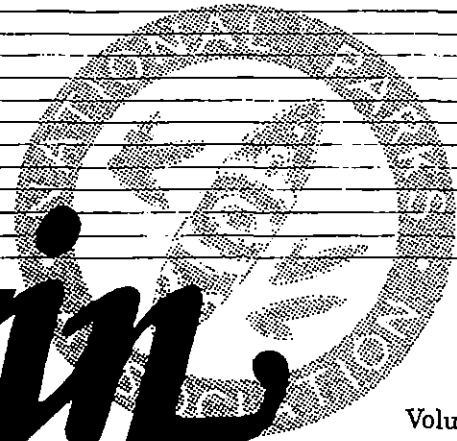


NPA Bulletin



Volume 34 number 2
June 1997

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION (ACT) INCORPORATED



Vision for Namadgi

Old days recalled

Iceland - land of ice and fire!

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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 and outings coordinator</i>	Max Lawrence 288 1370(h)
<i>Treasurer</i>	Mike Smith 286 2984(h)
Len Haskew	281 4268(h); fax 281 4257
Stephen Johnston	254 3738(h); 264 3967(w)
Robin Miller	281 6314(h); 201 2191(w)

Cover photo

The 112 mile ACT border survey marker with NPA members – 1997. Matthew Higgins' article on page 18 gives the background to this photo. Photo by Reg Alder.

The NPA (ACT) office is located in Maclaurin Cres, Chifley, next to the preschool and is staffed by Dianne Bostjancic. Office hours are:

10am to 2pm Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays

Telephone/Fax: (06) 282 5813

Address: PO Box 1940, Woden ACT 2606

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New members are welcome and should enquire through the NPA office.

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NPA Bulletin

Contributions of articles, line drawings and photographs including colour prints are welcome and should be lodged with the office or Syd Comfort (286 2578).

Deadline for September issue: 1 August 1997.

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

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President's foreword

Heritage Month - the month of April in the ACT - was a month worth celebrating this year for the NPA. Not only were we able to join the Parks and Conservation Service in a ceremony celebrating the completion of work on Orroral Homestead but three members received personal recognition from the Heritage Council. Matthew Higgins received one of the three Heritage Awards for his work on the surveying of the ACT border, and Syd and Barbara Comfort received one of the three Heritage Garden Awards. No one who knows Matthew's work or the Comfort's garden will be surprised but I am sure we are all pleased that they have received this recognition.

The ceremony at Orroral Homestead was a fitting conclusion to the years of work. It is described fully on page 12. Here I would like to thank Minister Gary Humphries for officiating, the staff of Parks and Conservation, particularly Peter Hann and Craig Richardson, for organising the event and NPA members Matthew Higgins, Max Lawrence and Len Haskew for their contributions. I would also like to thank Reg Alder, Fiona MacDonald Brand and Len Haskew for preparing the photographic display and Di Thompson for bringing her photographs. It was wonderful to have such a good response from the McKeahnie and Gregory families - the car and the propeller added their own ambience to the occasion.

Management Plans for ACT Parks

and Reserves are very much the theme of the moment. If committee members seem unnaturally obsessed with them it is a consequence of the need to follow the NPA's early work towards the setting aside of areas of especial natural value with procedures that ensure they keep their value.

Fortunately, respect for natural values prevailed this summer, and Black Mountain did not have to suffer the onslaught of hundreds of mountain bikes in the national championships. Then faced with opposition to running the downhill event on the Casuarina Walking Track on the western slope of Mt Majura (a "minor variation" from a route down the eastern slopes!) the Mountain Bike Association withdrew that proposal, and the event was finally run from near the top of Mt Majura, down a firetrail in Canberra Nature Park and then east into the Majura Pines. The track actually had four deviations off the firetrail and these became deeply rutted where the cyclists had to brake. The work needed to repair the damage and the time it will take will give a very good indication of the difficulty of reconciling the needs of such an event with the needs of a nature reserve. The exceptionally dry weather will not make rehabilitation easy, but it is a normal climatic variation that needs to be allowed for.

Canberra Off Road Cyclists have had a day's workparty under the supervision of Parks and

Conservation staff on overtime to rehabilitate the areas. A second day's workparty was aborted when few cyclists turned up and then staff were called away to bushfires, but will need to be rescheduled to complete the work. Considerable labour and a backhoe were needed to reshape the firetrail drains to prevent water eroding the ruts further, and to return rocks and bull dust (except that forming a fine coating over all the trees) to the track area. Thank heavens it didn't rain immediately after the event! Seed from nature grasses and ryecon, and jute matting and a judicious use of sterile hay bales or dirt humps and litter hopefully will ensure a good recovery. Artificial watering has been necessary and will probably need to be repeated. Monitoring sites have been established and fenced. However, it will take time and the area will need to be protected from further disturbance.

I usually leave writing this foreword to the last minute and so do not leave enough time to gather my thoughts most effectively. In the March issue I neglected to acknowledge some of the assistance provided at the Christmas Party. Len Haskew helped guide the drivers in and out, and he, Fiona MacDonald Brand and Reg Alder collected and returned the key to the gate, and organised the area for the party, and, most important, set up the Christmas Tree.

Eleanor Stodart

Liaison on the Australian Alps Walking Track

The Australian Alps Walking Track has three separate administrative bodies as it passes through two states and the ACT, so the Australian Alps Liaison Committee sponsored a two day meeting at Tawonga near Bright on 11-12 February to discuss issues on the management of the track and to establish some guidelines for a strategy working group to look at in more detail.

The meeting was attended by rangers from the three Park services representing all the areas through which the track passes, and by representatives of community groups such as NSW and ACT NPA, federations of walking clubs and Canberra Bushwalkers. A motel at Tawonga with a magnificent view of Mt Buffalo was taken over, but it was definitely a working occasion

and that was all we saw of the Victorian Alps.

The meeting began with an introduction on the track, covered from south to north by the relevant rangers. A recurrent theme was "I don't know my bit properly yet as I have just moved into this position", but we did get a good overall picture of the track and the different problems encountered.

continued on p. 5

A vision for Namadgi National Park

This is an edited version of an address given to the National Parks Association by Dr Colin Adrian, Director, ACT Parks and Conservation Service, on 20 February 1997.

The ACT Parks and Conservation Service sees its role as a land manager - to manage Namadgi as custodian, on behalf of the Government, for residents and visitors. To undertake such a role requires sound management practice in conservation; in preservation and heritage; in the management of park users; and in the interface between the Parks and adjacent land owners (including other Parks, private lessees, freehold land owners and ACT Forests). It also requires a partnership with the community, particularly the NPA, but also other groups who have a particular interest in the Park.

Management planning

The ACT Parks and Conservation Service intends reforming the management planning process. As a first step, draft Management Plans for Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve and the Lower Molonglo River Corridor, soon to be released for public comment, include several changes from previous Plans. These changes are:

- the inclusion of a Vision statement;
- a statement outlining management principles;
- simplified presentation; and
- clearly identified overall objectives for whole reserve management with specific management objectives for each major management issue.

The Management Plan will be a broad document providing principles and guidelines for decisions and is being simplified for the purpose of providing a readable and practical guide for land managers. Details of concepts and supporting processes will not be included, but will form part of implementation policies and procedures documents.

A review of Namadgi National Park (NNP) Management Plan will commence in the next few months. It was noted that Stephen Johnston has already done some work in preparation for this and his proposed changes to the objectives and zoning system will be taken into consideration. (Postscript: a workshop to progress the review was held in April).

The revised Plan will differ from the 1986 Plan in that what was one national park in 1986 is now two entities in terms



Dr Colin Adrian

of the legislation, the ACT Bimberi Wilderness Area and Namadgi National Park. The Plan will cover both areas. Additional areas will also be covered, notably North Cotter and Tennent-Bluegum, the ridge south of Gibraltar Creek and small areas formerly included in Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve.

Related policy issues

The deterioration at Booroomba Saddle camping area and Orroral Campground and the need to resolve the issue of a campground at Riverview or somewhere else outside the park has led to the development of a camping strategy which will take in Namadgi and other non-urban areas. Survey forms have been handed out to campers and a consultant is currently reviewing these. A draft report will be made available to NPA for comment.

A Walking Strategy is also underway, with particular focus on environmental impact, the need for additional trails and the possibility of converting existing trails to loop trails. The need for brochures will also be examined.

A draft Fuel Management Plan will be made available for public comment shortly. The Plan proposes that mowing or burning in Namadgi will be restricted to adjoining assets such as camping areas, the Lunar Laser and some of the huts.

An Asset Management Strategy is also currently being prepared. Initially, the Strategy will only cover the management of all built assets such as recreational facilities and other infrastructure. However, it will eventually extend to include cultural heritage sites, natural resources and ecological assets.

The ACT Nature Based Tourism Strategy, recently launched by the Minister, provides a framework for the development of a sustainable and profitable nature based tourism industry for the ACT. Included in the Strategy is the need for a public education campaign to promote the awareness of the current planning, land

management and environmental assessment systems in place in the Territory. Particular issues raised in the Strategy include the accreditation and licensing of tourism operators and accommodation.

Activities of special interest

Recent developments in the area of cultural heritage include work done by the NPA and the Kosciusko Huts Association on Orroral Homestead, Tennent Homestead and Brayshaw's homestead, and by the Canberra Alpine Club on Franklin Chalet. The KHA has also commenced work to restore Frank's Hut and Westerman's Homestead and the Canberra Alpine Club has produced a photographic collection on Franklin Chalet.

Also of interest, is an archaeological assessment of the Mt Scabby stone arrangements, by Trish MacDonald in cooperation with representatives from local Aboriginal communities. This concluded that the arrangements are of Aboriginal origin and not European origin as previously thought.

The NNP significant sites database has been updated in the last year and now contains over 500 sites recorded in the park. Many of the significant cultural heritage sites in Namadgi such as huts, Aboriginal art sites and brumby

yards have also been listed on the ACT Interim Heritage Register by the ACT Heritage Council, thus affording additional protection to these sites.

Plans for the conservation of the Aboriginal art at Nursery Swamp are also progressing satisfactorily.

Weed and Pest control programs continue with emphasis on the eradication of blackberries in the Gudgenby area, willows in Orroral Valley and Gudgenby, broom, nodding thistle, St John's Wort, feral pigs, rabbit warrens and goats in general. Currently, the only fox programs are at Boboyan and Mt Clear. A policy for the control of wild dogs/dingoes is under development, and the Kangaroo Advisory Committee is looking at the management of kangaroos on public land.

New works include 1993/4 walk trails at Orroral and signage at the Orroral Tracking Station. Scheduled for completion this year is the heritage trail section link to the Orroral camp area. The old wooden bridge in the Upper Cotter Catchment Wilderness area has been removed due to it becoming unsafe and is currently being replaced. There are plans to replace the Corin ranger house, as the previous one was burned down.

Future issues

There are several issues which need consideration. One is the 'Carrying Capacity' of the park. The current policy is to focus Nature Based Tourism development on Tidbinbilla and Tourist Drive 5 rather than on Namadgi, however, the issue of achieving the right balance regarding the use of the park needs further consideration.

Leases for ACTEW facilities on public land in the Cotter Catchment need to be developed as well as a policy on charging.

The issue of preservation of cultural landscapes versus the need to control weeds and conserve nature will become one of the bigger issues in the long term. Heritage trees are widely regarded as worthy of preservation, but there is a question surrounding management of whole groves of trees or whole landscapes. An example of this is the cleared Gudgenby landscape, which some groups have sought to maintain complete with willows and grazing cattle.

The nature of provision of services at Namadgi Visitor Information Centre also needs to be looked at.

On the issue of trail bikes in North Cotter, a recent law enforcement blitz by NNP staff and the Australian Federal

Police has resulted in reducing the frequency of bikes being used in this area.

The Flora and Fauna Committee initiative is now well established to assist with threatened species in Namadgi such as the North Corroboree Frog at Ginini Flats. This was listed last year as a Wetland of International Significance under the Ramsar agreement. The plan for the Corroboree Frog will also include management of Ginini Flats. Action Plans for threatened fish species found in NNP will also be progressed this year.

Alps memorandum of understanding

The ACT Minister for the Environment recently re-committed the ACT Government to the tri-state Alps Agreement. The Agreement has been in force for 10 years now. Under the Agreement, all parties commit funds to an annual program for worthwhile projects in the Alpine Parks. Highlights of last year's program were:

- two workshops for tour operators using the parks to assist them in offering a better service to their clients. A session for local tour operators will take place next month as part of the 'Front Line of the Alps' training course;
- the establishment of permanent sites to monitor vegetation response to fire. This will assist in making ecologically sound decisions about fire management in places like the Cotter catchment which supplies most of Canberra's water;
- production of a weed control manual for Alps parks;
- the production of pamphlets promoting minimal impact codes for visitors using mountain bikes, canoes and rafts; and
- training for rangers on aspects of cross border law enforcement.

An issue of concern which will need to be resolved is the prohibition under the Alps MOU of mountain bikes in Wilderness areas. Currently, mountain bikes still use these areas. Input from NPA will be sought to help resolve the issue.

Vision for Namadgi

Namadgi National Park including the Bimberi Wilderness, will exemplify efficient and effective land management as an integral part of the tri-state Alpine

Parks system. It will be recognised nationally and internationally as a natural area where bio-diversity conservation is paramount and all human activities, including the storage, release and off-take of water supplies, are consistent with ecological sustainability.

The range of low-key recreational and tourist activities will be extended whilst maintaining the character and natural qualities of our own National Park.

Acknowledgement

The expert assistance of staff from the ACT Parks and Conservation Service and the NPA in preparing this address is acknowledged.

Cathy Tighe

Liaison on the Australian Alps walking track

continued from page 3

The rest of the time was spent setting down the issues that need to be resolved for consistent management of the track. Some things discussed were factors affecting signs and marking, maintenance costs, feeder tracks and alternative routes. Discussion on alternative routes (such as the Main Range being an alternative to the Kosciusko road) brought out the problems in maintaining the Main Range track. The remote setting for much of the track was highlighted with the need to keep it vehicle free, and restrict horses, mountain bikes and commercial operations. Problems of enforcement in wilderness areas and the need within a few years for permits in some areas to restrict numbers were discussed. Facilities such as toilets will be needed at specific locations, but camping areas should be suggested rather than specified.

The meeting produced a sound framework for the strategy working group and by the end of the meeting this group had been set up. Chris Roper of the Canberra Bushwalking Club represents ACT and NSW community groups and Geoff Young is the ACT Parks and Conservation representative.

The community group representatives were all very pleased to have had the opportunity to participate and I am sure the rangers found value in the opportunity to compare problems and solutions.

Eleanor Stodart

Focusing our vision on Namadgi

The forthcoming revision of the Namadgi National Park management plan presents the opportunity to safeguard the future of this magnificent area. But it also could open the way for developments which would be to Namadgi's long-term detriment.

Which direction the revised plan takes will depend to a considerable extent on the input from the NPA - not just the general committee, but all our members, from the Conservation Council and other conservation groups.

The fundamental message we need to communicate is that Namadgi has been well managed over the past 13 years. This has ensured that its high conservation and cultural values and wilderness quality have been protected whilst providing for many thousands of visitors pursuing varied recreations.

Furthermore, Namadgi has been well served by a management plan that Park management still finds relevant and useful. While the plan needs revision and updating, most of it should be retained. By at least one interstate comparison, the plan was ahead of its time in 1986 in ruling out construction of new fire trails, identifying the need for closure and rehabilitation of those that were no longer required or were not sustainable, and prohibiting horse riding in wilderness and sub-alpine areas.

Even at this very early stage, my concerns about the direction the revised plan might take have been reinforced by a first-cut of a draft vision statement that was included in Dr Colin Adrian's address to the NPA on 20 February:

Namadgi National Park - including the Bimberi Wilderness - will exemplify efficient and effective land management as an integral part of the tri-state Alpine Parks system.

It will be recognised nationally and internationally as a natural area where bio-diversity conserv-

ation is paramount and all human activities - including the storage, release and take-off of water supply - are consistent with ecological sustainability.

The range of low-key recreational and tourist activities will be extended whilst maintaining the character and natural qualities of our own national park.

The statement has a number of deficiencies and they do need to be rectified because a vision statement tends to set the broad direction for the whole of the plan. Their content and emphasis therefore can have immense influence; they are certainly not just a set of high-sounding principles.

I begin with a critique of the given draft vision statement and conclude with an alternative.

The first and second statements should be reversed to properly recognise that the primary role of Namadgi, and all national parks, is nature or bio-diversity conservation.

Why the concentration on 'the storage, release and take-off of water supplies' in relation to ecological sustainability? A major reason for the relatively uncompromised quality of a large part of Namadgi is the strict controls since 1914 on activities in the Cotter catchment. I don't know what plans ACTEW might have up its corporate sleeve, but I would suggest that on available evidence, far greater threats to ecological sustainability are posed by the spread of weeds and feral animals and increased recreational and tourist pressures.

It is unnecessary to state that Namadgi includes the Bimberi wilderness, well at least part of it. And we should be consistently referring to national park management, not just the generic "land management".

But my major objections relate to the third paragraph. While it is very similar to statements in the synopsis on page 1 of the 1986 plan, the pressures for tourist developments and access in national parks

have grown considerably in recent years.

I believe it is presumptuous to commit to extending "low-key recreational and tourist activities" without firstly assessing whether this is desirable or feasible within the paramount constraints of bio-diversity conservation, the Park's distinctive identity, and likely available resources.

As a limiting criterion, "maintaining the character and natural qualities of our own national park" is too weak and could accommodate a range of quite inappropriate developments including four-wheel drive tours in the wilderness area and rustic, so called "wilderness lodges" for commercial tour groups like those in Tasmania's Cradle Mountain Lake St Clair and those proposed for Wilson's Promontory in Victoria.

At the very least, the statement could have followed the line of the ACT Nature Based Tourism Strategy: "...Namadgi will be reserved primarily for lower-impact activities focusing on the wilderness aspects of the park."

The resources issue is all too often overlooked in management plans, possibly because it's thought to be too hard; "we can't predict what the budgetary allocation might be in five years time." One could, however, very confidently predict that Namadgi will not receive any increased financial support from current or future Governments. Additional income will have to be generated from the users. Yet, as the Parks and Conservation marketing strategy and options plan indicated, there will be no windfall profits if visitor fees and licensing of tour operators are introduced.

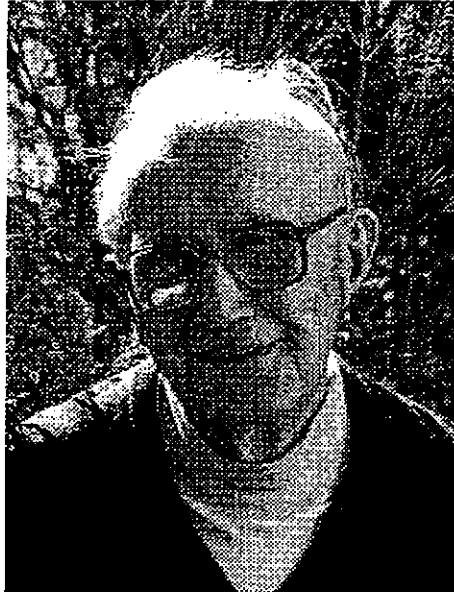
If that calculation is correct and if it is reasonable to presume that there is little or no spare capacity in the staff resources, we might conclude that any significant extension of recreational and tourism activities in Namadgi may

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Alastair Morrison - life member

At the March general meeting of the Association, President, Eleanor Stodart, presented Alastair Morrison with a framed certificate of life membership of the NPA. The certificate, shown here, carries a tribute to Alastair's contribution to the Association.

It also acknowledges the support of his late wife, Hedda, for the Association's causes and objectives.



Alastair Morrison
(Photo: Reg Alder)

LIFE MEMBERSHIP OF THE NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION (ACT) INCORPORATED

ALASTAIR MORRISON was elected a Life Member of the National Parks Association on a recommendation of the Committee by a unanimous vote of his fellow Members at a General Meeting held on the sixteenth of March, nineteen ninety-five.

The Members of the National Parks Association have made this award to Alastair, for the support he and his wife Hedda gave to the Aims and Objectives of the NPA. We thank Alastair for his unceasing support for conservation organisations with a broad community base, exemplified by his donations, his articles for the "NPA Bulletin", for his indefatigable letter writing to the editors of newspapers and for his participation in work parties and outings where he always made new members welcome.

Alastair's most significant achievement for ACT conservation and the National Parks Association for which we wish to give our special thanks was the development from an idea to a successfully completed project of "A Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT". Alastair's generous donation and assistance made the preparation and publication of the guide possible.

For and on behalf of the Members of the National Parks Association.

Eleanor Stodart
President

Beverly Harwood
Immediate Past President



Three Mile Dam

A party of seventeen spent the Canberra Day long weekend camping in various degrees of luxury at Three Mile Dam near Kiandra. Dianne Thompson led us as we explored the bush and some of the mining relics in the area. On Saturday afternoon we had two short walks, the first on the Goldseekers Train to Jimmy Reid's Stamper, shown in this photo by Olive Buckman.

Then after walking around Three Mile Dam we sat in the last rays of the sun to enjoy the evening. As we sipped drinks we passed around photos of the Tasmanian walk some had recently been on and heard various likely and unlikely accounts of their trip.

On Sunday we started walking from the Mt Selwyn carpark to link up with the Table Top Mountain fire trail. The morning mist lifted to another superb day, the alpine shrubs were fragrant and Mt Jagungal was clear on the horizon. At Four Mile Saddle we had morning tea and after consulting Harry Hill's recent book, *Best Bushwalks in the Kosciusko National Park*, which is full of

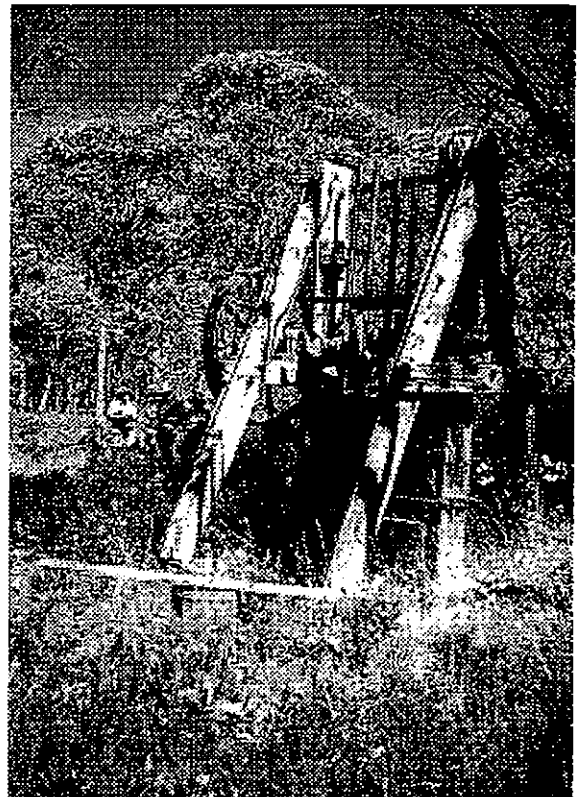
interesting information, we had a good look at the historic wooden gate there.

Some decided to go down to Four Mile Hut while the bulk of the party continued along the fire trail for two or three kilometres before diverging eastwards for the Elaine Mine, the objective for the day. We had a fascinating morning peering down mine shafts, finding old water races, dams, alluvial workings, an old steam traction engine and finally the mine entrance and ruins at Elaine. We had our lunch there and pondered about the people who left their mark so clearly all through these hills.

On Monday the group drove to the foot of Gooandra Hill about nine kilometres north of Kiandra on the Snowy Mountains Highway and, after climbing the hill and admiring the panorama, went down to Gooandra Homestead to see the work the Kosciusko Huts

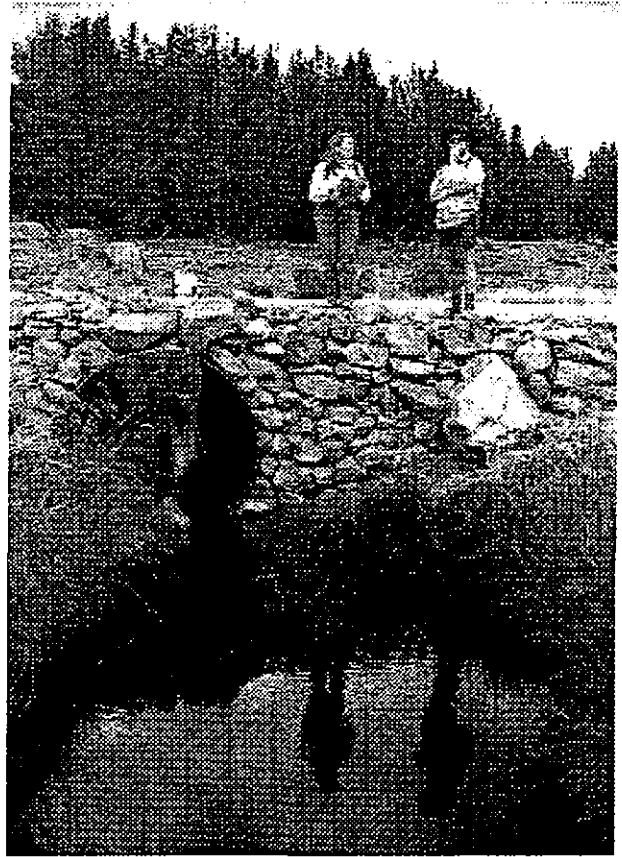
Association had put into its restoration.

Muriel Edwards



Jimmy Reid's Stamper
(Photo: O. Buckman)





Boboyan Pines clearing

With the continuing dry weather, felling of the Boboyan Pines is still proceeding and has extended into the western plantation. Eleanor Stodart visited the area on 30 January when the Parks and Conservation Service and ACT Forests, announced to the media, that felling had started. Then on 22 March Ann Connelly, Project Manager for the rehabilitation of the area for Parks and Conservation, led a group of NPA members over the area. These photographs come from both occasions.

Top, left to right -

The harvester machine in action, stripping branches from a tree it has just felled. Spindly gums behind have been carefully left to provide a start in rehabilitation.

Rings in a reject, a tree not good enough to use for timber, show initial good growth but defects later due to lack of trimming and other maintenance. The many rejects will need to be burnt, but at least nutrients will be retained on the site. Photos - Eleanor Stodart

Ann Connelly recording rainfall from a station in the Hospital Creek Area.

Ann Connelly and Eleanor Stodart inspect the new culvert on Bogong Creek. Rocks in the long pipe provide shelter to allow native fish to swim through.

Bottom - NPA members have a close look at the off duty harvest-er. Photos - Len Haskew.

PARKWATCH

National park or sandmine?

The W.A. State Government is likely to permit highly destructive sand mining adjacent to the unique and fragile Lake Jasper in D'Entrecasteaux National Park on the State's southern coast. A Department of Conservation and Land Management study identified serious risk from the proposed mine to the park's wetlands, the home of many species of waterbirds. A significant area was recently excised from the National Park to facilitate sand mining which may occur within 300 metres of Lake Jasper's summer shore line. According to the D'Entrecasteaux Coalition, which is fighting the proposal, even the environment officer of the company planning to conduct the mining has conceded that 'full and complete rehabilitation will be impossible.'

Wild, Autumn 1997, No 64.

Wilson's Promontory submission

A pioneer bushwalker and conservationist, the veteran of many campaigns, remarked to me some years ago that each generation needs to remain vigilant to safeguard national parks. They are never safe, she said, and will always be open to abuse by government, exploitative recreational and commercial interests and mismanagement. The battle is never won. Merely held over. So it seems in Australia today. This generation is being forced to regroup and mount the battlements in defence of those conservation victories of the past.

National Parks are under threat in all sorts of ways. In some States, management agencies are being starved of funds. In others, management agencies have been subsumed into more general land management bodies, whose primary aims conflict with the purposes of national park; thus losing their focus, identity and effectiveness. New threats have appeared. Perhaps the most pernicious being the four wheel drive and "traditional" equestrian users. Ironically, both groups, who have generally opposed the creation of national parks, now want to exploit them.

The threat of governments, seeing the commercialisation of national parks as a means of generating tourist dollars, is currently present in all States and territories. The Victorian Government, is the leader in this push, with the Wilson's Promontory issue the best known, so far. The facts should by now be well known. In late 1996, the Victorian National Parks Service issued a draft Master Plan for Tidal River, and the Wilson's Promontory Draft Management Plan. These proposed that two new lodges be built at Tidal River to accommodate 150 and 45 people, respectively. With these developments was proposed a series of serviced huts/standing tent camps for the private use of commercially guided walking

tours in the southern part of the park.

These proposals enraged the conservation movement in Victoria and through a brilliant campaign, spearheaded by the Victorian National Parks Association, the proposals were withdrawn for further consideration.

Naturally the ACT NPA has become involved in the debate over Wilson's Promontory. Many of our members know the area well and were horrified by the initial proposals. This Association wrote to the Victorian Minister for Conservation and Land Management, the Hon Marie Tehan MP, pointing out that the proposals to allow large scale commercial development in the park were anathema to the primary purpose of this and all national parks: nature conservation. We pointed out that parks are often the last areas of intact habitat for numerous wild species and serve as essential gene pools for biodiversity. The commercialisation of national parks by the Victorian Government, we stated, can only lead to the loss of biodiversity and the creeping destruction of these parks. The minister was urged to forget the short term and illusionary monetary gains to be obtained by lodges, commercial huts and the like, and to focus on the non-economic benefits of parks: the conservation of environmental resources, the protection of natural and cultural sites, the provision of research opportunities, education and recreation. It was pointed out, that the Victorian Government held parks in trust for the present and future generations and they were not government utilities available for short term commercial gain.

The battle to preserve the unique qualities of Wilson's Promontory is far from won. The way has been left open for the Victorian Government to promote continued development at Tidal River and in the south end of the park. The Kennett

Government does not give up easily as was seen in the Albert Park tragedy. However, it has managed to galvanise the conservation movement to greater vigilance. We, in the ACT, need to learn from this and be prepared to stand up in defence of some of the more damaging proposals that are bound to reappear for Namadgi National Park.

Timothy Walsh

Focusing our vision on Namadgi

continued from p. 6

require a significant shift of resources away from existing work.

I would suggest that the following vision statement is far more appropriate for the revised management plan:

1. Namadgi National Park will be efficiently and effectively managed with the primary objective of preserving its high conservation and cultural values, and its distinctive wild and relatively undisturbed character.
2. Management will recognise that Namadgi has considerable significance to the ACT and surrounding region, as well as to Australia, as a major component of the tri-state alpine national park system.
3. Management will provide for, and may extend recreational and tourist activities within the Park, but only where they are consistent with the primary objective (1 above) and where extension will not require a significant medium to long term shift of resources away from activities relating to the primary objective.

Stephen Johnston,
Convener, Environment
Sub-committee

NPA outings program

June 1997 – September 1997

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.

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.

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



1 June Saturday special event
Yerrabi Track Tenth Anniversary
Leader: Reg Alder

Ref: Yaouk 1:25 000
Phone: 254 2240

Come and enjoy a birthday walk along our Yerrabi Track to the 1489 metre Boboyan Trig. The walk is only 4 kms, and the 150 metre climb is rewarded by panoramic views of all the main features of Namadgi National Park – a great spot for a picnic lunch with your fellow NPA members. Meet at the Kambah Village shops at 10am, or if this does not suit, find your own way out. The Yerrabi Track carpark is on the right hand side of the Tharwa-Adaminaby road, 8 kms past the end of the bitumen at Gudgenby. 120 kms, \$24 per car.

15 June Sunday daywalk 2A/B/C/D
Time travel in southern Namadgi Refs: Yaouk, Shannons Flat 1:25 000
Leader: Martin Chalk Phone: 268 4864 (w), 292 3502 (h)

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. Visit Brayshaw's Hut, Waterhole Hut, and Westermans Homestead. Will also look at border survey markers and old yards and fences. An opportunity to revisit these historic sites in a winter setting. 150 kms, \$30 per car.

18 June daywalk
Wednesday walk
Leader: Max Lawrence Phone: 288 1370

The June edition of our series of monthly mid-week walks. Phone leader for details, which will be determined nearer the date.

21 June Saturday daywalk 2A/B/D
Mt Coree and Devils Peak Ref: Cotter Dam 1:25 000
Leader: Matthew Higgins Phone: 247 7285

Crunch frost in the northern Brindabellas this winter. We'll climb Coree from Blundell's Arboretum, then walk to Coree Flats, climb Devil's Peak, then return to Blundells. Some history, a good deal of great native forest, excellent views from both peaks. Steep climbs, about 14 kms. Book with leader, numbers limited. 90 kms, \$18 per car.

29 June Sunday daywalk 2A
Mount Tennent Ref: Williamsdale 1:25 000
Leader: Col McAlister Phone: 288 4171

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. A great walk from Namadgi Visitors Centre to the top of Mt Tennent, a climb of 750 metres to excellent views over Southern Canberra, the Naas Valley, and Namadgi. Return by fire trail down the western side. Different parts of the Alpine Walking Track are used going up and coming down. Short car shuffle. 40 kms, \$8 per car.

5 July Saturday car tour
Southern Highlands Devonshire Tea Crawl
Leader: Steven Forst Phone: 279 1326 (work), 251 6817 (home)

Meet just north of the Dickson lights on Northbourne Avenue at 8.30am. A drive to visit scenic spots in the Southern Highlands around Bundanoon and Fitzroy Falls, interspersed with stops at some of the Devonshire Tea houses in the area. This trip will go ahead whatever the weather. 300kms, \$60 per car.

13 July Sunday family stroll and picnic 1A
Molonglo Gorge Ref: ACT 1:100 000
Leader: Col McAlister Phone: 288 4171

Meet at Canberra Railway Station at 9.30am. A 6km morning stroll along this interesting gorge so close to Canberra, returning in time for a picnic or BBQ lunch and family get together. All on tracks, with some rocks to cross and a short climb. Bring your own everything. 30kms, \$6 per car.

20 July Sunday daywalk 2A
Horse Gully Hut Ref: Colinton 1:25 000
Leader: Col McAlister Phone: 288 4171

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.00am. From the Mt Clear Campground, follow the Naas Valley fire trail to Horse Gully Hut and return. A lovely walk through the valley and open woodland. Time permitting, a brief call into nearby Brayshaw's Hut. 140kms, \$28 per car.

23 July daywalk
Wednesday walk
Leader: Mike Smith Phone: 286 2984

The July edition of our series of monthly mid-week walks. Phone leader for details, which will be determined nearer the date.

27 July Sunday daywalk 2A/B/C
Square Rock and McKeahnie Trig Ref: Corin 1:25 000
Leader: Mick Kelly Phone: 241 2330

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. Walk on track from Smokers Gap to Square Rock. From Square Rock we will continue on through the 'bush' to McKeahnie Trig for lunch. Return will be via Smokers Flat and Smokers Trail. Expect section from Square Rock to the Trig will be scrubby. Short car shuffle. 80kms, \$16 per car.

30 July to 1 August Wednesday to Friday packwalk and camp 2A/B/C
Naas River history excursion Refs: Colinton, Michelago 1:25 000
Leader: Graham Scully Phone: 230 3352

Joint NPA/KHA walk. The Naas River was an important route through to the snow country for both the aboriginals and the early pastoralists, and there are many known sites of historical interest. This walk will explore some of those sites. On Wednesday morning we will set out from Caloola Farm for Max and Bert Oldfield's hut in a secluded hanging valley, where we will set up a tent camp. On Thursday we will explore further up the Naas with day packs, returning to camp. On Friday we return to Caloola. Be prepared for numerous river crossings (not a problem if the water remains low), and below-freezing temps at night. In the event of bad weather we will have the shelter of the hut for cooking and socialising. An option for those interested is to spend Tuesday afternoon and/or evening in comfortable farmhouse accommodation at Caloola at a cost of \$8 per person. Numbers limited. Book with leader before 20 July.

2 August Saturday daywalk 2A/B/C/E
East Booroomba Hill Refs: Corin Dam, Williamsdale 1:25 000
Leader: Stephen Johnston Phone: 254 3738

Phone leader for details and bookings. A circuit walk down the Alpine Track to Bushfold Flats, then up the ridge of the unnamed hill east of Booroomba Rocks to a rock slab on the summit which gives great views of the whole Blue Gum Creek area. Mostly offtrack – could be fairly scrubby in patches. 60kms, \$12 per car.

3 August Sunday ski tour 2A
Perisher (or Brindabella) Ski Trip Ref: Kosciusko 1:50 000
Leader: Mike Smith Phone: 286 2984

Contact leader by preceding Wednesday for details. An easy to medium ski trip in the Perisher area, visiting the Porcupine for views into Thredbo valley, and then on to Charlottes Pass for lunch, or shortening trip to return via Betts Camp. If there is good snow on the Brindabellas and weather and road conditions permit, this outing may be changed for a ski tour along the road from Mt Ginini carpark to Mt Gingera and return. Perisher: 400kms, \$80 per car. (Brindabella: 120 kms, \$24 per car)

10 August Sunday walk 3AB
Naas Creek Ref: Yaouk 1:25 000
Leader: Frank Clements Phone: 231 7005

A return walk to Naas Creek along the Old Boboyan Road from the locked gate, making a short detour through bush to the Hospital Creek hut on the 'out' leg. The road is undulating with no steep climbs. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. 100kms, \$20 per car.

17 August Sunday daywalk 1A
Mt Budawang Refs: Batemans Bay Forestry map, and CMW Budawangs sketch map.
Leader: Mick Kelly Phone: 241 2330

Meet at Canberra Railway Station carpark at 8.00am. Drive to carpark at base of Mt Budawang via Braidwood and Mongarlowe. A short but steepish walk on fire trail to Mt Budawang summit, for fine views of surrounding country including The Castle and Mt Pigeon House. Afternoon tea and stroll around Braidwood afterwards. Road from Mongarlowe to carpark may be slippery if there has been recent rain in the area. 200kms, \$40 per car.

23 August Saturday daywalk 3A/D/E
Mount Gudgenby Ref: Yaouk 1:25 000
Leader: Martin Chalk Phone: 268 4864 (w), 292 3502 (h)
Meet at Kambah Village shops at 7.30am. An early start for a demanding day's walk from the remains of the Boboyan pine forest up 700 metres through patches of thick scrub, regrowth and mighty rock slabs to the possibly snowy summit of magnificent Mt Gudgenby. 100kms, \$20 per car.

27 August daywalk 4A/B/C
Wednesday walk Ref: ACT 1:100 000
Leader: Max Lawrence Phone: 288 1370

The August edition of our series of monthly mid-week walks. Phone leader for details, which will be determined nearer the date.

31 August 3A/B/C/E
Murrumbidgee Corridor work party Ref: ACT 1:100 000
Foreman: Len Haskew (phone 281 4268)
Apprentice: Max Lawrence (phone 288 1370)

The weekend will be spent removing pine wildings from the banks of the Murrumbidgee between Kambah Pool and Jews Corner. The area we will work in is the habitat for some significant, but threatened, native vegetation and our work will have considerable environmental worth. Come either for the Saturday or Sunday, or even better, come for both days. You will be presented with a golden opportunity to fine tune your pine wilding removal skills, and will be accredited to work on the Boboyan Pines area at a later date! Phone Len or Max to volunteer your services.

6-7 September weekend packwalk 3A/D/E/F
Euranbene Mountain and Woila Clearing Refs: Badja, Snowball 1:25 000
Leader: Phil Gatenby Phone: 254 3094

Contact leader by Wednesday for details of this partly exploratory walk in Deua National Park. Camp at a clearing on Woila Creek. A climb of almost 1100 metres on the second day. 360kms, \$72 per car.

6 September Saturday ski tour 3A
Four Mile Hut Ref: Mt Selwyn Ski Touring Map
Leader: Steven Forst Phone: 279 1326 (w), 251 6817 (h)

Contact leader by Wednesday. A day trip to Four Mile Hut for lunch from either Kiandra or Selwyn Quarry, depending on the snow and weather conditions. 300kms, \$60 per car.

7-14 September one week packwalk 3A/B
Grose Valley Refs: Katoomba, Mt Wilson 1:25 000
Leaders: Pat and Eric Pickering Phone: 286 2128

Joint NPA/FBI walk. Bus/train to Strathfield, train to Leura. Four – five day walk through the beautiful Grose Valley in the Blue Mountains. Some steep climbs and scrambles. Return from Mount Victoria Station. Contact leaders early.

13 September Saturday daywalk 2C/D
'The Bog' Refs: Michelago, Colinton 1:25 000
Leader: Matthew Higgins Phone: 247 7285

The walk commences at the end of the bitumen at Gudgenby, crosses Dry Creek and climbs up and 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. The walk is entirely offtrack, involves a total climb of around 800 metres, and includes some patches of fairly dense scrub to get through. Book with leader. Numbers limited. 100kms, \$20 per car.

20 September Saturday daywalk 4A/B/C
Cotter Rocks Ref: ACT 1:100 000
Leader: Mick Kelly Phone: 241 2330

Meet at 8.00am at Kambah Village shops. A return walk of 23km from the Orroral gate, mostly along a fire trail and tracks, with some scrub on the final climb to the summit. 100kms, \$20 per car.

24 September daywalk 3A/B/C/F
Wednesday walk Refs: Bendoura, Bombay 1:25 000
Leader: David Large Phone: 291 4830

The September edition of our series of monthly mid-week walks. Phone leader for details, which will be determined nearer the date.

27-28 September weekend packwalk 3A/B/C/F
Mt Lowden – Mt Palerang Refs: Bendoura, Bombay 1:25 000
Leader: Stephen Johnston Phone 254 3738

An exploratory, mostly offtrack, walk along some very prominent mountains of the Great Divide – Lowden, Major and Palerang. An interesting range of vegetation, and spectacular views from Palerang. Walk will be deferred if weather unsuitable. Phone leader early for details and bookings. 120kms, \$24 per car.

October 3A/B/C/F
Great North Walk Ref: ACT 1:100 000
Leader: David Large Phone: 291 4830

David is considering walking selected sections of the Great North Walk from Sydney to Newcastle during the month of October. He would like to hear from people who may be interested in joining him.

Workshop on planning for reserves and Namadgi Park

On 10 April, the Parks and Conservation Service held a half-day workshop at Forestry House, Yarralumla, on Management Planning for Reserves and Namadgi National Park. As its title suggests, its purpose was to encourage discussion of general park planning issues and also to raise issues that should be considered in reviewing the 1986 Namadgi National Park Management Plan. This review is due to begin in June this year.

The workshop was attended by about thirty people, mainly from the Parks & Conservation Service, the NPA and other interested organisations. Discussion was opened by Keith Williams, who is directly responsible for park planning in the Parks & Conservation Service, and papers were given by Arthur Georges, chair of the Nature Conservation & Namadgi Sub-Committee of the Environment Advisory Council, and by Stephen Johnston. The workshop then divided into groups of four or five people, to discuss some of the park planning issues that had been identified in the preceding sessions.

Stephen mainly addressed the importance of zoning in park planning and management, and suggested possible zone types for the next Namadgi Plan. He also discussed a 'looming threat' for

Namadgi and other parks; and he pursues these issues in a contribution to this Bulletin. Arthur Georges discussed some general principles for park planning, that might be expected to guide the coming review of the current Namadgi Plan.

Following the workshop, Arthur Georges produced a draft discussion paper titled 'Generic attributes of good management plans for protected areas'. This has been circulated for comment to members of the Nature Conservation & Namadgi Sub-Committee (including the NPA representative, Eleanor Stodart), with the view in a covering letter that 'if we get this (ie, the discussion paper) right, we can expect the document to have influence both within and outside the ACT'. The intention is to submit the final version of the discussion paper to the Environment Advisory Council as a consensus document.

The NPA will be making its comments on the paper in the near future. A few of the recommendations in the draft paper that may be contentious or more difficult to implement are:

'That a management plan be viewed primarily as an agreement among the stakeholders on the purpose of the protected area, the values represented there, the

objectives of management, the process by which the plan will be implemented and the method by which its achievements will be monitored.' (*Comment: Who are 'the stakeholders'?*)

'Conservation of natural and cultural values is the over-riding purpose for national parks. Other purposes are acceptable provided that they do not conflict in any important way with this primary function.' (*Comment: How is 'any important way' to be interpreted, and by whom?*)

'An important issue is how prescriptive to be at the expense of flexibility to respond to changed or unforeseen circumstances...the level of detail in the Namadgi National Park Management Plan has served us well and should be retained in the draft revised document.' (*Comment: What details should we be prescriptive about?*)

Perhaps the most important point to note about the workshop is that it was held, and that interested groups outside the Parks & Conservation Service were invited. Open and continuing consultation between the Service and interest groups such as the NPA is vital for the future of our parks, and the workshop demonstrated that the Service is committed to this.

Robin Miller

Mid week walks

In the current Outings Program, mid week walks have been changed so as to be held on the fourth Wednesday of the month from July.

This fits in with the programs of the other clubs which offer mid week walks so that, between them, the four clubs provide a walk on each of the four weeks of the month.

The Bulletin Working Group

This issue of the Bulletin was prepared to the "edited copy" stage by the Bulletin Working Group made up of Association members. Graeme Wicks has joined me to form an editorial committee for the Bulletin.

We would welcome assistance from any interested members, in particular, someone willing to take charge of distribution of the Bulletin. **Syd Comfort**

You are cordially invited to the opening of a photographic exhibition by

Basia Meder

Awakening Dreams

Main Exhibition

Around the World in an Aussie Hat

18-29 June 1997

Opening by Senator Kate Lundy: 6pm, Friday 20 June

Australian National Capital Artists Gallery
1 Rosevear Place, Dickson, ACT
Gallery hours: Wed-Sun 12-4 pm

Old days recalled

The living present and the historic past joined at Orroral Homestead on a perfect autumn day on April 19 when descendants and members of the McKeahnie and Gregory families and others with links to the area gathered to celebrate the building's restoration.

For them, the historic occasion was also a family occasion as they reminisced about their relatives.

For others it was a chance to get a personal feel for the early times in the Orroral Valley and to hear the locals talk about family stories handed down from one generation to the next.

Nearly 100 people with local family ties, NPA members, members of the Parks and Conservation Service and others gathered at the homestead to watch the Minister for Environment, Land and Planning, Gary Humphries, cut a blue ribbon to officially mark the completion of the restoration work.

The Minister said the conservation works on the Orroral Homestead showed what could be achieved by co-operation between the NPA and the ACT Parks and Conservation Service. He hoped the NPA and the Parks and Conservation Service would continue to work together on other



L to R: Alan & Pam Ray, Reg Alder, Matthew Higgins, Robin Millar and Beverley Hammond at Orroral. (Photo: Max Lawrence)

projects—of which there were many.

Mr Humphries said anyone seeing the condition of the buildings in 1981 could have been excused for thinking restoration was a hopeless exercise and for walking away from the task.

"But you didn't walk away," he said, adding that such projects involving the preservation of our cultural heritage were of immense importance to our future.

The Manager of Namadgi Park, Peter Hann, introduced the speakers.

Andrew McKeahnie, speaking on behalf of descendants of Archibald and Mary McKeahnie, thanked all who had worked on the restoration.

The NPA President, Eleanor Stodart, said that although the celebration was taking place 16 years after the start of the project, the result demonstrated that people who cared would hang in there and keep chipping away till the right

thing was done. She noted that the working parties did not always have such pleasant, sunny conditions as those prevailing on the celebration day.

NPA Past President Beverley Hammond recalled that working parties sometimes

carried on under adverse conditions, and on one day endured strong winds and freezing temperatures, and only gave up when it began to snow.

The first working party, comprising 30 people, got together on 10 October 1982, Beverley said. A show of hands revealed that six of those originals were present on April 19.

There was great interest in the comprehensive series of photographs by Reg Alder, Fiona MacDonald Brand, Len Haskew, and Di Thompson showing the restoration project from beginning to end.

Also shown were earlier photographs and copies of early documents and fragments of newspapers that had been used to line the interior walls.

A very twentieth century touch to the display was given by the presence of an aeroplane propeller.

Gordon Gregory who lived on the Orroral property from 1947, when his father and two uncles bought the freehold from Andrew Cunningham, until the early 1980s, told the gathering the propeller, which had been left in the Orroral Homestead,



Dianne Bostjancic putting in a good word for NPA with the Minister. (Photo: Len Haskew)

was "the last relic of Andy's plane".

NPA members and descendants got together after the formalities and swapped stories and revived old memories while they enjoyed refreshments provided by the Parks and Conservation Service.

Graeme Wicks



Orroral restoration completion day. (Photo: Reg Alder)

Nursery Swamp rock art conservation study

Since bushfires in 1983 damaged mature trees and destroyed understorey adjacent to the Nursery Swamp Aboriginal art site, invading lichens have spread over the rock art and adjacent sheltered rock surfaces, particularly during the periods 1984-8 and 1992-3. Lichen is again covering the art and there is an urgent need for action as lichens are known to cause serious physical and chemical damage to rock and pigment surfaces.

Following up a recommendation in the 1996 Plan of Management, the National Parks Association applied for an ACT Heritage Grant to study the factors promoting lichen growth and to develop a control program. A grant of \$6380 has been approved to carry out the first stage of this conservation study. This autumn observation stage being co-ordinated by archaeologist, Dr. Kelvin Officer, involves one week of micro meteorological site monitoring and data analysis using a micro climate model developed by two of the consultants, Dr. Ian MacLeod and Dr. Bruce Ford. It will also involve a biological investigation of the immediate environment to assess the role of lichens and other organisms in the problem.

Three further seasonal observation periods will also be required to complete the study. Funding for these and for the production of a report containing recommendations for the conservation of the site is being sought through an Association proposal for the 1997/8 Heritage Grant funding period.

These studies will lead to an understanding of the environmental factors promoting lichen invasion and to the development of control methods which will reduce further damage to the rock art.

Clive Hurlstone

PARKWATCH

When woodlands ruled the Daintree

North Queensland's tropical rainforests are celebrated as living links with Australia's ancient past. Their gnarled, moss-clad trees, and humus-sweet smell of earth mingling with rotting leaves, are vivid reminders of when Australia was part of the southern super-continent of Gondwana.

Until the early 1980's it was widely accepted that rainforest vegetation had been steadfast in these locations, ever since their Gondwanic origin more than 100 million years before. But according to new source of data on their history, large tracts of tropical rainforests may not be ancient after all. Ancient types of forest, yes - including descendants of some of the first flowering plants - but re-established, during the past few thousand years, after a period of being overrun by *Eucalyptus* woodlands prone to frequent fire.

Researchers kept finding pieces of charcoal in the soil profile beneath what they thought to be continuous rainforest. The discoveries were puzzling, because rainforest is not usually penetrated by fire, the closed canopy preventing the growth of annual grasses as fuel. But, here, in undisturbed soils, kilometres away from the nearest *Eucalyptus* woodland, was charcoal. Carbon dating confirmed that within this extensive and important rainforest area, *Eucalyptus* woodland previously occurred over at least a 13 000 year period.

The evidence of the dynamic nature of tropical rainforests poses a challenge to assumptions about what conservation should protect. Should it focus on keeping landscapes as they are now, as they were at another time, (such as 1770) as some people suggest, or should we allow the natural process of change to continue unimpeded?

The research also suggests that some of the areas where rainforest species survived may not now be

available as refuges to carry these species through future periods of climatic change. Many of the river valleys and rich alluvial sites which may have acted as 'Noah's arks' of the rainforest plant and animal species in previous glacial peaks, have, during the past 200 years been cleared, dammed, farmed and otherwise modified.

Ecos, Autumn 1997.

Snake and chips

Wild Victorian carpet pythons have been implanted with microchips to aid research into this threatened species. The chips can also help identify pythons caught illegally. Implanting microchips follows on from a recent enforcement initiative aimed at deterring the illegal taking of pythons from the wild. Under the current Wildlife Act 1975, courts can impose a maximum penalty of \$10000 and seize specimens and equipment used in committing an offence.

Outdoors, Autumn 1997, No 10.

Reef dumping

Just weeks before a major military exercise at Shoalwater Bay, the Federal Government introduced amendments to the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act* to allow Australian and Allied warships to dump waste on the reef. The waste may include bilge and waste oil, but the US warship *Kilauea* had already dumped 50 smoke grenades into the water at Magnetic Island.

NSW National Parks Journal, April, 1997.

Strategy puts conservation first

Enlightened self interest has put conservation first among the 10 principles to guide the development of nature based tourism in the ACT. Conservation is recognised as not only good for the environment, but as good for business too.

The Government in February released a report on the development of a strategy for nature based tourism in the ACT, titled *Promoting the Natural Capital*.

It outlines a strategy to give new meaning to Canberra's nickname "the Bush Capital" by making the ACT's natural assets better known and developing income from nature based tourism.

The strategy includes integrating tourism and land management, infrastructure development, and the roles of industry and the government.

The NPA was invited to comment on the draft, and through these comments had input into the final report.

Promoting the Natural Capital is a comprehensive, 48-page report that builds on previous studies and draws on research in other parts of Australia and overseas, but it is by no means the last word.

Positive principles and policies are set out in general terms, and no doubt there will be ongoing debate on questions of interpretation and implementation.

The NPA is having input into finalising of management plans for all parks and reserves, one of the first initiatives arising from the strategy, and is working at getting more detail than has been contained in drafts issued so far.

Fast growing segment

More than 53 per cent of the ACT's area of about 2400 sq km is national park or reserve—the highest proportion of any Australian jurisdiction and possibly the highest in the world. There are also significant areas of commercial forest and attractions such as the

Botanic Gardens and the National Aquarium.

The Minister for Environment, Land and Planning, Gary Humphries, says in the report's Foreword that the Territory has a special combination of natural features and characteristics that make it increasingly attractive as a destination for nature based tourism—one of the fastest growing segments of the tourism industry.

"The ACT Nature Based Tourism Strategy provides a framework for developing the local industry to meet the long term conservation, social and economic interests of the ACT community," Mr Humphries says.

Tourism already makes a significant contribution to the ACT's economy. In the year to March 1995 the ACT received 1 705 952 visitors who spent \$330 000 000. They spent an average of \$53 a day.

If visitors can be persuaded to stay an extra day after completing their business or visiting the National Gallery, War Memorial, and Parliament House to visit Tidbinbilla, Namadgi or another natural area, there would be significant additional income and employment for the ACT.

Research suggests that for every 1 per cent of visitors who stay an extra day, an extra \$1.85 million will be added to the ACT economy.

Primary concern

While revenue—or 'yield' as the report calls it—is the goal, the first guiding principle of the nature based tourism strategy is to value the ACT's natural and cultural resources.

The report says:

"The Government has as a primary concern the conservation of the ACT's natural and cultural resources. The Government will, therefore, work to ensure that conservation is a primary factor in the further development of nature based tourism, using the

principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development. This is not only important for the environment, but is also good business: indeed, a clear message from other jurisdictions and academic research is that visitors expect to visit a natural or nearly natural area for their nature based experience."

"Work incrementally"

The second principle is to "plan strategically, but work incrementally". The report explains:

"Planning strategically allows for a holistic approach to industry development, while working incrementally allows for small steps to be taken sequentially. This means smaller investments, less risk and the ability to learn from mistakes while there is still time to take corrective action if required."

Other principles are:

- build on our strengths;
- broaden residents' and visitors' knowledge of the ACT's natural environment;
- encourage specialisation (based on the characteristics of particular parks or locations within parks);
- work co-operatively with other stakeholders;
- encourage a quality approach to customer service, products, and promotion;
- focus on (financial) yield (from each visitor), not necessarily on numbers;
- ensure that benefits are returned to the resource (new financial arrangements mean that such a commitment can now be given to park users in the ACT); and
- learn from experience.

Monitoring programs

"A key element in managing the future growth of the nature based tourism industry is the need to develop and implement monitoring programs in natural areas," the

Obituary: Allen Strom AM

report says.

"Current land planning and management controls provide significant protection in this regard, but we will need to do more in monitoring impacts. The ACT, coming late to formal development of nature based tourism can also learn from the experiences of the other states and territories and from overseas."

The Parks and Conservation Service, with other parties, is developing licensing and accreditation systems for operators.

With greater emphasis on user pays principles for government services, the service is evaluating and introducing, where appropriate, revenue measures. Charges have already been introduced for some ranger guided activities, and further work is being done on other possible revenue measures, including the issue of park entry fees.

Infrastructure

The report points out that except in wilderness areas "there is always some form of development in parks and reserves".

The ACT Government has reiterated that any proposals for development will need to meet the requirements of the Territory Plan and the National Capital Plan. It has agreed that formal accommodation development would be restricted to the periphery of the parks.

The Legislative Assembly Tourism Committee has recommended further exploration of the possibilities for additional food services along Tourist Drive 5 or in the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, the report says.

The service has also recommended that the Government consider mid to long term plans for existing buildings on public land in bush parks such as Gudgenby Homestead, which the Government has agreed to do.

Graeme Wicks

Allen Axel Strom AM, one of the founders of the conservation movement in Australia, died, aged 82 years, on 23rd March 1997.

His vision, knowledge of, and dedication to the natural environment of Australia and of New South Wales in particular, have been a guiding influence for both government and private groups for over fifty years.

His enthusiasm and knowledge were passed on to school-aged children in the 1940's and 1950's at Enmore Activity School and the Broken Bay National Fitness Camp. His eleven years of lectureship at Balmain Teachers College and his founding of the Caloola Club led untold numbers of young men and women to understand what was happening to the natural environment and, as a consequence, to teach their pupils about the human factor in protecting the environment.

Allen became a member of the NSW Fauna Protection Panel which was formed from government representatives and members of the Wildlife Preservation Society. This panel expanded the number of faunal reserves and persuaded the Department of Lands to establish additional national parks. In 1958 he was appointed NSW Chief Guardian of Fauna with a staff of two. For the next eight years Strom devoted all his energies to building the Service he led, to developing a national parks system and to spreading an understanding of what nature conservation meant. By 1965 about 50 nature reserves had been declared and more than 150 were in the pipeline despite governmental opposition to the release of Crown Lands. There were now ten field officers, an educational officer and eight office workers in Strom's organisation. At this stage, the Minister for Lands disbanded the Fauna Protection Panel and formed the National Parks and Wildlife Service.



Allen Strom AM (Photo: Reg Alder)

It was a great loss to the conservation cause in NSW that Allen was not appointed Director of the new Service. After three years of frustration, he returned to the Education Department as an adviser on conservation. He retired in 1971 and for the remainder of his life held executive positions in the Association of Environmental Education in NSW and in other activist groups in the district where he and his wife, Beryl, lived. He was Environmental Educator of the Year in 1981 and subsequently was made a Member of the Order of Australia in recognition of his contribution to conservation.

This great man who inspired so many others to love the natural environment and work for its preservation, deserves to be honoured by all future generations. His ashes have been scattered in Bouddi National Park and Nadgee Nature Reserve, two of the many reserves he worked to preserve.

Fiona MacDonald Brand

Iceland - land of ice and fire!

Torfajökull trek - August 1996



High rhyolite hills. (Photo: J. Webster)

"Why?" people ask, "what made you choose to go to Iceland?"

It came about this way. In 1996 John and I were planning a trip to UK and hoped to include some walking in Europe. We browsed through many brochures and in one the description of a guided walk in Iceland caught my attention: phrases such as 'unique and fascinating land...vast wilderness, exciting trek in the Torfajökull region between simple hutsso remote that we will be using food stocks laid up the previous autumn'... and'landscape like none other on earth'.

The attractions for me were that it was remote and different.

Iceland is an island of 103,000 km² in the North Atlantic, west of Norway, east of Greenland and north of the British Isles...its north coast just skirts the Arctic Circle. Its landscape includes green valleys, active volcanoes, geysers, cold deserts and massive icecaps. One of these, Vatnajökull, is Europe's biggest icecap. The highest peak is 2,119m. Iceland is also famous for its birds - millions of birds migrate there each year to breed.

The trek focussed on the

landscape, following the Markarfljot river for much of the time. It was a 15 day trip, of which 10 days were trekking, carrying a pack containing sleeping bag and mat, clothing and some food. We were advised to take warm clothing and wear leather boots for crossing many freezing rivers. I bought new boots on arrival in the UK and wore them whilst walking in France. They gave me blisters but I hoped they were now broken in. They weren't and I suffered!

Our group consisted of the English guide, seven other Brits, two Americans; two Swiss and myself - a total of 13. Unlucky for some? Well yes - as you will see later!

To begin the trek we drove 130 km from Reykjavik to stay one night at the Fljotsdalur Youth Hostel. It was a bright sunny morning when we left the hostel and indeed we were extremely lucky with the weather; only on one trekking day did we experience intermittent showers. The season was late summer and the maximum daytime temperatures were in the range of about 7° to 15° Celsius.

Initially we followed a gravel road but soon left this to stride out across

mountain slopes of green turf, heather and small alpine flowers. As the trek progressed the scenery became bizarre. Brilliant green moss replaced the grass and this, then, gave way to bare, black, volcanic soil. The views were wide and uncluttered, so that we could appreciate the shapes and contours of the rolling hills, with pockets of snow wedged into gullies. We passed through moonscapes of twisted, lava rock; battlefields of shattered black obsidian; hillsides of red rhyolite boulders and flood plains of coarse, black sand carpeted in bright moss and threaded through with glittering silver streamlets.

We saw and heard lots of geothermal activity. Thick plumes of steam rose through vents from a subterranean powerhouse accompanied by deep rumblings and suppressed throaty roars. Pools of boiling mud sucked and plopped or tiny jets of steaming water jumped about on stony stream beds.

At the foot of an icecap there were caves created by hot springs melting the ice. I ventured into the entrance of one cave but the rapid dripping of melting ice unnerved me as I visualised huge chunks suddenly breaking off. Climbing a short distance over this icecap, we came again to black hills scored with a maze of confusing gullies and then crossed icy snow drifts where my feet felt insecure.

We walked between 14 to 20 km a day between huts of two types. There were the shepherd's huts originally built for use during the autumn round up of sheep to take them to lower altitudes. The ground floor of these huts was usually stables and a wooden ladder led to the sleeping loft. The other type of huts had been built as emergency shelters. These were corrugated iron, A-frame structures. One of these had been built 25 years ago by Venture Scouts from Cumbria in

England, specifically for use of the company who run these treks. This hut had a dirt floor and no loo so didn't provide much comfort! We stayed there for 3 nights. Not far from this hut were some hot springs where we enjoyed a bathe in a deliciously hot pool.

When based at a hut for more than one night there were optional day walks to some special feature such as the Torfajökull Icecap and a large waterfall. Because of the blisters on my feet I felt obliged to forgo these excursions but we saw other waterfalls along our route. One of these was an impressive volume of thundering water arched by a shimmering rainbow.

Our most strenuous day was 20 km and took about 11 hours. Towards the end of this, after climbing through bleak, but interestingly orange coloured rhyolite hills, we descended steeply to an inviting mossy valley. It was here that one fellow tripped and twisted his ankle with an ominous crack! Fortunately we were heading for a group of several huts where there was a resident warden and the next day this fellow got a lift in a 4WD vehicle back to town where a

broken leg was confirmed on x-ray and plastered - and so our number became 12.

As the two weeks in Iceland wore on and summer drew towards its close, the nights became longer and there were about five hours of darkness. We were told we might be lucky and see the Northern Lights. On the last but one night of the trek I gazed up at the night sky and saw long white beams and wondered "are these the Lights?" I climbed the ladder back to our sleeping loft and asked in a loud whisper "Is anyone awake?" A voice from the dark responded in the affirmative. I said I thought I could see the Lights. Soon everyone was awake and scrambling down to ladder to have a look! This wasn't an extravagant show of red or green flashes but pale, translucent beams - ethereal searchlights which wavered and moved like chiffon scarves caught in a breeze. Fascinating! It was a fleeting, tantalising glimpse of a beautiful phenomenon. It was one of the many highlights of the trek and a fitting finale.

Judith Webster

**Taken from an address to the
NPA on 20 March 1997.**



Geothermal powerhouse! (Photo: J. Webster)

Access fees for Tidbinbilla

All money raised from access charges for entry to the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve will be used for conservation and visitor services within Tidbinbilla.

The Minister for Environment, Land and Planning, Gary Humphries, stated this when announcing that the charges would apply from July 1.

The charges will be set at \$8 per car. Yearly passes for cars will be \$20, and concessions will be available.

Mr Humphries said the funds raised would be in addition to, not a substitute for, the normal appropriation provided by Government.

Entry to all other ACT parks and reserves, particularly Namadgi National Park, would remain free for residents and visitors.

The Minister announced the introduction of the access charges in the context of the release of two plans—the Tidbinbilla draft Management Plan and the Public Works Implementation Plan.

Funds in the first year would be used to construct a new wetlands viewing platform, employ three additional staff for visitor services duties, and construct a new Tidbinbilla River Walk from the Visitors Centre to the animal enclosures area.

This last project was an idea of the Friends of Tidbinbilla, Mr Humphries said.

Graeme Wicks

Cottage to let

Mallacoota - Mud brick cottage available. Sleeps 6-8. Adjacent bush/beach. Easy to walk to town. Abundant birdlife and wildlife. Ideal base camp for coastal walks. Reasonable rates. Contact Barbara or Chris de Bruine (06) 258 6478(w) (06) 258 3531(h).

Yerrabi Track - the first decade

After ten years the Yerrabi Track is still attractive to walkers - the active, elderly and family groups - in that it provides the most satisfying vista of the mountains and valleys of Namadgi National Park after following the meandering track through forest and a grassy swamp. Children and the young in heart especially like the challenge of climbing on and around the extensive granite outcrops at the end of the track.

The genesis of the idea of the suitability of Boboyan Trig as a vantage point to be reached from the Boboyan road came from Alastair Morrison. I took this idea up with the committee and suggested that it could be a venue for a Heritage Week walk. These were ably led by Charles Hill and the public responded in large numbers. The route was marked with coloured plastic tape and as these had to be removed at the conclusion of the walk each year and because the walk was proving very popular, the idea developed that there was the need for a permanent track.

A proposal was made to the Parks

Service for a track to be built by volunteers from the Association and this received ready acceptance. I coordinated a group of then retired members and together we soon had the route determined and marked. The track follows three lines determined from compass directions. These straight lines were marked by tape and from these direct routes, the track was formed to meander avoiding obstacles which would obstruct or need some work to avoid. Fallen branches were then carried to mark the edge of the track, minor rocks raked away and without any soil disturbance, the public allowed to mark the track by compaction.

This policy has worked very well since the meanders, soil compaction by walking and forest debris has made, after ten years, a track almost free from erosion. Fallen logs made a rustic bridge over Little Dry Creek but as these recently became unsafe through rotting, it has now been replaced with a conventional plank bridge.

The opening of the track was carried out on June 14, 1987 by

Federal member John Langmore supported by our President Kevin Frawley. About 125 members and the public attended - the many feet went a long way towards the initial consolidation of the track. Association members produced two pamphlets, one as a guide to the track and the other illustrated Nature Notes on aspects of the track, birds, plants, geology and communities as well as a panoramic sketch to show all of the marked features to be seen through the 360 degrees from Boboyan Trig.

It is proposed to have a tenth anniversary walk on Saturday 14 June for members to check on how the track has fared over its first decade.

The Outings Program will have details of the time and meeting place. If the time of meeting is inconvenient, come along in your own time. Since the opening of the track there is 1km more of bitumen on the Boboyan road and the dirt section has been widened to give a better formation and surface.

Reg Alder

Surveyors in the south

On 1 February a group of thirteen NPA members took part in my "Selectors and surveyors in the south" walk advertised in the outings program. During the day we visited Westernmans homestead (built 1916), Waterhole Hut (built 1939 and extended during the Second World War), and Brayshaws Hut (built 1903).

The focus of the walk however was the identification of border markers along the Boboyan Divide. These small structures, many of them with their accompanying hand-carved reference trees still standing, date from 1915 and still officially define the ACT-NSW Border down in the deep south - even though the fences don't always follow the official line. Most of the marks seen were

installed by Surveyor Freddie Johnston's party. Johnston surveyed over twenty kilometres of the border and later in his career became a Commonwealth Surveyor General and the first Director of National Mapping (so remember him the next time you use one of your 1:100,000 Natmap maps!).

We had lunch near the spot where Johnston's line met that of Surveyor Harry Mouat (of Mouat Street, Lyneham, fame) in autumn 1915. The spot marks the completion of the five-year border survey task. From here we saw some examples of Mouat's party's work before we headed down a rather hot Grassy Creek valley back to Brayshaw's. In the course of the return walk we 'discovered' the ruins of a hut

previously not known: the question of the builder's identity awaits researching, though I've got some ideas.

Reg's cover photo shows the group at Johnston's 112 mile reference tree. The surveyors placed marks not only at 'corners' of the border line (i.e. where the bearing of the line changed along the natural watershed) but also at measured mile points. This point is 112 miles from the original start of the border survey, Mt Coree, going in a clockwise direction around the territory. Fortunately when the tree collapsed it broke just above the blazed shield, and by a fluke Johnston's skill with chisel and mallet survives for all to see today.

Matthew Higgins

Lifting the shield



Old blaze 1500 metres south-east of Tidbinbilla Peak.
(Photo: Martin Chalk)

In the September 1993 issue of the Bulletin, I submitted a photograph of a shield cut into a tree located in the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve (TNR). After enquiries with TNR staff could not help me identify the origin of the shield, I turned to the collective knowledge of the NPA for help. Alas, I received two phone calls but no resolution.

Over the intervening years, the nature of this carving played on my mind. I returned to the site one thundery afternoon in January 1996 to obtain some new photographs in the clear air and newly rainwashed forest. While I took my photos and the mosquitoes took my blood, I resolved to track down those responsible for driving me down this course.

Because the site is far from the ACT/NSW border, I could glean little from the work of the early surveyors and Matthew Higgins' research in this area. My lucky break came one afternoon while studying old parish maps at the ACT Government's Planning and Land Management Section - three file references on the side of an old map. After some 'to and fro' I located these files in the ACT Archives, then located at the

old Royal Canberra Hospital site. One of these files contained a map of the now TNR drawn in the late 1930s. It located a number of survey markers throughout TNR, including the subject of my search, and was titled "Survey of Millable Timber". Interestingly, other folios on the file contained lengthy arguments for the declaration of a nature reserve in the same area - fortunately, the latter arguments held sway.

Although I now had the reason for the tree shield, I still did not have the answers to the 'who' and 'when' questions. On the side of the old survey map were annotated surveyors' field book numbers. So, back to the Planning and Land Management Section I went to look at the field books, and here my trail ended. The field book of one E. Dowling showed that he used survey control point AD16, along with others in the region, to align a road for access to the timber. This work was done between 6 and 20 November 1935 - the year before TNR was proclaimed!

Martin Chalk

New members as at 1 May 1997

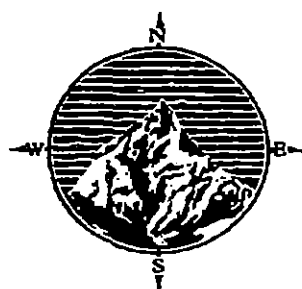
Rosemary Anyon	Wanniassa
Rosh Ireland	Kambah
Mirek and Yvonne Bartos	Kambah
Peter and Kay White	Flynn
Michael Tedeschi	Garran
Christine Hennessy	Gowrie
Barrie Ridgway	Weston
John Railton	Bonython
Marilyn Hughes	McKellar
Joan & Trevor Lipscombe	Forrest
John Wurcker and Judy Griffiths	Garran
Julian Robinson	Narrabundah
Bill Book and Margaret Smythe	Hackett
Rene Lays	Kaleen
Pamela Mathie	Queanbeyan
G Klintworth	Manuka
Barbara Hicks	c/- Farrer
Barbara Barnes	Ainslie

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Calendar

Activity	June	July	August	September
Bulletin Working Group Meeting		Tues 1		
Committee Meeting	Thurs 5	Thurs 3	Thurs 7	Thurs 4
Namadgi Sub-committee meeting	Thurs 12	Thurs 10	Thurs 14	Thurs 11
Yerrabi Anniversary	Sat 14			
General Meeting	Thurs 19	Thurs 17	Thurs 21	Thurs 18
Environment Sub-committee meeting	Thurs 26	Thurs 24	Thurs 28	Thurs 25

Further Details

Committee Meetings - Eleanor Stodart 281 5004 (h)

Namadgi Sub-committee - Robin Miller 281 5314 (h)

Environment Sub-committee - Stephen Johnston 254 3738 (h)

Yerrabi Anniversary - Reg Alder 254 2240 (h)

Bulletin Working Group - Syd Comfort 286 2578 (h)

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

Thursday 19 June: Wildlife management in the outback. Dr George Wilson from Australian Conservation Services will present an illustrated talk based on 20 years' experience controlling feral animals, counting kangaroos and assisting Aboriginal communities.

Thursday 17 July: Tidbinbilla before the nature reserve. Local author, historian and NPA member, Matthew Higgins, will speak on the life and times of the settlers at Tidbinbilla early this century.

Thursday 21 August: The Boboyan Pines Rehabilitation Project. Peter Hann and/or Anne Connolly will present a detailed progress report on the work to date. Some of the topics to be covered will be: roading and harvesting, water turbidity, sediment and erosion control, a summary of research results, native seed collection, and details of costs.

Thursday 18 September: Some cautionary tales. A representative from the Police Search and Rescue Unit, which is responsible for all land searches, both in the ACT and parts of surrounding NSW, will talk about the functions of the unit and some of their experiences which would be of interest to NPA members.

Thursday 16 October: State of the environment reports as a basis for sustainable management planning. Commissioner Joe Baker is required to present a report to the Legislative Assembly each year. The report includes an assessment of the quality of the environment and evaluates the adequacy of existing practices and procedures. Dr Baker will talk about his responsibilities and the opportunities he sees for the ACT's environment.