. My trekking challenge was to cross the snow-covered Thorung La Pass at an altitude of 5415 metres, where the temperature dropped

to -20°C. This particular part of my trip I did in the company of many other trekkers. Indeed, for reasons of safety, I would advise others not to attempt crossing this part of the Annapurna Circuit alone.

After spending 12 days in this fabulous but cold and snow-covered country, I descended towards the Kali Gandaki River valley. By now, I was longing to see green forests, flowers and to eat fresh fruit. Also, I longed to give my body and soul a rest in one of many hot springs on the way down.

The next part of my adventure was the trip to the Annapurna Sanctuary, the spiritual heart of the Himalaya. Once again I ascended the trail. Through the prodigious rhododendron, bamboo and sub-tropical forests, at almost 3000 metres, much to my surprise I noticed a group of monkeys playing nearby.

Every day I had the companionship of roaring rivers and a large number of brilliant waterfalls. But my most powerful experience occurred when I arrived in Annapurna Sanctuary at 4130 metres. After my arrival, clouds and the mist gradually lifted unveiling the magic of the place. The high alpine valley surrounded by the Annapurna peaks was superb and unreal. That night, with the full moon and the starlit sky, I did not sleep much. In the morning, the orange sunrise was breathtaking. Despite the cold weather (-15°C) I was happy and joyful. I felt lucky and privileged to be there.

This unique experience has charged my spirit with an inner peace that will endure for the rest of my life. With this feeling, I left the Sanctuary and gradually descended the track to Pokhara, the end of my trip.

Finishing my wonderful solitary adventure, I became nostalgic leaving behind my feeling of freedom and love for Himalayas. This trekking turned out to be one of happiest and most beautiful experience in my life. It was a fantastic and marvellous adventure. I learnt about my strengths and my weaknesses. I acquired a lot of courage and I loved it, especially because I had achieved it on my own!

I am convinced that most women can achieve as much given a bit of strong will and preparation.

Basia Meder

Calendar

JUNE

- Thursday 1 Committee meeting 7.30pm, for location contact Eleanor Stodart, 281 5004(h)
Thursday 8 Namadgi Subcommittee 7.30pm, for location contact Steven Forst, 279 1326(w), 251 6817(h)
Thursday 22 Environment Subcommittee 7.45pm, for location contact Stephen Johnston, 254 3738(h)

JULY

- Thursday 6 Committee meeting 7.30pm, for location contact Eleanor Stodart, 281 5004(h)
Thursday 13 Namadgi Subcommittee 7.30pm, for location contact Steven Forst, 279 1326(w), 251 6817(h)
Thursday 27 Environment Subcommittee 7.45pm, for location contact Stephen Johnston, 254 3738(h)

AUGUST

- Thursday 3 Committee meeting 7.30pm, for location contact Eleanor Stodart, 281 5004(h)
Thursday 10 Namadgi Subcommittee 7.30pm, for location contact Steven Forst, 279 1326(w), 251 6817(h)
Thursday 24 Environment Subcommittee 7.45pm, for location contact Stephen Johnston, 254 3738(h)

SEPTEMBER

- Thursday 7 Committee meeting 7.30pm, for location contact Eleanor Stodart, 281 5004(h)
Thursday 14 Namadgi Subcommittee 7.30pm, for location contact Steven Forst, 279 1326(w), 251 6817(h)
Thursday 28 Environment Subcommittee 7.45pm, for location contact Stephen Johnston, 254 3738(h)

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SURFACE
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General meetings

Held at 8pm, Room 1, Griffin Centre, Bunda Street, Civic

Thursday 15 June: Green Politics

Simon Grose, who is the science and technology editor at the *Canberra Times* and that paper's environmental features writer, will give an informed view of this highly relevant topic.

Thursday 20 July: Vegetation dynamics in lowland grasslands in the ACT

Sarah Sharp, grasslands project officer with the Parks & Conservation Service, has been undertaking an extensive research project on grassland protection and regeneration and conservation. She will speak to us about how grasslands respond to different treatments.

Thursday 17 August: Travels in China

After the AGM Doreen Wilson will give us an illustrated account of her experiences in China.

Thursday 21 September: Glaciation in the Snowy Mountains

Bob Galloway will speak on this area of unique interest—the only part of mainland Australia which shows evidence of being glaciated some ten thousand years ago.