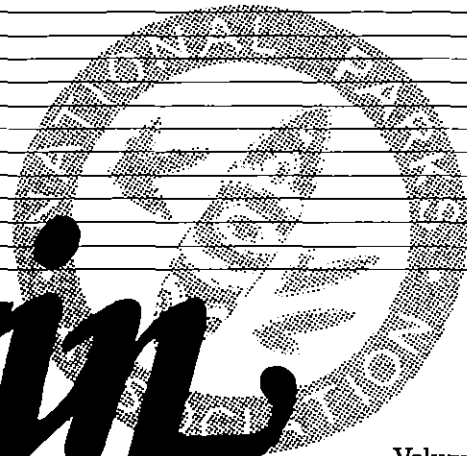


NPA Bulletin



Volume 36 number 1
March 1999

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION (ACT) INCORPORATED



Tidbinbilla and the Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby recovery

Termeil Coastal Reserves

A pox on all pests

CONTENTS

From the President	3	Namadgi-Tidbinbilla: High Country History and Heritage	11
<i>Clive Hurlstone</i>		Walking in history makes a good change	12
Bush Christmas party held indoors	3	<i>Graeme Wicks</i>	
<i>Graeme Wicks</i>		Termeil Coastal Reserves	13
A pox on all pests	4	<i>Reg Alder</i>	
<i>Eleanor Stodart</i>		Parkwatch	14
Draft Alpine Region Strategy	5	<i>Len Haskew</i>	
<i>Timothy Walsh and Neville Esau</i>		Some thoughts about the PALM report	15
Tidbinbilla role in Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby recovery	6	<i>Syd Comfort</i>	
<i>Geoff Underwood</i>		Book reviews	16
Obituary: Dr Robert Story	7	Car camping 1930s style	17
<i>Fiona MacDonald Brand</i>		<i>Olive Buckman</i>	
Morton and Budawang National Parks Draft Management Plan	8	Where I come from	18
<i>Neville Esau for the Environment Sub-committee</i>		<i>A new member</i>	
Rural Residential Development in the ACT	10	Australians for an Ecologically Sustainable Population (Canberra Branch)	19
<i>Syd Comfort</i>		<i>Phyl Goddard</i>	
A winter escape to far north Queensland	11	Calendar	19
<i>Betty Lewis</i>		General meetings	19

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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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.

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

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Cover: *The late Robert Story on a ridge south of Orroral in Namadgi National Park in 1992 preparing for one of the annual walks he led for the Canberra Alpine Club. Photo Reg Alder.*

From the President

It is with sadness that we mark the passing of Robert Story, a founding member and past president of the Association. Over a long period, Robert contributed greatly to the NPA and to the environment and outdoor scene in this region. On behalf of the Association, I extend our sympathy to his wife, Sybil, daughters Judy and Muriel and other members of the family.

Interleaved with this *Bulletin* is the new NPA pamphlet and membership application form. This new form has been designed to grab attention, so pass it on to someone

who may be interested in joining us.

The Gudgenby Valley Bush Regeneration Group has begun its 1999 program after a summer break. Come along and get some hands-on experience of gardening on a really large scale. Eleanor Stodart, phone 6281 5004, has the details.

The NPA will again have a display at ACT Alive on the lawns at Old Parliament House on 15th March and helpers are needed. After helping out you could look at the wide range of other community interests on display.

While in the area you could take in the new exhibition at the National Library called "Birds", where some of the library's rich and extensive collection of illustrations and books is on display.

The NPA is reprinting its wonderful bird guide, "*Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT*". The book, first printed in 1993, has sold 5000 copies and is highly acclaimed as a great local guide. If you don't have one get one fresh off the press, and remember it makes an ideal memento of Canberra, the Bush Capital (still), for visiting friends.

Clive Hurlstone

Bush Christmas party held indoors

Caloola Farm turned out to be an inspired choice for the association's 1998 Christmas party. Probably all members were looking forward to a day in the bush – almost a tradition after the parties at Nil Desperandum – but in the heat-wave conditions of December 13 nearly everyone who went was happy to stay indoors.

The original plan was to have the party at the Oldfield homestead, a few hundred metres down towards the river from the main complex of buildings and sleeping cabins. With its enclosed yard, the old house offered an atmosphere that was both historic and countrified. But when temperatures around 40 degrees were forecast, it was decided that Caloola's high-ceilinged meeting and mess hall was the best option.

The big hall meant there was plenty of room for the 65 members to enjoy their Christmas fare under cooling overhead fans while taking in a view across drought-stricken paddocks to the Naas River and the hills beyond.

Some of the more determined souls took their car fridges, picnic baskets and folding chairs into the open air and enjoyed the same view from the shade of an old gum tree. A few even went out in the midday sun and walked down to the Oldfield homestead, or as far as the parched river, and back.



A Bush Christmas indoors at Caloola. Photo Barbara Comfort.

Despite the heat, numbers were nearly the same as in recent NPA Christmas parties, and, as in past years, this was another occasion for a good, happy get-together. Members caught up with old friends, met newer members and swapped lots of news and plenty of stories.

Some slightly formal proceedings gave an added interest.

Max Lawrence called the party to order and after a few well-chosen words introduced Caloola Farm's manager, Peter Duggan, who welcomed members and spoke about the property's recent history. He described how it had been operated as, successively, a church-sponsored drug rehabilitation centre, then as a youth training centre, and most recently as a recreation and tourism facility catering for individuals and special-interest groups, while new

agricultural prospects are also being explored.

Local historian and NPA member Matthew Higgins spoke of the Aboriginal peoples who were the first human inhabitants of the Naas Valley. He gave an overview of its settlement by Europeans and the families whose names are part of its history – finishing on a sensational note with a story about a murderer on the run and a siege at the Oldfield homestead in the 1960s.

We had another fine NPA Christmas party, and the organisers and those who helped deserve our thanks and congratulations. And thanks are also due to Caloola Farm management for the use of their facilities and the welcome members received.

Graeme Wicks

A pox on all pests

English Broom

English Broom, *Cytisus scoparius* (also called Scotch Broom or just Broom), is widespread in Victoria and has been declared a regionally controlled weed in a number of districts. It has the potential for being an enormous problem in Namadgi. Stored seed remain viable for 80 years, an incredible number are produced, and unlike many other weed species, English Broom does not need disturbed ground to become established. Seeds are considered toxic to stock if eaten excessively, and may also be toxic to native animals. Thickets increase fuel loads in areas of native vegetation, burn intensively, but fire can stimulate germination so unfortunately does not rid us of the problem.

However, the potential for serious invasion has been recognised in the Parks and Conservation Service (PC&S) which has established a monitoring program. By spraying sites for the past 12 years the service has kept its occurrence at a manageable level.

Forty-four sites in Namadgi have been recorded, and the parks service would like help locating others that may be there. The only way of locating sites is by on-ground search, so bushwalkers could be valuable informants. Once notified, sites are checked and marked with a star picket and a yellow cattle tag. So, if any members come across unmarked patches, please record the position as accurately as possible and notify the Visitor Centre. If in doubt about identification, take a small sample of the suspect plant with you.

Another way in which NPA members could help is by 'adopting a patch'. This would require visiting the patch in November when the broom is in flower, and pulling up small plants. Thus people could combine the pleasure of a bushwalk with the satisfaction of working for a couple of hours to manage a problem weed in the park. Anyone who is interested in such an idea could contact me, or Steve Welch, the ranger looking after the spraying program, through the Visitor Centre.

Drawing by Eleanor Stodart



English Broom, Cytisus scoparius
(also known as Scotch Broom or Broom)

Shrub to 4m, usually 1-2, with a stout taproot, distinguished by stems with five sides and pods with hairy margins. Leaves with three leaflets (singly on tips), short stalks. Flowers - yellow pea about 2cm long, sometimes with red markings in centre. Pods hairy on margins, green at first, then brown or black when mature, 2-6cm long.

Pine, briars

Two well known and often lamented pests are pine wildings and briar roses. It is most unfortunate that several pine forests in the ACT are planted adjacent to bushland, the worst offender being Boboyan Plantation in Namadgi National Park. NPA has already had a few work parties felling wildings on the slopes above the pine compartments on the western side of Bogong Creek. Last November in one day we felled over 250 trees ranging in size from seedlings which could be pulled out (not many) to a tree 30cm in diameter. Most were between 5cm and 12cm in diameter.

As well as occurring on the slopes immediately above the plantation in Bogong Creek, established wildings extend well to the south of the plantation area, perhaps carried by Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos. Some of these trees are large, but others could be felled by hand and NPA members will have the opportunity to tackle as many as they like in work parties next April. We will also record the location of those too big to fell by hand so that money spent on contractors can be used most efficiently. Look in the Outings Program for details.

NPA members have been asked to tackle briar roses on work parties in

the past, to the extent that several members said "no more" to work party coordinator, Len Haskew. You will be pleased to hear that other people have been tackling briars within the Hospital Creek pine plantation. The Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group (GBRG) had a work party in early December which vigorously tackled those within isolated stands of eucalypts (incidentally the group included several NPA members). With so much bare ground and limited competition, the briars have the potential to do very well so some effort is worth undertaking to thwart them. GBRG will have another work party this autumn, and ranger Steve Welch hopes to have some of the larger plants near tracks sprayed.

Calicivirus and rabbits in the ACT

It is over two years since NPA had a work party (22 June 1996) to mark rabbit warrens in the Boboyan pine area ready for ripping when calicivirus arrived. Calicivirus was first found in the ACT in May 1996, and was released officially later that year, but the ripping did not happen till late last year, just two years later than planned. In the meantime, NPA members observed numerous rabbits bouncing freely in the open ground

between Gudgenby homestead and the Boboyan pines. It is also most unfortunate that although some ripping has now been done, the funds available were not adequate for Parks and Conservation Service to complete the job. Rabbits are still present at Gudgenby in sufficient numbers to spread easily into the vulnerable regenerating bush.

The picture over the rest of the ACT is not so gloomy. Rabbit numbers at all other sites monitored are as low as they have been, a situation also found on rural leaseholds. For example, near Uriarra Crossing numbers dropped in 1996 and have stayed low.

Monitoring by spotlight counts at Glendale, Orroral, Mount Clear and Boboyan has appeared to show a rise in numbers after ripping (when rabbits cannot easily retreat into warrens) then a fall due to

calicivirus. That is, warren ripping appears to stimulate an outbreak of calicivirus. A lack of foxes also appears to aid in the spread of calicivirus. Foxes keep rabbits near their warrens and ensure quick disposal of carcasses. Rabbit numbers at Boboyan and Mount Clear crashed in 1996; in both these areas Parks & Conservation Service has been poisoning foxes; and at Boboyan it was observed that carcasses persisted. Tests suggest that a large brown blowfly may be the chief carrier of the virus from carcasses. Certainly it can spread into isolated populations, such as the one at Bendora (and to urban pet rabbits if not protected).

Overall in the ACT, rabbit numbers have dropped and have remained low. It will be interesting to see whether the reduction will lead to reduced feral cat and fox

populations and increased survival of the native shrubs selectively grazed by rabbits. Unfortunately Gudgenby appears to be the exception that proves the rule. Why that is so is not clear. Last October, 70 per cent of Gudgenby rabbits were sero positive for calicivirus so it may be that there were large numbers of young rabbits there when the virus first spread and these are now immune for life. (Rabbits under six weeks do not succumb to the virus and become immune). However, they will not pass their immunity on to their progeny and few wild rabbits live more than two years so we can hope that the next generation will not be so fortunate. We also need to see that adequate ripping is done to maximise their exposure.

Eleanor Stodart

Draft Alpine Region Strategy

The NSW Department of Urban Affairs and Planning has issued a Draft Alpine Region Strategy for the local government areas of Bombala, Cooma-Monaro, Snowy River, Tumut, Tumbarumba and Kosciuszko National Park. In the words of the Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning, Craig Knowles, "This is a region undergoing significant change of its local and regional economies, in the role and needs of its communities, and in the pressure to achieve the right balance between environmental preservation and development." This strategy has been prepared "as the first step in working with local communities to manage and direct this change...it is not a legal planning document. It provides direction and guidance, not rules and regulations".

As soon as the NPA ACT became aware of this draft strategy Neville Esau, convenor of the Environment Sub-committee, formed a working party (Kevin Frawley, Stephen Johnston, Timothy Walsh and himself) to study the strategy and prepare comments back to the NSW Government. Given the findings of the recent Perisher Valley inquiry, our task was tinged with foreboding!

The strategy is a curious document. It appears to say all the right things – the importance of the region for: its biological diversity, its tourism resources, its water, agricultural and forestry resources. Nonetheless it fails to acknowledge the need to keep development outside the area's national parks.

The strategy was prepared by a steering committee set up by the NSW Government in 1997, made up of representatives of local interest groups and local and state agencies. Considering the enormous amount of research work done on the region by bodies such as the Australian Academy of Science, the Australian Conservation Foundation, the Wilderness Society, and of course the National Parks Associations of ACT, NSW and Victoria, the lack of participation of these organisations is odd. In addition, the Australian Alps Liaison Committee (Commonwealth, Victorian, NSW and ACT Governments) does not seem to have been involved in any meaningful way.

The result is that the bibliography lacks even the most basic conservation studies (except for the National Strategy for the Conservation of Australian

Biological Diversity). Most of the work cited involves tourism, economic and transport opportunities, jobs and the like.

This said, it must be acknowledged that the strategy is wide-ranging. It acknowledges some of the environmental attributes of the region and points out how farming, forestry, hydro and irrigation schemes, feral animals and the like have taken their toll. In advocating a strategy to stimulate local development, improve transport links, increase rural population and stimulate all-season tourism, it does state this must be done through an ecologically sustainable framework.

A series of policies are enunciated and then brief action plans and priorities, outcomes and responsibilities are listed for each plan. It is here the NPA ACT has commented on the need to remove some of the woolliness of the plans and to incorporate government and community conservation groups in those responsible for overseeing the outcome of each policy.

It must be noted that the significant Aboriginal and European heritage of the region is

continued on page 9

Tidbinbilla role in Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby recovery

This is the text of the address of Geoff Underwood, Wildlife Officer, Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, Environment ACT to the September general meeting of the association).

Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve (TNR) has had a long association with the brush-tailed rock wallaby. The species has lived among the granite tors surrounding the Tidbinbilla valley for thousands of years prior to the arrival of European settlers. They were once common along the Australian eastern coast from western Victoria through to southern Queensland, and whilst reasonable numbers still exist in the more northerly parts of their range, the species has been lost from most of the central and southern sections of their distribution.

Commercial hunting of Brush-tailed Rock Wallabies resulted in over 500 000 bounties being paid during the period between 1894 and 1914, and with extensive fur trade existing up to 1927. During 1908 some 92 590 rock wallaby skins were marketed through a single Sydney wool-broking company. The fragmentation of rock wallaby habitat as a result of land development, and the introduction of predators such as foxes and cats, have also had a dramatic impact upon Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby populations, particularly in south-eastern Australia. The small, fragmented populations which have managed to survive these threats must also contend today with increased recreational usage of these refuge sites.

Unfortunately the Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby is now classified as critically endangered in Victoria, where it is estimated that there are probably only 20 to 30 animals left in the wild. The brush-tailed rock wallaby is also considered endangered in the ACT, with recent surveys failing to find any evidence of animals remaining alive in the wild. The last Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby to be seen alive in the wild



Brush-tailed Rock Wallabies on granite boulders in Namadgi. Will we be seeing them there again? Drawing by Eleanor Stodart.

in the ACT was in 1959, in what is now the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. It is now probable that the Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby is extinct in the ACT, and likely to face a similar fate in Victoria unless action is taken to assist the species recover numbers. As a result of the threats facing this species a recovery program was established in Victoria. A small number of animals was trapped from East Gippsland and transferred to Healesville Sanctuary in 1997 to form the nucleus of a captive breeding group.

The problem faced by the recovery team was how to quickly breed up the large number of animals needed for a release to the wild. Normally a female rock wallaby will only produce one young a year, and with the small group held at Healesville Sanctuary it would take more than 15 years to breed up enough animals for a single release. The solution was to get more than one young from each female per year, by transferring pouch young from the female Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby to that of a "foster female" from another species, a technique which had not been used in a conservation program in the past.

Some brush-tailed rock wallabies

were introduced to the New Zealand island of Kawau during the late 1800s, where they subsequently bred up in numbers owing to the lack of predators. During the 1970s some of these animals were caught from Kawau Island and transferred to a number of Australian zoos for display. In 1986 a male and two female "Kawau Island" brush-tailed rock wallabies were transferred to TNR to start a captive breeding and display group. These animals adapted well to Tidbinbilla and today the reserve is home to the largest population of brush-tailed rock wallabies in captivity, numbering over 30 animals. Until recently, the "Kawau Island" animals were considered unsuitable for release into the wild, because they were thought to differ genetically from known wild populations in Australia.

Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve was an obvious choice of venue to undertake "cross fostering trials" because of the large group of "Kawau Island" rock wallabies housed here, and the fact that we also had a large colony of Tamar wallabies which would make ideal foster mothers. And so it was that in early 1997 members of

the brush-tailed rock wallaby recovery team descended on Tidbinbilla to commence trials of this innovative technique.

The cross fostering procedure involves catching a "foster mother" Tamar wallaby, and transferring the pouch young from a brush-tailed rock wallaby to the Tamar wallaby. Once transferred, the rock wallaby pouch young would feed upon the milk produced by the "foster mother" and continue to grow in the tamar wallaby pouch. With the removal of her pouch young, the female Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby is then able to produce another young, and in this way it is possible to obtain up to six young per year from each female, instead of the single young normally produced. Utilising this technique rock wallabies would be rapidly bred up in captivity, making it feasible to release a group back to the wild in as little as three years. Whilst this would not only enable rock wallabies to be released into the wild sooner, it would also provide a number of cost savings which could then be

used in the conservation of other threatened species.

The cross fostering trials have proved to be a spectacular success, with seven Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby joeys having been successfully cross fostered to tamar wallaby surrogate females; all of which have now left the pouch. The next stage in the process is to cross foster the young of Victorian brush-tailed rock wallabies to the Tamar wallabies held at Tidbinbilla. This will allow us to rapidly build up the number of Victorian animals to enable an early release to the wild.

An additional benefit of this program has been that the genetic makeup on the "Kawau Island" rock wallabies housed at Tidbinbilla has been more closely scrutinised, and as a result there is now strong evidence to suggest that these animals are in fact suitable for release in the ACT region. Environment ACT is currently developing a draft action plan for brush-tailed rock wallabies in the ACT and it is hoped that this will

identify the development of actions which will enable the reintroduction of captive-bred animals in order to re-establish the species in the wild. Ultimately, it is hoped that the cross fostering technique can be used to breed animals suitable for release back into the wild in the ACT.

As a result of the success of the program and the interest it has generated a Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby recovery team has been established in southern NSW and the formation of a national recovery team is also proposed, with TNR again playing a major role in these groups.

The coming months will see TNR involved in the development of a number of conservation programs, not only with the Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby but also with several other species.

One day you might be able to come to Tidbinbilla and once again see wild brush-tailed rock wallabies living among the granite tors of the Tidbinbilla valley.

Geoff Underwood

Obituary

Dr Robert Story

Employed in his early years as a pasture research officer in South Africa, Robert, the botanist, was also a convinced environmentalist. He first spoke out about the destruction of the environment by human activity whilst giving a talk at Albany Museum (South Africa) in 1945. Robert said, "Unless we keep our population under control and limited, we are committing suicide just as surely as the sun is going to rise to-morrow." He maintained this viewpoint all his life, so that having migrated to Australia in 1959 with his wife, Sybil, and children, Judy and Muriel, it was very much in character that he was attracted to groups involved with the environment.

Robert was one of the founding members of the National Parks

Association of the ACT in 1960. He joined the committee in 1962 and was president from 1963 to 1965. As the main aim of the ACT NPA in the 1960s was to establish "a National Park for the National Capital", Robert was a member of a party of three committee members (Julie Henry and Fiona Brand were the others) who walked into Mount Kelly in 1962 with Alpine Club member Alan Bagnall who knew the area. After climbing the mountain, drinking in the view, the solitude and the remoteness, there was no doubt that the national park proposal would be based on the Mount Kelly - Gudgenby area.

Robert worked hard with Julie Henry to write the proposal drawing on expert information from several of his CSIRO colleagues. The proposal was presented to Mr Doug Anthony, Minister for the Interior, in 1963. The present Namadgi National Park is a continuing memorial to NPA founders such as Robert.

The Story family's main recreation was bushwalking - long and hard - and involvement in the Kosciusko Huts Association (KHA) work parties. Robert was president of KHA in the 1970s and also president of the Canberra Bushwalkers and the Australian National Parks Council. He was made an honorary life member of the NPA in 1984 and awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in 1989 in recognition of his involvement in all these environmental bodies.

The National Parks Association of the ACT has been honoured to have had Robert as a member for 39 years, grateful for all that he did, and all that the Story family have given, and continues to give, to the conservation cause.

Robert Story born 1913, South Africa, died 19 February 1999, Canberra ACT.

Fiona MacDonald Brand

Morton and Budawang National Parks Draft Management Plan

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service has issued a draft management plan for the Morton and Budawang National Parks and the NPA has already provided detailed comments in response.

All management plans are detailed and complex documents. The summary I have included here only touches on some of the many issues, strategies, policies, and action plans included in the draft. Copies of the draft plan and our detailed response are available in the NPA office if members wish to pursue any topic in more detail.

The specific objectives for Morton and Budawang National Parks listed in the draft plan include:

- conservation of these parks as components of the system of protected lands of the Sydney Basin and Coastal Escarpment
- conservation of representative samples of the diverse plant and animal communities of the basin and escarpment
- conservation of areas with significant vegetation communities and threatened plant species
- maintenance of populations of threatened native animals, particularly the Ground Parrot, Eastern Bristlebird, Koala, Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby, and Broad-headed Snake
- protection and enhancement of wilderness values
- protection of significant Aboriginal art sites
- promotion of public appreciation of the diversity and high conservation significance of the two parks, and the need for protective management and non-damaging use
- provision of opportunities for low-key day and overnight recreational use on the edges of Morton National Park
- promotion of tourist use and appreciation of the northern rim and south-eastern corner of Morton National Park

- provision of educational opportunities at Fitzroy Falls and other suitable locations.

The overall strategy to achieve these objectives necessarily includes a range of management programs; the draft plan lists these as:

- fire management
- weed and feral animal control
- rehabilitation of disturbed areas
- threatened species surveys
- recording of historic places
- access
- remote and wilderness management
- promotion of minimal impact use
- rationalisation of the Budawang Wilderness walking tracks
- provision of boundary day and overnight recreation facilities

Within this strategy, the major parts of both parks will be managed as wilderness areas; large sections of both parks have already been gazetted as wilderness under the Wilderness Act.

The draft plan provides detailed discussion and explanations of all these strategies: policies and action plans for each objective are included in the draft. There is extensive discussion of promotion, interpretation, and recreation issues, including options for controlling access to wilderness areas. A comprehensive policy covering all aspects and levels of recreation and access covering the whole of the parks is included.

The NPA, through the Environment Sub-committee, has provided comments on a number of sections of the draft plan, including expressing support for initiatives to improve the conservation status of the parks, such as the declaration, under proposed legislation, of the Clyde and Shoalhaven Rivers within Morton National Park as wild and scenic rivers.

Our major comments concerned the sections on promotion, interpretation, recreation opportunities and wilderness. We

saw the implementation of imaginative policies in these areas as essential to address the current unsustainable impact of recreational use in popular areas, particularly in Morton National Park. Central to any policy to achieve sustainable recreational use is a policy to restrict and regulate access and numbers of visitors. Unless this objective can be achieved many of the other policies to redress current degradation and achieve sustainable use will fail. The draft plan rightly points out that a compulsory permit system would not work. We believe that a voluntary permit system is both practicable and achievable.

Our response in these key areas included the following comments (these have been slightly abridged):

Promotion and interpretation

NPA ACT supports the policy objectives listed for this section. A clear and imaginative education policy and actions are urgently needed to promote sustainable use of many areas of Morton and Budawang National Parks. Bushwalking and other outdoor organisations (including programs in schools and colleges) have a major impact on the way these parks are perceived and used. To help achieve the objectives we would like to see not just authors, but clubs and organisations, especially peak bodies, directly involved in disseminating information and undertaking appropriate actions to achieve the stated policy objectives.

Recreation opportunities

Consistent with our recommendations for education programs to promote (voluntary) restrictions on visitor numbers, we would like to see more restrictive policies and action plans on areas where vehicular, horse riding, and bicycle access is permitted. There should be no access for these activities in wilderness areas, or in buffer zones surrounding

wilderness areas. All vehicular, horse, and bicycle access should be restricted to designated roads, and only on the periphery of the parks. We believe that recreational vehicle use within these parks has already exceeded the criteria set in the plan of management for environmental damage, and the time is overdue for the inclusion of further vehicular restriction and control in the plan of management.

The list of policy points for this section is quite long and detailed, reflecting the diverse range of activities and areas that have developed in the parks. Considerable strengthening and rationalisation of these policies needs to occur to emphasise more appropriate recreation patterns and controlling inappropriate uses. The emphasis should be on education and management for sustainable use, particularly in wilderness areas.

Wilderness

NPA ACT believes that a policy and action plan to restrict visitor numbers is essential to achieve sustainable use of the wilderness areas in Morton and Budawang National Parks. We believe this restriction can be achieved voluntarily and without the use of permits, which, as the draft plan of

management notes, are expensive to administer and difficult to enforce in Morton and Budawang National Parks. All other wilderness control policies, however, will ultimately fail to achieve long-term sustainable use unless visitor numbers can be controlled.

As part of the policies for this section, the service should give a high priority to developing a policy and action plan to (voluntarily) control visitor numbers. As mentioned in our comments on an earlier section, we believe this could be achieved through clubs and schools agreeing to implement such a policy. If clubs and schools agreed to limit numbers to a maximum of six per walk and the frequency of visitations to once or twice per year, a significant reduction in numbers could be achieved. Such an NPWS request would reach a large proportion of the potential (and cooperative) wilderness users. The Federation of Bushwalking Clubs and other peak bodies, and education bodies, could, and would, play a key role in achieving this objective. Other suggestions to limit numbers could include a voluntary registration system, perhaps Internet-based, and signage at popular entry points specifying

limits on numbers. The service already controls visitor numbers on commercial trips. Combining this with restrictions on non-commercial recreational visits would lay the foundation for sustainable use of this wilderness.

We would emphasise the importance of policies and action plans for:

- provision of suitable composting toilets at camping areas
- adherence to the minimal impact bushwalking code
- no cave camping
- use of fuel stoves only – no removal of fallen or dead timber
- removal of all cairns
- provision for ranger presence at peak times (Easter, etc) in popular areas to promote sustainable use policies and monitor activities
- rationalising tracks and camping areas
- implementing track maintenance and hardening through voluntary work programs.

We believe that the draft plan provides the wide range of policies and action plans necessary to provide secure conservation, redress existing degradation and achieve sustainable use.

**Neville Esau for the
Environment Sub-committee**

Draft Alpine Region Strategy *continued from page 5*

acknowledged in the strategy and adequate suggestions for its preservation and interpretation are made.

This strategy is seen by its authors as a community planning document which will allow local communities to plan their futures in an economically and ecologically sustaining way. However due to the national and international importance of the region, these communities must allow conservation groups such as the NPA to play a role. When all is said and done, were it not for conservationists of the stature of the Byles, the Dunphys, Lane Poole, Costin, Mulvaney, Flood, and many more, this area would not be recognised for its unique environmental importance.

Threats to the Alpine region of NSW still exist in the form of unsympathetic town planning, uncontrolled feral flora and fauna, and the devastating and the pernicious effect of four-wheel drive vehicles. This strategy, when finalised and implemented, could be the instrument to deal with these.

**Timothy Walsh and
Neville Esau**

Membership application form enclosed

Perhaps you could pass this to
someone who would like to join
the NPA.

Green Words is 10

At an afternoon of water and music held beside the pool of Churchill House in late December, Green Words marked its tenth birthday. Speaking to the occasion, Roger Green recalled that a lot had changed over those 10 years; on a global scale, the Cold War had ended and on a local scale, Green Words had gone from a single Mac and himself in a room in Ainslie to an organisation employing some 12 staff. He had some words of appreciation for his clients including two originals still on his books, one being the National Parks Association.

The organisation received a small birthday gift – an addition of two words to its name – which henceforth is “Green Words & Images”.

Syd Comfort

Rural Residential Development in the ACT

In September 1998 the ACT Government released a discussion paper on Rural Residential Development (RRD) in the ACT, prepared by consultants. RRD was defined as land division into lots in excess of 0.5ha and less than 8ha in area which allows some form of rural activity. The consultants were to examine the introduction of RRD into the ACT, investigate possible sites for development and to consult with key stakeholders and community representatives. The foreword to the paper by the Executive Director of Planning and Land Management, Lincoln Hawkins, indicated that an outcome favouring RRD was anticipated.

Discussion paper conclusion

The discussion paper concludes that there is a demand for RRD in the ACT and that it would provide a housing option not currently available in the Territory. It would also provide an opportunity for investment to target a "quality" market niche not well catered for. The paper concedes that if RRD were permitted in future urban areas, fewer residential lots would be available in the ACT and that the financial return to the Government would depend on the level of land values achieved. Potential RRD areas are identified as :

Melrose Valley (11 large lots)

Kinlyside (208 small lots) and north Gungahlin (69 small lots).

Background

The ACT and Sub-region Planning Strategy - agreed in 1995 between the Commonwealth and ACT Governments and regional councils - which considered long term land use in the region, did not propose RRD for the ACT but agreed with some development of this type in adjacent areas of NSW. The ACT Rural Policy Task Force Report, developed in 1997 after extensive community consultation did not favour RRD in the ACT and firmly opposed it on productive agricultural land. Recently a proposal for RRD in Kinlyside received widespread publicity and

was subsequently withdrawn. On 28 May 1998 the ACT Legislative Assembly passed a resolution supporting the Government's commitment to the introduction of RRD.

Conservation Council responses

The Conservation Council of the South East Region and Canberra has prepared a comprehensive response to the discussion paper and concludes that it cannot support the RRD as proposed in the discussion paper. I have attempted to summarise the council's submission in succeeding paragraphs.

Process

By adopting a policy in favour of RRD in May 1998 the Government has rejected the recommendations of the Rural Policy Taskforce opposing RRD, reached after extensive community consultation, and has ignored the need for further consultation. By taking this decision without discussion with other authorities in the region, the Government puts at risk the cooperative approach to planning that led to the agreement on the ACT and Sub Region Planning Strategy in 1995. To adopt the pro RRD policy before the discussion paper on the subject was completed undermines the value of that report. The Government approach takes little account of the importance of consultation and runs contrary to established ACT and regional planning guidelines.

Future city development and cost

The Conservation Council submission recognises the need to keep a large area of land available in the ACT for future urban needs. If Kinlyside and north Gungahlin were to be used for RRD, over 2000 urban lots would be lost and the need for alternative areas for urban use could result in pressure to urbanise valuable open space. The low population densities of RRD would work against urban consolidation and favour urban

sprawl with consequential demands for additional roads, and increased polluting traffic. Use of land for RRD would also reduce the return to the Government from the release of land from approximately \$30 000 to \$5000 per urban block. The ACT community as a whole could be subsidising a lifestyle that only a small section of the community could afford.

Environmental issues

There are a number of environmental management issues associated with RRD: weeds, predation, fire and the protection of natural areas. The consultants acknowledge that even well designed RRD "cannot guarantee the retention of flora and fauna". Areas of Yellow Box/Red Gum grassy woodland, a declared endangered ecological community, would be particularly vulnerable. Especially with small blocks, there will be pressures from both initial development and continuing human impact through fragmentation of habitat, predation by domestic animals, introduction of weeds, changes to the visual aesthetics of rural landscapes and the destruction of wildlife corridors. Protection from bushfires and a desire for a tidy appearance by some owners will lead to destruction of conservation values. Protection of the environment through property management agreements will face many problems, some stemming from the process itself and others from the resources needed to enforce these with hundreds of individual land holders.

Site selection

The Conservation Council questions how the authors of the discussion paper decided which areas are suitable for RRD; chosen sites have serious nature conservation problems which have not been addressed. The areas proposed for RRD include ecosystems classified as endangered, some of which are already covered by conservation action plans prepared by the ACT

continued on page 17

NPA outings program

March – June 1999

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



15 March Canberra Day (Monday)
ACT Alive
Lawns opposite Old Parliament House
Contact: Yvonne Bartos
Phone: 6231 5699

We are asking members to help the NPA by calling in to our tent and spending up to a couple of hours answering questions about the Association and its aims, and about the display. You will also have the opportunity to see the other interesting stalls at this popular exhibition. Please phone if you can help.

20 March Saturday daywalk
Brindabella Range Ramble
Leader: Steven Forst 2A
Map: ACT 1:100 000
Phone: 6279 1326(w), 6251 6817(h)

Meet at picnic area carpark on Utiarra road just off the Cotter road (near Duffy) at 8.30am. A fire trail walk through the tall 'shady' forest between the Cotter River and the Brindabella Road. Nestled in a south east facing valley this moist temperate/alpine eucalyptus forest provides for pleasant walking even in summer. Some views of Canberra. 80 kms, \$16 per car.

21 March Sunday daywalk
Naas River
Leader: Frank Clements 3A/B
Map: Yaouk 1:25 000
Phone: 6231 7005

A repeat of the August walk, but without the cold and wet weather (?). Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.00am. Walk from Boboyan Pines carpark to an unusually coloured rock outcrop, climbing about 70m, then proceeding to Hospital Creek falls and Hospital Hut, before resuming the Old Boboyan Road and going on to Naas River. Return to cars via the road. 100kms, \$20 per car.

22 – 28 March 1999 seven day packwalk
Cobberas to Thredbo
Leaders: Mick Kelly and Max Lawrence 3A/B
Map: Jacobs River 1:100 000
Phone: 02 4472 3959 (Mick), 6288 1370 (Max)

This walk is fully booked. If you haven't booked your only chance is to go on the waiting list for last minute cancellations.

24 March daywalk
Wednesday walk
Leader: Yvonne Bartos
Phone: 6231 5699

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

27 March Saturday work party
Gudgenby work party
Leader: Eleanor Stodart
Phone: 6281 5004

This is a joint exercise with the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group to tackle briars and other weeds in the newly seeded areas where once stood Boboyan Pines. Meet at the Yankee Hat carpark at 10.00am or, if you wish to share transport, at the Namadgi Visitors Centre by 9.15am.

10 – 11 April Saturday and Sunday work parties
Upper Hospital Creek work party
Leader: Eleanor Stodart
Map: Yaouk 1:25 000
Phone: 6281 5004

We will be felling the smaller pines in Hospital Creek south of the Boboyan pine plantation, and recording the location of those too big to tackle by hand. The pines are well spread out, so there will be opportunity for good walking and to really get to know the area. Attend either or both days. Ring leader for details. 100kms, \$20 per car.

18 April Sunday daywalk
Corang Peak
Leader: Mike Smith 3A/D
Map: Corang 1:25 000
Phone: 6286 2984

Meet at Canberra Railway Station Kingston at 7.30am. Note early start. A walk in the Budawangs from the Wog Wog entrance to Corang Peak which has 360 degree views. Scrubby side trip to Admiration Point for lunch (more great views). Return by same route, making the total walk near to 20kms. Drive is around 250kms, \$50 per car.

16 – 18 April three day packwalk
Mt Clear Campground to Caloola Farm
Leader: David Large 1A/B
Maps: Colinton, Michelago 1:25 000
Phone: 6291 4830

A through walk to explore sites of historical interest, visiting a number of huts, ruins, grave sites and old settlement sites in the Naas Valley. Day 1 see Barrett's ruin, Demanding and Horse Gully huts, and camp at Brayshaw's ruin. Day 2 visit Mrs Mathieson's grave, Reedy Creek settlement sites, and camp at Max and Bert Oldfield's hut. Day 3 is Tom Rowley's ruin and the walk out to Caloola. Mostly on track, few hills. Many river crossings may involve some wading if river is up. An easy packwalk suitable for beginners. Transport TBA, but depending on numbers probably meet at Caloola and bus to Mt Clear.

24 April Saturday daywalk

Mt Domain

Leader: Steven Forst

1A/B

Map: Tidbinbilla 1:25 000

Phone: 6279 1326 (w), 6251 6817 (h)

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. A steep climb (over 600m) on track to the top of one of Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve's landmark mountains. There's plenty of time and we'll take it slowly and enjoy the views. 70kms, \$14 per car, plus TNR entrance fee.

24 – 26 April three day packwalk

Northern Kosciuszko Frost Plains

Leader: Martin Chalk

2A/B/C/F

Map: Rules Point 1:25 000

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

A three day walk across the frost plains of northern Kosciuszko National Park. Visit places such as Old Currango, Gurrangorambla Range, Pockets Hut, Seventeen Flat, Cooleman Plain and Caves, and the site of Harris Hut. Call leader by preceding Wednesday for details. Numbers will be limited. 400kms, \$80 per car.

28 April daywalk

Wednesday walk

Leader: Max Lawrence

Phone: 6288 1370

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

1 – 6 May one week packwalk

Orroral to Kiandra

Leader: Graham Scully

2A/B/C

Map: Tantangara 1:100 000

Phone: 6230 3352

Day 1 – from Orroral through Cotter Gap, Cotter River to camp at Little Bimber Creek. Day 2 – over Murrays Gap to camp at Oldfields Hut, optional climb to Bimber summit. Day 3 – to Old Currango via the site of Argentine Harris' cherry garden homestead. Day 4 – to Currango where we will stay in booked accommodation, have a hot shower and a meal in the main homestead. Day 5 – to Hains Hut via the Murrumbidgee. Day 6 – To Kiandra via Witzes Hut and Wild Horse Plain.

2 May Sunday daywalk

Mt Gingera and Brumby Flat

Leader: Steve Hill

3A/B

Map: Corin Dam 1:25 000

Phone: 6231 9186(h)

Meet at the carpark in the pines off Uriarra Road near where it joins the Cotter Road. From Pryors Hut we go up to the Gingera north summit (steepish), then along the ridge for a while before a gentle descent to Brumby Flat (still at around 1800m) on the western side. A chance to enjoy a beautiful example of an alpine frosty hollow/marsh and meditate about the real world. We then visit some ancient snowgums (centuries old), and undertake a gentle scramble up to the southern summit. Back to Ginini carpark the usual way. 140kms, \$28 per car.

7 – 9 May three day packwalk

Namadgi National Park

Leaders: Eric and Pat Pickering

2A/C/D/E

Map: Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000

Phone: 6286 2128

Joint NPA/FBI walk. Three days in Namadgi National Park starting from Orroral and taking in Mt Namadgi, Creamy Flats and Coronet Peak, and possibly Mt Kelly. Some rock scrambling and magnificent views. Lots of scrub but plenty of time to enjoy this beautiful area. Phone leader for details. 70kms, \$14 per car.

8 – 9 May weekend outing

Hawkesbury cruise

Leader: Len Haskew

Phone: 6281 4268

Details of this outing were in the last program. If you want to go, but haven't booked, phone Len. You never know, he may still have a vacancy.

16 May Sunday daywalk

Brindabella National Park

Leader: Max Lawrence

1B/C/E

Maps: Brindabella 1:100 000, Umburra 1:25 000

Phone: 6288 1370

This walk involves a couple of hours driving (including over an hour on bumpy four wheel drive tracks) to get to the kick off point for what is quite a short walk. Our destination will be the top of the falls on Waterfall Creek, which plunges well over 200m in very short order on its way down to the Goodradigbee. A good opportunity to visit this great new park on our doorstep. Phone leader early for details and bookings. Numbers will be limited by the availability of 4WD vehicles. 140kms, \$28 per car.

22 – 23 May weekend packwalk

Royal National Park Coast Walk

Leader: David Large

2A

Map: RNP 1:30 000

Phone: 6291 4830

Joint walk with FBI. A repeat of last September's walk. This time we will utilise the YHA hostel at Garie Beach making it a light pack or supported walk. Suitable for beginners. Enjoy magnificent sea views from cliff tops. Transport TBA depending on numbers. Phone leader for details and bookings.

23 May Sunday daywalk

Yaouk Peak

Leader: Stephen Johnston

2B/C/E

Map: Yaouk 1:25 000

Phone: 6258 3833(h)

An off-track 600m climb to Yaouk Peak, with time to explore the small plateau. Phone leader for bookings and enquiries. 180kms, \$36 per car.

26 May daywalk

Wednesday walk

Leader: David Large

Phone: 6291 4830

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

29 – 30 May weekend packwalk

Booth Range

Leader: Philip Gatenby

3A/B/D/F

Maps: Colinton, Michelago 1:25 000

Phone: 6254 3094

Partly exploratory walk on the ridges and valleys of the Booth Range, south and east of Booths Hill. Mostly off track, some patches of thick scrub may be encountered. Phone leader by Wednesday 26 May for details and bookings. 130kms, \$26 per car.

30 May Sunday daywalk

Orroral Circuit

Leader: Steven Forst

2A

Map: Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000

Phone: 6279 1326(w), 6251 6817(h)

A walk from Orroral Campground up the track to Orroral Homestead and the tracking station site and beyond, returning on the other side of the river. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. 70kms, \$14 per car.

6 June Sunday daywalk

Murrumbidgee River – Red Rocks Canyon

Leader: Steve Hill

2A

Map: Tuggeranong 1:25 000

Phone: 6231 9186(h)

Almost a stroll for the most part, mainly on tracks. A chance to visit some magnificent sights along the Murrumbidgee Corridor from the Tuggeranong Creek corner to Red Rocks for lunch and, if people wish, further downstream. Beautiful scenery right on our door step, and plenty of bird life at any time of the year. Meet at Urambi Hills carpark about 200m along Learmonth Drive from the Athlon Drive turnoff in Kambah at 10.00am. 0kms, \$0 per car.

12 – 14 June long weekend packwalk

Quiltys Mountain

Leader: Steven Forst

2A/B

Ref: CMW Budawangs

Phone: 6279 1326(w), 6251 6817(h)

Contact leader by Tuesday for details of two and a half day walk starting Saturday. Easy-medium walk with packs to a base camp on the Endrick River. Visit Quiltys Pass, the Bora Ground, and Round Mountain. A late lunch at Braidwood on Monday. 340 kms, \$68 per car.

12 – 14 June long weekend carcamp

Murrumbidgee National Park

Leader: Mick and Joan Kelly

Maps: Durras 1:25 000, Batemans Bay Forestry Map

Phone: 02 4472 3959

Weekend will include walk from Depot Beach to Durras Mountain (283m) and return, plus some forest walks. Relaxation will be the main theme, perhaps some birdwatching or fishing for those interested. Please phone leaders by Monday 7 June.

19 June Saturday daywalk

Coree and Devils Peak

Leader: Matthew Higgins

2A/B/D

Map: Cotter Dam 1:25 000

Phone: 6247 7285

Crunch frost in the northern Brindabellas this winter! Joint walk with KHA. We'll climb Coree from near Blundells, 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 14kms. For the fit. Book with leader, numbers limited. 90kms, \$18 per car.

Forthcoming, dates to be determined

The Two Rivers Walking Track

Contact: Mick Kelly

Phone: 02 4472 3959

The Two Rivers Walking Track is a joint venture of the Shoalhaven City Council, the NPWS and the Aboriginal community of Shoalhaven. It links the Shoalhaven River near Nowra south to the Clyde at Yadboro, mostly on established firetrails and tracks. Mick is planning to organise a packwalk along the track, probably of about a week's duration. Details of the walk, which is likely to be held during the winter months, will be in the next NPA outings program. Watch this space.

Westbourne Woods Walk

Held the second Sunday of every month. Meet at the entrance to Royal Canberra Golf Club at the top of Bentham Street Yarralumla at 9.30am for a two hour free guided walk to enjoy the many species of mature trees from all corners of the world, (*no dogs please*).



Mont Adventure Sale

In May 1998, David Edwards of Mont Adventure Equipment spoke at our general meeting and promised to let us know about their next sale. Here are the details:

A three day clearance sale of clothing, tents and other outdoor products will be held in late March.

Friday 19th March : 12 noon to 7pm

Saturday 20th March : 9am to 5pm

Sunday 21st March : 9am to 3pm

Address : 39 Crawford St, Queanbeyan.

A winter escape to far north Queensland

An offer of favourable airfares induced me to go north in June 1998 and the Queensland Tourist Office helped me to make up my mind by finding an interesting four-day rainforest walk not far from Cairns.

On the first day, an adventure company from Cairns picked me up at Palm Cove and took me to the Atherton Tableland, which offers beautiful scenery. Some of my favourite places from a trip I made 35 years ago look unchanged: Lake Barrine with its giant Kauri pines around 1100 years old, Lake Eacham, Yungaburra, where a neighbouring giant strangler fig tree with aerial roots dropping about 15m to the ground.

A cruise is now available on the extinct crater, Lake Barrine, so I joined this later in the day. The crystal clear waters show off freshwater tortoises, giant eels and snakes while the Red Cedars, Silver Ash, Black Bean trees and flowering Umbrella Trees make it most attractive. The skipper of the boat showed his skill at attracting Kites with his whistles (and pieces of bread) whilst a shiny, dark Darter bird was drying out on a fallen tree.

The next morning I joined a group for a two-day rainforest trip. We set off early from Yungaburra to go to the edge of the Bartle Frere rainforest, which forms part of the World Heritage listed Bellenden Ker National Park. Bartle Frere Mountain is the highest in Queensland at 1615 metres and Bellenden Ker is the second highest.

Before setting off we were introduced to various plants to watch out for, including the leaves of the

Stinging Tree and the long canes of the Wait-a-while Palm or Lawyer Vine, of which there were many. Our head guide, a naturalist, was also invaluable for finding the tracks and droppings of the Cassowaries which live in these forests. Their mounds were enormous, but the big shy bird was not to be seen. Neither was the Dingo whose footmarks were right on our tracks for a while.

It took us about five hours, walking mainly along ancient Aboriginal trails, crossing some mountain streams, to reach our small campsite at Moochoopa Falls. The canopy of trees is very high, making the area below very dark, the tracks difficult to follow and the tree roots and buttresses of fig trees hard to avoid.

I spent a rather cool night in a hammock with a sheet of clear plastic hanging from a line above, which to my surprise gave complete protection from hours of pouring rain. The morning light came suddenly and straight away brought out a burst of birdsongs, the loudest of course from the Kookaburra.

On the third morning I was left behind with my guide as the others rolled up their hammocks and left for their return trip to civilisation. Day three was another eventful day. We walked up and down slippery tracks leading to beautiful waterfalls like the Crossover and the Amphitheatre, at times hanging on to roots and branches. Unfortunately the water was quite cool and not inviting for a swim. Along the way we stopped to admire the profusion of fungi on the fallen



Flowering umbrella tree at Lake Barrine. Photo Betty Lewis.

trees. An interesting rock outcrop along the wide and clear Russell River was our lunch stop.

In the afternoon we located the Coochie Falls, after some trouble finding the overgrown track. However, our explorations were cut short by heavy rain which encouraged us to hurry back to camp at Moochoopa Falls.

As my last day in the Bartle Frere rainforest concluded I reflected on the quietness of the forest canopy. Apart from the Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, which were heard quite frequently, the other birds kept quiet during the long periods of fine mist. Occasionally, the Cockatoos were joined by Rifle Birds and the soft wailing of the Catbird, to leave me with a wonderful aural memory of my three days in the rainforest.

Betty Lewis

Namadgi-Tidbinbilla: High Country History and Heritage

This is a course being run by Canberra historian and member Matthew Higgins at the ANU's Centre for Continuing Education (CCE). The course consists of three evening sessions and two one-day

bushwalks. Making extensive use of slides and oral history tapes, the course is designed for people wanting to know more about the post-settlement history of our beautiful ACT high country. The

walks visit some key sites reflecting major themes in the mountains' history. The course is to be run again in May 1999. For details ring the CCE on 6249 3891.

Walking in history makes a good change

It's easy to detect the enthusiast when Phil Bubb talks about walking in Europe. He says that, in his view, to confine walking to Australia could "result only from poverty or bigotry." In an entertaining talk, he told members at the July general meeting that walking in Europe was a pleasing contrast to walking in Australia. "I love both," he said. "I appreciate the virtues of each the more because of the contrast."

Phil's talk - on the pleasures of walking in Europe and how they differ from those in Australia - was a nice balance of anecdote, advice and encouragement. He also brought a wealth of maps, guides and other reference materials for members to look at.

Phil and his wife, Leonie, are relative newcomers to walking in Europe but they have made up for lost time. Since their first European walk in 1992, they have been back four times and have completed walks in France, Switzerland, Austria, Norway and Slovenia.

One of the main differences between walking in Australia and walking in Europe is that the first is associated with the bush, whereas in Europe walking is done in a context of history and culture.

"The walking terrain has a human history of tens of thousands of years, a written history of a thousand or two," Phil said of Europe. "It has buildings, ruins and footpaths hundreds of years old. Each region has an individual culture developed around its farming, and the farms are there to suggest what life was like before modern times. One is surrounded by places where Western civilisation was formed."

Other things that make walking in Europe special are:

- no mountains in Australia have the grandeur and beauty of the Alps
- the footpaths are well signposted, marked and mapped, and sometimes connect over thousands of kilometres and several countries
- moderately priced accommodation adapted to walkers is available enroute, and reduces what needs

to be carried to little more than a day pack

- there is a certain sweetness represented by the French use of the word *douce*; Europe is mostly green, soft, moist and seductive.

Switzerland and Austria abound in marked and mapped walking tracks, and France has 40 000km of *grandes randonnees*. One, for example, goes from Strasbourg in the north along the mountains of the eastern borders of France to Nice in the south - in fact, it is a trans-European path starting on the coast of the Netherlands. Another trans-European path starts on the Atlantic coast, traverses the Pyrenees, passes through Switzerland and along the spine of Austria. "I have no idea where it ends," Phil confessed.

Phil outlined walks in four regions as examples of different walking experiences in Europe: mountain walking in Switzerland, walking through history in the Auvergne district of southern France, a walk with more recent history in the Vosges Mountains of north-east France, and a "special place" - Queyras, near Briancon, south-east of Grenoble and south-west of Turin, where the French border balloons into Italy.

"We walked from a hotel in Zermatt for six days with little recrossing of tracks," Phil said about their mountain walking in the Swiss Alps. "It was not wilderness but we could always see a wildness of crags and glaciers with everything dominated by the impossibly real Matterhorn. On our first day we climbed 6000 feet to the Hornli Hutte, clinging to the shoulder of the Matterhorn.

"In Switzerland, most people only walk downhill. They use lifts to go up. Where there are no lifts, there are few people."

When Phil and Leonie journeyed to the Auvergne in 1992 and walked from Chamonix to Clermont Ferrand in the Massif Central, they discovered they were on the "highways of history".

"Two kilometres south of Clermont Ferrand, at the plateau of Gergovie,

Julius Caesar won a major battle against the Gauls led by Vercingetorix. It was here in 1095 that Pope Urban preached the First Crusade with its enormous consequences for Western history. We took a bus to the edge of town, and passed an 11th century fortified church where, I like to think, the sermon was delivered."

Next day, they passed through small villages, a Gallo-Roman temple to Mercury, a firing range with "danger of death" notices prominently displayed, sheep grazing in a volcanic crater, and a large Romanesque church out of all proportion to the small village it was in, with "brilliant light through its arches upon arches ... this wonderful place defied gravity and exuded light."

In the Vosges Mountains of north-eastern France are the emplacements, trenches, ruined armaments and cemeteries of the wars of this century. As Phil and Leonie walked from a ridge where the French and Germans had fought a stalemated battle for four years in World War I, they came on a French family picnicking within the walls of a ruined castle and wandered through beautiful old wine villages, and, said Phil, life seemed strange - tens of thousands of Germans now live in Alsace because France is cheaper and the country is beautiful.

Queyras, an isolated place surrounded by mountains, is one of Phil's favourite places in Europe - an outstanding natural area that does not preclude villages, tourism or agriculture. Among their walks in the area was a three-day circuit of Monte Viso, taking them over the border into Italy.

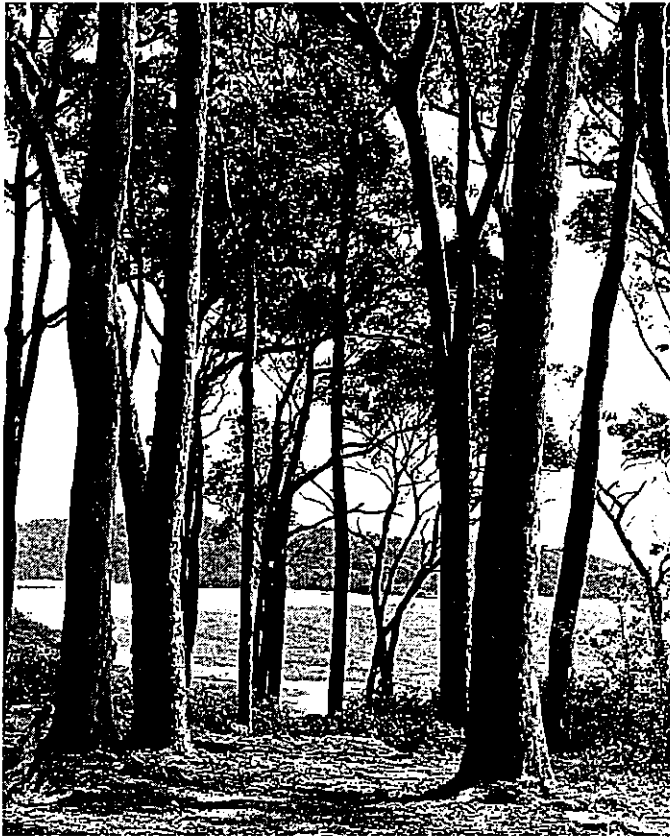
"Although steep, we climbed quickly through the alpine landscape in sunshine almost to the Col de la Traversette on an excellent path. Hannibal is believed to have crossed this pass," Phil said, adding that when they reached the col "our privacy disappeared because half of Italy was picnicking in the sun."

continued on page 13

Termeil Coastal Reserves

A draft plan of management to regulate the use of one of the few remaining undeveloped coastal areas of the South Coast of NSW has

under the State Forests of NSW. A steering committee was formed made up of representatives these organisations and of NSW Fisheries,



*Meroo Beach and Meroo Head from Nuggan Point, Termeil Coastal Reserves.
Photo Reg Alder.*

been formulated and public comment on its impact has been requested.

The reserve, to be named Termeil Coastal Reserves, extends from the southern shore of Tabourie Lake to the northern shore of Williga Lake adjacent to the Bawley Point settlement. The reserve extends along the coastline for a straight-line distance of 6.5km and has an average width of 400m and an area of 430ha.

Proposals for the declaration of the area as a national park or a reserve have been raised over a period of several years but have been complicated by the divided control of the land. Part of the land is under the control of the Shoalhaven City Council, part under the NSW Department of Land and Water Conservation and the remainder

under the State Forests of NSW. A steering committee was formed made up of representatives these organisations and of NSW Fisheries, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Ulladulla Local Aboriginal Land Council. Community views were gained from public meetings, written representations, two user surveys, a management forum, informal discussion with various groups and from comment on the draft plan.

In addition, a reference group was formed consisting of representatives from groups of organisations having common objectives. A meeting of this group was held to develop the basis for identifying the

values of the area and for a plan of management. Despite the size and the diversity of the group a good deal of agreement was reached on the importance of the proposed reserve. Subsequently, newsletters were distributed to report on progress on developing proposals for the management of the reserve.

In summary, the plan ensures that the major part of the reserve will continue to be managed as a natural area with the following stipulations:

- the only access is to be by two roads from the Princes Highway
- all other vehicle tracks are to be closed, there is to be no vehicle access to the beach and off-road vehicle use is to be prohibited
- present use of parking areas is to be formalised and parking fees introduced
- primitive camping is to be

permitted at Termeil Head and Meroo Head with toilet facilities, firewood and fireplaces

- a coastal track is to be formalised
- sensitive areas are to be protected;
- community groups are to be encouraged to become involved in the management of the reserve
- recreational horse riding is to be permitted on tracks and on beaches below the high water line
- Termeil and Meroo Lakes are not to be opened to the sea
- commercial fishing in the lakes is to be permitted
- dogs and other small pets are to be prohibited.

The development of this draft management plan shows how, with the cooperation and involvement of many diverse public interests, a plan that will suit most can be evolved. The declaration of the area as a reserve indicates that public lobbying over a long period can result in the preservation of a fragile area and in its protection from development.

Reg Alder

Walking in history makes a good change

continued from page 12

On their descent – “into the cloud, me with a frisson of vertigo as the crags at my feet disappeared into the fog” – they came upon a spring with a sign that said it was the source of the River Po.

Phil ended his talk with succinct and comprehensive advice, ranging from using the Internet and writing to local authorities rather than national organisations in planning ahead and to always ask the price of everything beforehand.

Phil and Leonie have a wealth of reference material as well as experience. They are happy to give advice and information to members thinking of walking in Europe, and can be contacted on (02) 6248 6769.

Graeme Wicks

PARKWATCH

For this issue of the Bulletin Len has drawn his Parkwatch material from the Internet instead of from periodicals as he has done previously. He would welcome comment on this initiative.

Address to the inaugural meeting of the Australian Industry Group's National Environment Policy Group

By the President of the Australian Conservation Foundation, Peter Garrett.

I thought you may be interested in our view of 10 of the most important issues for the coming year.

They are:

1. Protecting Australia's coasts and marine environments
2. Saving our National Parks and World Heritage Areas - no to Jabiluka and no to the threats to the Great Barrier Reef
3. Halting the clearing of the bush
4. Reforming tax to clean up the air
5. Accelerating greenhouse action. While we see the opportunity for emissions trading, our view is that first a fair dinkum, target driven action to reduce emissions in Australia needs to be in place.
6. Rescuing Australia's forests from failing "Regional Forest Agreements".
7. Bringing back to life the once mighty Murray, Darling and Snowy Rivers.
8. Don't put it in our back yards - cessation of uranium mining and radioactive waste dump proposals.
9. The proposed Federal Environment Bill. We describe this legislation as back to the future, devolving Commonwealth responsibilities to the states, to companies, to individuals, but not to the community and being highly restrictive in application. We are aware that some of our concerns are shared by business.
10. Stopping the burning and poisoning of the great rainforests and reefs in South East Asia and Papua New Guinea.

ACF website: acfonline.org.au Feb, 1999

No place for a radioactive waste dump: Kupa Piti Kungka Tjuta Women's Group

We are Aboriginal women. We were born on the earth. Some of us are Arabunna women. This is our old people's country - Arabunna People's country. The Billa Kalina region is very important to us. It is the place where our grandmothers' grandmothers lived. It was our home until we were forced to move off the lands.

We have always remained connected to the land and this connection is still strong. We still know where the women's sites are and we are concerned that our women's sites will be destroyed so that when we go back it will all be gone.

We're trying hard about this rubbish - the radioactive dump. We don't want that - we've got kids to grow up on the country.

The Lake Eyre basin and country is millions of years old and Billa Kalina has ancient mound springs. We've got underground water, that's why we're worrying about the water. We don't want the poison from the dump leaking into underground water.

And we're worried about the animals. We eat malu (kangaroo), kalaya (emu), unkgata (frill necked lizard), goanna, ngintaka (perente), porcupine, kipara (wild turkey), kalamina (blue tongue lizard), kalta (sleepy lizard). We're worried that any of these animals, birds will become poisoned and so we'll become poisoned in our turn.

They should listen to the Aboriginal people first. We traditional people really know the land. We are holding the culture for the land and for our grandchildren. We've got the story to the land from our grandmothers and grandfathers, not on paper but in our heads. We are the custodians of this. This poison can never be fixed. That is why we are talking strongly for the land and for the people.

Ngananya Kulila! Listen to us!

**Kupa Piti Kungka Tjuta Women's Group is based in Coober Pedy and*

is comprised of Aboriginal women from the Arabunna, Kokatha, AntinKarinya and YanKuntjatjara communities of northern South Australia.

ACF Website: acfonline.org.au Feb, 1999

Ground-breaking agreement marks new era in Australian Wetlands Conservation

An unprecedented agreement involving rural landholders and conservationists along with state and federal governments in the joint management of significant wetland areas contained within farming properties was signed on World Wetlands Day, Tuesday 2nd February 1999 in Moree.

NPANSW and WWF-Australia have facilitated a memorandum of understanding that involves listing more than 1000 hectares of the Gwydir wetlands, which are about 500 kilometres north west of Sydney near Moree, under the international Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

This agreement is another step in a very important process - conservation groups engaging productively with landholders and governments to develop new approaches to conservation.

The Gwydir wetlands had been dying in recent years due to water extraction for irrigation use, weed invasion and clearing for agriculture, all of which are addressed in the Memorandum of Understanding. Previously developed water sharing rules now cemented through the agreement have already yielded results with the return of half a million breeding waterbirds to the wetlands over this summer.

The landholders will also continue to benefit from flood induced pasture for their livestock. The stewardship of the sheep and cattle producers who own the land is considered central to maintaining the conservation values of the wetlands.

From the Nswnpa website www.nswnpa.cjb.net Feb, 1999.

PARKWATCH

Historic decision by Newcastle City Council: Boral on Notice – Stop Woodchipping

10 February 1999

The Wilderness Society strongly supports the historic Resolution of the Newcastle City Council last night to continue its commitment to cease commercial dealings with Boral and applauds the extension of this principle to include all companies woodchipping our native forests.

"Newcastle City Council is leading the world in its pursuit of Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD), and is putting into action what too many organisations have left as just words," stated Wilderness Society spokesperson Glen Klatovsky.

The first part of the Resolution is as follows:

With the exception of those matters coming within the Local Government Tendering Regulation, Council confirms its decision to have no new direct commercial dealings with any commercial entity (including Boral) which, in Council's view, has a significant involvement in the woodchipping of Australian native forests.

"Boral, and all the woodchipping companies in Australia, have been put on notice. The community will act to end this industry, the most unpopular industry in Australia. The precedent has been set.

"This Resolution paves the way for many other Councils and organisations, both public and private, to pursue the common goal of ending the woodchipping of Australia's native forests. Boral has had two opportunities to account for their practices in native forests in front of the public jury that is NCC, and failed abysmally. It is now time for Boral to become responsible and accountable.

*Wilderness Society Website:
www.wilderness.org.au Feb, 1999.*

Compiled by Len Haskew

Some thoughts about the PALM report

A review of the Planning and Land Management Group (PALM) within the ACT Department of Urban Services was completed by consultants Ernst and Young in November 1998 and was considered by the Legislative Assembly in December. This note does not attempt to evaluate the report; rather it seeks to draw attention to what are seen as disturbing directions proposed by the consultants. The following extracts from the report illustrate some of these concerns. Section reference numbers are shown in brackets.

The report emphasises the need for PALM to facilitate investment and development. "PALM needs to improve its performance in the following key area(s): developing an organisational culture of clearly meeting customers' needs, in particular providing a level of service which contributes to investment confidence and economic development whilst maintaining ecological sustainability and quality development goals." (1.1)

An increase in the decision-making authority of PALM staff is recommended. "PALM's stakeholder groups have differing and at times competing interests. In many cases there will be clearly differentiated winners and losers. It needs to be accepted that PALM's role centres around this need to assess and balance competing interests." (2.2.1) "PALM needs to create an atmosphere where staff have the appropriate skills and the authority to take decisions." (2.2.1)

It is recommended that the 1996 decision of the Legislative Assembly to widen the requirements for neighbourhood notification be overturned. "Options for achieving efficiencies: reduce by 20% the number of building and development applications requiring public/neighbour notification." (8.6.1)

The report recommends options for reducing Commonwealth involvement in Territory planning. "Align the Territory and National Capital Plans and have the Territory administer both on behalf of the Commonwealth." "Rationalise designated areas in the Plan to reduce the need for referral of applications to the National Capital Authority." (8.6.1)

In order to streamline the planning and land management system, the report suggests that the specificity of the Territory Plan be reduced. "Refine the Territory Plan to widen the acceptable land uses in zones to maximum extent." "Remove site specific land use policies." (8.6.1)

The report proposes the option of reducing the scrutiny of the Legislative Assembly over variations to the Territory Plan. "Where a Plan variation is required, the process could be shorter with the final decision resting with the Minister. This would remove the current requirement in the legislation to refer the draft to an Assembly Committee for inquiry and report. Additionally, whilst under the proposed new arrangements the variation would be tabled in the Assembly for the information of members, it would not be open to disallowance as is currently the case." (8.3.3.1 Table 8)

The report suggests that the requirement for development applications, with the attendant processes, be reduced. "Create categories of 'as of right' development for less complex proposals....Introduce minor lease variation process for applications where proposed uses are entirely consistent with all requirements of the Territory Plan for specific areas." (8.6.1)

Whilst attainment of efficiency within the group, updating of

continued on page 18

Book Reviews

Canberra's Historic Houses; Dwellings and Ruins of the 19th century.

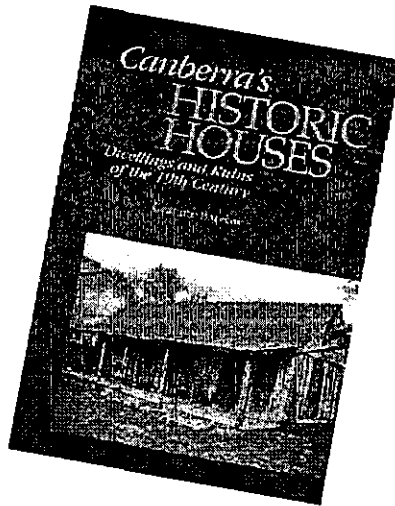
by Graeme Barrow, Dagraja Press, 1998. RRP: \$24.95

The first impression this book gives is that it is well presented, with quality paper, clear colour photographs, and easy to read text. It will appeal both to readers who will simply skim through, look at the photographs and scan the text, and to those who have a deeper interest in buildings and history. Some of this latter group may wish to follow up references for particular buildings in the footnotes section towards the end of the book.

The reader is given an overview of 50 dwellings and ruins in the ACT, complete with colour photographs and historical summaries. To my surprise, the very first building to be described is Elm Grove, which my son and his partner rented for three years before moving down to the coast to build their own home. Built in 1882, and now slowly deteriorating, it is unlikely to be retained when Gungahlin development reaches this property.

The five-page introduction sets the buildings in their historical context from the discovery of the Limestone Plains in 1821 to the early years of this century. However, the author does not restrict himself simply to historical facts and technical descriptions. He laments the limited protection and funding for our built heritage, gives examples where officialdom has neglected or destroyed buildings that ought to have been preserved, and urges those who care never to lose their vigilance. A very useful feature is that each place is related to the Register of the National Estate, the Interim Heritage Places Register, the Heritage Places Register and the National Trust.

The book comprehensively covers a wide range of buildings, from the large and grand such as Lanyon and Duntroon, to the small and humble such as Brayshaw's hut and the Tennent homestead. Some may be



surprised that so much remains of our pre-Federation heritage.

A frustration I felt going through the book was in not knowing precisely where each building or ruin was, or whether it is possible to pay a visit. Admittedly some are on private property and not open to the public, but others such as St John's Schoolhouse are available for inspection, and some details on access would have been welcome.

In all, this book provides a useful summary of our 19th century built heritage, and will be of interest to those of us who live in the ACT, as well as visitors.

Graham Scully

Explore the Australian alps. By the Australian Alps Liaison Committee. New Holland Publishers, Sydney, 1998. RRP \$29.95.

Subtitled a *Touring Guide to the Australian Alps National Park*, this is a very attractive book. It is large (A4 size and with nearly 180 pages), printed on a glossy paper which enhances text, maps and photographs. Indeed given a hard cover it would fulfil all the requirements of a 'coffee table' book.

Explore the Australian alps is obviously aimed at people who primarily tour by car and who do not have a detailed knowledge of the area. Nevertheless, it provides good reading for those who know the area well.

The book gives a comprehensive overview of the region. Natural

history, including geology, ecology and flora and fauna, is treated thoroughly. There is also a good section on cultural history, detailing both Aboriginal and European influences on the landscape. The hydro schemes are well documented, as is the plea for the conservation of cultural heritage.

By far the greater part of the book is taken up with the "grand tour" which takes the driver and passengers through the major alpine parks commencing in Gippsland at Licola and concluding in the ACT at Tharwa. The tour is divided into six sections so it is quite easy to choose an appropriate trip.

All tours have a similar format, with the main highlights mentioned (the tour in a nutshell) followed by indications of distance, travel time, road conditions (and cautions), the appropriate season for the trip, the availability of fuel, food and accommodation as well as an indication of national parks camping areas.

Then follows a very well detailed description of the trip and intermediate distances. Important scenic highlights are pointed out and, in addition, coloured sidebars on each page give further detail about points of interest and these are often accompanied by an appropriate photograph. The detailed descriptions, together with the excellent maps would make it hard for anyone to miss the road.

Each of these "grand tour" sections is accompanied by further details about interesting side trips which take you deeper into the parks. To me this is the book's greatest strength, encouraging visitors off the main roads and giving them an intimate look at the area being travelled. The division of these side trips as suited to 2WD or 4WD vehicles enables drivers to make appropriate choices. Once again the maps (at least for 2WD) are quite adequate, although those taking the 4WD might find it wise to take along more information. As far as I could tell, the descriptions are quite

continued on page 17

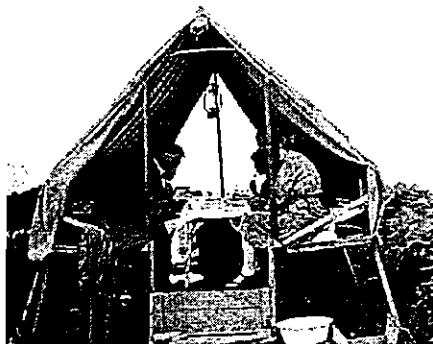
Car camping 1930s style

For many years car camping has been a feature of NPA outings programs, with some notable leaders such as Ian Currie and Len Haskew willing to dream up ideas and to keep the unruly in order. These camps have attracted a variety of accommodation – tents, trailers, campers and vans – but none, to my mind, quite as fascinating as the camping trailer devised by Olive Buckman's father in the early 30s when her family camped regularly in a farm on the Welsh coast. Towed by the car owned by Olive's grandmother, the trailer provided an early and ingenious solution to the situation we now are able to address from a range of vehicles available from the showroom floor. Olive's photos and an extract from her book, *Life is a Mountain*, tell the story.

"A dead-end road ran into the sandhills and a farmer and his daughter were friends of the family, so that we often had the area to ourselves when camping there. I used to sleep on the back seat of the car, some in a tent, and four in Dad's trailer. As always, years ahead of his time, he invented and made a 'tent-a-van'. When closed it measured about six feet long, four



A family group standing in front of the camping trailer at the Welsh farm in 1932. Olive is second from the left. Photo courtesy of Olive Buckman.



The camping trailer opened and in use, 1932. Photo courtesy of Olive Buckman.

or five feet wide and about two feet deep. The 'lid' was in two parts, hinged along the sides and at an angle of forty-five degrees. They met at the top. At the short ends were double hinged pieces, dropping down to form a step when open, and meeting the sides when closed. With all our gear in, it was rather like an oblong house with sloping roof when ready for towing. Once opened, the

two parts of the lid came down and were fixed horizontally out from the sides of the box base. Framework then held a canvas cover in a tent shape over the whole thing, so that two people could sleep on the bottom of the box and two on the side extensions. During the day a folding table was erected in the box and we sat along the sides."

Olive Buckman

Book Reviews

continued from page 16

accurate, but I suppose this should come as no surprise, as the book was compiled by staff from both state and territory national park services as well as the Australian Alps Liaison Committee and the Biodiversity Group of Environment Australia.

Also included are appropriate cautionary notes for drivers, walkers and campers. (Detailed track notes for walkers are not included in the book – suggested walks are either listed in the sidebars or mentioned in a table showing camping areas and facilities).

A bibliography, and suggestions for further reading are also included. I was surprised to see that NPA's Field Guides were not

included in this reading list.

While Kosciusko Huts Association, quite rightly, was mentioned in regard to hut conservation, sadly our NPA initiatives were not mentioned in the articles on the Yerrabi Track, the restoration of Orroral Homestead or the Boboyan Pines Project.

In general, the photographs throughout the book are excellent and in the main well presented.

Explore the Australian Alps is a book well worth reading (and owning) and would make a very acceptable gift to someone contemplating all or part of the "grand tour".

Len Haskew

Rural Residential Development in the ACT

continued from page 10

Government. The discussion paper identifies problems associated with each of the proposed sites but these problems are not worked through, largely because there is a lack of relevant information. Further discussion of the validity of these selections cannot proceed in the absence of this information.

Conservation Council conclusion

The Conservation Council submission concludes by expressing a lack of confidence in the discussion paper and finds that there are too many problems and inequalities associated with the current proposal to support it.

Syd Comfort

Where I come from

I never truly appreciated the hills and ranges of Canberra until I went to live in Adelaide.

I had worked at an outdoor job in Canberra for three years. For most of that time I was in sight of the ranges. I spent several days in the Brindabellas and several in the Tidbinbilla Valley. There were some road jobs on the Boboyan Road. I remember driving to the summits of Coree, One Tree and Tennent. I do not recall admiring the view or pondering the wonders of nature during those years. There was always a job to do and during lunch breaks I played euchre with the men.

Then, working in Adelaide, the locals insisted I marvel at the beauty and majesty of the hills within sight of their city. I agreed, diplomatically, and did not point out the detrimental effect of the quarries and orchards on their slopes. But when I flew home for my first holiday, the plane came in from the south. I had a good view of the hills and ranges to the west and south of Canberra. I realised I should be telling the South Australians about the hills around my home.

A few years later I returned to work in Canberra - still in the field. I kept a closer eye on the ranges. I

became more appreciative. I spent time at the dams on the Cotter. I visited many of the trig stations on the mountain peaks. I often worked into the evening - seeing the sunset behind the hills - before driving back to town. I camped on Bimberi for two periods of several days each.

In recent years, I've joined a few National Parks Association walks into the mountains. These are challenging and instructive outings. I still have a good deal to learn about this part of the Canberra district. I like to look back at Canberra from a mountain peak and identify landmarks in the city. (I also enjoy lying in a hot bath at the end of these days.)

However, I confess to preferring to spend my Saturday afternoons supporting my old rugby union club doing battle with the Canberra teams in the local competition. I don't sit in the grandstand. I like to watch the game walking up and down the far touchline. And when things go against my team (alas, a regular occurrence these days), I do not gaze heavenwards. I look towards the ranges and find solace there.

I recently had a five-week period of recuperation at home after an operation. I date the turning point

in my recovery as the day I anticipated doctor's orders and shuffled several hundred metres to a point from where I could see the western and southern horizons. More than most people, I should have an affinity for that country.

My maternal grandfather was a dedicated trout fisherman. During the 1930s (before I was born) he and his two sons (my uncles) were regular visitors to the Brindabellas. They travelled up from Sydney, through Canberra, beyond Brindabella Station to Koorabri. They camped and fished along the Goodradigbee River.

My mother and her mother were not interested in fishing or camping. On the outward journey my grandfather delivered them to Hotel Bundanoon and while the men fished the women enjoyed the social life of the Southern Highlands: dining, dancing, tennis, sedate bushwalks.

One year, my father's family came up from Sydney to have a holiday at Bundanoon. My parents met.

I owe my very existence to the call of the Brindabellas.

A new member

Some thoughts about the PALM report

continued from page 15

procedures to keep abreast of changing practice and the provision of prompt service are desirable objectives, it is important that these goals are not achieved at the expense of accountability and protection of the public interest, or by distortion of the balance between development pressures and community and environment interests. This caution is particularly relevant to the ACT at the present time when the Territory is facing a changed and difficult economic situation.

Syd Comfort



Just before returning to the USA, Esther Gallant enjoyed a car camp at Mount Clear with NPA members. Esther from Minnesota, a member of the Sierra Club, spent nine months in 1998 at the ANU and addressed the November meeting of the NPA. Left to right, Col McAlister, Max Lawrence, Reg Alder, Fiona Brand, Len Haskew, Bonny Fox, Laurie Adams, Esther Gallant. Photo Barrie Ridgway.

Calendar

	March	April	May	June
Committee Meeting	Tues 30		Thur 6	Thur 3
Gudgenby Regeneration ¹	Sat 27			
Easter Monday		Mon 5		
World Environment Day				Sat 5
Bulletin Working Group ²		Tues 13		
Canberra ACT Alive ³	Mon 15			
General Meeting	Thur 18	Thur 15	Thur 20	Thur 17
Environment Sub-committee ⁴		Thurs 8	Thurs 13	Thurs 10

Further Details

1 – Eleanor Stodart 6281 5004

2 – Syd Comfort 6286 2578

3 – Outings Program

4 – Neville Esau 6286 4176

General meetings

Held in Forestry House, Yarralumla, commencing at 8.00pm.

Thursday 18 March. The trouble with being green. Bruce Ford, Head of Conservation, National Gallery of Australia, and Dr Kelvin Officer, of Navin Officer Heritage Consultants, have been monitoring the rock art shelter known as Nursery Swamp II to determine the environmental factors leading to a virulent green lichen that threatens to obscure and eventually obliterate the Aboriginal paintings on the rock face. The work was funded by a grant from ACT Heritage obtained by NPA and was described by Graeme Wicks in the September Bulletin. We will hear something further of their work and how they discovered a major natural limiting factor on the growth of lichen which may lead, in the future, to a very low impact conservation intervention.

Thursday 15 April. Preparing for the 2000 State of the Environment Report. Joe Baker, Commissioner for the Environment in the ACT, will discuss the particular challenges associated with the definition of the environment in the Environment Protection Act 1997 (which was not available when he last talked to the NPA). As with our 1997 report, we will be covering the Australian Capital Region which comprises the ACT plus 17 surrounding local government authorities of NSW. Much benefit has been gained from the public workshop in December 1998 that looked at the issues and indicators that should be included in the report. Joe will refer to the outcomes of that workshop.

Thursday 20 May. Jabiluka. Anna Reynolds, National Liaison Officer, Australian Conservation Foundation, will provide us with an update on uranium mining in Australia, particularly with regard to Kakadu National Park.

Thursday, 17 June. Visions for the New Millennium. A senior representative of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service will talk on the outcomes of the visions for the New Millennium process and current plans for parks in the south-east of NSW.

New members

Michael Kearns, Kambah

Beverley Shallcross, Weetangera

Elain Herlihy, Kambah

Els Wynen and David Vanzetti, Flynn

Richard & Judith Miller, Geary's Gap



Australians for an Ecologically Sustainable Population (Canberra Branch)

As its name suggests, Australians for an Ecologically Sustainable Population (AESP) is dedicated to the advocacy of a population size commensurate with Australia's resource base. AESP was inaugurated in 1988 in the belief that over-population in Australia and elsewhere was the major cause of accelerating environmental degradation. AESP is funded by donations and membership fees and seeks to promote awareness of the extent and implications of world-wide and Australian population growth by means of public meetings, conferences, submissions to government, press statements and publication of a quarterly newsletter.

With statistics showing a world population of 2.5 billion in 1950, rapidly approaching 6 billion now and still growing, and with Australia having the second-fastest growth rate of any developed nation, AESP advocates lower immigration rates whilst rejecting selection based on race.

AESP supports conservation groups in the many issues on which they focus but claims that if we cannot stabilise, let alone reverse, human population growth, all our efforts to preserve the environment will in the end be futile.

Australians for an Ecologically Sustainable Population Inc.

Website:

<http://www.teknet.au/~aespnat>

Canberra Branch: PO Box 3345,
Manuka ACT 2603

Tel: (02) 6286 5318

Fax: (02) 6286 5424

Email: crsett@ozemail.com.au

Phyl Goddard

National Parks Association (ACT)

New members welcome

Application form enclosed



An NPA group at Brayshaw's Hut. Photo Graeme Wicks.

NPA Bulletin

If undelivered please return to:
National Parks Association of the ACT
PO Box 1940 Woden ACT 2606

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