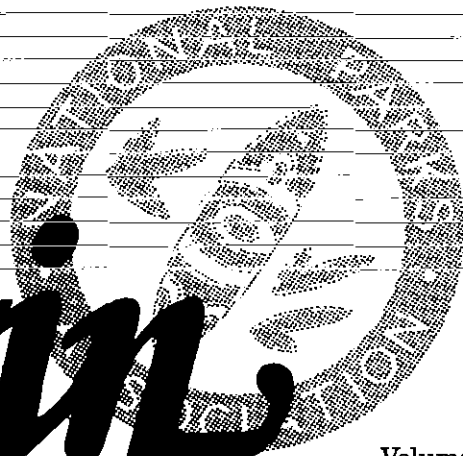


# NPA Bulletin



Volume 32 number 4  
December 1995

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION (ACT) INCORPORATED



## Namadgi views

## Caring for the Lower Molonglo

## CONTENTS

User pays and benefits	5
<i>Len Haskew</i>	
Glaciation in the Snowy Mountains	8
<i>Bob Galloway</i>	
Namadgi views	10
<i>Reg Alder</i>	
Caring for the Lower Molonglo	14
<i>Clive Hurlstone</i>	
Development and tourism	18
A botanical experience in Yunnan	19
<i>Doreen Wilson</i>	

### Please note

The office manager will be away from 1-23 February. The office will be attended intermittently during that period.

**NPA Christmas Party**  
**Sunday 10 December**  
**3.00pm Orroral Valley Picnic Ground**

**Cover photo by Reg Alder**  
**Sunday briar cutters at Orroral**

## National Parks Association (ACT) Incorporated

Inaugurated 1960

### Aims and objectives 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 landuse to achieve conservation.

### Office-bearers and committee

<i>President</i>	Eleanor Stodart 281 5004(h)
<i>Vice-president</i>	Clive Hurlstone 288 7592(h); 246 5516(w)
<i>Immediate past president</i>	Beverley Hammond 288 6577(h)
<i>Secretary</i>	Max Lawrence 288 1370(h); 272 2032(w)
<i>Treasurer</i>	Mike Smith 286 2984(h); 248 3624(w)
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Phil Bubb	248 6769(h); 275 8028(w)
Steven Forst	251 6817(h); 279 1326(w)
David Large	291 4830(h)
Colin McAlister	288 4171(h)

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 Household members \$25 Single members \$20  
 Corporate members \$15 *Bulletin* only \$15  
 Concession \$10

For new subscriptions joining between:  
 1 January and 31 March—half specified rate  
 1 April and 30 June—annual subscription  
**Membership inquiries welcome**  
 Please phone the NPA office.

**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.*

### Deadline for March issue: 1 February 1996.

*NPA Bulletin* is produced by Green Words for the National Parks Association (ACT) Incorporated. The *NPA Bulletin* was produced with the assistance of funds made available by the ACT Government under the 1994-95 ACT Heritage Grants Program.

Printed on recycled paper by Koomarri Printers, Belconnen, ACT.

ISSN 0727-8837

# President's report 1994-95

This has been a challenging year for NPA but fortunately it has not been beyond the resources of members. The first problem was the lack of an elected president. As the second acting president, however, I can testify to the effective networking and commitment of our members. Many do not have the time to serve on committees, or need a break from doing so, but whenever necessary, people have come forward to make sure that we have continued to work to our objectives. Clive Hurlstone acted as president until March when he took on the position of vice-president, and I, the elected vice-president, stepped into the president's position.

We have had other changes during the year. Charmian Crimmins, who ruled our little roost at Chifley, resigned as office manager to take up full-time work, but we were fortunate to engage another excellent manager, Maureen Blackmore, and the changeover went very smoothly.

And now the year has ended with a change of research officer. We thank Nicki Taws for her valuable work over the past 18 months and

we welcome Ray Polglaze to the position. He brings experience working for the conservation of Perth wetlands and much enthusiasm, and we look forward to working with him.

The general committee and the subcommittees on Namadgi and the environment have met monthly throughout the year. Len Haskew as secretary has recorded minutes, arranged speakers for meetings and provided support at other times. Treasurer Mike Smith has managed the accounts with assurance. Stephen Johnston has convened the Environment Subcommittee and Steven Forst the Namadgi Subcommittee, both giving time well beyond that demanded by the meetings themselves. Phil Bubb has organised the outings program so that once again members can go walking, canoeing, or skiing with the Association nearly every weekend if they wish.

The more tangible achievements of the year have been:

- the report on the rehabilitation of the Boboyan pine plantation, prepared in anticipation of harvesting of the pines, to put

forward the need for adequate resources to be allocated to the area's rehabilitation

- a statement on the future development of Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve
- a submission to the Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Economic Development and Tourism emphasising the need for conservation to be paramount in national parks.

All these reports were prepared by Nicki Taws in consultation with the Environment Subcommittee.

Members also made progress constructing boardwalks in Namadgi under the direction of park rangers. The boardwalks cover swampy ground on the track between Orroral camping ground and the space tracking station site.

Less tangible achievements include meeting with ACT politicians Gary Humphries, Lucy Horodny, Michael Moore and Paul Osborne, to put our view that the present management of Namadgi has been sensitive to the conservation of the area, and that developments in national parks must be consistent with the conservation of natural and cultural heritage. These visits were prompted by the government's proposal to let the management of Namadgi to interests outside the ACT as well as by the push for ecotourism developments which may compromise wilderness qualities. Previously committee members had accompanied Bill Wood on a walk along the Yerrabi Track. Committee members also met with Linda Webb, Director of ACT Parks and Conservation, and we plan to continue liaison with the department. NPA was also represented at two workshops run by Parks and Conservation, one on a strategy for weed control and the other on the management of Tidbinbilla, and we expect to

*continued overleaf*

## A word from the president

In the ACTEW Environment Management Plan launched last September it was refreshing to read that 'ACTEW recognises that we need to move towards more sustainable development and use of resources' rather than the more frequent glib promise to maintain sustainable development, for it shows a recognition that a sustainable use of resources is something that will not come simply and easily.

It is fairly obvious that water supplies need long-term planning and are of value to the community. The management structure of a national park also requires long-term planning and is of value to the community, for different managements will almost inevitably have different effects in the longer term. Conservation in national parks requires a very long-term view. NPA's main project at the moment is to look at the kind of management that will best conserve the natural and cultural features of Namadgi National Park so that we can take a proactive rather than reactive role in assessing any changes that may be proposed.

*Eleanor Stodart*

## President's report

*continued from previous page*

comment on draft plans which will result from the workshops.

The *Bulletin* continued to be of a high standard and was again produced by Green Words. The *Bulletin* published articles on natural and cultural heritage in the ACT as well as a broad range of other items of environmental interest.

Funding for all this activity has come from several government grants as well as subscriptions, donations and voluntary effort. We received a grant from the federal government's Grants to Voluntary Conservation Organisations towards our administration, enabling the office to continue its function as a very important base from which voluntary committee members can achieve something towards conserving the environment. We also received grants from the ACT Heritage and Environment Grants Programs. They went towards the production of the *Bulletin* and the publication of articles on heritage, and the preparation of reports on the environment such as the Boboyan

pine report. We continue to benefit from Alastair Morrison's generous grant towards the cost of printing the *Bird Book* as funds come in from the sale of the book.

Monthly general meetings have been held in the Griffin Centre where members have had the opportunity to listen to a variety of environment-related talks, from the importance of the ACT's remnant native grasslands to trips by members.

NPA (ACT) has maintained links with the ACT Conservation Consultative Committee, the Conservation Council of the South-East Region and Canberra, the Landcare subcommittee, the Heritage Week committee, and the Australian National Parks Council. We have also had public displays on Canberra Day, World Environment Day and in public libraries.

I would like to conclude by thanking all members who have ensured the Association continued to function, from the regular providing of supper at general meetings to the floating of ideas on how we can best work towards our aims. The many individual contributions make the Association what it is.

**Eleanor Stodart**

## Bush-walking food

I am conducting a study of the food customs and traditions of bush-walkers. The aim is to document the types of food and meals that walkers prepare and take with them, and the changes that may have taken place over the years.

With this issue you will find a 'Bush-walking Food' survey sheet. Please take the time to complete and return it to me. It will help the project greatly to get as many replies as possible. I am interested in your experiences, whether you are an occasional day walker or very experienced expeditioner.

Feel free to photocopy the survey and distribute it amongst your bush-walking friends, bush-walking and mountaineering club members, scout and guide groups and school classes. Alternatively, you can easily obtain further copies of the survey by writing to me at the address below.

I am the current secretary of the Australian Folklore Association, a life member of The Wilderness Society and a bush-walker myself. I have been researching and writing on aspects of Australian folklife over many years.

A report on the results of this study will be submitted to this magazine once the project is completed.

Thank you for your help! Please return completed survey sheets (or make further inquiries) to: Mark Moravec, Folklore Project, 104 Howitt St, Ballarat, Victoria 3350.

**Mark Moravec**

## A 'solution' to the Coree conundrum

Twenty years ago I worked for the Australian Outward Bound School (based at Tharwa). The school ran 26-day courses for students aged 17 to 30. Part of this course was based at Mt Coree and one of the activities was a solo experience. During solo, students would spend three days and nights alone at a designated spot in the bush.

Students were given plastic sheeting to construct a shelter, survival food and water. They were asked not to move more than 50 feet from their designated spot. Some students spent considerable time constructing their shelters and did not remove the rocks when they left, leaving behind the arrangements described by Reg Alder in the last *NPA Bulletin*. The cairns along the ridge top may have been placed so that the instructor doing the daily check of the students would be able to locate them all.

Up to 50 students would be put out on solo at the same time—along the north-east and south-west ridges of Coree and along the border ridge line south to Piccadilly Circus. Over a season (November–March), 300–400 students might be placed on solo in the Coree area, so I would not be surprised if more of these stone arrangements are found.

**Trish Macdonald, Ranger, Namadgi National Park**

## Correction

In the September issue of the *Bulletin*, the heading on page 4 should have been 'Fiona MacDonald Brand OAM'. We regret the error.

# User pays and benefits

On 15 October Mike Smith led an NPA outing to Bungonia Gorge in the Bungonia State Recreation Area.

Bungonia SRA is the largest of its kind in NSW and caters for a variety of activities such as caving, climbing, canyoneering and canoeing as well as walking. I would imagine that the area also attracts others interested in more passive activities such as bird-watching, studying flowers and photography.

For as long as I've been visiting the area it has been a 'user pays' facility. Visitors can freely enter through a boom gate but can only leave through another boom gate that has to be fed with an appropriate token.

When we arrived for Mike's walk, the fruits of 50 000 or so visits per year were to be plainly seen. Well-defined and sympathetically sited car parks have been constructed near the popular lookouts, making things much easier for both motorists and pedestrians. The lookouts too have been upgraded and now look like giant diving towers suspended above the gorges. They give uninterrupted views of the chasms and creeks and the Shoalhaven River (and, unfortunately, the ugly limestone quarry at South Marulan). The larger car park also has ample toilet facilities. Walking tracks have been extensively upgraded with prominent signs at the beginning of tracks and junctions. The 'tourist' routes to the more popular viewing areas have been well paved and although this looks a little incongruous I suppose it helps eliminate erosion and also keeps viewers on the track. These improvements, coupled with the already existing comfortable

camping facilities, certainly justify charging entrance (or, in this particular case, exit) fees.

Mike chose to combine a couple of the area's tracks to make a very interesting (and a little challenging) circular walk through the spectacular Bungonia Gorge. The walk commenced by following the Mount Ayre track or white walk



*NPA members walking through Bungonia Gorge.*

*Photo by Len Haskew.*

passing slightly to the east of Mount Ayre. This part of the walk afforded fine views of the Shoalhaven River and at one point it was possible to see one of the old chimneys that mark the former Tolwong Mine site. Mike left this track to lead us down to the junction of Bungonia Creek and the Shoalhaven River and from

there the party walked, rock-hopped and scrambled up the creek through the gorge. This section featured grassy camping areas beside Bungonia Creek. They are obviously very popular as firewood is non-existent. Anyone considering camping here would be well advised to bring their fuel stove. A little

further up the creek we passed huge boulders that have fallen into the creek as a result of the quarry's activities and, indeed, there are several ominous sign boards that tell of the warning signals that are given on weekdays when blasting is in progress. The gorge itself is literally 'littered' with boulders (I don't know if they occur naturally or whether they are the fruits of previous quarryings) which certainly slow progress. The last time I was there was a decade or so ago and at the time I thought they approximated suburban houses in size—this time, though, they resembled small blocks of home units! After passing over and through (but seldom around) the boulders, the floor of the gorge is reasonably flat and there is time to look around and marvel at the high walls and wonder how the rock climbers cope with them. Mike chose to leave the gorge when the party

reached Efflux Creek and this reasonably steep climb led us back to the Lookdown car park.

All in all it was a most enjoyable walk enhanced somewhat by seeing our park-use fees being put to such worthwhile use.

**Len Haskew**

# Oral history



Matthew Higgins has recently completed two oral history projects which will be of interest to many members. *Remembering Tidbinbilla* is the title of the report on the 1995 Tidbinbilla Oral History Project. The report consists of summaries of interviews with families who lived in the Tidbinbilla area before the nature reserve was established and it looks at a range of themes in the history of the district. Also interviewed was the first manager of the nature reserve. The report is illustrated with 60 photographs taken by interviewees. Copies of the report can be obtained from the Tidbinbilla Pioneers Association (\$19 plus postage) by contacting Claire Lewis at 1 Dakin Place, Hackett ACT 2602. Hopefully copies will also be available in Canberra libraries in due course. The original tapes are held by the ACT Heritage Section at Tuggeranong. The project was funded by the ACT government's Heritage Grants Program.

The second report is *Bulls Head and the Arboreta*. This is the outcome of a series of oral history interviews looking at two major themes in the forestry history of the Brindabellas: the story of the Bulls Head logging and bushfire prevention settlement and the history of the trial plots of conifers and other exotics planted on the range and elsewhere from the 1920s to the 1960s. The report consists of full transcripts of the interviews and was supported by the National Estate Grants Program. From January 1996 it will be available from the National Trust (ACT) office in Light Street, Griffith ACT, phone 239 5222.

*A wintry view of loggers' quarters at Bulls Head, 1950s. Photo from Murray Colless collection.*

## Raptors in the ACT

Jerry Olsen was guest speaker at the October general meeting. Jerry's association with birds of prey began about 25 years ago. He is presently a member of the Applied Ecology Research group at the University of Canberra and he is also well known for his work on the rehabilitation of orphaned or injured raptors.

Jerry began his presentation by pointing out the large number of raptor species that live and nest in or near suburban Canberra. Each species was shown to the meeting on slides and some of the points that can confuse identification were

pointed out. Jerry also mentioned that our own *Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT* was an excellent publication for the purposes of identification.

Part of Jerry's research involves studying nesting sites and nesting habits and he told stories of falcons that tried time and time again to nest on the ledges of office blocks only to have the eggs washed away in rainstorms and of others which don't bother to build their own nests but use abandoned nests. These birds, Jerry says, are quite particular in that they won't use

nests that are some years old but prefer sites that are relatively 'warm'. Jerry also acts as a consultant regarding the siting of tracks in urban bushland—raptors tend to abandon their nests if there is too much human activity nearby.

Jerry's enthusiasm was certainly transferred to his audience—many of us will be out and about with binoculars and *Field Guide* trying to become more familiar with these fascinating birds.

**Len Haskew**

## A visit to Queanbeyan conservation sites

About 20 members of the NPA and the Monaro Conservation Society visited two important conservation sites on the outskirts of Queanbeyan on Sunday 17 September.

The tour was led by Tom Baker, former secretary of the Conservation Society, who was recently elected to the Queanbeyan City Council.

The first walk was from Wickerslack Lane through leasehold and Commonwealth land to the Queanbeyan River gorge, downstream from the wall of the Googong Dam. While there has been some infestation of willows and noxious weeds along the river banks, this section of the river still has quite a wild appearance, in stark contrast to the burgeoning suburban development nearby of one of the fastest growing cities in NSW. A number of significant native plant species grow on the rocky banks, including *Hakea microcarpa*, *Melaleuca parvistaminea* and

*Leptospermum obovatum*, and the river provides habitat for native animals including platypus. An interesting feature was the dense regrowth of *Acacia mearnsii* that has developed since bushfires swept through the area in 1985.

The second walk was to the Gale precinct further downstream. This area has been the subject of a controversial housing development plan. The issue was resolved by the Queanbeyan City Council recently with about 35 per cent to be set aside for housing and the rest for a reserve. The area has unfortunately suffered from years of uncontrolled use by trail bikes, four-wheel drives, firewood collectors and the like. But it still retains some valuable bushland, a spectacular limestone outcrop, caves, and the remains of two lime kilns which operated during the 1920s. However it is rapidly deteriorating through lack of protective fencing. Sensitive,

intensive management will be required to ensure the future integrity of the proposed reserve, which has the potential to become an important natural asset for Queanbeyan and the district.

After lunch a number of people visited a revegetation project on the Queanbeyan River (which has provided work for long-term unemployed young people), the old railway bridge, and the cemetery where the graves of the pioneering McKeahnie family were of particular interest.

Stephen Johnston



NPA and Monaro Conservation Society members visit sites near Queanbeyan. Photo by Reg Alder.

# Glaciation in the Snowy Mountains

*(The following is the text of Bob Galloway's address to the October general meeting.)*

Most people know there was a time when great ice sheets, similar to those in Antarctica today, existed in the northern hemisphere. Modern glaciers in the mountains of New Zealand, the Andes of South America and elsewhere were then much larger, and there were also glaciers in lower mountain ranges that are now ice-free. Actually, the growth and decline of glaciers and ice sheets was only one result of a stupendous series of climatic changes which affected the entire planet just yesterday, in geological terms. Such effects included lowering of the sea level by 100 metres or more and changes in rainfall, evaporation and vegetation over vast areas.

In the Snowy Mountains, the climatic changes can be seen from the clear traces of former glaciers. More extensive evidence exists in Tasmania.

Put simply, glaciers can form wherever snowfall exceeds melting. As one climbs a mountain or moves from warmer to colder latitudes, the ratio of snowfall to melting increases until eventually snow patches survive from one winter to the next and glaciers can begin to develop. The line (really a zone) where snowfall equals melting is called the 'equilibrium line', or sometimes the

'permanent snowline'. At present, the equilibrium line is in the atmosphere more than a kilometre above the summits of the Snowy Mountains, but around 20 000 years ago, in response to worldwide climatic changes, it was low enough to just intersect the highest part of the range and cause the development of small glaciers.

The Snowy Mountains form a rolling plateau that falls steeply on the west and more gently on the east. The highest summits (the 'Main Range') are on the western edge of this plateau, and these used to act like a snow fence to catch snow coming from the west. The snow piled up on the lee of this ridge and that is where the glaciers formed. Elsewhere on the mountains snowfall was insufficient or summers were just too warm for permanent snowfields and glaciers to develop.

When glaciers form in mountains they tend to be located in hollows and valley-heads. Initially, the cirques are just small depressions in which permanent snow patches accumulate. The patches thicken and turn into ice which gradually creeps down the slope and eventually carves armchair-shaped hollows, known as 'cirques'—or 'cwms' or 'corries' if you are Welsh or Scottish. If there is sufficient ice, moving sufficiently rapidly, and if the rocks are suitable, glaciers can carve out rock basins. Some of the debris produced by the erosion is dropped at the lower margins of the ice to form arcuate ridges known as moraines, but much is carried away by melt-water streams issuing from the ice.

In the Snowy Mountains, 13 cirques have been recognised. Most of them are weakly developed, but Blue Lake cirque is a true rock basin, eroded in granite where two ice masses converged. In places, the moraines have acted as dams retaining the shallow Albina,

Cootapatamba and Club Lakes and Hedley Tarn. Most of the moraines form double arcs indicating two separate stages in the glacial story, but the degree of post-glacial weathering and erosion of the two arcs is very similar, so they must have been closely spaced in time. Associated with some of the cirques are ice-scratched rocks.

The glaciers last existed around 20 000 years ago, and by 15 000 years ago the ice had disappeared. We know these approximate ages, partly by radio-carbon dating of organic material that accumulated in one of the cirques after the ice disappeared, and partly by analogy with glacial histories elsewhere. We cannot know when the glaciers first started to form in the Snowy Mountains but there is no definite evidence there for earlier glacial episodes during the last couple of million years. This is in strong contrast to more heavily glaciated parts of the world, including Tasmania, where there is abundant evidence for several earlier glacial episodes, sometimes larger than the most recent one. Evidence for more extensive previous glaciation in the Snowies put forward by earlier researchers has not stood up to critical examination. It remains possible that future work may uncover such evidence, although finding clues gets steadily harder as the vegetation recovers from the grazing era and obscures evidence such as rocks ('erratics') possibly transported by moving ice.

When the glaciers existed, average annual temperatures were between 5 and 10 degrees Celsius lower than now and colder conditions affected not only the mountains but also much of the continent, with drastic effects on vegetation and landform processes. In the mountains, vegetation was very scanty and bare ground was subject to severe freezing. It is even possible that the highest areas, where not covered by

## Tenders invited

NPA has updated its office computer and is now calling for tenders from people interested in the previous computer and printer.

286 IBM-compatible PC  
40 megabyte drive  
4 megabyte memory  
dot matrix printer—Epson LQ-550

Tenders in writing will be accepted until 31 January 1996.



ice, experienced 'permafrost'—permanently frozen ground such as exists in the Arctic today. Under such cold conditions, rocks split and the debris crept down slopes, smoothing their profile but forming little steps in detail. Very minor versions of these phenomena still occur on bare areas in the mountains.

The lower temperatures resulted in a much lower treeline. We do not know how low it was in this area, but possibly it was as low as the site of Canberra—about 1200 meters below its present level.

Many lakes in dry countries like Australia have no outlet and their level rises and falls with changes in the ratio of precipitation to evaporation. Lake George is an example, and when the climate was much colder it was much bigger and deeper and overflowed to the west at Geary's Gap, even though the rainfall was probably less than now.

Winds were probably stronger and could blow sand up out of the river beds—one example can still be found on Mt Pleasant overlooking the Military College.

As the climate ameliorated after the glacial time, the treeline gradually rose and warmth-loving plants reinvaded the mountains. We can trace this invasion from pollen in the mud at the bottom of Blue Lake and Club Lake. By around 7000 years ago the climate was at least as warm as it is today and the ice had all gone.

The glacial traces in the Snowy Mountains, small though they are, provide valuable clues to the dramatic changes that affected the entire world over the last couple of million years. The present landscape and vegetation are, in geological terms, both recent and transient. This raises problems for a conservation ethic that seeks to preserve the natural landscape we see today.

**Bob Galloway**

## The bush-walker detectives

A party of 10 Sydney bush-walkers set off down Meryla Pass on what was intended to be an easy walk to Lake Yarrunga. With the camp-site part of the way down the track, the walk continued without packs.

At about 11am the packs were left off the fire trail at a track junction. Later, after lunch on the return journey, four teenagers accompanied by two dogs were encountered. One had a machete and a comment was made that they had come down through the bush. The matter of dogs being prohibited in national parks and other general matters were discussed, including the time they were to be picked up by their parents the next day.

Returning to the junction, the walkers went in search of their packs to find four of the ten were missing, clearly stolen. The party split into small groups to search the area for the packs and for signs of other people while two raced back to the top of the pass to check the cars. A freshly disturbed embankment some 500 metres down the lake track was investigated and, by following this indication of entry, three of the four lost packs were found. The lightest one was missing; in one of the three a cigarette lighter was found wrapped in the cover of the missing pack.

It seemed obvious that the four teenagers were possibly the culprits, and a plan to apprehend them was made.

Knowing that they would come back before 11am in time to meet their parents, the walkers replaced the stolen packs and took up strategic positions with a camera cocked at the ready to take photos. The dogs sensed that the walkers were hiding behind the trees but, before their positions were given away, a shout to stop set the teenagers running. One dropped the light pack on the way. A call that others were up the track caused all to stop, since they were out-

numbered and had nowhere to run. An inspection of their gear found an identical cigarette lighter.

The parents duly arrived to collect their wayward offspring. The difference in responses on being told what had occurred was marked. One wonders how the parents could have accepted their explanations as to how they acquired four packs full of gear and food.

At 3pm all of the party crowded into the Bowral police station to tie up the three available police and everybody else for two hours.

It would appear that the dogs, presumably sensing food, drew attention to the cache of packs. As the culprits would have had to carry two packs each to their cars, perhaps it was their intention to rifle the packs and exchange their equipment with that which might have been better quality and then just discard the rest.

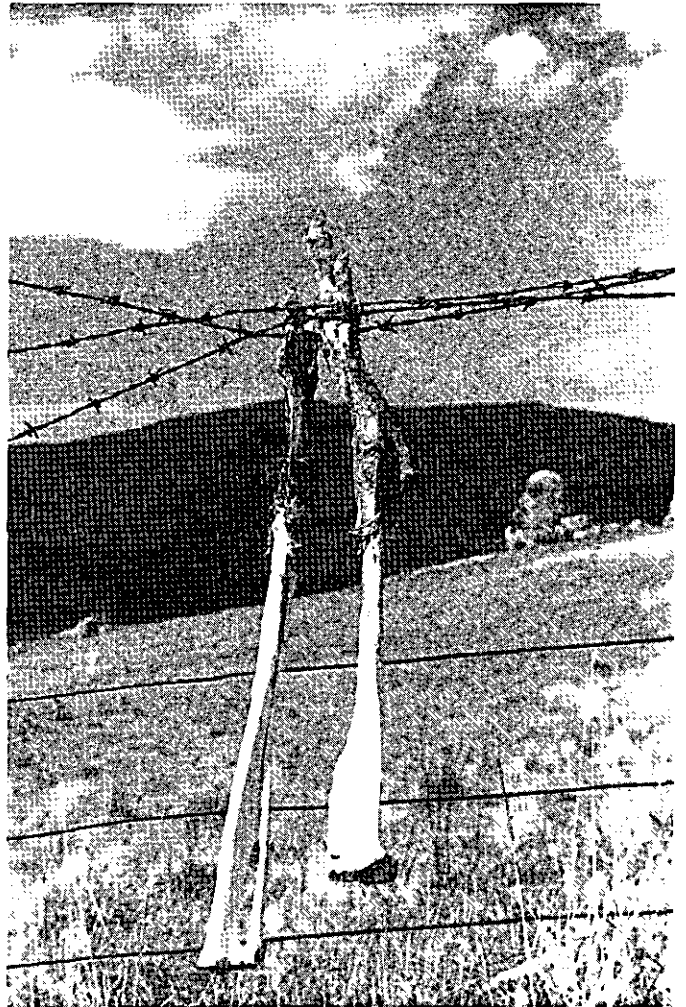
(Adapted from an article and club meeting report in *The Sydney Bush-Walker* of September 1995.)

**Reg Alder**

### New members as at 6 November 1995

Simon Middleton	Campbell
Chesley Engram and Margaret Innes	Watson
Mary and Maurice Sexton	Duffy
Mirek Zak	Uni of Canberra
Gregory Gardiner	Banks
Ron Chesham	Mitchell
Debra Cazalet	Downer
Simon Munslow	Kaleen
Marjorie (Bonnie) Fox	Ridgeaway, Queanbeyan
Mike Morriss and Margaret Cole	Bungendore
Tom Connors	Lyneham
Ian, Joanna, Michael and Kathryn Hufton	Yarralumla
Simon Josey	O'Connor
Sonja Weinberg and Ian Mason	Macquarie

## Namadgi views



*Above*  
The re-routed Alpine Track now passes over the creek from Mt Tennent a short distance down from the original waterfall crossing. From this point the track climbs easily to rejoin the original route. Except in times of flash-flooding, the creek can be crossed safely. The Cypress Pine Walk continues straight on by its original route from the Alpine Track marker.

*Above left*

The Alpine Track and the Cypress Pine Walk followed a common route from the Namadgi Visitor Centre until they reached this waterfall. For safety reasons the Alpine Track has now been re-routed. If walkers should venture onto the granite top of this waterfall, especially in wet weather, extreme caution should be taken to keep back from the exposed granite surfaces.

*Above right*

A slight error of judgement. Words cannot describe the pain, hunger and thirst, being prey to every flesh-eating animal, bird or insect, or the lingering death. Kangaroos follow set routes to new pastures and shelter, using open gates or forcing their way under fences. Where kangaroo paths are obvious, panels of internal fences should be removed or lower wires cut on boundary fences to avoid repetition of these cruel deaths.

The description of the third section of the Alpine Track will appear in the next issue of the *Bulletin*.

# Outings program

December to March 1996



## 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 canoe trips, nature and history 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.

**27 Dec-1 Jan Holiday Pack Walk** 1/D/E/F  
Attrema and Leyden Creeks,  
Morton National Park Ref: Touga, Yatwal, Burrier 1:25000  
Leader: Pat and Eric Pickering Phone 286 2128 (h)  
Joint FBI/NPA walk. Contact leaders as soon as possible for bookings and details. Six days in this interesting and remote area. Rock scrambling, swimming, and magnificent views. Could establish a base camp near a beautiful pool which could provide a relaxed option for some while others adventure. Distance 320km \$ per car.

**7 January Sunday Walk** 1/B/C/D  
Grassy and Sheep Station Creeks  
Namadgi National Ref: Yaouk, Shannons Flat 1:25000  
Leader: Stephen Johnston Phone 254 3738 (h)  
Contact leader for booking and inquiries. A long but very interesting walk through the former grazing leases of southern-ACT past old huts, fences and yards. The walk concludes with a 300m climb and descent over Boboyan and Pheasant hills. 140km drive \$28 per car.

**13 January Saturday Walk** 2/A/D  
Mount Gingera, "the easy way"  
Namadgi National Park Ref: Corin Dam 1:25000  
Leader: Mick Kelly Phone 241 2330(h)  
Meet at the corner of Eucumbene Drive and Cotter Road at 8.30am. A 13km return walk from Mt Ginini carpark via Pryors Hut and Mt Gingera. Suitable for beginners. Road to Mt Ginini is a narrow and gravel. The climb from the hut to Mt Gingera is about 200m. Distance 120km \$24 per car.

**21 January Sunday Walk** 2/E  
Gigerline Gorge  
Murrumbidgee River Ref: Willamsdale 1:25000  
Leader: Stephen Johnston Phone 254 3738 (h)  
Contact leader for bookings and inquiries. A good walk for a hot day - follow the Murrumbidgee upstream from Cuppacumbalong to Angle Crossing with possible side trip up Guises Creek and optional swimming. 50km drive - \$10 per car.

**30 January-4 February Pack Walk** Day 1: 3/A  
Namadgi's Elusive Peaks Days 2-6: 1/A/D/E  
Ref: Rendezvous Creek, Yaouk 1:25000  
Leader: Graham Scully Phone 230 3352 (h)  
Contact the leader at least a week before the walk, preferably earlier. An opportunity to spend time climbing and sitting on top of the summits of, Mt Gudgenby, Mt Kelly, Mt Sentry Box and others. The walk is a combination of easy and moderately hard walking and scrambling with plenty of time for rest, recuperation and socialising. View stone arrangements on some peaks. Participants need to be of average fitness. A food drop will help to keep packs light. 150km drive \$30 per car.

**3 February Saturday Walk** 2/A/B  
Tidbinbilla Mountain Ref: Tidbinbilla 1:25000  
Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve  
Leader: Max Lawrence Phone 272 2032(w) 288 1370 (h)  
Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30 am. Walk along the fire trail in Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve to Fishing Gap, and then up the track to the summit of Mt Domain, a total climb of about 675 metres. Great views over the nature reserve and also over the Cotter Valley to the Brindabellas. Return may be by the same route, or cross country, depending on how we feel. Distance 60km \$12 per car.

**9-11 February Weekend Pack Walk** 2/A/D/F  
Gungahlin and Burrungubugge Rivers  
Kosciusko National Park Ref: Berridale, Eucumbene, Kosciusko 1:50000  
Leader: Mick Kelly Phone 241 2330 (h)  
Contact leader by the Wednesday of the previous week for details. It is planned to leave Canberra on Friday afternoon. Mainly on fire trails and tracks but trackless between Teddys Creek and Kidmans Hut. A circular walk including the lower Gungahlin River, Kidmans Hut and the Burrungubugge River. Return to Canberra on Sunday evening or stay over to Monday for the Kosciusko-Blue Lake-Charlottes Pass circuit. Distance 400km \$80 per car.

**10-11 February Weekend Pack Walk** 1/A  
Goodradigbee River Idyll Ref: Brindabella or ACT special 1:100000  
Near Wee Jasper Ref: Brindabella or ACT special 1:100000  
Leader: Fiona Brand Phone 247 9538 (h)  
Contact the leader by Wednesday for details. A short walk to a campsite with ample opportunities for swimming, picking blackberries, or contemplation. Drive about 180km \$36 per car.

**10 February Saturday Walk** 2/A/C/D  
Naas River Gorge Ref: Collinton 1:25000  
Namadgi National Park Ref: Collinton 1:25000  
Leader: Jack Smart Phone 248 8171 (h)  
Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. Leave cars at Shanahans Mountain car park and descend to Shanahans Falls Creek, following it downstream to its confluence with Naas Creek. Lunch on cliff looking up one gorge and down another. Some steep terrain and some scrub, as well as open level walking. Distance 110km \$22 per car.

**24 February Saturday Walk** 2/A/C/E  
Tolwong Mine near Bungonia Ref: Caoura 1:25000  
Morton National Park Ref: Caoura 1:25000  
Leader: Mike Smith Phone 248 3624(w) 286 2984(h)  
Meet at Southwell Park and corner of Northbourne Avenue at 8am. Descend to the Shoalhaven River by the old flying fox trail. Wade across river to old mine workings. Return by different route to the entrance of Bungonia SRA. 500m descent/ascent. Small car shuffle. 250km \$50 per car.

**2 March Saturday Walk** 1/B/C/D  
**Gibraltar Creek Hills**  
**Namadgi National Park** Ref: Tiddinbilla 1:25000  
**Leader: Stephen Johnston** Phone 254 3738 (h)  
Contact leader for bookings and inquiries. A short but fairly sharp walk from Gibraltar Falls across the three rocky hills that form the northern boundary of the Booroomba property through some interesting forest, including the only known stand of Silver-top Ash in the ACT. Total climb about 600m. 60km drive \$12 per car.

**9 March Saturday Walk** 2/C/D  
**'The Bog'**  
**Namadgi National Park** Ref: Michelago, Collinton 1:25000  
**Leader: Max Lawrence** Phone 272 2032(w)  
Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30 am. the walk commences at the end of the bitumen at Gudgenby, crosses Dry Creek and climbs up over the Booth Range to an interesting frost hollow known as 'The Bog' high on the eastern side. This is the site of an old stock camp, and features a hut (now collapsed) and fencing for what was probably once a horse paddock. The walk is entirely off track, has a total climb of around 800m and has some patches of fairly dense wattle to get through. 100kms \$20 per car.

**15-18 March Pack Walk** 1/D/E/F  
**Budawang Range**  
Ref: CMW The Northern Budawang Range  
**Leaders: Pat and Eric Pickering** Phone 286 2128(h)  
Joint FBI/NPA walk. Contact leaders by 8 March for bookings and details. A four day circuit from Newhaven Gap taking in Folly Point, Darri Head, Monolith Valley, Mt Tarn, Pagoda Rocks, etc. Some track walking, some thick scrub and rock scrambling, magnificent views. Numbers limited. About 375km \$75 per car.

**16 March Saturday Walk** 1/A  
**Murrumbidgee River - Casuarina Sands**  
**Murrumbidgee River Corridor** Ref: Tuggeranong 1:25000  
**Leader: Gary Schneider** Phone 254 9801(h)  
Meet at Casuarina Sands at 9am. Bring swimmers. A leisurely walk along the track to the south exploring the river and swimming as the opportunities present themselves.

**16-18 March Weekend Pack Walk** 2/A/D  
**Mt Kelly via Sams Creek** Ref: Rendezvous Creek  
**Namadgi National Park** Yaouk 1:25000  
**Leader: Frank Clements** Phone 231 7005(h)  
Contact leader by Wednesday for details. Pack Walk to Mts Kelly and Scabby or Namadgi through Gudgenby Saddle and along Naas and Sams Creeks. Mostly by fire trail, but some off track walking. Cooking stoves are preferred but not essential. 100km \$20 per car.

**23-24 March Weekend Pack Walk** 2/A/D/E  
**Diamond Creek**  
**Deau National Park** Ref: Bendethera 1:25000  
**Leader: Mike Smith** Phone: 286 2948(h) 248 3624(w)

Contact leader by previous Wednesday for details. A walk in the Deau National Park along Diamond Creek which has several 5-10m waterfalls. This walk inland from Moruya is in an area threatened by adjacent logging. Probable Friday night stay at a holiday house on the coast to ensure an early start. Approx 500 km drive \$100 per car.

**30-31 March Work Parties**  
**Namadgi National Park**  
**Leader: Len Haskew** Phone 281 4268 (h)  
Contact Len by Wednesday to express your interest and find out what is to be done. This is an opportunity for members to demonstrate how much they value Namadgi National Park by doing their bit to help maintain and improve it. Attend either day or both.

**5-8 April Easter Pack Walk** 2/D/E/F  
**Belowra and Yowrie**  
**Wadbilliga National Park** Ref: Belowra, Yowrie 1:25000  
**Leaders: Pat and Eric Pickering** Phone: 286 2128(h)  
Joint FBI/NPA walk. Contact leaders before January 20 for details. A four day adventure in the remote Wadbilliga National Park. We intend to climb Belowra and Barren Jumbo Mountains. We saw these peaks from Jillicambra Mountain on the October '94 walk. We shall also explore the Wadbilliga River, either Queens Pound River or Lake Creek and one of the nearby ridges. Rock scrambling, rock hopping, steep climbs, swimming if warm enough. Approx 375 km \$75 per car.

**28 April Sunday Heritage Month Drive**  
**Blue Range area**  
**Leader: Doreen Wilson** Phone: 288 5215  
Meet at Eucumbene Drive and Cotter Road at 8.30am. An easy walk from Blue Range Hut to the site of Sherwood Homestead. An area of historical significance and autumn colour. Walking on tracks with some steps to climb. Take lunch or a drink. 60km drive \$12 per car.

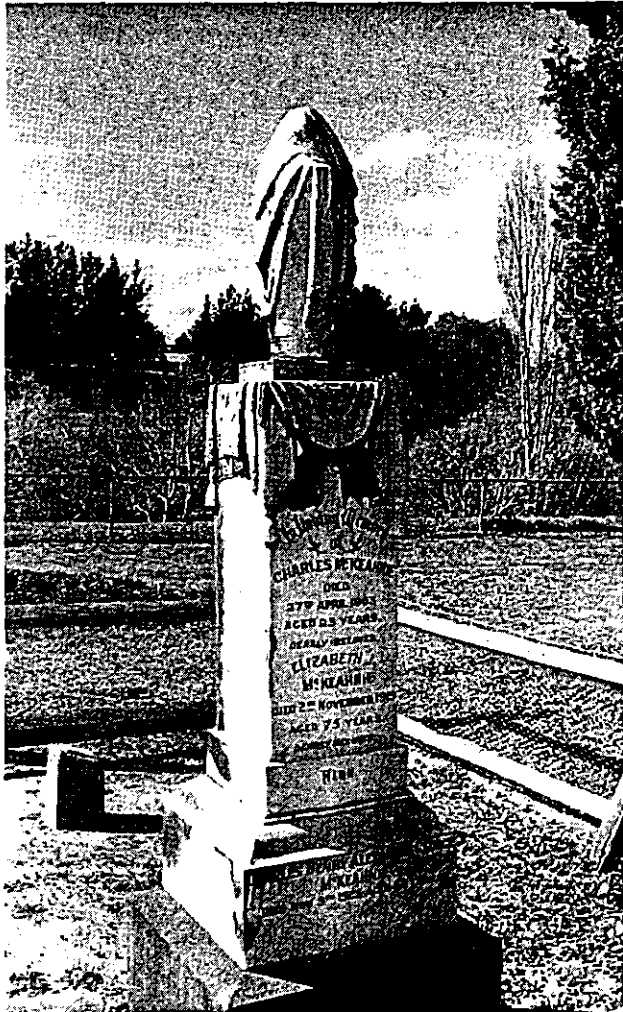
**24 April - 2 May (or longer) Great North Walk**  
**Sydney to Newcastle**  
**CALM route maps**  
**Leaders: Pat and Eric Pickering** Phone: 286 2128(h)  
Contact leaders before 28 February for details. The Great North Walk between Sydney and Newcastle was opened in the Bicentennial year, 1988. It was the idea of two Sydney bushwalkers and was taken up by the NSW Department of CALM. The total distance is 250kms and takes 14 days. Much of the walk is in State forest, national park and council bushland. The 'discovery kit' available from CALM indicates an exciting walk with great views, splendid forest as well as historical and yes, some urban features. We are thinking of a trip of at least seven days- shorter or longer options can be negotiated. A meeting of those interested will be held on Tuesday 5 March 1996 to discuss arrangements. Join us for a day, a few days or week or more!

#### POINTS TO NOTE

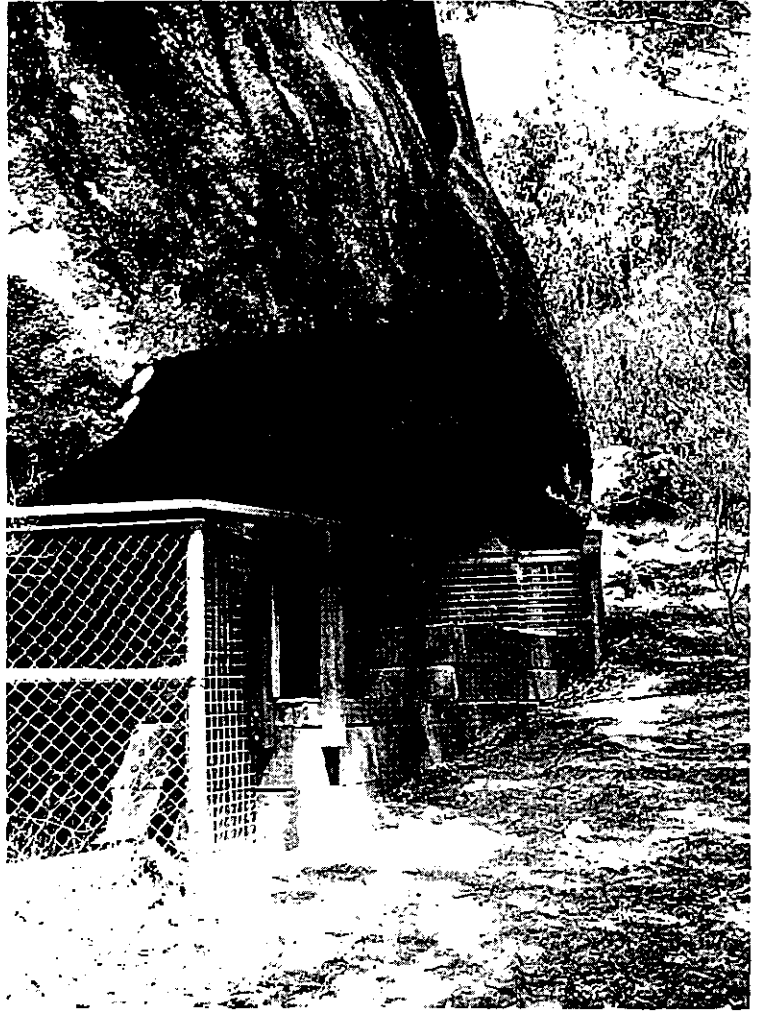
Please support the outings program by volunteering to lead outings. New leaders are welcome. The greatest demand is for gentle day walks. The outings convenor is happy to suggest locations suitable for a walk if you do not have something in mind yourself. Feel free to send in suggestions for outings to the association's office as soon as you think of them.

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 however incurred. 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 while engaged in any such outing.

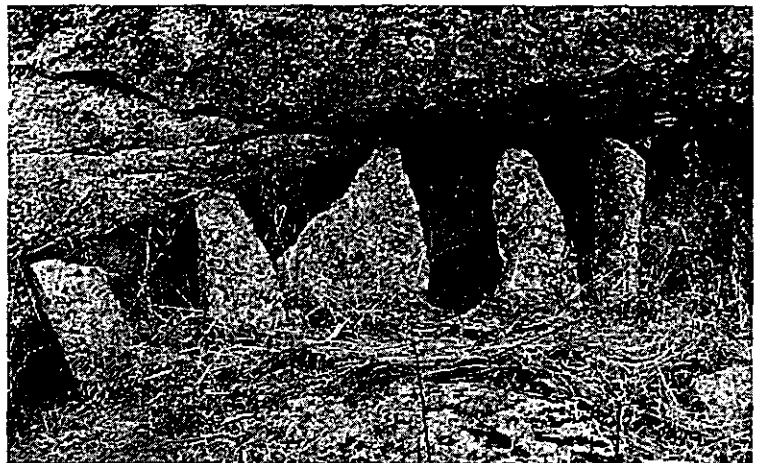
The committee suggests a donation of TWENTY cents per kilometre DIVIDED BY THE NUMBER OF OCCUPANTS in the car, including the driver, (to the nearest dollar) be offered to the driver by each passenger accepting transport. Drive and walk distances quoted in the program are approximate distances for return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



*Above left*  
 The McKeahnie family grave plot in the Queanbeyan cemetery. Charles McKeahnie built the Gudgenby and Orroral homesteads. Gudgenby, which was demolished in the early 1960s, was of similar design to Orroral and the Kosciusko Huts Association has been instrumental in bringing back to the ACT a large component of this important building. The remaining timbers of Gudgenby are now in store awaiting a long delayed decision on a site and funds for its rebuilding.



*Above right*  
 A viewing platform, seat and guard rails have been built within the Rendezvous Creek rock art shelter. Part of the former wire mesh fence and gate, now removed, provides easy access to view the paintings at a distance, which should help in their preservation.



On the way to the Rendezvous Creek rock art shelter there is an early attempt to block off an overhang to prevent rabbits burrowing by using rocks to prop up wire mesh. The origin and purpose of other groups of rocks laid out on adjoining boulders is less clear and may be thought over while a rest is taken. These rocks are about 150 metres before the second fence is met and are below the large rock slab about the same distance above the track.

**All photos by Reg Alder.**

# PARKWATCH

## NSW forestry reforms

The NSW government has announced that it will shift logging out of 389 000 hectares of old growth forest. Once a nine-month forest assessment has been completed, a moratorium will be placed on high conservation value areas and more national parks will be created.

However, environment groups are continuing to press for urgent action—despite the announcement of logging cuts, forests which should be conserved are still in danger of being logged and woodchipped over the next nine months. So far, logging cuts do not apply to the woodchip industry and with 90% of trees felled in the south-east forests going to the Eden woodchip mill, environment groups are pressing Bob Carr to remove the 'Harris-Daishowa roadblock' for serious forest protection.

A summary of the NSW government's forest reform follows:

- there will be a 15% price rise for timber from state forests
- logging will be rescheduled so that hardwood logs are sourced mainly from regrowth forests and plantations—previously agreed volumes of logs will be maintained
- a \$60 million industry-restructuring package will assist employers and contractors over the next 12 months
- over the next 12 months the production of value-adding timber products such as laminates, paper, furniture and plywood will be investigated
- in July 1996 hardwood quotas for sawlogs (not woodchips) will be reduced by 30% in coastal regions
- hardwood plantations will be increased from 2000 hectares to a target of 10 000 hectares in 1998 at a cost of \$47 million. Softwood plantations will be expanded by 18 200 over the next three years
- logging in the Eden Management Area will be rescheduled away from state forest areas which are needed for conservation reserves.

*National Parks Journal*, NSW National Parks Association, August 1995

## Wild dogs in ACT

Over the past 12 months farmers in the Naas Valley close to Namadgi have lost between 850 to 1000 sheep because of attacks by wild dogs. The dogs are not domestic strays but a distinctive hybrid breed, tall and rangy with some dingo. The ACT Parks and Conservation Service is responsible for controlling the dogs in Namadgi National Park and for some years has been employing trapper Bill Osbourne—in recent years he has trapped a greater number of dogs, indicating the rising dog numbers. The use of poison within the park is not permitted but if trapping proves to be ineffective in reducing sheep attacks then poison bait on adjoining land may be used.

*Landnews*, Agriculture and Landcare Section, ACT Parks and Conservation Service, September 1995

## Alps recommended for World Heritage

*The International Significance of the Natural Values of the Australian Alps*, a report commissioned by the Australian Alps Liaison Committee, has concluded that the area has many qualities which merit its inclusion on the World Heritage list, and that the Alps ranks higher than several other Australian sites which are already included. According to Professor Kirkpatrick, the report's compiler, the major feature of outstanding value is the eucalypt-dominated sclerophyll vegetation which extends from sealevel to over 2000 metres.

The report is the culmination of an official process of assessment which started in 1988 and it is now up to the Australian public, the Commonwealth government, NSW, Victorian and ACT governments to decide whether the area should be nominated for World Heritage listing.

*Park Watch*, Victorian National Parks Association, September 1995

## Spotlight on Ranger

Recent protests by traditional owners and others prevented the release of 500 000 cubic metres of contaminated water from the Ranger uranium mine into the waterways of Kakadu National Park. But the miners will continue to seek permission to release toxic water unless the notion of uranium mining in monsoon areas is reviewed.

Because Ranger is an open-cut mine, it has significant areas where uranium ore is exposed to rainfall and run-off. During the wet season the surface run-off can become contaminated. A total of 600 000 cubic metres of excess water has accumulated as a result of above-average rainfall during the 1994-95 wet season. The pit in which it is stored is needed for tailings storage if mining is to continue.

A new review of Ranger under the Environment Protection (Impact of Proposals) Act is needed.

*Habitat*, Australian Conservation Foundation, August 1995

## Dryland salinity

Dryland salinity affects thousands of hectares in the south-east region. It damages our most productive land and even has an impact on urban building sites.

The key to dryland salinity is groundwater. Groundwater can pick up salt from the soil and rise into the root zone of plants, damaging or killing them. Widespread bare patches where little will grow can be the result. Evaporation further concentrates salt on the surface. Salt water oozes from the bare patches and, if left untreated, the bare patches spread into a complex of erosion gullies.

Dryland salinity is increasing because we have altered the vegetation. Changes to vegetation in one part of a catchment may cause salinity downstream. Simple changes in land use in key recharge areas (areas where surface water soaks into the soil and recharges

groundwater) can improve conditions downstream.

Halting dryland salinity requires the active cooperation of all landholders in an afflicted catchment, even those who may not be experiencing the symptoms of salinity.

*Bogong*, Canberra and South-East Region Environment Centre, Spring 1995

## Export woodchipping

In 1993 Japan imported over four million tonnes of woodchips from Australian native forests. The assault on native forests has never been greater. But the economics do not make sense: the combined debt of the forest agencies of state governments is about \$5 billion. We are paying to have our forests destroyed.

Daishowa has a licence to export 950 000 tonnes a year, which includes 250 000 tonnes of supposed sawmill waste. The forests of NSW and East Gippsland cannot sustain the current level of exploitation.

*ACTwild*, The Wilderness Society (ACT Branch) Inc., Spring 1995

## Acacias—gourmet tucker

Bread, biscuits, cereals, salsas, jams, chutneys and salad dressing are some of the products produced by Australian Native Product Industries. Its Adelaide kitchens prepare a range of gourmet foods derived from native plants. The company has been testing a variety of wattle seed species for food potential as well as developing a range of native spices. Roasted and ground wattle seed and ground pepper leaf are already available. Wattle seed is high in protein and gives food a nutty flavour—it can be used to flavour damper, bread, sauces and ice-cream, and can be used as a coffee substitute.

At the moment wild wattle seed can supply the industry but director of Australian Native Product

Industries, Roger Filke, envisages that the native food industry will expand beyond its current gourmet food lines to mass market products such as muesli bars, in which case there will be a need to farm acacias.

*Ecos*, CSIRO, Spring 1995

## Hardwood plantations

A series of demonstration hardwood plantations are to be established in Bega, Eden and Bombala districts. The plantation project is sponsored by the Department of Land and Water Conservation's Farm Forestry Project to produce commercial timber on previously cleared agricultural land and provide environmental benefits by preventing soil erosion, creating windbreaks and controlling groundwater. The project will also create employment through New Work Opportunities teams to make fences, plant trees, control weeds, fertilise and follow-up maintenance. In the long term, a regional hardwood timber industry is envisaged.

*Broadcast*, Greening Australia ACT and SE NSW (Inc), July/August 1995

## Contaminated sites in ACT

Old sheep dips and farm dumps in the ACT are potentially dangerous and according to the Conservation Council, need to be identified and properly managed. There are approximately 100 dip sites—16 being in urban areas such as Lyneham and Theodore, and a similar number of dump sites.

In spite of the creation of a contaminated sites unit in 1994 by the ACT government, little has been achieved. The ACT desperately needs to develop environmental protection legislation which would not just apply to agricultural contamination, but other sites such as the highly contaminated Kingston foreshore which is likely to be contaminated with PCBs, organochlorines, arsenic, creosote,

solvents, oils and petrol. The Conservation Council believes that the federal government should take responsibility for this and the other contaminated sites which have been inherited by ACT people with self-government.

*Sustainable Times*, Environment Centre and Conservation Council, September 1995

## Wilderness Red Index

The Wilderness Red Index is a non-government monitor of wilderness and its protection throughout Australia. At the Fourth National Wilderness Conference in Sydney in 1993, it was resolved that the index be adopted as a major tool in wilderness preservation campaigns.

Under the terms of the Index, only statutory protection as a wilderness confers secure status on a wilderness area. For endorsement of their management as satisfactory, wilderness areas must be managed to ensure wilderness quality. In the case of impaired areas, policies must demonstrate that wilderness quality is a management goal. The index contains information on 158 wilderness areas throughout Australia. Obtained from first-hand knowledge, the material is available to any group or individual interested in wilderness areas. Information on individual areas costs \$5. The entire NSW 1993 index costs \$100. There is no charge for index researchers and campaigners.

The Wilderness Red Index needs more researchers. If you have a favourite wilderness area, you can assist by helping to update basic information on the area. You may be able to check the accuracy of what is already on file or add to knowledge of land use history and conservation measures.

*Wilderness Red Index Newsletter*, June 1995

# Caring for the Lower Molonglo

The following is a letter from NPA to The Hon Gary Humphries MLA, the Minister for Planning and the Environment.

Dear Minister

At a meeting with representatives of the National Parks Association on Friday 7 July 1995, we emphasised the need to protect the important environmental values of the Lower Molonglo Gorges. You indicated that you were unaware of the area's significance and invited us to outline our concerns.

I understand that an officer in your department is currently working on a management plan for the Lower Molonglo. The NPA believes the area should, as a matter of priority, be protected in a nature reserve.

The Lower Molonglo Gorges are one of the five areas of river gorge in the ACT and together with the adjacent, relatively intact sections of the Lower Molonglo River corridor, provide an important refuge for a range of plant and animal species of national, regional and local significance. They were recognised as a Nature Conservation Area by the National Capital Development Corporation in 1983, as a site of regional significance by the National Capital Planning Authority in 1990, and are to be examined for National Estate listing in a study funded by the Australian Heritage Commission.

## Significant native flora

A report by Dr Peter Barrer to the ACT Heritage Council identified 225 species in an area of about 600 to 700 hectares. These include 17 species listed in the National Capital Planning Authority *Draft Flora and Fauna Guidelines* as regionally uncommon or rare, and two, possibly three, nationally rare or rare and vulnerable species, *Discaria pubescens*, *Pomaderris pallida* and *Pomaderris* sp. aff. *andromedifolia*.

The area includes:

- extensive mature and regenerating stands of an unrecorded, and probably locally endemic and rare open forest/woodland/open woodland association between *Callitris endlicheri* (black cypress pine) and *Eucalyptus macrorhyncha* (red stringybark)
- mature and regenerating stands of *Callitris endlicheri* open forest/woodland, of regional significance because of their extent
- a distinct and unusual occurrence of stunted and sometimes mallee-form *Eucalyptus blakelyi* (Blakely's red gum).

## Significant fauna—reptiles

The reptile fauna is unusually diverse for such a small area with 20 species recorded. They include:

- extensive areas of native grassland habitat for the nationally endangered pink-tailed legless lizard (*Aprasia parapulchella*)
- four regionally significant reptiles including the stone gecko and marbled gecko.

## Significant fauna—birds

The area includes:

- regionally significant habitat for birds, particularly raptors such as the brown goshawk, wedge-tailed eagle, peregrine falcon, brown falcon and Australian kestrel which breed in the area
- important woodland habitat for the regionally rare southern whiteface, diamond firetail and regionally uncommon double-barred finch.

## Significant fauna—mammals

The area includes extensive habitat for a significant population of the regionally uncommon eastern wallaroo as well as habitat for, and populations of, platypus, eastern water rat and bush rat.

## Conservation corridors

The proposed Lower Molonglo Nature Reserve could provide an important link with:

- the nearby Shepherds Lookout Nature Reserve and the Murrumbidgee Corridor
- the natural vegetation of Pine Ridge south of Stockdill Drive and areas of natural vegetation north and south of the upstream limit of the proposed reserve
- fringing *Casuarina* woodland downstream and upstream of Coppins Crossing
- Stromlo Forest and hence Black Mountain.

## Threats to the area

The two main threats to the native fauna and flora of the Lower Molonglo are fire and grazing by livestock.

## Fire

Lack of formal protection has led to an increased frequency of destructive bushfires which have destroyed significant areas of the fire-sensitive *Callitris endlicheri* and the nationally rare and vulnerable shrub *Pomaderris pallida*. *Callitris endlicheri* is very slow-growing and appears to take several centuries to reach maturity.

## Grazing

Grazing by sheep and cattle destroys existing habitats for native plants and animals and inhibits the successful regeneration of a wide range of native forbs (a herb other than grass or sedges), shrubs and trees including the three nationally rare shrub species. It leads to a widespread lack of groundcover to support and protect many reptiles and small mammals, soil compaction, loss of topsoils and, in some areas, sheet and gully erosion. Though livestock grazing in the Lower Molonglo Gorges was terminated recently, there could be pressure for its resumption. Because



of the damage grazing causes, any such requests should be rejected.

Other actual or potential threats include introduced fauna and flora, pasture improvement, incompatible recreational use and infrastructural developments.

### Conclusion

The NPA believes it is essential that the Lower Molonglo Gorges and adjacent areas of high natural value be declared as a nature reserve as soon as possible to recognise their significant flora and fauna summarised above, and to provide appropriate management for their current and future preservation.

Declaration of the nature reserve and provision of management that removes or reduces the threats to its natural values would be an important and widely-supported conservation initiative by your government.

If you would like to become more familiar with the Lower Molonglo, Dr Peter Barrer would be pleased to expand on the points raised in this letter and to guide you to some of the area's most notable sections.

Yours sincerely  
(signed) Clive Hurlstone  
Acting president  
8 September 1995

## ANPC annual conference

Representatives of national parks associations and nature conservation councils from the ACT, Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia attended the 22nd annual conference of the Australian National Parks Council in Canberra on the weekend of 21 and 22 October 1995.

After hearing a summary of the ANPC's activities over the past 12 months, the conference considered its priority issues and appropriate strategies for 1995-96. The ANPC's main concern has been the Commonwealth government's National Reserve System Cooperative Program, a Commonwealth initiative to help establish a national system of conservation reserves representing major biogeographic areas. In May 1995 the ANPC received funding from the Australian Nature Conservation Agency to perform the program's community liaison function. This project is due to run until at least May 1996.

An important aspect of the project was coordination of a submission, *Application of the Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia to Develop a National Protected Areas System*. Based on research by the World Wide Fund for Nature, this document was circu-

lated to conservation organisations across Australia with requests for feedback and contributions. The submission has now been endorsed by about 20 peak conservation organisations.

Some other issues considered at the conference were:

- protection of remnant native grasslands and grassy woodlands—an important issue in the ACT
- native vegetation clearance controls
- forests
- marine and coastal reserves
- the future of lighthouses and their surrounding land areas, many of which are within or adjacent to national parks and reserves and have been offered by the Commonwealth to the states
- the proposed nomination of the Australian Alps for World Heritage listing.

Stephen Johnston, a member of the NPA's general committee, was re-elected president of the ANPC and Anne Reeves, president of the NSW NPA, was re-elected as honorary secretary.

The ANPC delegates acknowledged the Association's generous support of the conference.

## Cape York campaign

The Cape York Peninsula is an area of immense ecological and cultural importance. Over 50 Aboriginal languages are spoken and elders continue to teach and guide their communities. The peninsula's indigenous population of approximately 13 000 continues to rely significantly on the natural environment for food, fuel, medicines, implements and art.

In June 1995 the Cape York Indigenous Environment Foundation, which is an alliance comprising the indigenous, original owners of the land, members of the Australian Conservation Agency and the Wilderness Society, was formed.

The foundation is based on the

view that the traditional owners of the land must first re-establish their links with the land before environmental conservation values can be secured and aims for the land to be returned to the original Aboriginal custodians to own and manage appropriately.

The pastoral industry currently occupies about 54 per cent of the Peninsula and generates an economic return of less than 4 per cent of the cape's gross regional product. Food for the indigenous population accounts for a subsistence economy with a conservative market value of \$6 million, about the same as the pastoral industry. Clearly the poten-

tial outcomes of the foundation's campaign are of greater value in the long term—socially, economically and environmentally—than a continued reliance on grazing.

The foundation needs the support of the wider community—many Cape York Peninsula properties are now for sale and money needs to be raised in order to return the land to its custodians. If you would like to help, send your donation to the Cape York Indigenous Environment Foundation, PO Box 2496, Cairns 4870.

*Habitat*, August 1995, Australian Conservation Foundation

# Photo album



*Above*

Fiona Brand and Len Haskew never deviated from the track (or couldn't if they tried) crossing Endeavour Moor from Nadgee Lake to the Bunyip Hole. Nadgee Nature Reserve had devastating fires in 1971 and 1981. The extent of the prolific regrowth since then is almost obliterating the track.

*Right*

NPA members join Sarah Sharp, ACT Parks and Conservation grassland expert, for a tour of four native grassland sites around Canberra. The tour started in the paddocks of Gungahlin where the proposed town site has been moved to ensure the protection of the striped legless lizard (*Delma impar*).

The next stop was the Majura firing range where a remarkable diversity of species makes the range one of southern Australia's most important native grassland sites. The group was fortunate enough to see two earless dragons (*Tympanocryptis lineata pinguicolla*) which, only four years ago, were thought to be extinct in the ACT.

Lunch was at the Barton cathedral site where kangaroo grass (*Themeda triandra*) grows thickly and yam daisies (*Microseris lanceolata*) and bulbine lilies (*Bulbine bulbosa*) are quite prolific. The tour finished at a small remnant area in York Park, behind the new offices of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, which provides habitat for the endangered golden sun moth, *Synemon plana*.

The grasslands tour was both enlightening and enjoyable and heightened our appreciation of the importance of preserving this inadequately recognised but fascinating ecosystem.

**Stephen Johnston**



*Above*

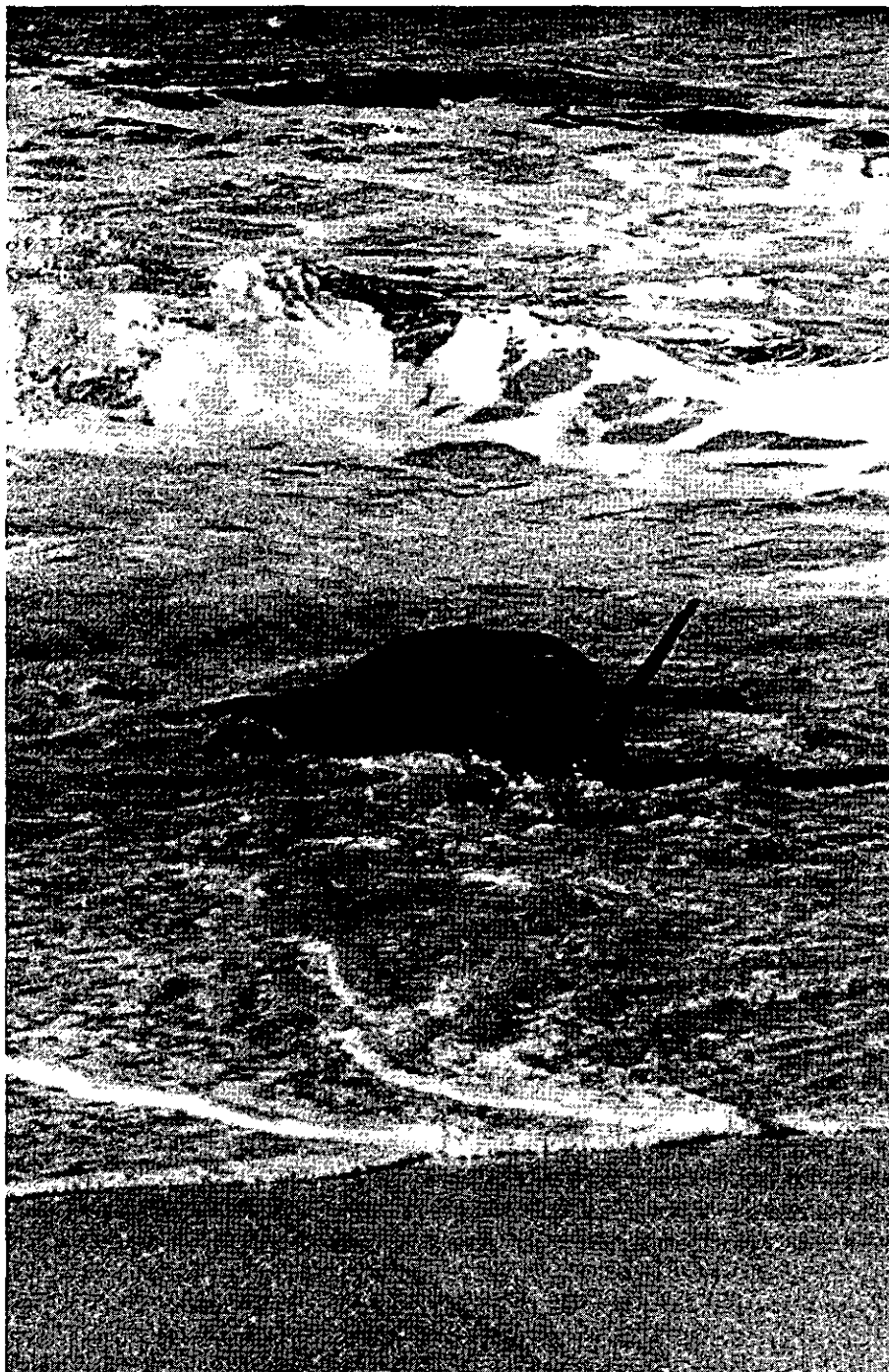
Four-wheel-drive enthusiasts, in testing their vehicle capabilities, have seriously damaged this bank above the Queanbeyan River east of Queanbeyan. It is an indication of the damage that could occur in Namadgi if four-wheel-drivers are given unfettered access to the park.





*Above*

Adrienne Nicholson was a trifle wary of the thrashing of this dwarf sperm whale (*Kogia simus*) on Nadgee beach as it attempted to once again become water-borne. The whale was first sighted moving slowly along behind the first line of breakers. There were barnacles on its body and it appeared to be old or ill as the effort to regain the water was obviously tiring. These whales only have teeth in the lower jaw and feed principally on squid, but crustaceans and fish are also eaten. They can dive to at least 300 metres out to the continental shelf. Last seen it had managed to free itself from the beach and was swimming once again within the first line of breakers. Reported strandings of this species of whale are rare in Australia. The sighting was reported to the Australian Nature Conservation Agency which maintains a database of whale strandings. The agency would appreciate information on any strandings that members might observe. Photographs and as much information on the condition of the whale should be obtained to enable a questionnaire to be filled out.



*Above*

A distinguishing feature of the dwarf sperm whale is the shape of the dorsal fin. Other features are a maximum length of 2.7 metres and seven to 12 pairs of teeth in the lower jaw.

The pygmy sperm whale (*Kogia breviceps*) has a shorter dorsal fin with less shape, a length of up to 3.4 metres and 12 to 16 pairs of teeth in the lower jaw. Neither species have any functional teeth in the upper jaw.

**All photos on these two pages are by Reg Alder.**

# Development and tourism in ACT's parks

*The following text is taken from a transcript of the NPA's evidence to the ACT Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Economic Development and Tourism.*

*Clive Hurlstone, Ray Polglaze and Nicki Taws, all of NPA, were called to give evidence at this standing committee.*

NPA's concern is more with the benefits, or otherwise, to national parks of economic development and tourism. The NPA sees the primary role of national parks and nature reserves as nature conservation.

## **How does tourism affect national parks as habitat for other species?**

We think that their principal value or character at present is their unspoilt, undeveloped nature. Our concern would be towards maintaining that aspect or character.

In general, the NPA is opposed to infrastructure or major developments within the parks. However, infrastructure could be a walking path in an area which is delineated for recreation, or it could mean a lodge within a wilderness area. Until one is looking at the specific proposals it is a bit hard to know how to respond.

Many people still don't know that some national parks exist—when they find out there may be a great many more visitors each year. On the one hand this is an opportunity, but on the other it could be a threat to the integrity of our parks. Before any development goes ahead it is important to assess the carrying capacity of national parks. At this stage we do not even know the current condition of parks, or how current visitor numbers are affecting them.

It is vital that we set up a management planning process. We need to define the extent of opportunities, identify where there may be scope for additional visitors and where there are already too many visitors, and work out what controls are needed. We are four years down the track from when the legislation said the management plan should be prepared, and yet only Jerrabomberra and Namadgi have

completed management plans (and Namadgi's is nine years out of date). This means that we are really not in a position to be able to say we should be promoting the parks more. Although other reserves do not have management plans, a great deal of decision-making about things such as paths, parking areas and marketing is still going ahead. The ACT does have a process for management planning that includes provisions for issues to go to the public and includes provisions for matters to go to the Assembly, but that process does not seem to be happening.

## **Is increased ecotourism going to result in better resources and better management of the parks?**

It looks like the commercial tour operators are not in a financial position and are not likely to be able to contribute very much in real funds. It seems that visitor fees are not viable; they are not going to generate much income. Even if we do have large numbers of fee-paying visitors to the parks, it looks as though that is not going to lead to large additional resources to the parks.

An option that still needs to be looked at is ACTEW, who do not seem to pay anything for the management of the catchment although they save about \$2 million a year by using that catchment rather than taking water from Googong.

Both Bill Wood and the chairman agreed that these points were very interesting and should be included in the report, and that the NPA's submission was very comprehensive. The chairman agreed that the introduction of management plans should be the first priority, as without one it is impossible to judge whether a proposal should be approved.

Mr Wood indicated that he was impressed with the NPA's submission because it pointed out the primary purpose for national parks, which should override anything else. He also noted that the committee is not anticipating any developments in the park or on its periphery, although Clive Hurlstone and Nicki Taws pointed out that there are already proposals for developments in

Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve and at Corin Forest.

Bill Wood asked how the NPA would feel about importing Australian species not native to the area into Tidbinbilla. Nicki Taws replied that until we have some overriding vision for Tidbinbilla, it is impossible to decide. Mr Wood replied that Tidbinbilla is a natural environment which will be kept that way, although steps have been taken to make it easier to see the animals.

Ray Polglaze said that Tidbinbilla had a relatively fragile balance. He said he would not be surprised if there was a significant increase in the number of people wanting to wander around an area like Tidbinbilla, and that if this happened it would not be possible to maintain it in the way that it is; more people would definitely mean some effect on the animals. However, no specific proposals have yet been made, so the NPA can make no specific recommendations.

The standing committee also asked for the NPA's view on the possible sealing of the Boboyan Road.

Clive Hurlstone replied that there are a range of views on this, even within the NPA. The NPA has supported improvements to the road which have already been made, because the road has been quite dangerous in the past. Although sealing the road would lead to more through-traffic, it is difficult to tell what impact this would have on the park. If the New South Wales government seals the road from the ACT border through to where the sealed road begins near Adaminaby there would definitely be a lot more tourist and ski traffic using that road, and this may mean service stations and road-houses.

Ray Polglaze added that it is difficult to answer such a general question, and that the NPA would really need an impact assessment in order to decide whether resurfacing the road would be acceptable or whether it would be a real problem. Mr Wood agreed that, as there is no funding available for the road, the question is fairly academic.

## A botanical experience in Yunnan



We left Australia in May so it was good spring weather in China and an excellent time to look for China's great abundance of flora.

Our hosts, Dr Zhou Zhekun and Guan Kaiyun of the Kunming Institute of Botany, introduced us to a mass of flowers and shrubs in off-the-beaten-track sites up to 3500 metres.

Many specimens were quite well known to us, as the plant-hunters of the early 20th century diligently worked in the same mountains and valley, bringing plants into the western world—rhododendrons, orchids, lilac, iris, berberis—the list goes on, with some of the slipper orchids being most outstanding.

Of course the clearance of the forest from the hills is known to a few of us and we were pleased to see reafforestation in many areas. They certainly do need plantations in the far-flung areas to the west where it is extremely cold in the winter and power supply is very limited.

Our botanists collected small samples of flora during the day (this was also fieldwork for them) and had an identification trivia night after our dinner. For those who did not take to the higher walks, this was one way to catch up on the great finds. The botanists also had 'great finds' and plants in places they were not aware of, so it was great to know our tour money was going to such a good cause. Of course we did some touristy things as well, and met some lovely people including a marvellous orchestra in Lijiang, with an apt description, 'living fossils of music'.

A visit to the Stone Forest south of Kunming brought back memories of seven years ago. There are more visitors now but it is holding up well and still keeps the camera busy with its towering columns and sometimes crazy shapes of limestone karst. I wish it was easy to do it again!

**Doreen Wilson**

*Top: Eucalyptus globulus growing alongside the highway in SW China.*

*Bottom: Eucalyptus globulus stripped for production of eucalyptus oil—a shadow of the glorious trees that we all know.*

*Photos by Doreen Wilson.*



# Calendar

## DECEMBER

Thursday 7 Committee meeting 7.30pm, for location contact Eleanor Stodart, 281 5004(h)  
Sunday 10 NPA Christmas Party 3.00pm, Orroral Valley Picnic Ground

## JANUARY

Tuesday 23 Environment Subcommittee 7.45pm, for location contact Stephen Johnston, 254 3738(h)

## FEBRUARY

Thursday 1 Committee meeting 7.30pm, for location contact Eleanor Stodart, 281 5004(h)  
Thursday 8 Namadgi Subcommittee 7.30pm, for location contact NPA office, 282 5813  
Thursday 22 Environment Subcommittee 7.45pm, for location contact Stephen Johnston, 254 3738(h)

## MARCH

Thursday 7 Committee meeting 7.30pm, for location contact Eleanor Stodart, 281 5004(h)  
Thursday 14 Namadgi Subcommittee 7.30pm, for location contact NPA office, 282 5813  
Thursday 28 Environment Subcommittee 7.45pm, for location contact Stephen Johnston, 254 3738(h)

## NPA Bulletin

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National Parks Association of the ACT  
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Print Post Approved  
PP 248831/00041

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## General meetings

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

### Thursday 15 February: The Ramsar Convention

Australia will host the next of the once-in-four-years meetings under the Ramsar Convention in Brisbane in March. The conference will press the need to identify and adequately protect wetlands of international significance. A representative from ANCA will talk to us about the convention and its importance and also discuss significant Australian wetlands.

### Thursday 21 March: Threatened species legislation

The ACT is developing its own threatened species legislation and Debbie Worner and Bill Logan from the Wildlife Research Unit of the Parks and Conservation Service will speak to us about current proposals.

### Thursday 18 April: The Boboyan pines

The harvesting and rehabilitation of this area is a matter of interest for all NPA members. At this meeting we are fortunate to be able to listen to a presentation on the future of the area from Dianne Garrod, manager, Conservation and Wildlife Section of the ACT Parks and Conservation Service.