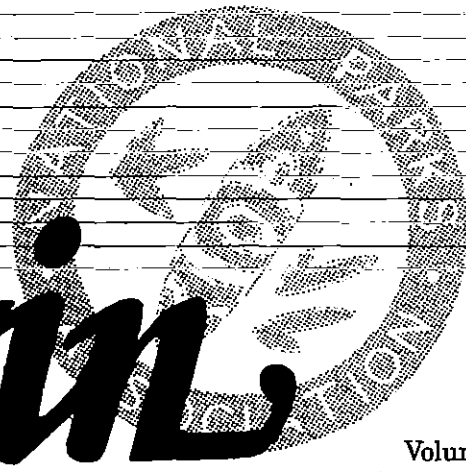


NPA Bulletin



Volume 35 number 3
September 1998

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION (ACT) INCORPORATED



Annual Report 1997-98

Proposed book on Canberra Nature Park

Update on native title issues

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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.

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Cover

At the initial work party of the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group, Clive Hurlstone plants a tree for the NPA with Minister Brendan Smyth, left, and member Stephen Johnston nearby. Photos Syd Comfort.

The NPA (ACT) office is located in Maclaurin Cres, Chifley, next to the preschool and is staffed by Dianne Hastie. Office hours are: 9am to 1pm Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays

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Membership

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

Subscription rates (1 July to 30 June)

Household members \$30	Single members \$25
Corporate members \$20	<i>Bulletin</i> only \$20
Concession \$15	

For new subscriptions joining between:

1 January and 31 March – half specified rate

1 April and 30 June – annual subscription

NPA Bulletin

Contributions of articles, line drawings and photographs including colour prints are welcome and should be lodged with the office or Syd Comfort (02) 6286 2578.

Deadline for December issue: 1 November 1998.

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

This bulletin was produced by the NPA Bulletin Working Group with assistance from Green Words. Funds provided by the ACT Government under the ACT Environment Grants Program assisted in the production of this issue.

Printed by Copy-Qik Printers, Canberra, ACT on recycled paper.

ISSN 0727-8837

National Parks Association Annual Report 1997-98

The last 12 months has seen the National Parks Association of the ACT involved in a range of activities, some, including the monthly general meetings with guest speakers, outings program, Bulletin production and promotional displays have been ongoing, but new issues have arisen to offer new challenges.

The NPA is managed by a committee which met 13 times during the year and made decisions on organisation, priorities, funding and expenditure. Much of the activity of the NPA takes place elsewhere. This year, in the context of a native title claim over Namadgi National Park, the Namadgi Sub-committee looked at the requirement for a research paper on joint management of national parks. The sub-committee commented on drafts and met the author, Dermot Smyth, for discussions and the resulting paper titled "Nourishing Namadgi" is now available. Informative briefings by Namadgi rangers were regularly given to the

sub-committee with discussion following on such items as park access, the camping strategy, the Lunar Laser Station, the harvesting of Boboyan pines and the Gudgenby Valley Bush Regeneration Project.

The Environment sub-committee took on the major share of our conservation and land use planning issues. The NPA responded to a Draft Willow Management Strategy for the ACT and we continued our collaboration with the Conservation Council with responses to the Draft Variation to the Territory Plan No.89 (Boundaries of Murrumbidgee and Molonglo River Corridors) and the Draft Plan of Management for the Lower Molonglo River Corridor.

Issues in nearby NSW led to submissions on the Perisher Range Village Master Plan Environmental Impact Statement, an access strategy for NSW national parks and draft plans of management for the Brogo Wilderness and Tinderry Nature Reserve. In April and May sub-committee members attended public hearings on the Perisher

Village Plan in Sydney and Berridale.

Committee members met with director Dr Colin Adrian and representatives of Environment ACT on a number of occasions to discuss a range of matters including the native title claim on ACT parks, the management plan process, mountain bike use and the extension of horse access in Canberra Nature Park. Delegations also met with Chief Minister Kate Carnell, Minister for the Environment Gary Humphries and Minister for Urban Services Brendan Smyth. The President, along with Rod Griffiths of the Conservation Council, appeared before the Standing Committee on Urban Services hearing on the Draft Plan of Management for Canberra Nature Park.

The NPA ACT had a contract with Environment ACT in 1997-98 to provide services for the promotion of public interest in parks and conservation, for assistance in providing community comment on park management plans and for preparation of submissions on natural and cultural environment issues. For these services we received \$15,262. The contract has been extended until December 1998 with a review to determine future funding by the end of the year. The conservation study on the Nursery Swamp rock art site funded by an ACT Heritage grant and sponsored by the NPA is nearing completion.

The non-renewal of our Commonwealth Grants to Voluntary Conservation Organisations grant last year, reinforced for the committee the importance of fund raising from the annual President's Appeal and from donations received with subscription renewals. My thanks to the many generous members whose donations during the year have been

Annual general meeting 1998

At the association's well-attended annual general meeting held at Forestry House on 20 August, the following office-bearers were elected for the ensuing year:

President: *Clive Hurlstone*

Vice President: *vacant*

Immediate Past President:

Eleanor Stodart

Secretary: *Max Lawrence*

Treasurer: *Mike Smith.*

Yvonne Bartos, Len Haskew, David Pfanner and Timothy Walsh were elected as committee members. Clive Hurlstone's report for the 1997-98 year is reprinted in full in this bulletin.

The contributions of retiring committee members, Stephen Johnston and Robin Miller were recognised in a motion of

appreciation and all members of the committee were roundly thanked for their work over the past year. In presenting the financial statements for the year to 30 June 1998, Treasurer Mike Smith, reported that the year had been a satisfactory one and that the association was in a sound position aided by the generous donations of members.

Member, John Webster, then gave an interesting presentation on Flinders Island which he had visited last February, and stimulated a lively discussion particularly amongst those members who knew the island. Adrienne Nicholson hosted a most enjoyable gluhwien supper during which we agreed that AGMs aren't so bad after all.

Syd Comfort

continued on page 4

National Parks Association

Annual Report 1997-98 *continued*

significant in funding our research projects and other activities.

The production of the *NPA Bulletin* has continued under the guiding hand of Syd Comfort. This is not an easy task and I, along with all members am always pleased to see a high quality edition each quarter thanks to Syd and the Bulletin Working Group.

The preceding report may give the impression that the members of the NPA are engaged in continuous toil on behalf of national parks and conservation but we do get to enjoy the parks and the natural and cultural heritage we work to conserve.

This is accomplished with our quarterly outings program put together by Max Lawrence and his team of leaders. Their well-balanced mix of day, pack and interpretive walks to places local and further afield are looked forward to with enthusiasm by our members.

Guest speakers at general meetings gave excellent talks. The presentations by Joe Baker, Ian Fraser, Matthew Higgins, Peter Tedder, Reg Alder and Eleanor Stodart were outstanding. Our promotional displays at ACT Alive and the Environment Day Fair attracted interest and enquires about parks.

Four highlights of the year exemplify for me, the objectives of the NPA. The launch in December by Chief Minister Kate Carnell of Ross Bennett's book *Reptiles and Frogs of the ACT* demonstrated our continuing commitment to the stimulation of interest in natural history and education for conservation.

The burning of slash from the harvest of pine trees in the Hospital Creek compartment of the Boboyan plantation signalled the commencement of the bush regeneration process for which the NPA, with its primary interest in Namadgi National Park, has long campaigned and to which we hope to make a big contribution.

The public hearing of the Standing Committee on Urban Services on the Draft Plan of Management for Canberra Nature Park was the culmination of the NPA's long involvement in the development of a management plan. This tied in with objective of the promotion of land use to achieve conservation and our cooperation with organisations having similar interests.

Finally, the Christmas Party at Nil Desperandum gave me the opportunity to renew acquaintance with many members and enjoy the organised heritage walks and entertainments.

In conclusion I thank the following members of the committee, Eleanor Stodart, Max Lawrence, Mike Smith, Len Haskew, Yvonne Bartos, Tim Walsh and especially sub-committee conveners, Stephen Johnston and Robin Miller for their commitment and effort over the last 12 months. Stephen and Robin are stepping down after convening the sub-committees for a number of years. Thanks to Office Manager Dianne Hastie for organising the everyday activities, and Research Officer Ray Polglaze for his underpinning research and submission preparation. Finally thanks to all those members and leaders I have not mentioned individually who contributed to the activities of the NPA over the last 12 months.

Clive Huristone, President

Proposed book on Canberra Nature Park

The committee and a publications working group have been looking at the possibility of NPA publishing a book on Canberra Nature Park. We have checked with Environment ACT and, as our ideas do not clash with any of their projects in the pipeline, we have their blessing. The next step will be for a meeting of interested members to have a brainstorming session. The meeting is to be held on Thursday 22 October at 7.30 pm at the home of Eleanor Stodart, 38 James Street, Curtin.

The target date for publication is January 2001, and the following is a tentative plan of contents. The size of the book would be something like our reptile and frog guide, probably not so glossy but with more pages.

1. Introduction

- Burley Griffin's ideal of trees on hills
- Status as reserve
- Generalisations about grasslands, Black Mountain type flora etc.
- Parkcare

2. Details then to be tackled unit by unit, with a chapter for each of the 25 areas, each chapter covering (with the proviso that topics found to be too repetitious could be

taken out and put in a general section)

- map
- history of reservation
- special features (landscape, flora, fauna, Aboriginal history, European history)
- quotations from individuals showing value of area to them, possibly presented at head of chapter or in box.

3. Possible section on controversies such as mountain bikes, horse trails, fires, Telstra tower, ACTEW water storage.

4. Photographs

- Views of, say, Cooleman Ridge, Mount Painter, Pinnacle for people to look back on a see changes
- View of Canberra showing significance of tree covered hills
- Other items of importance, such as grassland detail, Typanocryptus

5. Boxes to contain interesting items that do not easily fit in flow of text, such as wildfires, controversies, cattleman on Red Hill.

Eleanor Stodart

Christmas at Caloola

Sunday 13 December 1998

The association's Christmas party this year will be held at Caloola Farm which is situated at the end of Naas Road, some 16km south of the Namadgi Visitor Centre. Details of the function are included in the Outings Program. Caloola's Peter Duggan gave me some background information about the farm.

A property of 200ha located on the Naas River, Caloola was resumed in the 1970s in anticipation of the area being flooded by the waters of the proposed Tennant Dam. Subsequently, when the dam was deferred, properties in the area were handed back and, by agreement between the previous owners and the Government, Caloola was handed over to the Baptist Church. For a period it served as a rehabilitation centre, and then, for a number of years as a training farm. This role ended in late 1997 and since then the property has been used for accommodation and recreation. Until last summer, Caloola ran sheep but with the severe drought that stopped the flow of the river, all stock were removed. It is likely that some sheep will be



Association members (l to r) Syd Comfort, Gary Thompson and Len Haskeew relaxing at the 1997 Christmas party. Photo Barbara Comfort.

returned to the property on agistment in the spring.

On its southern boundary Caloola adjoins Namadgi National Park which then extends south to the NSW border. Thus Caloola is a good starting or finishing point for walks along the Naas River Valley and adjacent ridges.

NPA Christmas parties have built up a reputation as great days full of fun, interest and socialising. I am sure that the 98 Christmas at Caloola will be all these.

Syd Comfort

Bulletin Working Group

The *NPA Bulletin* is produced and distributed by a group of association members who make up the Bulletin Working Group. The group meets each quarter to review the previous issue, plan directions for future issues and agree on sharing around what needs to be done for the next bulletin.

I would be pleased to hear from any member who would care to join the Bulletin Working Group or attend the next meeting of the group on the evening of Tuesday, 6th October.

Syd Comfort
Convenor (6286 2578)

New members

- Diane Judd Gowrie
- Heidi Boeck Calwell
- Charlotte Poole &
Greg Warwick Campbell
- Jean Gifford O'Connor
- Barbara Edgar Braddon

Association member honoured

The Queen's Birthday Honours List announced the award of the Medal of the Order of Australia to NPA member Penny Hebbard. The award was made for Penny's service to the community particularly through the ANU Club for Women, the Abbeyfield Society, The Anglican Church and youth organisations. The association extends the warm congratulations of members to Penny.

Update on native title issues

In the June issue of the NPA's Bulletin there was a brief update on developments with the native title claims to parts of the ACT. It was noted that the NPA was considering a draft of the report it had commissioned from Dr Dermot Smyth on possible models for the future management of Namadgi National Park if native title to the park is recognised. It was also noted that the NPA was seeking recognition by the National Native Title Tribunal as an interested party for the purpose of the tribunal's examination of the ACT native title claims.

The NPA has now received the final version of Dr Smyth's report, and a summary of key points in the report is provided below. The NPA has also been accepted by the Native Title Tribunal as an interested party for its mediation of the native title claims, and information about this is also provided below.

Dermot Smyth's report

The 40-page report is titled "Nourishing Namadgi: Exploring options for the joint management of Namadgi National Park". Copies can be obtained from the NPA office, including by e-mail. The report has four main sections. The first gives background on the nature of native title and its application to national parks. It includes a useful table summarising the potential advantages and disadvantages of joint management for the main stakeholders (ie, "Aboriginal owners", "government conservation agency", "biodiversity conservation" and "park visitors"). The second section summarises distinctive joint management arrangements already operating in several national parks in Australia (Gurig, in the Cobourge Peninsula, NT; Nitmiluk (Katherine Gorge), NT; and Kakadu, Uluru-Kata Tjuta (Ayers Rock), NT, and Booderee (Jervis Bay), NSW. It also looks at approaches of each of the

state governments towards involvement of Aboriginals in park management. The third section assesses the main features of four distinct models of joint management in Australia that differ essentially in the degree of control or involvement of Aboriginals in park management.

The fourth section discusses two possible joint management options for Namadgi. The first is a refinement of the Uluru model "on the basis of experience gained from the other parks using this model and to meet local needs"; and the second option would be to develop a new model "that builds on the experience of both the Gurig and Uluru models and meets local needs". Some of the differences between Namadgi and these two Northern Territory parks are summarised in a table.

The report lists features that a refined model of Uluru might have for Namadgi. These include:

- "Aboriginal ownership of the Park, either through recognition of native title or via a statutory grant of land, or both..."
- "The establishment of a board of management with a significant Aboriginal majority and a diversity of other expertise represented."
- "A staged process of mediation and arbitration for resolving disputes relating to interpretation of provisions of the lease, independent from Ministerial direction."
- "A staged process of mediation and arbitration for resolving differences between the board and the Legislative Assembly with respect to the approval of plans of management."
- "Opportunities for the Board to earn and receive revenue directly, in addition to allocations from the ACT Parks and Conservation Service."
- "A commitment to manage the Park to protect and conserve all its natural and cultural values."
- "A commitment to recognise and respect the cultural, social and economic rights of native title holders, including the right to access, occupy and use the Park."

- "A commitment to recognise and respect the rights and interests of visitors to the Park."

The report notes that these and other features of park management "could be prescribed in legislation, the lease agreement and/or the plan of management".

The new model for Namadgi outlined in the report would incorporate features of the refined Uluru model but "without the need for native title holders...to lease back their land to the government". Objectives and commitments in the refined Uluru model would be specified in legislation and/or a legal agreement.

The report concludes by stating that "It will be important that among the commitments by government and Aboriginal groups required to successfully negotiate joint management is an ongoing process of two-way education and learning".

In a follow-up letter to the report, Dermot Smyth wrote:

"It is important to first negotiate the joint management arrangements, rather than become too focused on imagined potential conflicts...the fact is that we do not know what the resource use aspirations of the native title holders are or will be, and we do not know if or to what extent these aspirations may conflict with conservation objectives...The other fact is that Namadgi will retain its status and legal protection as a national park following determination of native title. In my view it is therefore reasonable to negotiate the details of how the park is to be used (by visitors, by native title holders, by scientists etc.) in the development of the Plan of Management in the usual way."

He added:

"It is important to emphasise that the rights outlined in the native title statement of claim do not represent the suite of rights which will necessarily be exercised by native title holders in the park."

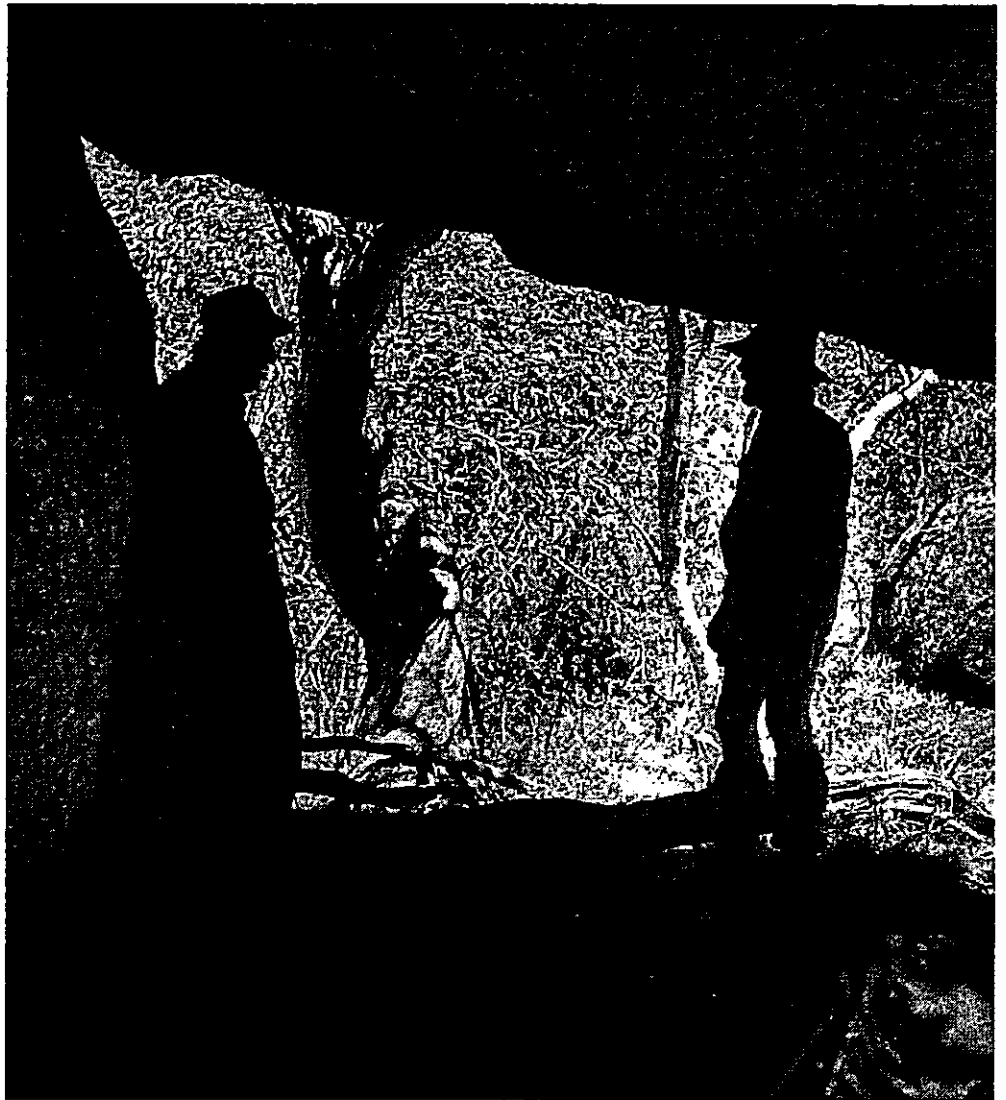
NPA action

The NPA sent copies of Dermot Smyth's report, with accompanying letters, to the native title claimants; the Chief Minister, Kate Carnell; the Minister for Urban Services, Brendan Smyth; the National Native Title Tribunal; the media; and others thought to be interested. At a meeting on the report with Brendan Smyth in mid July, arranged by the Conservation Council of the South Eastern Region & Canberra and attended by the NPA, the Minister agreed to sponsor an 'awareness raising' workshop on issues raised in the report. This workshop, to be arranged jointly with the Conservation Council, is expected to be after current differences between the two native claimants have been resolved.

National Native Title Tribunal

Following the tribunal's notification to the NPA that it had been accepted as an interested party for the purpose of the tribunal's mediation of the ACT native title claims, members of the NPA were invited to meet with the Tribunal member appointed to hear the claims. The purpose of this meeting, at the end of July, was to explain the tribunal's procedures to the NPA.

As indicated in the June issue of the NPA's Bulletin, the first step in the mediation process will involve the tribunal and the two claimants, with the object of resolving differences between the claimants. This meeting will be able to refer to a genealogical study of Aboriginals associated with the area that has been commissioned by the ACT Government and is expected to be completed in September. If the differences between the claimants are resolved, the tribunal will then



Rock shelter, Mt Kelly. Photo Fiona MacDonald Brand.

organise a meeting between the claimant(s) and other interested parties, including the NPA, to explore implications of recognising the claim and to work out how any problems that emerge might be resolved. Issues that cannot be resolved by the tribunal, among claimants or between claimants and other interested parties, can be referred to the Federal Court.

It is not possible at this stage to predict how the various issues relating to the ACT native title claims will unfold or how long it will take to address them: it could be months or years. What can be said, however, is that if and when current differences between the two ACT claimants are resolved, the NPA will now be well prepared, as a result of Dermot Smyth's report, to consider

some of the issues that may then arise relating to future management of Namadgi. Indeed, other parties involved at that stage are also likely to be assisted by his report. The value of the report has already been acknowledged by the Minister for Urban Services, during the meeting with him in July, and also by the Native Title Tribunal. The tribunal has suggested that the NPA could distribute copies of the report to other interested parties, when that stage of the mediation process has been reached.

In the meantime, the NPA is discussing with the Conservation Council how the "awareness raising" workshop agreed by the Minister might be organised and when it is timely to do so.

Robin Miller

A decade of park planning

Preparing a management plan for Canberra Nature Park was never going to be easy given the composite nature of the park and the wide spectrum of interpretation of its role and function. Canberra Nature Park (CNP) is made up of 25 units totalling 6000 hectares and covers most of the undeveloped hills and ridges close to urban Canberra and some important remnant grasslands.

The development of a management plan for CNP can be said to have begun with actions taken by the Parks Service in 1988 to develop public awareness of the park and to make information on it more readily available. A survey of public attitudes to the park was conducted in the following year in conjunction with an invitation to participate in the management plan process. There were some 3760 responses and 577 submissions including one from the NPA that emphasised the need to give the park proper legislative protection and a management plan that would preserve its landscape, bushland, rural and recreational values rather than permit it to become another urban park.

The early 90s saw planning and legislative developments that had important implications for the CNP including the formulation of the Territory Plan and the enactment of the ACT Land Act which established the status of the park. The Commonwealth Joint Committee on the National Capital reported on protecting and managing the national capital's open spaces and concluded that "the ecological values of the National Capital Open Space System are the principal reason for its existence."¹ Action was taken to settle the boundaries of existing

CNP units and to extend the park to include new areas, notably, grasslands in Gungahlin.

A Draft Management Plan for CNP representing a synthesis of community views and government policy was released for public comment in September 1996. The plan proposed the following vision for the park:

"A series of diverse nature reserves throughout urban Canberra managed to conserve native flora, fauna and habitat, and to provide opportunities for appreciation, recreation, education and research in accordance with protecting the natural and cultural heritage, and landscape values of the area."²

Areas Comprising Canberra Nature Park

Aranda Bushland	McQuoids Hill	Oakey Hill
Black Mountain	Mount Ainslie	Red Hill
Bruce & O'Connor Ridges	Mount Majura	Rob Roy Range
Coleman Ridge	Mount Mugga Mugga	The Pinnacle
Farrer Ridge	Mount Painter	Tuggeranong Hill
Gossan Hill	Mount Pleasant	Urambi Hills
Gungahlin Hill	Mount Taylor	Wanniassa Hill
Isaacs Ridge	Mulligans Flat	Gungahlin Grasslands
	Dunlop Reserve	

The management plan adopted a zoning system to identify particular management strategies in keeping with area management objectives. These zones are: multiple use (which applies to most of the park); intensive recreation and tourism; facilities and urban buffer. Broad descriptions and management practices were set out for each zone. The plan then addressed management issues under the headings of natural resources, cultural resources, environment protection, visitor use, community participation, uses requiring approval and urban-related issues. The publication included a number of maps, tables and appendices.

Early in 1997 the NPA collaborated with the Conservation Council in the development of a carefully researched response to the

draft plan. This submission ran to some 50 pages and made 340 detailed recommendations. The submission recognised the important part the management plan should play in the conservation of an area which represents the nearest natural reserve for the majority of the ACT's residents. A constant theme in the submission was the need to reconcile the management of CNP with the primary objective of conserving the natural environment and the belief that the draft management plan should more strongly reflect the priority that the conservation of the natural environment has over other uses of the park.

The submission strongly supported the development of management strategies for each CNP unit and proposed the concept of Specific Area Management Plans. These would be based on clear prescriptive guidelines set out in the management

plan and would involve the establishment of implementation plans so that all Specific Area Management Plans would be completed within a 10 year period. The submission also called for an implementation plan for the wide range of management action identified in the draft plan. It supported the draft plan's recognition of the importance of community involvement in roles complementing those of the Parks Service.

During 1997 two issues rose to prominence during consultation on the draft plan, namely, equestrian activities in CNP and cycling in the park. Public meetings were held to assist in the resolution of these issues, the NPA being an active

¹ Our Bush Capital p.xv

² Draft Management Plan p.3

contributor. The cycling issue was brought into focus by the search for a suitable location for national mountain bike championships planned for Canberra whilst the equestrian controversy concentrated on use of the Mount Painter, Pinnacle and Aranda Bushlands areas.

In late 1997 the Parks Service issued a report on the consultation process and on its responses to public submissions to the draft management plan. A revision of the draft plan titled the Final Draft Management Plan incorporating changes made following the consultation period was released in December 1997. This plan maintained the pattern of the draft but did introduce some significant changes. For example, it re-ordered the overall management objectives to give precedence to conservation processes and extended the areas in which horse riding is permitted to include Aranda Bushland.

In early 1998 an action was heard before the ACT Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) which sought the review of a 1993 decision by the Parks Service to close Aranda Bushland to horses and, as might be expected, this action had a bearing on the developing CNP plan of management. After hearing argument for and against permitting horse riding in the Aranda section of the CNP the tribunal concluded that the decision to refuse permission for horses to enter the area should not be set aside at this time. The tribunal noted that the Final Draft Plan of Management provides for horse riding under certain controls and suggested that horse riders should wait until the proper planning processes have been complied with. The tribunal saw merit in a proposal put to it that base-line environmental data should be collected before horses are allowed to re-enter the area in order that any future environmental impact of horses can be measured and evaluated.

The ACT Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Urban Services conducted a public hearing

on the CNP plan of management on 3 July 1998. On behalf of the Conservation Council and the NPA, Clive Hurstone presented a submission that requested that the committee make the following recommendations:

incorporation of information on implementation plans and their role in meeting management objectives,
provision of detailed maps of each CNP unit,
horse riding not be permitted in Aranda Bushland nor be extended to any area not included for this purpose in the draft plan,
a mountain bike track be established outside CNP and Environment ACT reinforce its policy of user education through on-ground enforcement and use of legal sanctions.

Dr Colin Adrian, Executive Director of Environment ACT, whilst conceding that conservation objectives are paramount, said that his organisation was looking to balance objectives in relation to tourism, recreation and research as well as environmental issues. The proposed extensions for horse riding were modest and, he claimed, consistent with the precautionary principle. Agreement was close for the conduct of trials for some single-use tracks for cyclists in Bruce and on O'Connor Ridge.

Proponents of the extension of horse riding areas cited the position taken by the AAT in support of their stand whilst opponents of such extensions spelt out their reasons, in particular, drawing attention to the special natural values of Aranda Bushland. The representatives of cycling organisations emphasised the importance of education of users, particularly on multi-use Tracks, and generally favoured multi-use tracks but with some single-use tracks for cyclists.

Other speakers criticised the proposed plan on the grounds that it exceeded the capacity of the Parks Service to ensure adherence to it and that it lacked performance standards and indicators to measure its effectiveness.

The Standing Committee is yet to forward its recommendations to the Minister but this will probably be the next step in the development of the management plan. There seems a good chance that this decade year in the evolution of the plan will witness its completion and approval.

Syd Comfort

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The Brogo - a wilderness zone worth extending

In my boyhood, more than 30 years ago, I used to look at road maps and wonder about all the blank spaces without any roads or settlements marked, just shadings for mountain ranges. I remember marvelling at the annotation on a road map of Tasmania - between arrows that pointed out across the south-west it said: "this area is not inhabited and some of it has still not been explored."

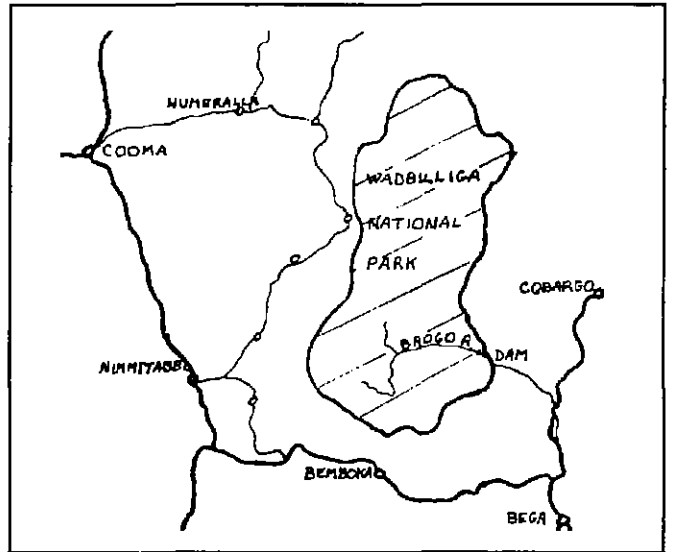
Of course these supposedly blank spaces were deceptive. By the mid-1960s plans were well advanced in Tasmania for the damming of Lake Pedder and on the mainland the compulsive drive to thrust fire access and logging roads into the mountains was well underway. In the space of just 20 years or less, Forestry Commission bulldozers opened up to vehicles huge areas of otherwise wild country that had previously only been accessible by horse or foot.

Against that background, it was with a great sense of hope and adventure that I set out in late December 1986 to lead my first

wilderness walk into the Brogo valley which runs through Wadbilliga National Park, north-west of Bega. Phil Gatenby had provided me with basic information on how to get in along Yankees Creek. The suggestion for an exit ridge I found

in the long out-of-print book, *Bushwalking around Canberra* Apart from that rudimentary advice there were a few pages on the Brogo in Peter Prineas' and Henry Gold's book, *Wild Places*, and a few 1:25000 maps. But as we were to soon find out, even those detailed maps did not mark all the clifflines. And none of the information quite prepared us for the wonderful sense of walking in a place where relatively few people had been before - there was no litter, only one old fireplace and, after we left Yankees Flat on the first morning, no tracks until we reached the Razorback fire trail on the second last day.

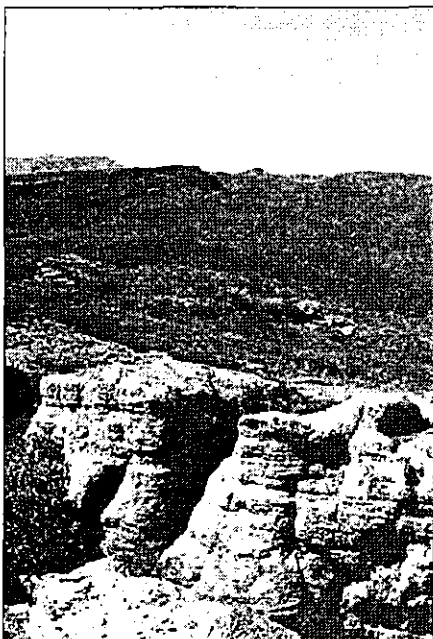
In subsequent years I led two more week-long walks into the Brogo, yet a growing familiarity with the area never made me indifferent to its wild appeal. It is, as a recent NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service report highlights, a designated wilderness area in need of expansion. In the cynical 90s, taking a positive approach to wilderness is far from fashionable; it's often put down as "1970s thinking". Under the new form of right wing political correctness, wilderness is dismissed as a naive, romantic, Eurocentric cultural concept. Or as the 1996 Kakadu National Park Draft Plan of Management says: "...wilderness is essentially a way of thinking



which means different things to different people. It is a social concept." (p 94)

A significant part of this argument is based on the view, popularised by Tim Flannery, that because of centuries of Aboriginal burning the suggestion that an area is pristine or "natural" has no substance. What the Brogo report makes clear is that wilderness is, in fact, a perfectly credible concept based on the relatively low level impact of past land use on natural values. Whilst graziers until quite recent times moved their cattle into the Brogo valley to graze at places like Robinsons Flat, and willows are now dotted along the river north of Robinsons Creek, these have been, and remain, relatively small impacts. If the geologist W.B. Clarke was to stand today on the edge of the *Casuarina nana*-covered plateau of the Kybeyan Range and look east, he would be unlikely to notice any changes to what he described in 1852 as a "wild and precipitous channel,filled almost daily by dense vapours and clouds from the sea" (*Wild Places*, p113).

It is with the aim of limiting the future impact on the Brogo's wilderness, its diverse flora and magnificent river valleys and plateaus, that the NPA has supported the largest extension of



Kybeyan Plateau in the Brogo wilderness. Photo Stephen Johnston.

NPA outings program

September – December 1998

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 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, 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



Black Mountain Wildflower Walks

The Society for Growing Australian Plants and the Field Naturalists' Association of Canberra, with support from the ACT Parks and Conservation Service, are putting together a series of walk sheets describing self-guided strolls in Black Mountain Reserve that take about one hour. Locations and names of what is in flower alongside the tracks help to introduce walkers to the spectacular wild flowers that colour the mountain during Spring. The sheets will be available from most ACT Government outlets, the Northbourne Avenue visitors' information centre, TELSTRA Tower, and the Environment Centre. Because winter and spring weather can affect flowering and therefore publication times for the sheets, prospective walkers are invited to contact either Rosemary Blemings (phone 6258 4724) or Leon Horsnell (phone 6253 1290) for details of the sheets' availability.

19 – 20 September weekend packwalk

Mt Morgan and Half Moon Peak

Leader: Phil Gatenby

1A/B/E/F

Maps: Rendezvous Creek and Yaouk 1:25 000

Phone: 6254 3094

Contact leader by Wednesday 16 September. A walk from the Yaouk Valley along the Lone Pine fire trail, up Mt Morgan and across to Half Moon Peak. Total Climb of 800m on the first day. 220kms, \$44 per car.

20 September Sunday daywalk

Grooves and paintings

Leader: Frank Clements

3A

Maps: Rendezvous Creek, Yaouk 1:25 000

Phone: 6231 7005

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. A 16km walk mainly across the Gudgenby paddocks to the axe grinding grooves on Middle Creek, and then around the ridge to the Rendezvous Creek rock paintings. Return across the paddocks. 100kms, \$20 per car.

23 September daywalk

Wednesday walk

Leader: Yvonne Bartos

Phone: 6231 5699

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

26 – 27 September weekend packwalk

Royal National Park Coast Walk

Leader: David Large

3A

Maps: RNP guides

Phone: 6291 4830

Walk from Orford to Bundeena. An opportunity to experience the Spring wildflowers and magnificent ocean views in Royal National Park just south of Sydney. We will probably depart from Canberra early Saturday morning, arriving Orford mid morning, then walking on to camp at Curracurung. On Sunday morning we walk to Bundeena, catch a ferry and then a train back to our cars at Orford. Return to Canberra Sunday evening. Numbers limited, phone leader early for details and bookings. 500kms, \$100 per car.

3 October Saturday daywalk

McKeanie Trig

Leader: Martin Chalk

2A/C/E/F

Map: Corin Dam 1:25 000

Phone: 6268 4864(w), 6292 3502(h)

A visit to McKeanie Trig from Smokers Gap. The walk will be partly on track and partly off, with a side trip to the head of the Orroral Valley. We will depart Kambah Village shops at 9.00am. 80kms, \$16 per car.

4 October Sunday daywalk

Mt Coree and Devils Peak

Leader: Matthew Higgins

2A/B/D

Phone: 6247 7285

This walk was originally scheduled for June, but had to be re-scheduled because of forestry operations in the area. We'll climb Coree from near Blundells Arboretum, then walk to Coree Flats, climb Devils Peak, and return to Blundells. Some history, a good deal of great native forest, excellent views from both peaks. Steep climbs, about 14km. Book with leader, numbers limited. 90kms, \$18 per car.

10 October Saturday daywalk

Greens Peak

Leader: Barrie Ridgway

1B/C/D/E

Map: Corin Dam 1:25 000

Phone: 6288 1696

A short but challenging walk, all off track. Shown on the map as hill 1409, Greens Peak is north east of Corin Dam across White Sands

Creek. After climbing and then descending to the creek, we climb steeply to the summit through some lovely tall forest with grand views from our lunch spot. Total climb is 670 metres. Please book with leader by 8pm Friday for an 8.30 start from Kambah Village. 120kms, \$24 per car.

17 October Saturday daywalk
Black Mountain Botany Ramble
Leader: George Chippendale
1A
Map: Canberra Street Directory
Phone: 6281 2454

Meet at 9.30am at the Belconnen Way entrance to Black Mountain Reserve (several hundred metres to the east of Caswell Drive). A morning ramble to see the flowers, suitable for all ages and fitness levels. Bring your morning tea, camera, binoculars and *Wild About Canberra*. Finish by midday. This is a traditional NPA outing at this time of year, originated by our founding president Nancy Burbidge, and carried on in recent years by our well known resident botanist George Chippendale. It could be a useful complement to the self-guided strolls being facilitated by the Field Naturalists and the Society for Growing Australian Plants.

18 October Sunday daywalk
Micalong Campsite, H&H Track
Leader: Mike Smith
3A/B
Map: Couragago 1:25 000, H&H guide
Phone: 6286 2984

Meet at forest/picnic area carpark on Uriarra Road just off the Cotter Road at 8.00am. Walk the Hume and Hovell Track from near Log Bridge campsite to Micalong Creek campsite via Pompeys Pillar natural rock column. On formed foot track and forest roads with some undulations and short sharp climbs. Car shuffle involved. 200kms, \$40 per car.

22 October Thursday meeting
Proposed Canberra Nature Park Guide Book
Contact: Eleanor Stodart
Phone: 6281 5004

Members interested in progressing the proposal for NPA to produce a guide book to the natural and heritage features of Canberra Nature Park are invited to attend a meeting at 38 James Street, Curtin, starting at 7.30pm. The meeting will discuss the concept and possible layout of the book, as well as means of bringing it to fruition. Everyone most welcome.

24 October Saturday daywalk
de Salis Nobs

Leader: Stephen Johnston
3A/C/E/F
Maps: Corin Dam, Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000
Phone: 6258 3833

From the Orroral Valley follow the road past the Cotter Gap track and climb 450 metres onto the ridge south of de Salis Creek, and across three rocky nobs. Return via Cotter Gap. A fairly energetic day with some rock scrambling. Phone leader for details and bookings. 60kms, \$12 per car.

25 October Sunday daywalk
Honeysuckle to Orroral
Leaders: Olive Buckman and Max Lawrence
2A

Maps: Corin Dam, Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000
Phone: Olive 6248 8774, Max 6272 2124 (w), 6288 1370 (h)
From the road near the Honeysuckle collimation tower site, follow the fire trail down to the old Orroral tracking station, and then down the heritage trail to Orroral campground. Nearly all down hill or flat, and we will be taking time to stop and stare and learn something of the history of the area. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. Sizable car shuffle involved. 90kms, \$18 per car.

26 October to 1 November seven day packwalk
Nadgee
Leader: Graham Scully
3AB

Map: Nadgee 1:25 000
Phone: 6230 3352
This walk was originally scheduled for early August, but wet and wild weather forced its postponement. There are still a couple of vacancies, so people interested should phone early to secure a berth.

28 October daywalk
Wednesday walk
Leader: Barric Ridgway
Phone: 6288 1696

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

29 October Thursday night out
A Special Evening

All members are invited to a joint KHA-NPA-FBI-CBC 'gear night' at Jurkiewicz Adventure Sports on Thursday 29 October. Jurkiewicz have kindly agreed to open between 6pm and around 9pm specially for us. What's more, purchases made on the night will receive a 20% discount. Refreshments will be available, and guest speakers will begin the evening. So, if you've been thinking about a new tent, boots or even just a tube of seam sealant, or would simply like to meet other members of the four organisations, come right along. Jurkiewicz are located at 47 Wollongong St, Fyshwick (as if you didn't know!). See you there.

1 November Sunday daywalk
Coree Falls
Leader: Max Lawrence
2A/B/E
Map: Cotter Dam 1:25 000
Phone: 6288 1370 (h), 6272 2124 (w)

Meet at 8.30am at the picnic area carpark in the pines off Uriarra Road near where it joins the Cotter Road. The walk starts from the arboretum at Blundells Flat, and proceeds via Pabral Road, with a final descent through light scrub to the falls on Coree Creek. Exploration of the falls may involve some rock scrambling (not compulsory!). 90kms, \$18 per car.

7 - 8 November car camp and cruise
Montague Island and Wagonga Inlet
Leader: Len Haskew
Phone: 6281 4268

Details of this activity were provided in the last program, and participants should by now have made their bookings and paid their money. Having done so, don't forget to turn up!

8 November Sunday daywalk (half or full day)
Mulligans Flat
Leader: Bev Hammond
2A
Map: Canberra UBD
Phone: 6288 6577

A second chance for those who were rained out in July. Drive down Gundaroo Road Gungahlin to the NSW border (last 5km gravel) to meet at 9.00am. Walk the fence line of the Themada Paddock for expansive views. Morning walkers leave us there. Others continue in main reserve beside the border, along the old tree-lined Murrumbateman-Bungendore road to the woolshed site, 'Mulligans Flat', and return to the start.

15 November Sunday daywalk

Mt Morgan

Leader: Steven Hill

3A

Maps: Yaouk, Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000

Phone: 6231 9186

For those who missed Phil Gatenby's packwalk, another chance to explore one of the highest local mountains. Start at Loïe Pine trail in Yaouk Valley, steepish climbs at times on track to summit. An extensive tour around the summit viewpoints to witness the majesty of much of the things that matter to us. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 7.30am. 200kms, \$40 per car.

22 November (Sunday)

Namadgi Work Party

Contact: Clive Hurlstone

Phone: 6288 7592(h), 6246 5516(w)

This is your chance to help bush regeneration in the areas at Gudgenby formerly occupied by the notorious Boboyan Pines. On this exercise we will be engaged mainly in removing pine seedlings and attacking briars. This is a big project where our work parties can really make a difference. Please phone Clive for details (and to volunteer!).

25 November daywalk

Wednesday walk

Leader: Mike Smith

Phone: 6286 2984

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



29 November weekend packwalk

Tabletop Mountain and beyond

Leader: Phil Gatenby

3A/B/D/F

Maps: Denison, Cabramurra 1:25 000

Phone: 6254 3094

Walk south from Kiandra to explore the area around Tabletop Mountain and Waterhole Creek. Climb up Tabletop. Phone leader early for details, bookings. 300kms, \$60 per car.

29 November Sunday daywalk

Mt Ainslie – Mt Majura circuit

Leader: Col McAlister

2A/C

Map: Canberra Street Directory

Phone: 6288 4171

Meet in carpark behind War Memorial at 9.00am. Climb Mt Ainslie on track, then across eastern side of Canberra Nature Park and climb Mt Majura for lunch. Great views in most directions. Return to cars by tracks around the western base of both hills.

6 December Sunday daywalk

Franklin, Aggie, Bendora

Leader: Col McAlister

2A

Map: Namadgi map and guide

Phone: 62884171

Meet among the pines at the carpark on Uriarra Road just off the Cotter road at 8.30am. A pleasant day taking in three of the walking tracks close to the Mt Franklin road. The Mt Franklin track features new interpretive displays of the area's skiing history. The Mt Aggie track features beautiful woodland and views down into the Brindabella Valley and beyond. The Cotter circuit crosses the Cotter below Bendora Dam, and then passes through peppermint forest and a ribbon gum gully to the Bendora Dam picnic area. 150kms, \$30 per car.

13 December (Sunday)

Christmas Party

Contact: Max Lawrence

Phone: 6288 1370 (h), 6272 2124 (w)

This year's Christmas party will be at Caloola Farm, and will be something of a variation on the theme established so successfully at Nil Desperandum over the last couple of years. Basically we're looking for things to get under way from about 11.00am on, so bring a picnic lunch. Access is much simplified compared with Nils, but there are still a couple of gates, and you'll have to open and close them! For

those of you who haven't been to Caloola, head south from Tharwa past the Namadgi Visitors Centre, and turn left immediately after you cross the bridge over the Gudgenby River at Naas (if you get to Fitz's Hill you've gone too far!). Caloola is then about seven or eight kilometres on at the end of the dirt road. Members wishing to sleep over at Caloola on the Saturday night should book with Max.

20 December Sunday daywalk

Cathedral Rocks

Leader: Col McAlister

2A/C

Map: Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000

Phone: 62884171

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. A climb from the Orroral campground of some 400 metres to hill 1316. Then down about 100 metres to the massive formation of Cathedral Rocks for lunch. Return via Orroral Homestead and track to campground. 70 kms, \$14 per car.

23 to 27 January 1999 packwalk

Brogo Wilderness

Leader: Stephen Johnston

Phone: 6258 3833

Stephen is planning a four or five day packwalk in the rugged and wonderful Brogo Wilderness of South East NSW. More details will be in the January–March Outings Program accompanying your December *Bulletin*.

February or March 1999 packwalk

Pinch River to Thredbo

Leaders: Mick Kelly (02 4472 3959)

Max Lawrence (6288 1370)

Mick and Max are contemplating a one week packwalk from the junction of the Pinch and Snowy Rivers on the Barry Way below Jindabyne to Dead Horse Gap and Thredbo. See your next Outings Program.

the wilderness area proposed in the NPWS report. To the current area of 31977, hectares which was initially declared in September 1983 under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*, the option supported by the NPA would add another 42172 hectares including 23146 hectares of Wadbilliga National Park covering the Queens Pound and Wadbilliga River catchments, north of the Brogo; 5616 hectares of the adjoining Murrabrine State Forest and 13291 hectares of the Bemboka section of the South East Forests National Park which lies between the town of Bemboka and the Brogo Dam to the north-east.

The NPWS report records predictable objections to the expanded wilderness declaration from some recreation user groups because of a loss of access for non-wilderness compatible activities, but commendably highlights the detrimental impacts of roads, vehicles and horse riding on natural areas.

The principal consideration should not be the often claimed "rights" of recreation user groups, but rather the relative impacts of all forms of recreation in relation to the natural integrity of different areas. A regional approach is required in recreation planning that considers the qualities and past and present land use of *all* crown lands rather than a particular national park or state forest area in isolation. The report reflects this approach where it notes (p 64) that there are ample opportunities for four-wheel driving and horse riding in nearby state forests which have been subject to far greater levels of modification through logging and the development of access roads than most parts of the Brogo wilderness.

There is a need to not only close roads that run through the proposed expanded Brogo wilderness, to public vehicular and horse use, but also to thoroughly assess which roads should be closed to *all* vehicles and rehabilitated. One prime prospect for this approach is the dead end track to Yankees Flat.

While the NPWS may wish to maintain the Razorback Fire Trail for management access as it runs from the tableland near the headwaters of the Tuross down to the settled coastal hinterland, this perceived need should be balanced by the consideration that it divides the proposed Wadbilliga-Queens Pound River and Brogo River wilderness sections of the park. As a ridgeline trail, Razorback is also highly visible from parts of the Mount Wadbilliga plateau. In other words, it significantly compromises the wilderness integrity of the proposed expanded area.

While some roads are necessary for fire control and management activities, road development, in NSW and Victoria at least, has been carried out in a largely ad hoc manner. There seems to have been a sense that any moderately large natural area which is not crossed by a road will inevitably constitute a greater fire risk. The architects of this now discredited policy did not adequately, if at all, consider the effects on the natural environment and the considerable costs of maintaining the roads, let alone whether the roads would be of *real* benefit in fire prevention.

They also did not take account of the increased access the roads would allow to relatively remote areas for larger numbers of public users who are all too often responsible for starting fires, accidentally or deliberately. A report 14 years ago by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Conservation, *Bushfires and the Australian Environment* (August 1984), heard evidence from the NPWS that a survey in one national park showed



*Along the Brogo River.
Photo Stephen Johnston.*

that nine out of every 10 fires started from the edge of trails (p 18). While supporting the service's view that some fire trails would have to be constructed, with subsequent environmental impact carefully assessed, the committee said: "... there are areas such as natural parts of parks and reserves remote from other assets where trail construction is unnecessary and the advantages of access are outweighed by the disadvantages. The Service stated that a lack of trails was not a disadvantage and that other methods could be employed in national parks." (p 18).

The NPA supports the long-established view that more intrusive management, including maintaining an appropriate level of existing road access, more intensive fire management, and weed and feral animal control will be necessary in a buffer zone where a wilderness area abuts rural lands. This is particularly applicable to the western edge of the Brogo wilderness along the Kydra Fire Trail and in the southern Bemboka section of the wilderness. But the remaining trackless areas must be kept in that state to maximise protection of flora and fauna and to remind visitors of what the eastern ranges of Australia once looked like.

**Stephen Johnston,
Convener Environment
Sub-Committee**

Proposed Perisher Range Village master plan

The area now known as the Kosciuszko National Park (KNP) has been under threat many times since European occupation of Australia. The effects of goldmining, grazing, timber-getting, hydroelectricity generation and diversion of water for irrigation are still much in evidence. However, since the official ending of grazing above 4500 feet in 1957 (in reality it was to continue for some years due to the lack of enforcement and rearguard action by graziers) and in the park as a whole in 1969, the main threats have been feral animals (pigs, horses, four-wheel drives) and the ski industry.

Skiing in KNP has always been legitimate. However, since the early days of the development of human communities within the park specifically for winter recreation, words of caution have been sounded. W K Hancock, in his pioneering ecological study of the region, *Discovering Monaro*,¹ warned in 1972 of the threats posed by increased ski-related development in the park and the dangers of entrepreneurs seeking commercial activities in the summer to bolster their winter income. Hancock, in welcoming the forthcoming Plan of Management expected "It will render justice to all legitimate interests in the Park - not least, to the skiers and the summer tourists. Nevertheless, the expansion of the tourist industry will take place predominantly *outside* the Park's boundaries".

Hancock was writing at the end of a long and bitter period of struggle by scientists and bushwalkers. A farsighted NSW Minister for Lands, Tom Lewis, had pushed through the necessary management structure to ensure the survival of the alpine area in NSW.

Alas, the battle was far from won and once more the vandals are at the gates. The ski industry, on this occasion Perisher Blue Pty Ltd, has applied for an extra 1000 beds at

Perisher Village. This proposal involves the construction of a village containing buildings (up to four storeys) with apartments, hotel and commercial operations and lesser development at Smiggin Holes.

The proposal is currently the subject of a Commission of Inquiry set up by the Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning at the request of the NSW Minister for the Environment. In its submission to the Inquiry the NSW Department of Urban Affairs and Planning describes the aim of the development, which it opposes, thus:

"The stated overall development concept is to transfer the present relatively low key Perisher Range resorts [including Smiggin Holes] into pre-eminent destinations providing international class facilities catering not only for winter but year round recreational activity."²

The inquiry is an interesting one. It is not being conducted by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NP&WS), indeed, they as the proponents of the development are already compromised when it comes to evaluating the proposal. Rather, it is being conducted under the auspices of a Minister whose department clearly feels the proposal is wrong on environmental, nature conservation, regional planning and many other related issues.

The conservation movement opposes the proposal as well. The National Parks Associations of NSW and the ACT have a long and solid involvement in the battle to ensure the Australian Alps are protected.³ Our opposition is based on the core principle of the associations that national parks are first and foremost for nature conservation and the maintenance of biodiversity. Nowhere is this more important than in KNP, which, along with the Alpine National Park in Victoria, contains the only examples of alpine

ecosystems on the Australian mainland. Commercial developments as far as possible should be outside parks. The existing ski resorts in KNP are a fact of life and with all their environmental and planning faults, will always exist. However, this is no reason to allow their expansion and development into all year round playgrounds for the rich.

The National Parks Associations of NSW and the ACT and the Colong Foundation for Wilderness funded the preparation of a submission to the inquiry and Timothy Walsh and Neville Esau attended two days of hearings at Berridale on 12 May and 10 June 1998.

The conservation groups' submission opposed the NP&WS's attempt to justify the development proposal on the grounds that by selling additional bed rights it will generate income to clean up the environmental damage caused by previous poorly planned and controlled developments.

At the first attendance of the hearing, the NPA representatives were deeply impressed by the arguments put forward by officials of the Snowy River Shire Council, within whose local government boundary Perisher resides. They strongly opposed the development on nature conservation grounds and maintained that if increased accommodation and related commercial activities are needed in the area, then these should occur in existing towns outside the park such as Cooma, Berridale and Jindabyne.

To our utter amazement and dismay when we attended the second day of the hearing at Berridale three weeks later the Snowy River Shire Mayor, Ken Prendergast, reversed this view completely and said council supported the Perisher Village proposal subject to some town planning requirements.

continued on page 13

Adventure clothing and equipment

Anyone passing by the Griffin Centre on Thursday evening, 21 May, could have been excused for thinking that NPA members were being kitted out for an expedition to the subantarctic islands. David Edwards, from the Queanbeyan-based firm, Mont Adventure Equipment, had brought along a very extensive range of winter and wet weather gear for members to look at and try on. It was a very successful strategy as brightly coloured garments went from hand to hand, or perhaps more accurately, from hand to back to hand. Indeed, it may have been the most colourful general meeting we have ever had!

Mont had its genesis some 20 years ago when Andrew Montgomery began making sleeping bags and down clothing in his Canberra garage. It is now an Australian-based company manufacturing high quality outdoor clothing and equipment for sale in Australia and for export to the USA, Japan and New Zealand. Although most manufacturing is now done in Fiji, there is still a factory in Queanbeyan and all the design work and product development is undertaken in Australia. Mont staff engaged in

these tasks are all active outdoor enthusiasts who bring a wealth of practical knowledge and experience to their work. They design clothing and equipment for bushwalkers, climbers, cyclists and skiers.

Most of the garments displayed were of composite construction with more than one type of fabric being incorporated into a single garment, fabrics being selected to meet the specific demands of the garment. For example, a hard wearing material is selected for the shoulder area of a jacket designed for the pack walker. Two- and three-layer Gore-Tex are the most widely used fabrics.

David's presentation demonstrated just how sophisticated the design and manufacture of outdoor gear has become. The trend is towards a range of garments, each is designed to meet the requirements of a specific application. Fabric selection and design aim to meet particular demands for such qualities as weight, warmth, wind-proofing, breathing, ventilation and abrasion resistance. The result is a range of items with identifiable qualities that can then be matched with the needs of the user. A very lightweight windproof

and showerproof jacket which had been designed primarily for high energy activities such as cycling was on display and very well demonstrated this approach. To take advantage of these developments, purchasers need to identify how garments are to be used and the qualities favoured before making their selection.

Colours (is black a colour?) and colour patterns employed in the garments displayed were, to say the least, striking. The fabric manufacturers, not just fashion, contribute to this by introducing new colour ranges at regular, often annual, intervals. David opined that Australians are still rather conservative in the colour stakes compared with, say, Japanese outdoor enthusiasts.

In the question time at the conclusion of his talk, David gave some suggestions on how to make Gore-Tex garments work more effectively. He advised that it was essential to wear 'wicking' garments next to the skin and then to wear as few layers as possible between this and the Gore-Tex outer shell. He also advised to wash and cool iron Gore-Tex garments occasionally.

Len Haskew and Syd Comfort

Proposed Perisher Range Village master plan *continued*

Representatives of the developer had been active! Unfortunately, it seems that there is virtually no local conservation movement in the Snowy River Shire to lobby the council on matters such as this.

Make no mistake. What has happened in the Victorian Alps, where ski developments have been allowed to override nature conservation, is poised to occur in KNP on a scale unknown previously. Once Perisher Village is "upgraded" the incremental commercial

development will relentlessly occur year by year, valley by valley.

Once more the conservation movement must rally to oppose these inappropriate developments proposed for the Park. Write to the NSW Premier, the Hon Bob Carr MP with copies to the Hon Pam Allen MP, Minister for the Environment and the Hon Gary Knowles MP, Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning, Parliament House, Sydney to express your views.

Timothy Walsh

¹W K Hancock, *Discovering Monaro - A Study of Man's Impact on his Environment*, CUP Cambridge 1972 pp 180-181, 191

² *Primary Submission to the Commission of Inquiry into the Perisher Range Master Plan EIS*, NSW Department of Urban Affairs and Planning [1998]

³ See for example *Australia's Alpine Areas: Management for Conservation*, papers from a conference arranged by NPA (ACT), Canberra 1985

Planting eucalypts where pine trees grew

Felling of the Boboyan pine plantation is on hold till markets improve, but rehabilitation of the area already felled is now under way, thanks to a group of volunteers. Fortunately, enough preparation, including the collecting of seed and burning of slash, had been done before withdrawal of funding by the Government and the project can therefore continue.

At a series of meetings in June and July, interested people formed the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group with the aim to "assist with rehabilitation of the Boboyan pine area as recommended in the management plan of Namadgi National Park". Alec Ellis is president and Eleanor Stodart, secretary. A broad range of people, including representatives of families who farmed the area and several NPA members have shown an interest. Ann Connolly, who was previously project coordinator for the Boboyan pines and who now is Parkcare coordinator for ACT Parks and Conservation, is providing welcome support, and rangers from Namadgi, Steve Welch (now on long service leave) and Amanda Carey, are doing their best to steer through the expert advice and develop an effective program.

The main features of the program have been influenced by experience

at Jounama, an erstwhile pine forest being converted to bushland near Tumut. Regeneration there was best after burning, seeding had best results when done in winter, and planting of seedlings was best in spring.

Fortunately, after a long delay waiting for rain, the slash was burnt in a few fine days after the first shower but before everything became too wet. Even though the weather was colder than ideal, the burners managed to create the right kind of fire for the purpose, with air currents drawing smoke and flames to a central rising column and so creating a hot fire, as showed clearly in the photograph in *The Canberra Times* on 21 June.

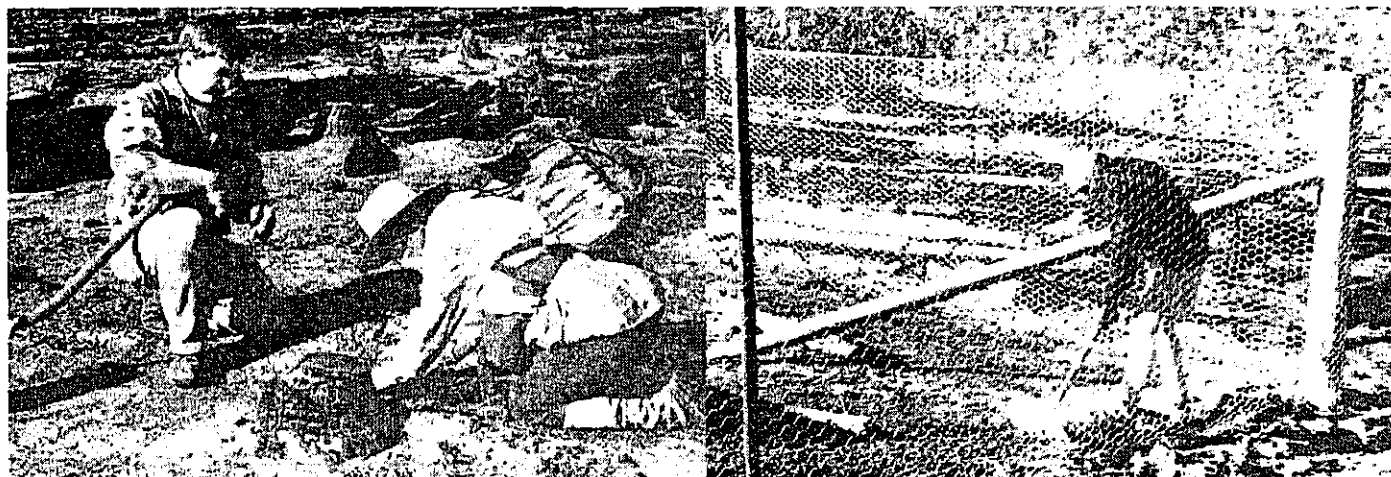
Exclosures are to be built to protect some areas from kangaroo and rabbit grazing, and some will have specific regimes of planting and protection to test a limited number of variables so that results will point to methods that are most effective for regeneration.

Enough seed to do much of the area has already been collected, but more may be needed later, particularly if some areas need to be redone. Yarralumla Nursery has germinated some stock for planting, and the Society for Growing Australian Plants has offered to continue this work.

The first work parties of the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group were held on 11 and 12 July, when the weather was favourable. After a heavy frost, both days were fine, with a light breeze in the afternoon. Thirty-three people attended on the Saturday and nine on Sunday.

Saturday's work began with some symbolic plantings. First the Minister for Urban Affairs, Brendan Smyth, planted a seedling on behalf of the ACT Government, then Esma Curtis planted one for the white settlers in the area, then Clive Hurlstone for the NPA, planted one to represent the public's interest in the project, and Joan Goodrum planted one on behalf of the Ngunnawal people. Then the workforce dispersed to tackle the five different tasks of the weekend - building the first exclosure, sowing seed into prepared ground, broadcasting seed, collecting and burning unopened pine cones, and training in water quality testing.

About half of Saturday's group were involved in sowing seed into prepared ground. The Minister and his two daughters worked hard for the morning. Being the youngest there, Amy and Lorena will have the best opportunity to see the results of their labour, for this is a long-term project. The rip lines which were



The Minister watches Joan Goodrum plant a seedling for the Ngunnawal people. Photo Eleanor Stodart.

NPA member David Hall buries the exclosure netting. Photo Eleanor Stodart.

prepared for the planting of the pines are clearly visible in the bare soil today, with the charred stumps of the mature trees beside them. So how long must it be before the area begins to look like a normal piece of bush?

While walking in lines over the ground trying to select the best areas to hoe and sow seed we realised how successful the burn had been. Over most of the area fine rubbish and cones were completely burnt, but plenty of charred logs remain to provide shelter. Close to the top road where the fire was less intense there are already numerous eucalypt seedlings. (There were also some pine seedlings, but these were dispatched quickly.)

For broadcasting, the seed was mixed with sand. Eucalypt seed is very fine and it needs to be spaced. To have seedlings come up thickly like grass would be a waste.

The project has a strong element of pragmatism as planning has had to be fitted in with the rangers' normal duties: there is no longer a staff member dedicated to the project. So what is being planted reflects what is available. Nature and time will select what the final bush contains. The seed used for both methods of sowing was collected in the area. Snow gum, *Eucalyptus pauciflora*, a broad-leaved peppermint, *E. dives*, and candlebark, *E. rubida* are being sown in roughly equal proportions. The Parks and Conservation Service also has limited quantities of seed of black sally, *E. stellulata*, and this will be spread around the edges off frost hollows.

The volunteers building the 20x20m enclosure with its 2m high fence must have tested out Toddy's patience, (Graham Toddkill of Parks and Conservation Service supervised this work and worked with the crew) but together the experienced crew managed to dig the holes, erect the posts and strainers, attach the wire and strain it and then attach the

netting, and bury a narrow strip at the bottom. By the end of Sunday, when just the gate needed to be attached, the enclosure was looking good. We have protected at least one little island from the depredations of both kangaroos and rabbits. Following the rabbit eradication work of the preceding months, they were not much in evidence, but kangaroo footprints could be seen all over the bare ground.

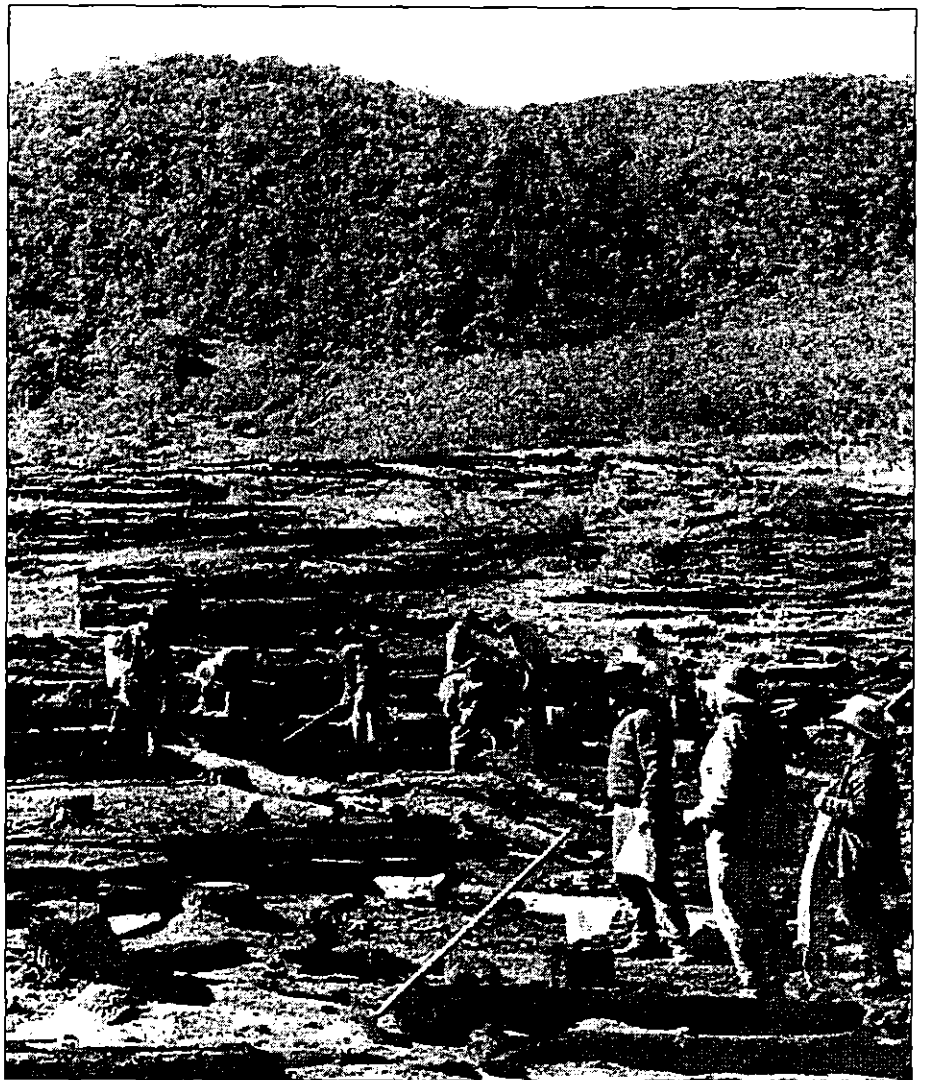
It was a very successful weekend, but we have not yet done 20 hectares, and there are another 70 plus to go in the Hospital Creek area alone.

The work party on 1 August virtually covered the rest of compartment 915 of the Hospital Creek area, leaving two more

compartments to do there. We tried a sowing technique of preparing ground and scattering seed, something in between the techniques of the previous work parties. Ranger Amanda Carey supplied us with prepared acacia seed as well as eucalyptus seed. We sowed a mixture of both and then spread acacia seed over the higher ground already sown with eucalypts. So, all the top half of the compartment, including the enclosures, has both eucalypt and acacia seed.

A couple of young boys, Shawn and Daniel Connaughton seemed to enjoy themselves collecting pine cones and burning them. It was good to see a family taking part together.

Eleanor Stodart



Gudgenby Rehabilitation Group sowing seed. Photo Reg Alder.

PARKWATCH

Roadside treasures

Things are finally starting to move in New South Wales on roadside vegetation. This is crucial for biodiversity protection, as in some areas it is the only native vegetation left. The Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) has overseen the formation of a Roadside Environment Committee (REC), representing government agencies, the Nature Conservation Council, Greening Australia and others. The Committee has produced an excellent video and three booklets on assessment, planning and implementation of roadside management to protect native vegetation.

habitat, April, 1998

A 3000-year journey in the forest: is the end in sight?

In Monga, a mountainous valley on the edge of the eastern escarpment not far from Canberra, there is the story of the 3000-year caterpillars. In this story there are tree ferns that grow until they can be measured from their height, to be hundreds of years old. When these ferns are four, five or even six hundreds years old, they grow too tall to support their own weight, and gracefully and slowly bend to the ground. This leads to a forest of strangely shaped ferns, arching and curving through the darkness of the rainforest.

Eventually the crown of the fern reaches the ground, and its weight taken, begins to climb back up again towards the light. Then a strange thing happens - roots form at the base of the crown where it touches the ground and the tree fern starts to use these new roots instead of the old. Eventually, the trunk rots away, leaving no trace of hundreds of years of growth, and the new trunk now stands some metres away from where the old trunk grew.

The tree fern has moved and it continues this cycle again and again and again, each time growing, falling, and moving further away until it is thousands of years old. These tree ferns are like giant caterpillars crawling through the

forest, on a journey, thousands of years long. No one truly knows when they die, or where they end up.

Now perhaps there is an end in sight for their journey. It is an end involving bulldozers, chainsaws, and fire. This is where the paths of forest and people sometimes meet. While we cannot change the path that tree ferns or other forest creatures take, we can decide our own. The Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) process occurring across New South Wales at the moment is setting that path for us, but we can influence which direction this path takes.

One path could see many of the precious forests of New South Wales logged, clearfelled, and woodchipped for at least another 20 years, and promises made to the industry about wood supply that can't be kept. A different path could see these forests protected, along with a smaller, more sustainable timber industry, including efficient use of plantations. Then perhaps the path of tree ferns and humans would meet only on a bushwalk or forest appreciation trail, a meeting of admiration rather than destruction.

The conservation movement has put forward a proposal which would see this and other crucial areas protected, as well as an end to clearfelling, security for small value-adding millers from a woodchip-dominated industry, and enough wood for a sustainable hardwood timber industry. The South East Forest Alliance is calling urgently for people to write to the New South Wales Premier, Bob Carr, asking him to support the conservation movement's proposal.

The end is in sight for many of our precious forests. Whether we choose a path that leads us there is up to us.

Bogong, Autumn, 1998

Hands off our heritage rivers

The *Heritage Rivers Act 1992* was given bipartisan support after a comprehensive three-year review by the Land Conservation Council. It identifies 18 heritage rivers that are afforded protection through this Act because of their 'significant nature conservation, recreation, scenic or

cultural heritage attributes'.

But although this legislation exists, the State Government appears determined to destroy their special qualities. This came to light when charges against Senator Bob Brown of obstructing lawful forest operations near the Goolengook River were dismissed on 27 February 1998. The Magistrate doubted the logging operations were lawful because they extended 100 metres into the heritage river area thus contravening the Heritage Rivers Act. Minister Tehan has indicated that she is prepared to change the Heritage Rivers Act retrospectively to slash the heritage rivers areas by half - in other words to make the law fit the logging, rather than having the logging abide by the law. This is nothing less than the abuse of parliament.

Many of you may be aware that the Minister for Agriculture and Resources, Patrick McNamara has been talking about damming the Mitchell or Thompson Rivers, both of which are heritage rivers. In recent correspondence to the Victorian National Parks Association he has said, 'I understand that Southern Water is currently investigating the commercial viability of building and operating a medium sized reservoir on one of a number of potential sites identified by the former Rural Water Corporation on the Mitchell, Thompson and Macalister Rivers.' The VNPA is most concerned at this turn of events and will be following the investigation carefully.

People Caring for Nature, April, 1998.

Sydney water land to become national park

The Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning, the Hon Craig Knowles, has recently assured the Nature Conservation Council of NSW that Sydney Water lands in the Blue Mountains will be transferred to the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Delivery of this commitment has proven difficult due to opposition by Sydney Water.

continued on page 17

The NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act

Michael Saxon, Manager Threatened Species Unit—Southern Zone, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, addressed the June General Meeting of the association and gave us an interesting well documented and illustrated account of his functions and activities. The following are the notes Michael prepared for us.

I recently had the pleasure of presenting a talk on the relatively new NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act to the NPA of the ACT. I say pleasure because it was the first time in many months of giving similar talks that the audience was supportive and genuinely interested. Given the wide-ranging impacts of the Act on local government, developers, land

clearers etc, I frequently have to face mistrust, really difficult questions, and often anger.

The Act has been in place since the beginning of 1996 and together with 10 other biologists within the Threatened Species Unit and five environmental planners, we have been responsible for coordinating its administration over the 30 local government areas that make up the southern zone of NSW. The zone's geographic corners are Kiama in the north-east, Cowra in the north-west, Hume (Albury) to the south-west and Bega to the south-east. This huge area, of course, takes in a wide and diverse range of environments, from the coastal heaths, the forests of the eastern seaboard, the rugged escarpments,

tablelands, sub-alpine and alpine areas, to the south-west slopes.

The threatened flora and fauna of these environments is unfortunately numerous. At the last count, we estimated the zone contains at least 80 fauna and 120 plants currently listed as threatened. During my talk we discussed some of the more well known ones in the greater ACT area such as corroboree frogs, grassland earless dragons, striped legless lizards, heath monitors, koalas, tiger quolls, yellow-bellied gliders, powerful owls, swift parrots, regent honeyeaters, superb parrots, Wilkinson's grevillea, Yass daisy, Wee Jasper grevillea, button wrinkle wort and Swainson's purple pea.

continued on page 18

PARKWATCH *continued*

At the time the Sydney Water corporatisation legislation was passed, conservationists warned that Sydney Water's land must not be treated as an asset, but as part of the public estate held in trust by the corporation. Conservationists were assured by the Fahey Government that the legislation ensured the new corporation's land assets would never be sold. In fact, the enabling legislation was amended by the then National Party Planning Minister, Robert Webster, to ensure that the land could be transferred only to the National Parks and Wildlife Service and 'at no cost'.

It is a pity, however, that the words 'to the National Parks and Wildlife Service' were not added following the words 'at no cost'. Contrary to the views of the Fahey Government, to the zealots in the corporation 'at no cost' means at no cost to the corporation.

The corporation constantly reminds its board of directors to heed its own commercial charter and the State Owned Corporations Act which specify that non-commercial activities must only be undertaken with adequate compensation, in this case, financial recompense for land in the Blue Mountains.

The Government's policy of having the Parks Service manage Sydney Water catchments, and Sydney Water pay for the management of the catchments, is economically and environmentally rational. Sydney Water should pay the service so that catchment management is 'at no cost' to the NPWS.

Why should the service and volunteers subsidise the corporation by fighting fires, controlling pigs, horses and weeds? Perhaps the volunteers removing weeds, helping to control pigs and fighting fires in the Sydney Water catchments should send invoices to Sydney Water. Interestingly, some of the volunteer fire fighters are former catchment rangers of Sydney Water, whose jobs were rationalised for the worship of economics. When Lake Burragarang is full of mud, Sydney Water will know that you cannot drink money.

The Colong Bulletin, May, 1998.

By gum - Japan makes a tree

Toyota has announced plans to launch its new and improved eucalypt in Australia. Fast-growing, tough and with an enhanced appetite for carbon dioxide, this is a high-performance tree.

In Toyota's venture into forestry, it will own 90 percent of a new company, Australian Afforestation P/L, which will be established in Melbourne.

Beginning next year, Australian Afforestation plans to buy land in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia, planting 500 hectares a year for a decade.

It will take 10 years for the first trees planted in Australia to be ready for harvesting. The trees will be chopped, chipped and shipped to Japan, where Nippon Paper Industries will pulp the woodchips to manufacture paper ... which presumably will be used to print Toyota brochures and manuals.

The Japanese tree, because it grows so quickly, soaks up more carbon dioxide than other species. It is not clear whether the trees are hybrids or genetically engineered.

Each hectare of the Toyota eucalypt plantation will counter the greenhouse impact of only two cars - so the plantations will negate the tail-pipe emissions of only about 0.1 per cent of the total Australian car fleet. But it's a start.

Sydney Morning Herald, July 3 1998

Book Review

Australian Alps: Kosciuszko, Alpine and Namadgi National Parks.

By Dierdre Slattery, UNSW Press.
RRP \$29.95.

This book is the third title in a series on Australian national parks and covers the three Alps national parks, Alpine, Kosciuszko, and Namadgi.

A number of books have been published over the past 30 years on various aspects of the Alps, including descriptions of their natural and cultural histories, and a range of recreational pursuits. Here is a book that combines many of these topics in one compact volume. Although called a field guide it is really much more than this. There are chapters on alpine geography, geology, flora, fauna, Aboriginal and European histories, water resources, conservation, and recreation.

Although many of these topics can and do involve much scientific detail, the author presents the information in a straightforward, even chatty style which is very easy to follow. A number of controversial issues involving resource use, ecology, management, and recreation are also discussed. These are presented in a clear, balanced way, presenting the (often opposing) arguments without unnecessary rhetoric and allowing readers to draw their own conclusions.

The maps and descriptions of routes and walks are necessarily concise but provide a good introduction to the recreational possibilities in the Alps. These would need to be supplemented with more detailed maps and route information when trips are planned. A useful appendix gives details for sourcing this additional information. A reading list for further study is also included together with notes on sources and both a general and a species index.

There are a few errors in the text and maps which subsequent editions are sure to correct. None distracts from the enjoyment or usefulness of the book. I was



disappointed to see the work of the NPA ACT not acknowledged when discussing the declaration of

Namadgi, although the Victorian NPA gets due credit for their long struggle to achieve an alpine national park in Victoria. Nor was the creation of Namadgi as straightforward as perhaps the author implies. Many of the same land use issues were fought over in Namadgi as in the Kosciuszko and Alpine National Parks.

These are minor points, however. This is an extremely useful guide to the Alps and the alpine national parks. Packed with information on alpine ecology and a wide range of conservation topics and issues affecting the Alps, and including many colour photographs, it would form a valuable addition to any library of books on the Alps.

Recommended.

Neville Esau

The NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act *continued*

The Act provides NPWS with a mandatory requirement to produce a recovery program for each of the listed species. We were delighted to complete 11 drafts for the 1997-98 year. Only 189 to go!

The drafts outline the action necessary to attempt to reverse the extinction process. These include such things as surveys, predator control, fencing, genetic studies, studies of the ecology of the species, captive husbandry, identifying and managing the threatening processes, and education. They also provide direction to state and local government authorities on how to best account for each species when they are undertaking or giving approval for developments and activities such as sub-divisions, construction of roads and other major infrastructure.

The requirement to account for threatened species in the 'approval' process is, for us biologists, one of the more complex aspects of the Act. Both the public authorities and the community, in general, rely heavily

on us to provide them with this information. We have devoted much energy to conducting workshops on the *Threatened Species Conservation Act* for a large number of shire councils and other authorities in the zone. With the majority of habitat on freehold land, we recognise that councils, in particular, play a vital role in preventing inappropriate developments and activities from going ahead. The approval of the Director-General is also required if such developments are likely to have a significant impact on threatened species.

All in all, however, we see education of all land management agencies and groups such as the NPA as one of our top priorities in administering the *Threatened Species Conservation Act* – for, after all, the NPWS cannot do it alone. I look forward to meeting with you once more, some time in the future, and hopefully reporting on our successes.

Michael Saxon

From England to Scotland

When I cross the border from England to Scotland, I always feel a thrill of excitement, and when I cross the other way I feel a little sad. Scotland, the land of my ancestors and some years of my life, the land of Sir Walter Scott, the land of the mountain and the flood. Last year when my wife Liz and I visited Scotland, there was plenty of flood. For the last couple of years I had been planning to walk over the border by the flank of the Cheviot. For lack of time, because of our crowded itinerary in the UK, it would have to be a day walk.

My cousin, Norman, came down by train from Aberdeen whilst we were staying with another cousin near Newcastle. He stayed the night and in the morning Liz drove the two of us to Langleeford Farm near Wooler. Norman and I started our walk at 10 am and Liz drove round to Kirk Yetholm in Scotland and left our luggage in a bed and breakfast place. Then she drove via Jedburgh and away south of Hadrian's Wall to see a friend, before returning to Kirk Yetholm to await our arrival.

From Langleeford Farm (255m above sea level) Norman and I walked past the old buildings of Langleeford Hope. The rain had temporarily stopped, and as we made our way up Harthope Burn, we met a couple from Wales who were also undeterred by the unpropitious weather. Eventually, we came to a fence. Following this to the right, we ascended to Cairn Hill, 776m above sea level. We saw the Welsh couple disappearing to the right into the mist, heading for the top of the Cheviot. At Cairn Hill we had come to a path which deviates from the Pennine Way and goes to the Cheviot. So we turned left along the very boggy path. By now, torrential rain had set in with gale force winds but we had good waterproof clothes. We were helped when we came to a hundred metres or so of flagstones, presumably dropped by helicopter, and later we had about 300m or so of quick walking on a board walk across a swamp. Elsewhere, it was

necessary to keep a careful look out for deep and sucking bogs. It is about the boggiest place in Britain. There is a wartime Spitfire hidden at the bottom of a Cheviot bog.

Soon we came to the still muddy Pennine Way (here far from the Pennines) where our path bisected an obtuse angle made by the Way. Turning right along the Way, we passed Auchope Cairn and soon got a beautiful, slightly misty view on our right down to the Hen Hole, a deep and very steep-sided ravine through which flows a headwater of the curiously named College Burn. A small mountain rescue hut came into view and we got inside to get out of the wind and the rain to eat our sandwiches. By then the rain, though not the wind, had abated. The Schil, a rather large bump on the ridge, was now visible ahead. However, for fear of hypothermia (and this in midsummer), I suggested that we abandon our planned route over the Schil and hop over the fence into Scotland and go steeply down to the bottom of the Cheviot Burn. We did this, mostly zigzagging on sheep paths, and walked past the farm buildings of Cocklawfoot after crossing the burn. We then had pleasant walking in a milder climate the last 13km or so to Kirk Yetholm, mostly on a narrow road with little traffic, and following the Bowmont Water. After we passed through Town Yetholm, we crossed the bridge to Kirk Yetholm, at the other end of which we entered the Border Hotel at a little before 8 pm. Here we found a message from Liz directing us to the bed and breakfast. After a great dinner in the bar of the hotel and a huge breakfast at the bed and breakfast next morning we drove Norman to Berwick-on-Tweed to catch the train back to Aberdeen, and Liz and I drove off to Glasgow. Norman had a map measurer at home and claimed that we had done 20 miles (32km). With my cruder methods I could not make it more than 29 km. In any case, the gale force winds on the tops had made it an invigorating and, in its way, more

pleasurable walk. For any reader who might like one day to do the walk, possibly in better weather (including the short diversion to the top of the Cheviot), the relevant maps are the Cheviot Hills and Kelso sheets in the Ordnance Survey Landranger Series.

Jack Smart

The Environment Centre

The Canberra and South East Region Environment Centre was established in February 1974 when a number of individuals and environmental groups, including the NPA, saw the need for an environmental education centre. The centre devoted its first few years to establishing its library and assisting local and regional conservation groups with their campaigns on a range of environmental issues. In 1980 the centre began publishing its own magazine, *Bogong*, which to-day is a highly valued environmental journal. At about that time, the centre decided to pull back from active involvement in environmental issues - a mantle taken over by the newly formed Conservation Council - in order to focus on development of its library resources. To-day, the centre has one of the most comprehensive environmental libraries in Australia.

The Environment Centre also runs the Bogong Environment Shop which has grown to become a significant retail operation. This is located in the same building as the centre itself in Kingsley Street, a little out of the way of passing trade, a problem that the centre is hoping to address.

In both its library and shop, the Environment Centre plans to meet changing demand patterns which at present point in the direction of practical information on environmentally friendly lifestyle skills which improve the quality of life for individuals in a sustainable way. Canberra and South East Region Environment Centre
Kingsley Street, Acton
GPO Box 1875 Canberra ACT 2601
Phone: (02) 6247 3064, 6248 0885
Email: caserec@peg.apc.org
Home page: www.spirit.net.au/envoz
Syd Comfort

Calendar

Activity	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Committee meeting	Thur 3	Thur 1	Thur 5	Thur 3
Bulletin Working Group ¹		Tues 6		
Gudgenby Regeneration ²	Sat 12	Sat 10	Sat 7	Sat 5
General Meetings	Thur 17	Thur 15	Thur 19	
Proposed CNP Guide Meeting ³		Thur 22		
Gear Night ⁴		Thur 29		
Work Party – Namadgi ⁴			Sun 22	
Christmas at Caloola ⁴				Sun 13

Further Details

¹ Syd Comfort 6286 2578

² Amanda Carey, Namadgi National Park 6207 2900

³ Eleanor Stodart 6281 5004

⁴ Outings Program

Red Dot

Does your *NPA Bulletin* have a red dot on the address label? If it does, this will be the last *Bulletin* you receive until you renew your membership. If you have already paid and have a red dot, please contact Dianne in the office on 7282 5813.

General meetings *September and November meetings will be held in Forestry House, Yarralumla. The October meeting will be held in the Australian Reptile Centre. All meetings commence at 8pm.*

Thursday 17 September. Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. Geoff Underwood (wildlife officer at Tidbinbilla) will talk to us about the status and conservation of the endangered brush-tailed rock wallaby, and Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve's involvement in the recovery program.

Thursday 15 October. The Australian Reptile Centre. Ross Bennett, the author of our *Reptiles and Frogs of the ACT*, will host this meeting at his recently opened display and education building in Gold Creek. Members will be provided with a unique opportunity to inspect the centre with Ross and to hear an entertaining and enlightening presentation on reptiles. (*Members will be asked to pay the concessional entrance fee of \$6. The Reptile Centre is located in Gold Creek (Ginninderra) opposite Federation Square. To reach it from the Barton Highway enter O'Hanlon Place and follow the signs to the centre which is across from Federation Square adjacent to the motel which is under construction.*)

Thursday 19 November. Rafting Down the Tatshenshini River. Esther Gallant was a member of a party which rafted down this wild river that flows through Yukon Territory, British Columbia and Alaska. The journey was made to celebrate the first anniversary of British Columbia's declaration of a provincial park to protect the Tatshenshini from mining. Esther will talk about this journey and also promises us some slides of grizzly bears and glaciers.

Sunday 13 December. Christmas Party at Caloola Farm.

NPA Bulletin

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