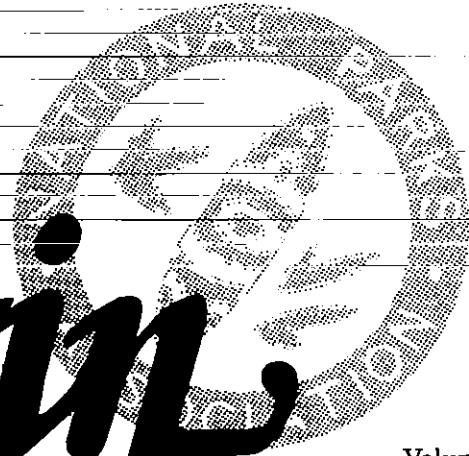
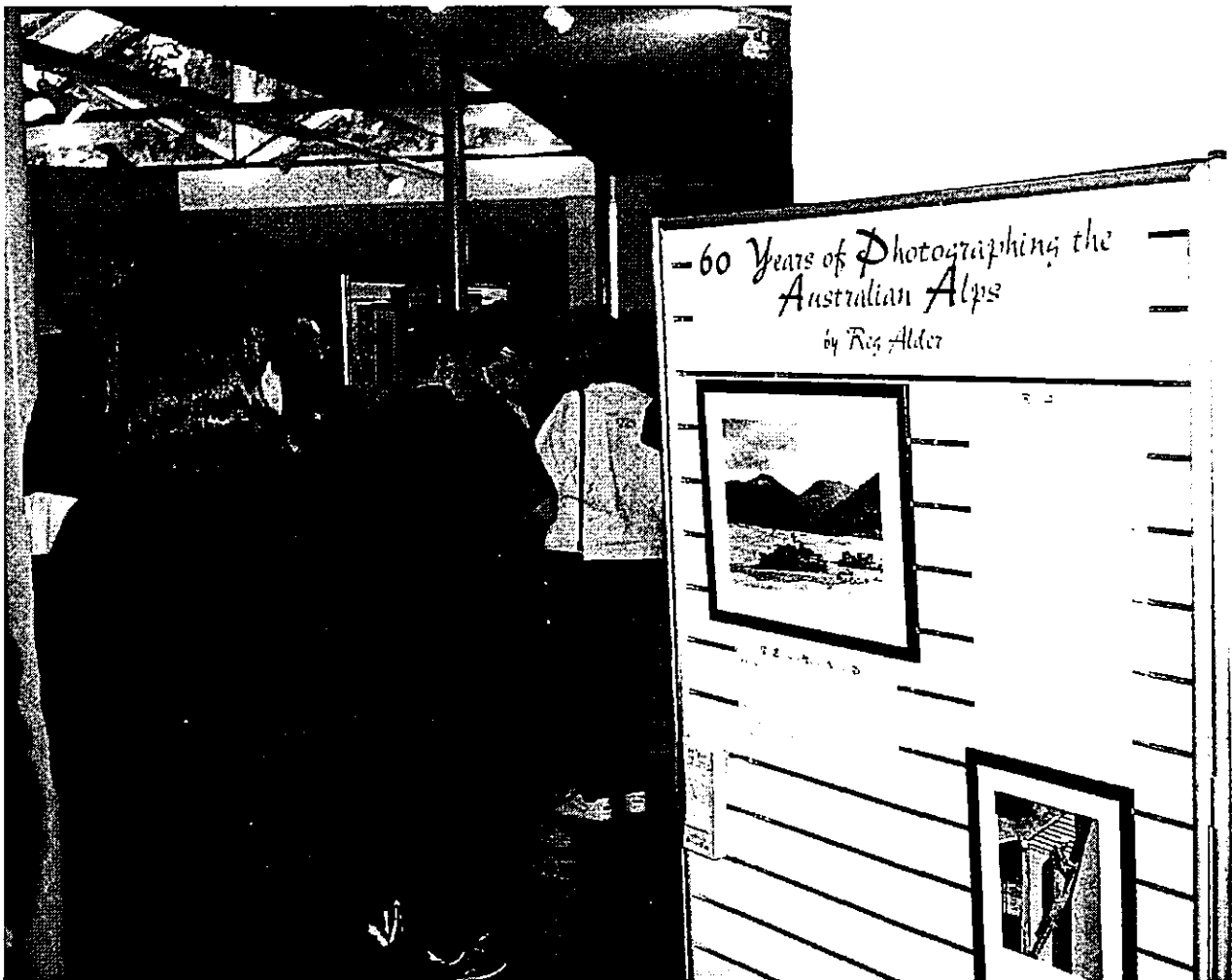


NPA Bulletin



Volume 36 number 4
December 1999

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION (ACT) INCORPORATED



Association awarded research grant

Environment Sub-committee report

ACT water policies under scrutiny

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National Parks Association (ACT) Incorporated Inaugurated 1960

Aims and objectives of the Association

- Promotion of national parks and of measures for the protection of fauna and flora, scenery, natural features and cultural heritage in the Australian Capital Territory and elsewhere, and the reservation of specific areas.
- Interest in the provision of appropriate outdoor recreation areas.
- Stimulation of interest in, and appreciation and enjoyment of, such natural phenomena and cultural heritage by organised field outings, meetings or any other means.
- Cooperation with organisations and persons having similar interests and objectives.
- Promotion of, and education for, conservation, and the planning of landuse to achieve conservation.

Office-bearers, committee and convenors

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<i>Vice President</i>	Vacant
<i>Secretary</i>	Max Lawrence 6288 1370 (h)
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Membership

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

Subscription rates (1 July to 30 June)

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

For new subscriptions joining between:

1 January and 31 March – half specified rate

1 April and 30 June – annual subscription

NPA Bulletin

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

Deadline for March issue: 1 February 2000.

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

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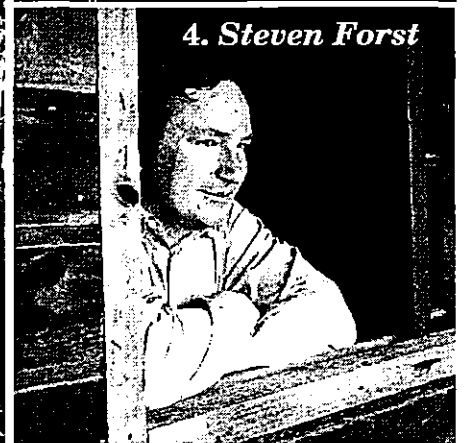
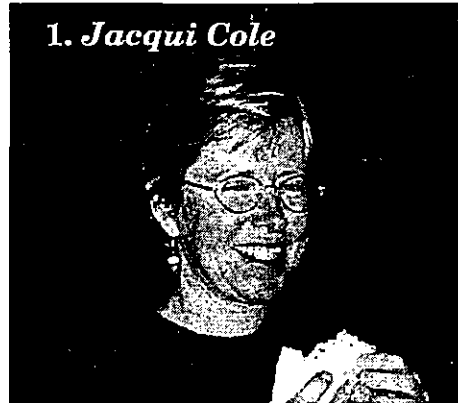
Cover: *Opening of exhibition, 60 Years of Photographing the Australian Alps. Photo Graeme Wicks.*

NPA Committee 1999

At the August Annual General Meeting, the association was unable to fill the positions of President and Vice President and that there remained vacancies for Committee members. Subsequently, retiring president Clive Hurlstone offered to accept the position of President for a further six month period and at its September meeting the Committee agreed that he be co-opted. Since then, David Large has offered to serve on the Committee and has been co-opted. Clive and David are to be congratulated on their acceptance of these positions. However, the Committee situation remains critical with the Vice President position and three Committee positions still unfilled and the position of President becoming vacant early in the new year. The association faces another busy year; Clive's article on research grants and Neville Esau's outline of the Environment Sub-committee's activities indicate some of the association's commitments. These can only be met through a depth of support from within the association. Members are urged to consider whether they can play a part by offering to serve on the Committee.

Syd Comfort

New committee members



1. *Jacqui Cole. Photo Col MacAlister.* 2. *Neville Esau. Photo supplied.*
3. *David Large. Photo Pete Tedder.* 4. *Steven Forst. Photo Col MacAlister.*

Association awarded research grant

The National Parks Association ACT has been awarded \$26 250 under the ACT Environment Grants Scheme by the Minister for Urban Services Brendan Smyth. This is a very significant outcome for the NPA giving us an opportunity to make a major contribution to conservation policy in the ACT. However, this year's grant has no specific component to support the *Bulletin*.

The grant is to fund the NPA's research and professional writing of submissions on "conservation management of ACT parks and other public lands". Under this general heading the major projects are:

- putting forward the NPA's recommendations for the

structure and content of the second Namadgi National Park management plan, supported by the provision of information and analysis

- putting forward the NPA's recommendations for the structure and content of ACT Forests nature conservation management plans, supported by the provision of information and analysis
- preparing submissions on implementation plans for those ACT parks and reserves with approval plans for management. Plans for the Murrumbidgee River Corridor, the Lower Molonglo River and Canberra Nature Park could be involved.

A component of the grant application is a commitment by NPA to contribute "in kind" support to the projects. This support is taking the form of field trips around the ACT to gain first hand knowledge, literature searches, research, reviews and workshops.

These activities will be arranged by a working group within the Environment Sub-committee. Any member who would like to participate either regularly or occasionally in these activities or would like more information on the projects should contact Clive Hurlstone on 0407 783442 or Ray Polglaze on 6247 1024.

Clive Hurlstone

Environment Sub-committee report

Land Management Agreements

As members may be already aware, the ACT Government is at present negotiating with ACT rural lessees for the implementation of Land Management Agreements (LMA) on rural leases and has prepared legislation. A group of environment organisations, including the Canberra Ornithological Group (COG), the Conservation Council of the South East Region and Canberra (CCSERAC) and the NPA do not believe that the ACT Government's present legislation will provide the best outcome for long-term conservation on rural land; the group prepared and submitted an alternative plan for the establishment and implementation of Land Management Agreements in the ACT. It contains a number of significant variations to the Government proposals, including the valuation of rural leases and the funding for a Rural Conservation Trust, which would administer the LMAs.

In the ACT, rural leaseholders manage some 40 000 hectares, which constitute approximately 20% of ACT land. Significant areas of two threatened ecological communities, natural temperate grasslands and yellow box - red gum grassy woodland, occur on leased rural land, particularly in northern ACT. If the ACT is to achieve ecologically sustainable management of the areas that contain these remnant communities, improved off-reserve conservation of rural land is essential.

Unfortunately, the Government has rejected the main thrust of the conservation group plan. Since then, intensive lobbying of various MLAs has been undertaken by the group in an effort to see elements of our plan implemented in the Assembly. We are seeking four key amendments to the Government legislation:

- the monies received from payouts on capital improvements and annual rental income from rural leases be paid to the Rural Conservation Trust
- the management/action plan section of LMAs be public

documents that are registered at the Titles Office and maintained on a publicly accessible register at the Rural Conservation Trust. The publicly available section would exclude any information identifying sensitive conservation information or private financial details.

- a Rural Conservation Trust Board be established which can directly advise the Minister for the Environment. It would include representatives from ACT Government, Rural Lessees Association and CCSERAC, and an independent ecologist and a person with appropriate financial background.
- where a rural lessee fails to fulfil commitments in an LMA the Rural Conservation Trust be able to take all necessary action to:
- stop any activity that will or is likely to threaten sustainable land use or nature and land conservation values;
- restore sustainable land use, nature and land conservation values; and
- recover trust payments which have been paid under LMAs.

The Minister's Environment Advisory Committee will also discuss the issues in November. It is too early to tell what the outcome of all these efforts will be or the effects on the legislation when introduced in the Assembly. We will continue to lobby Assembly members. This is a crucial issue for sustainable land management and conservation of endangered species and communities in the ACT.

Gudgenby Valley recreation study

As reported by Tim Walsh in the previous NPA *Bulletin*, Environment ACT has been examining plans for increased recreational opportunities in the Gudgenby Valley, including commercial options for the use of the house on the former Gudgenby grazing lease. As part of this assessment, NPA was invited to comment on a draft proposal for a study to examine and report on recreational opportunities in the

Gudgenby Valley. In our response we emphasised the need for Environment ACT to refocus the study on the upgrading of the ecological resources of the valley, rather than to take advantage of degraded national park values (as the study claimed) to locate recreation facilities in this area.

Environment ACT is entrusted with the stewardship of the park to safeguard its ecological values. The emphasis for the Parks Service should be in enhancing the biodiversity of the Gudgenby Valley through rehabilitation programs, not planning and managing inappropriate recreation or commercial activities. The replanting and rehabilitation of the former pine plantation is already proceeding; replanting and rehabilitation of other degraded parts of the valley, particularly the riparian zones, should follow this.

The need to rehabilitate the area of the former grazing lease is not included or supported by the Gudgenby Recreation Study as currently drafted. The study should be redrafted to reflect this objective, to follow the recommendations of the Campground Strategy and to limit any recommendations for the Gudgenby house to non-commercial and non-intrusive activities.

The cost of the inclusive study as proposed is not warranted in the light of these guidelines. The objectives of the study should properly be more limited with more emphasis placed on ecological values and the enhancement of biodiversity on currently degraded sites. It is up to Environment ACT to provide funds for building and site maintenance at any time, not link these to projected outcomes of the study.

CCSERAC is supporting the NPA on this issue and through it we have had the opportunity to lobby a number of MLAs to put our arguments opposing commercial development. We will continue to use every opportunity to achieve a positive outcome for conservation at Gudgenby.

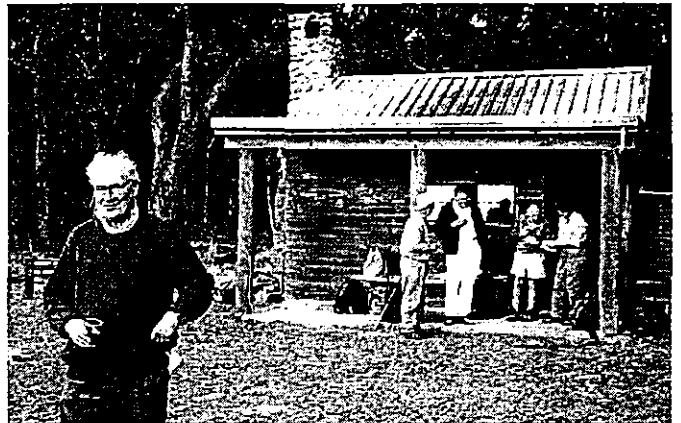
Life Memberships awarded



Above: Olive Buckman with her certificate after presentation at the September general meeting. Max Lawrence on the left, Clive Hurstone on the right. Photo supplied by Clive Hurlstone.

Above right: Clive Hurstone presenting Jack Smart with his certificate. Photo Col MacAlister.

Right: Brandy Flat Hut where the presentation was incorporated into a NPA walk. Photo Col MacAlister.



Environment Sub-committee report – continued

NPA Projects

A separate article in this *Bulletin* gives some detail on grants NPA has received from the ACT Governments Natural Heritage Fund. The NPA's Research Officer, Ray Polglaze, has been working with the Environment Sub-committee to establish the scope of the projects, the expected outputs and outcomes, and the timing and financial breakdown for each project.

Woodland action plans

Last year Environment ACT released its Draft Action Plan Number 10 on the "Yellow Box/Red Gum Grassy Woodland - An Endangered Ecological Community". Members will be aware that woodland and grassland communities are the most endangered ecological communities in the ACT. Most have already been cleared for urban development. These woodlands in turn support a range of birds and animals which are themselves endangered due to continuing loss of habitat. The action plan identified the remaining areas of Yellow Box/Red Gum Grassy Woodland in the ACT and reported

on their status for conservation and management.

The NPA has actively supported the work of CCSERAC in working to achieve a secure conservation status for these areas. COG is also an important supporter and contributor, especially through their ongoing bird surveys in a number of these key woodlands. The endangered woodland areas are in a number of land use categories; some already in reserves, some on rural leases, some on areas managed by other agencies, and some in areas designated in the Territory Plan for future urban development.

The aim is to achieve secure long-term conservation of all the woodlands identified in the action plan either through reservation, land management agreements, or change of land use status, wherever this is more appropriate for the particular places and threats.

Water management

Two ACT water issues have been considered recently: the ACT Environmental Flow Guidelines

and the ACT Water Resource Management Plan. Ray Polglaze has researched these issues for the sub-committee and produced excellent detailed submissions. Ray has prepared an article for this *Bulletin* on the Water Resources Management Plan, so members can be up-to-date with water issues in the ACT.

Finally, I would like to issue an invitation to any members interested in the ongoing conservation work of the association to join the Environment Sub-committee. New members are welcome anytime. There are significant challenges ahead, including responses to the regional forest agreements for the South East Forests. The strength and effectiveness of the association depends on the commitment of its members. Can you find one evening a month to help? If you are interested or would like to know more of the work of the sub-committee, please contact the NPA office or myself.

Neville Esau Tel: 6286 4176,
Email: nemax@atrax.net.au

The legacy of voluntary conservationists

What follows is my precis of part of the QNPA's Twelfth Romeo W Lahey Memorial Lecture presented by John Sinclair on 15 April 1998. The content of this article is drawn from the lecture but the selections and emphasis reflect my biases and prejudices and are not necessarily those of John Sinclair.

The distinguished conservationist, Dr Bob Brown, has developed a philosophy that all our actions should be predicated by a simple question that needs to be answered in the affirmative: "Will future generations thank us for doing this?"

This should be the philosophy which motivates the voluntary conservationist. We, more than most, should be aware of the legacy we leave for future generations. The only motive for honorary "greenies" is a sense of public interest, philanthropy and our obligation to future generations.

Voluntary conservationists are now even rarer than they were a decade or so ago. While they are not yet extinct, there are many reasons why voluntary conservationists are a threatened species in Australia's current political climate.

Professionalism is usurping the role of volunteers. Previously the domain of volunteers and unpaid advocates, the conservation movement now employs an increasing number of professionals. The role of volunteers has been reduced in almost every field where professionals are employed. Unfortunately, professionals seem to replace volunteers and don't seem to complement them.

Economic rationalism is killing volunteers. The economy can only "grow" if work can be measured in terms of cash payments. Thus government grants go mainly to organisations which employ professionals.

Many politicians are hostile to the environmental movement because they see in it conflict with the economic models they support. As

such they are actively trying to discourage community support for conservation. Why? Because:

- Politicians see the environment as impeding to other decisions they want to make.
- More Australians belong to conservation organisations than to political parties, so politicians feel threatened.
- While politicians are prepared to accept that the community holds some values such as religion and culture (including our sport) to be so precious that they exempt them from the rules of economic rationalism, they are reluctant to give such unequivocal support to the environment.

A diminishing pool

A healthy voluntary conservation movement requires a pool of people with available time and personal resources to give. As the proportion of the population in the work force increases, so does the pool of potential volunteers diminish.

Government environment departments

The establishment of government environment departments has deceived some supporters who assume that the government will do the right thing for the environment. Government departments of the environment are lulling some people into a belief that there is no longer such an important need for volunteer conservationists. Little could be further from the truth. This has disarmed the voluntary conservation movement to some extent and robbed of us of some of our former support.

Many bureaucrats lack a genuine commitment to protecting the environment, rather they are more interested in their own welfare and furthering their professional careers. Politicians and bureaucrats are subject to intense lobbying by vested interests to relax enforcement of environmental standards.

Some traps for voluntary conservationists

Some governments are now keen to lock the volunteer conservation movement into a consultative process which is a subtle way to muffle public criticism. It aims to muzzle watchdogs, stifle criticism in public forums and exhaust resources without delivering any satisfactory gain for the environment.

Conservationists should not become involved in a consultative process which results in criticisms or advocacy which would normally occur being muted in any way.

Another warning concerns exhausting volunteers' resources in the process. Engaging in consultation involves all participants in both financial costs and the most precious resource of all - time.

The state of the environment

The need for a more active and more vocal, indeed more strident, conservation movement is now greater than it was say at the time of the Franklin River protests. To achieve this we must mobilise far more of the community to become more active voluntary supporters of conservation. If we fail to do this then the list of losses will only grow and those few achievements we have managed so far will pale in significance.

How can we mobilise the community?

- We need the public to realise that while we may seem to win some of the more celebrated conservation battles we are losing the overall war.
- We should recruit for conservation groups more actively. Why don't we have advertisement in newspapers telling people how to join and what they can do to help?
- We need to make the work volunteers are asked to do more relevant and meaningful so that

The Bulletin Working Group

The current issue of the *Bulletin* is the twelfth produced by the Bulletin Working Group and thus marks the completion of three years' work by group members.

The *Bulletin* rests, of course, on the foundation provided by our contributors and we are indeed fortunate to have many able and willing members who have plied pen, keyboard, camera shutter and sketching pencil with imagination and skill over the years. The role of the Bulletin Working Group extends from facilitating the work of the contributors to finally seeing the *Bulletin* delivered to members.

The group meets quarterly to review the previous issue, to consider problems and improvements and to plan the next issue. Individuals undertake to follow up on matters raised and to do continuing tasks such as editing articles and gathering information. Barbara de Bruine and Greg Lewis have borne the brunt of the editing load over the period with Muriel Edwards recently taking over from

Greg. Len Haskew has regularly compiled Parkwatch, arranged reports on general meeting speakers and provided notes on forthcoming speakers. Graeme Wicks has prepared a style sheet for the *Bulletin* and, with the convenor, generally keeps an eye on writing and production standards as well as assisting with the selection and layout of material. Fiona MacDonald Brand and Reg Alder bring a wide knowledge of association affairs and environmental matters to our discussions whilst Eleanor Stodart, Martin Chalk and Tim Walsh contribute ideas and are always willing to follow up issues that need to be covered. Max Lawrence can be relied upon to have the outings program ready for printing each issue. Many other members, including Betty Lewis, Judith Webster and Phyl Goddard, are always ready to assist when needed.

For each issue, Muriel Edwards holds a 'post out picnic' when she gathers a group of members to label,

sort and dispatch the *Bulletin*. Noelene and Alan Atkinson, Phyl Goddard, Reg Alder, Fiona MacDonald Brand, Graeme Wicks, Len Haskew, Betty Lewis and Tim Walsh are amongst this group but because people are not always available, Muriel (phone 6251 4503) would welcome some more volunteers.

Dianne Hastie in the NPA office and staff in Greenwords and Images and in Ausdoc On Demand all play important roles in producing the *Bulletin*, complementing the efforts of the working group.

The Bulletin Working Group plays an important part within the association by helping to keep members informed on association and environmental matters. I would be very pleased to hear from anyone who is interested in joining the group in any capacity.

Syd Comfort

Convenor,
Bulletin Working Group

The legacy of voluntary conservationists – *continued*

they will feel welcome and needed.

- We need to make it clear that people can only stop the global environmental decline through people power and that relegating responsibilities to governments alone will not work.
- We need to change the attitude of politicians and bureaucrats so that they no longer view us a threat and "the enemy" but as allies in advancing the public interest to protect the environmental heritage of future generations.
- We need to be politically active if we are aiming to recruit more political activists.
- "Conservation must be fun". We must make our organisations

socially attractive if people are to be enticed to sacrifice their precious leisure hours in our cause.

Legacy for future generations

While we urgently need more national parks we must also urgently address what is happening outside the national parks where the four precious pillars of our life support systems (soil, biodiversity, air and water) on earth are rapidly crumbling. If we lose the war here the risks to the integrity of national parks will increase.

Although it is a task greater than any Olympic challenge we must take more initiatives to shame governments into better management of the whole environment. We need to convince

the public that governments do not have a monopoly on environmental protection, and indeed, that governments do not share our priorities for the environment. We need to become more focused on our own agenda for protecting the total environment. We shouldn't only react to the agendas others have nominated.

The legacy of the volunteer conservationists will be the benefits which future generations derive. We should not be looking necessarily to the thanks that we receive for our actions now. We have to remember the test which Bob Brown prescribes: "*Will future generations thank us for what we have done?*"

Len Haskew

Space explorers quit Orroral

Demolition work at the Orroral Observatory, scheduled to be completed about the end of November 1999, will pull down the curtain on the era of space exploration at Orroral, south-west of Tharwa in the southern ACT. Pioneering graziers once occupied Orroral's long, narrow strip of cleared land, but now the valley and the surrounding tree-clad hills are part of the Namadgi National Park.

The graziers were there longer than the space explorers. The valley was settled as early as the 1820s while space exploration lasted a bare 33 years, from 1965 to 1998. Before the Europeans arrived, Aboriginal hunters and gatherers roamed this valley.

Today a walking track, starting at the Orroral campground, links the Orroral Homestead, a survivor of the 1860s, with what remains of the Orroral space tracking station, shut down in 1984. A mountain road, not part of the heritage trail, gives walkers access to the site of the Orroral Observatory, closed late in 1998.

At one time there were two tracking stations here—one on the valley floor and the other at Honeysuckle Creek above Orroral. They were closed in 1984 as their importance to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) faded. The American agency consolidated its ACT activities at the third tracking station in the territory, at Tidbinbilla.

The two stations came on stream in the mid 1960s—Orroral in 1965 and Honeysuckle in 1967—and their communications work was important to the success of space exploration programs including the Apollo program to put a man on the Moon, and the Mercury, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn missions.

Honeysuckle's moment of glory came on 21 July 1969 when the American astronaut Neil Armstrong stepped onto the surface of the Moon. Pictures and sound of this audacious feat were transmitted to world television audiences via Honeysuckle Creek.

After the tracking stations were shut down, vandals and looters targeted both sites and finally a decision was made to demolish the buildings to floor level. Concrete slabs, a few planted trees, roads and interpretation signs are all that remain to show that for almost 20 years the facilities built in this area figured prominently in the early years of space exploration.

It was ironic that isolation, which first gave the sites their appeal, also enabled vandals to carry out their violent destruction unhindered. For the scientists, Orroral and Honeysuckle produced the quiet environment essential for receiving distant radio signals from space, while the facilities were close enough to Canberra for staff accommodation and support services.

The functions of the Orroral Observatory, built high on a mountain above the valley, were removed to Mt Stromlo after it was decommissioned in November 1998. A new observatory was constructed at Mt Stromlo and while it is owned by a federal government agency, the Australian Surveying and Land Information Group, or AUSLIG, a company called Electro Optic Systems built the facility and operates it on AUSLIG's behalf.

The shutdown of the Orroral Observatory presented AUSLIG with a sticky removal problem. The observatory possessed a 1.5 metre-diameter astronomical telescope and its owner, NASA, wanted it back in the United States. Its largest single part weighed eight tonnes while remaining parts weighed 10 tonnes.

The problem was the hazardous access road up the mountain. It is of dirt, steep, and presented a challenge of some magnitude to a crane driver, whether going up or coming down. However, the road was negotiated without incident in mid 1999 and the job of plucking the telescope out of the observatory accomplished successfully in six hours. After that it was trucked to Queanbeyan for packing and shipping back to the States.

Construction of the observatory's main structure, dome-roofed, circular, began in 1974 and it was occupied the following year. At first it was called a lunar laser ranger facility because an important function was to fire laser pulses at the Moon to enable calculations concerning continental drift to be made. It took about 2.5 seconds for the laser pulses to flash across the 385 000 km separating the Earth from the Moon and back again via reflective mirrors placed on the lunar surface by American astronauts and unmanned spacecraft.

In following years other functions were carried out by Orroral. It fired short pulses of laser light at sets of mirrors on passing satellites and measured the length of time it took light to reflect from the mirrors and return to Earth. These measurements enabled calculations to be made concerning the changing shape of our planet.

The observatory monitored changes in the Earth's rotation and the movement of tectonic plates. The information gathered, says AUSLIG, contributed to national and international research into understanding tectonic motions and climatic change. AUSLIG believes that in time this information could lead to improved strategies for dealing with issues such as earthquakes and the greenhouse effect.

Government, science and business were provided with intelligence gained through laser ranging at Orroral while AUSLIG also collaborated with overseas ranging stations in handing on information obtained from the observatory's activities. It still does, but from Mt Stromlo.

Four caesium atomic clocks were placed in the Orroral Observatory, clocks so precise in their measurements that they could determine the travel time of a laser pulse to the Moon to within a nanosecond (a thousand millionth part of the second). One clock was designated as the "national primary

Wetlands Management

Our guest speaker at the July general meeting was Dr Brendan Edgar, who is the Director of Environment Australia's Wetlands Unit. Brendan's address concentrated on two main themes: Australia's role at the 1999 Ramsar Convention in Costa Rica, and, the Commonwealth's Priority Action for Wetland Conservation. (Ramsar is the international agreement on wetlands.)

At the convention the Australian delegation announced the nomination of four new Australian Ramsar sites and proposed and gained support for three resolutions. These resolutions concerned:

invasive species and wetlands; multilateral cooperation on the conservation of migratory waterbirds in the Asia-Pacific region; and, defining Ramsar site boundaries.

Brendan outlined the management issues of highest priority affecting Australian wetlands. Among the items he discussed were:



Cotter River below Bendora Dam showing low water level and growth of grass. Photo Graeme Wicks.

- the importance of providing environmental flows, that is, maintaining flows in waterways which sustain the waterway environment, particularly in inland river systems
- the impact of salinity on wetland and river systems
- the impact of coastal development on wetlands
- the expansion of residential and

industrial development into wetlands

- the impact of invasive species impacting on wetlands.

Brendan's presence at our meeting was particularly timely as during the question-and-answer session following his talk he was able to discuss some of the aspects of the Draft Plan of Management for Ginini Flats.

Len Haskew

Space explorers quit Orroral - *continued*

standard of time" and was maintained with the objective of keeping Australian time accurate to 100 nanoseconds.

Following Orroral's closure, the atomic "time clock" is now owned by CSIRO's National Measurement Laboratory, coordinator of the National Timescale Service. One atomic clock was sent to Mt Stromlo and the third to a laser ranging station near Geraldton (WA). The fourth clock is defunct.

AUSLIG sought tenders for the removal of various obsolete structures and equipment at the Orroral Observatory site including a cabin for workers, sheds, water storage tanks and thick cables. When this article was written, demolition was well under way and should have been finished about the end of November 1999.

Ugly appendages to the dome

building were to be dismantled, the interior gutted, various openings bricked up, and the structure left as a memorial to the brief period in which space activities were run from this mountain. Open doorways at ground level will allow the structure to be used for shelter by bushwalkers. Climbing up to this isolated location is hard work and for this reason the building should be safe from the vandals who largely destroyed both of the easily accessible tracking stations.

Another memorial will remain. It is one of three survey markers on the site and commemorates a National Mapping surveyor Harry Granger (1928-77), who worked tirelessly to build the observatory.

The Namadgi National Park authorities have an abiding interest in the observatory site because of its location within the

park. They acknowledge the site's heritage value and its suitability as a walk destination—especially for the lovely views it provides of the Orroral Valley and beyond.

Bushwalkers, as they do now, will have to plod up the access road which will be blocked off at the bottom by a rock or log barrier. The present gate and fence will be removed and the road rehabilitated to the extent necessary to prevent erosion gullies from developing. It will be renamed the Granite Tors walking track which acknowledges the grand boulders seen from the road and the outcrop at the observatory site. The site itself will be restored to some extent although natural regeneration will reclaim it in future years.

Graeme Barrow

Managing Kosciuszko National Park

A field trip by the Kosciuszko Support Group

The Kosciuszko National Park Support Group is essentially a sub-committee of the NSW National Parks Association. Its purpose is to maintain a link between the association and the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) staff involved in day-to-day management. The group gives rangers some exposure to the views of NPA membership, and also gives them the opportunity to help ensure that such views are based on sound information on the practicalities of park management.

To this end the group arranged with the NPWS for a four day tour of the Kosciuszko National Park over the period 9-12 October. The group was headed by Heather Roy of the NSW NPA, and comprised Marion Woof, Bill Dowling, and Di and Gary Thompson, as well as yours truly. Di is an active member of the NSW NPA as well as the ACT NPA, and I was kindly invited along as a representative of ACT NPA.

This article provides a rundown on who we saw, where we went and what we did. A further article on page 18 provides a summary, issue by issue, of what we found.

Tumut

On Saturday morning we were met at Yarrangobilly campground by our hosts for the day, Tumut based rangers Dave Pearce and Simon Allender. Heather had prepared a list of questions and issues for discussion and our rangers not only managed to provide the answers, but also to keep a very busy schedule. We were shown work done on the campground, a nearby rare and endangered plant (the leafy anchor plant), the recently refurbished Cotterills Cottage, and the remaining Jounama Pines.

From there we went to Long Plain Hut, where there was a large horse party in camp, and then on to Ghost Gully horse camp on the Port Phillip Fire Trail, where our trusty rangers gleefully enticed Di to drive her Subaru Forester through water that



On Round Mountain left to right, Bill Dowling, Marion Woof, ranger Craig Smith, Gary and Di Thompson, Heather Roy. Photo Max Lawrence.

came over the bonnet! Not once, but twice! Was this their way of stopping the questions? If so, it didn't work - much talk of brumbies, pigs, illegal access and law enforcement. As a practical demonstration we even saw Simon pinch a woman who was driving around pinching rocks.

On to Yarrangobilly Caves, where we were met by manager Jo Ingarfield and given a cuppa, and a run down on management issues, which include what to do with Caves House and its 'heritage listed' septic system. The Caves have the only information centre actually within the park boundaries.

On to Kiandra, where we were introduced to the old court house and gaol, which now lie unrecognisably disguised under 'layers' of ugly relatively modern additions (another heritage quandary). The nearby Matthews Cottage is faring much better, having been recently restored under ranger Dave's supervision, but it too poses a question as to how it might be used. There seems little doubt that the key to survival of all of these historic structures is to keep them in some form of use. 'Use it or lose it' was an expression we were to become familiar with. At Kiandra we were also introduced to another expression - 'cultural erosion'. The old mining scars will be allowed to

heal at their own pace, and in the meantime will be part of the 'Kiandra experience'.

On to Selwyn Resort, Dry Dam and the Nordic Ski Shelter along the Kings Cross Road (no water crossings). Dave and Simon were subjected to further interrogation on such issues as development of the Selwyn Resort, the lessee's responsibility for maintenance of the resort's road and carpark (now urgently in need of resealing), corporatisation of the Snowy Mountains Authority and consequent implications of NPWS inheriting SMA 'assets' such as quarries and gauging stations. Eventually the duo were released, and they were last seen fleeing exhausted in their trusty Landcruiser for Tumut or perhaps even beyond.

Our group headed to Cabramurra for a cuppa and a look around the town, which is set to become the latest and greatest heritage dilemma. From there on to the Snowgum Lodge in Khancoban, which provides separate rooms, cooking facilities and clean linen for the princely sum of \$15 a night.

Khancoban

On Sunday our first victim was ranger Craig Smith, who we met at the Khancoban NPWS office. Craig

took us back up the road we'd come down the evening before, to a spot where we parked the cars and climbed Round Mountain. The views from the summit are pretty sensational, and provide an excellent overview of the Jajungal Wilderness. Craig is a nature photographer of some reputation, and there are many fine examples of his work in the Khancoban office. Like Dave Pearce, Craig is an Aussie who has worked in the US Parks Service in Alaska.

After lunch in Khancoban we went south to the roadside rest and camping area at Geehi, where we sheltered out of the rain in a partially restored hut (roof but no walls), and talked with Craig and Khancoban manager Dave Lawrence. Unfortunately the foul weather precluded our scheduled visits to Mt Youngal and Olsens Lookout. On the way back to Khancoban the ladies investigated the 'Queens Loo' at Scammells Spur Lookout, and sadly found it to be blocked. This magnificent full-flushing edifice was reportedly erected as a comfort stop for the young Queen on her visit to the Snowy Scheme in the early 1950s, but legend has it that the Royal bladder was more robust than thought, and the Rolls cruised right on by.

Sunday evening saw us again at the Khancoban Country Club for dinner (recommended), during which the town experienced a huge thunderstorm, complete with a

spectacular lightning show, huge thunder claps, and rain by the bucketful. The storm had repercussions early next day (Monday) as we headed along the Alpine Way for Jindabyne where dislodged stones and rocks made driving quite hazardous. No doubt there will be pressure to upgrade the whole road when traffic increases following sealing of the few kilometres of dirt remaining. Disturbingly, the Bicentennial Horse Trail follows this dangerous section of road for a distance of 18 kilometres.

Jindabyne

At the flash new headquarters in Jindabyne we were greeted by assistant manager Andrew Harrigan, who cheerfully submitted to the routine interrogation, addressing a whole new set of issues relating to overall park management and the particular issues facing the ski resorts and the alpine area. With regard to the latter, there is now a small mob of brumbies in the summit area but brumbies are a political hot potato, and even shifting the summit mob will require ministerial approval.

From the Visitors Centre we went to the site of last summer's Jindabyne fire, and then on up to an almost snowless Charlottes Pass (in weather that was still pretty dreadful) where we were shown the very latest in public dunnies.

On the way back we stopped off at the NPWS visitors centre in

Perisher, where the new Perisher development proposal was discussed. The development has yet to be put out to tender, and the next opportunity for public comment will be when the successful tenderer (assuming there is one, given recent poor snow seasons) puts up development plans in detail.

On our return to Jindabyne we ran into Dave Darlington who is manager of Kosciuszko National Park, and at the time was on leave, but still kindly made himself available to us over lunch. This did not protect him from a grilling from our little group, but it did mean we were able to put in a good word for the staff who had been so friendly and helpful to us.

Queanbeyan

The final port of call was the Queanbeyan NPWS office, where we had an appointment with Dr Tony Fleming at midday on Tuesday. Dr Fleming is the head of the NPWS Southern Directorate based in Queanbeyan, which takes in virtually the whole of South East NSW, including Kosciuszko National Park. He has a background in the conservation movement, having been President of the Conservation Council of the South East Region and Canberra for a period during the 1980s.

Like all of the other NPWS staff with whom we had dealings, Tony was generous of his time, spending his lunch hour and then some with us. Subjects discussed included the current restructure of the service whereby most senior managers have to compete for a reduced number of positions (sounds familiar), an overview of the broad management issues being faced by park managers, and, going beyond just Kosciuszko, the Comprehensive Regional Assessment in progress as part of the process for the Southern Regional Forest Agreement.

All in all, a very interesting and informative few days that reassured us that Kosciuszko National Park is in good hands. If only there were more of them and they had more resources to work with. And if only they could do something about those brumbies.

Max Lawrence



Di Thompson's white knuckles, Port Phillip Firetrail. Photo Max Lawrence.

ACT water policies under NPA scrutiny

Why have environmental policies?

Development of water resources has changed the 'magnitude, frequency, seasonality, duration and variation' of water flows in Australian rivers. These changes have 'contributed to the decimation of populations of many native fish species...have been implicated in the proliferation of carp...have also provided ideal conditions for blue-green algal blooms, and have degraded channels, riverbanks, floodplains, wetlands and faunal and floral communities' (Cullen et al. 1996).

To address these issues, Commonwealth and State government bodies are adopting policies on environmental flows.

Earlier this year, the ACT Government adopted its policies on environmental flows and water allocations. The policies are detailed in the *Environmental Flow Guidelines* and the *Water Resources Management Plan*.

The guidelines protect flows of water to support environmental values such as native fish species, aquatic vegetation and recreation in rivers. They protect low water flows and control the amount of water extracted from high water flows in rivers, groundwater aquifers and lakes. They set limits on the amount of water that can be extracted for water supply, urban parks, commercial use and agriculture.

In keeping with the *Water Resource Act 1998*, the guidelines consider economic and social impacts. This means that while the guidelines 'set out the flows necessary to ensure environmental values', they also include trade-offs that compromise those values.

The plan is an extension of the guidelines. It includes calculations of the total water flows in each catchment, as well as the water flows needed to meet the guidelines and the amount of water remaining for extraction. The plan includes provisions for setting new water allocations in each catchment over the next 10 years.

NPA action

In its submissions on these policies, the NPA requested:

- community consultation before use of low and drought flows by the water supply dams;
- commitments to modifying the dams so they can mimic natural seasonal flows;

- protection for flushing flows;
- no interruption to natural flows of the Naas and Gudgenby Rivers;
- continuing commitment to water conservation;
- a comprehensive monitoring program;
- an independent review;
- specific objectives and performance indicators;
- annual reports; and
- a Water Resources Council.

While these issues are still to be pursued, the following outlines the rationale for the NPA's requests.

Support for a conservative approach

While changes to flows of water in rivers affect many aspects of aquatic systems, scientists say we know very little about what the precise effects are. Indeed, one group of aquatic scientists says 'the science of environmental flow assessment in the context of the whole riverine ecosystems is still in its infancy' (Banks et al. 1997).

As a result, some aquatic scientists advocate a conservative approach that minimises changes to natural water flows (Arthington & Pusey 1993).

Some of the ACT guidelines reflect this recommendation. These include the limits on extracting from high water flows, the protection of low flows, and the need to mimic natural flows and temperatures. NPA considers these aspects of the guidelines to be positive steps by the ACT Government. The NPA is concerned, though, by the many significant exceptions to this conservative approach.

High water flows¹

The guidelines state that only 10 per cent of the high water flows in rivers and groundwater aquifers can be extracted from non-water supply catchments. This protects 90 per cent of the high water flows and, largely, maintains the natural water flows in these catchments.

The high water flows to the water-supply dams are not similarly protected. The dams can extract 100 per cent of the high water flows. This could affect 73 per cent of the Cotter River's flow through Corin Dam and 91 per cent of the Queanbeyan River's flow through Googong Dam. Water extraction to these levels would significantly change the water flows below these dams. The dams also account for more than 95 per cent of the ACT's current water extraction.

Low water flows¹

The guidelines protect the low water flows in rivers and groundwater aquifers across all catchments. While this measure protects aquatic systems that are under stress, the amount of water flow that is protected varies by catchment. For example, this guideline protects 25 per cent of the water flow in Gudgenby catchment, but only 2 per cent of the water flow in Jerrabomberra catchment.

Low water flows to the water-supply dams have more limited protection. The Environmental Management Agency can let the dams extract up to 50 per cent of the low water flows. In periods of drought, the dams may be allowed to extract all of the water flows. This could lead to more stress on aquatic systems at times when they are already stressed.

1. The 80th percentile - defining high and low flows
A key concept in the *Environmental Flow Guidelines* is the 80th percentile flow of water. The 80th percentile flow of water is used to define the high and low flows. The 80th percentile flow is the flow of water which has 80 per cent of the flows above it and 20 per cent of the flows below it. The highest 80 per cent of flows - the high water flows - are the flows which are above the 80th percentile flow. The lowest 20 per cent of flows - the low water flows - are the flows which are below the 80th percentile flow.

Mimicking natural flows

Fish and other aquatic species use the natural seasonal variations in water flows as cues for breeding. The guidelines say water releases from the dams should mimic the natural seasonal ups-and-downs in flow and temperature.

Many of the dams, such as Scrivener and Captains Flat, cannot mimic these natural flow variations because of the way they are constructed. While the guidelines say the dams should be modified within 'appropriate' and 'reasonable' time frames, they also say that 'it is not expected that major structural changes will be undertaken specifically to meet the guidelines'.

The guidelines also protect 'spawning flows' of water from Corin Dam. These water flows may support breeding by the endangered Macquarie Perch and Trout Cod in the Cotter River.

Flushing flows

Flushing flows – the flushes of water that follow storms – are important for maintaining aquatic ecosystems, channel structure and the control of exotic plants. The Captains Flat, Scrivener, Googong and Cotter dams are not required to release flushing flows. According to the guidelines, below Googong Dam the 'tributary flows will provide adequate flushing', but there is no evidence provided. Interestingly, the 1996 draft guidelines did require Captains Flat, Scrivener and Googong dams to release flushing flows.

Naas and Gudgenby

The Naas and Gudgenby catchments have special status because much of their areas lie within Namadgi National Park and the Bimberi Wilderness Area. Unfortunately, the guidelines treat them in the same way as other catchment areas. This means water could be extracted, inappropriately, for purposes such as tourism. The NPA believes natural flows should not be interrupted in these areas.

Murrumbidgee River

The guidelines also adopt a convenient approach to the Murrumbidgee River. Before the Murrumbidgee River reaches the

ACT, 27 per cent of its water flow has been extracted at Tantangara Dam in New South Wales. The guidelines define the remaining flow of water across the border as the natural flow, so that 10 per cent of the remaining higher flows in the ACT's stretch of the Murrumbidgee River can be extracted. This would place additional stress on an already stressed river.

The guidelines claim the current effect of all the ACT's water extraction on downstream flows in the Murrumbidgee River is insignificant. They do not consider the potential effect of increased water extraction by the ACT.

Increasing the ACT's water extraction?

The guidelines allow the ACT to increase its water extraction. According to the plan, the ACT's estimated total average annual run-off from controlled catchments is 465 Gigalitres (GL). Of this, 272 GL are needed to meet the guidelines. This leaves 193 GL potentially available for extraction. Current extraction is 65 GL. The plan provides for 8.4 GL in new allocations over the next 10 years. This leaves almost 120 GL – about twice current usage – unallocated.

ACT residents may continue their high per capita usage – the community could triple its current water extraction. The plan allows for a water-supply increase of 6.5 GL – or more than 10 per cent over the next ten years. Fortunately, surveys show that ACT residents place water conservation measures ahead of the need for a new dam.

The plan also permits an increase of 1.9 GL (80 per cent) for urban irrigation and agricultural demands. In 13 of 32 catchments, the plan allocates increased water for 'growing of pasture or permanent crops such as grapes or olives'. As such, the plan may meet likely short-term demands, but does not provide long-term predictions or strategies.

Nevertheless, there are 120 GL that could be allocated to additional environmental flows. These could include flushing flows, spawning flows below Bendora Dam and some percentage of the higher flows in the water-supply catchments.

Monitoring and review

Given our limited knowledge of the precise effects of changed water regimes, the guidelines as adopted are, at best, reasonable guesses. It follows that we need to learn from experience thorough monitoring. We also need to enhance our knowledge of aquatic systems through further research.

The guidelines say there will be an 'ongoing monitoring and evaluation program', and the plan outlines water and biological monitoring which is 'required', 'important' and 'relevant'. But both documents are unclear about what monitoring will be done and by whom. Lack of clear commitments to specific monitoring is a critical flaw. We may not learn from experience.

The guidelines and the plan include commitments to review after five and three years, respectively. But they do not specify and independent process for these reviews. Nor do they include specific objectives or performance indicators that would provide criteria for the reviews. Also, they do not include commitments to ongoing reporting to the ACT community or a process for ongoing consultation with that community.

In addition, the Environmental Management Agency (a section of Environment ACT) has conflicting roles. It is an environmental protection agency, setting the environment flow guidelines, and a water resources agency, allocating water between potential users. The NPA believes this conflict enhances the need for independent review and ongoing community consultation.

Ray Polgaze

Note: This article was developed with the support of the ACT Government Environment Grants Program. If you would like a copy of the NPA submission please contact Dianne at the NPA office.

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The wrong mob?

When former ACT Environment Minister Garry Humphries announced on behalf of his government that he was offering joint management of Namadgi National Park to the local Ngunnawal people, there was an outcry from so-called 'respected local historians and experts'.

According to such experts, whose anguish was reported in *The Canberra Times* and broadcast on various local radio stations, Humphries was offering this deal to 'the wrong mob'. It was not the Ngunnawal (or Ngunawal) that should have got it, they argued, but the Walgalu or Wolgal. This, they cried, was stated quite clearly by Norman Tindale in his 'definitive' work, *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia* (published in 1974 and researched in the 1930s). In her address to the ACT National Parks Association on October 21, Ann Jackson-Nakano argued that Tindale's work was seminal rather than definitive, and set about de-constructing his sources on this area.

Ann, who is a journalist and published author as well as an historian, completed her Master of Letters thesis, 'Death and Resurrection of the Ngunnawal: A Living History', at the ANU in February 1994, just a couple of months after the Native Title Act was passed. In 1997, representative members of all families identifying with the Ngunnawal community today voted unanimously for Ann to write, on their behalf, the historical evidence for the Ngunnawal Native Title Claim to Namadgi National Park (a copy of this is held in the Manuscripts Section of the National Library of Australia). This year, the Canberra Committee for the Centenary of Federation awarded Ann's publisher, Aboriginal History Inc., \$40 000 to publish her two-volume history on the Ngunnawal. Although the recipient of various grants to offset her enormous costs, Ann herself is unpaid for her work.

The first volume focuses on the Kamberi, the original Aboriginal family group in the region between

Lake George and the Goodradigbee River, and from south of the Yass River to the headwaters of the Murrumbidgee, at the time the first explorers and settlers arrived in the Canberra-Queanbeyan district in the second decade of the 19th century. The second volume focuses on an Aboriginal farming community at Pudman and Blakeney Creeks in the heart of Ngunnawal country between Gunning, Boorowa and Yass.

To give us a feel for the complexities she faced in researching and managing her work, Ann gave examples of the extensive historical records available on individuals and family groups in the Canberra-Queanbeyan district, which were supported by her numerous interviews with indigenous and non-indigenous individuals and families from this region who have historical associations since the early days of settlement.

In her talk, Ann reminded us that history focuses on change and she demonstrated how the historical changes thrust upon the indigenous peoples of this region had affected them over the last 180 years - from when Joseph Wild was led to Weereewaa (Lake George) in 1820 to the present time. She argued that there was continuity, too, that Aboriginal societies in New South Wales were probably organic in pre-settlement times which meant that territorial boundaries, social relationships, associations and identity ebbed and flowed as individuals from neighbouring groups intermarried, or were defeated in conflicts with rival groups or fled over the mountains in the face of advancing warriors from another continent altogether.

Ann pointed out that contemporary writers and observers in the early days referred to the dominant group in the Canberra-Queanbeyan region by different names but, in reality, they were actually the same people, that is, the Kamberi. It was impossible to say for sure, she said, to which

linguistic group, as identified by Norman Tindale, the Kamberi belonged: the Ngunnawal (or Ngunawal), the Walgalu (or Wolgal) or the Ngarigo (or Gurumal). In fact, from late last century as missions and reserves were established for local Aborigines at Yass and Brungle (near Tumut), there was much more interaction between traditionally hostile groups as they rallied together as survivors to face a common enemy, the Europeans. There were many intermarriages between people in the areas surrounding the ACT and a large number of families and individuals who were originally from the Canberra-Queanbeyan district left their country forever and moved further down the Murrumbidgee and Murray Rivers to other missions and reserves to flee the advancing settlers. Conversely, others arrived from non-Kamberi areas.

Today, descendants might identify with the Walgalu (Wolgal), the Ngarigo (Gurumal) or the Ngunnawal (Ngunawal), or even all three. For example, a person's great-grandfather might have been from the Kamberi district but he married a Yass woman, so his children could identify with either country. If, say, they had three children and one married a woman from Tumut, another married a woman from Booroowa or Cowra, and another remained unmarried and stayed in the Kamberi district, the family identity might be splintered or expanded. Therefore, it would not be for 'uninformed local historians and experts' to determine which modern group was the 'right' or 'wrong' mob in the context of the native title claim, Ann argued, but for the local families coming together as a community to decide.

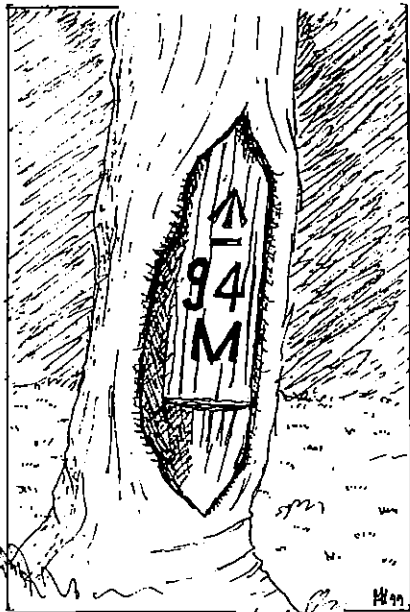
When the Ngunnawal Native Title Committee was formed, all relevant families were represented and the native title claim was the result of a joint effort from the families. Descendants of the Kamberi were part of that group and identified today as Ngunnawal due to the intermarriages of their ancestors

New border report

Members will be aware that in 1996 I completed a study of the original survey of the ACT-NSW border. That report analysed how the ACT came to be the shape it is, examined the process of surveying the border, and described the surveyors' experiences. It also included an inventory of 272 original survey marks left behind by the border surveyors, which I found during fieldwork along 100km of the border between Mt Coree and the Boboyan Road. Since that time a number of NPA walks have featured the border and visited some of the



Matthew Higgins and Martin Chalk on Matthew's walk to Corin Dam earlier in the year. Photo Max Lawrence.



94 MILE REFERENCE TREE, ACT-NSW BORDER, CARVED BY PERCY SHEAFFE'S TEAM, EARLY 1915.

marks, and similar items have appeared in the *Bulletin*.

I have now completed a second report, being mainly an inventory of marks found along a further 40km of the border, between Yarara Trig and the Boboyan Road (thus, as with the first project, the second relates directly to cultural heritage values on the border of Namadgi National Park). In this latest project, 210 marks were found. These marks were installed by Percy Sheaffe's survey party and by Freddie Johnston's survey party, during late 1914 and early 1915. Included are a number of finely carved references trees.

The border markers, on the whole, are among the earliest surviving structures erected after the decision to build the national capital on the Molonglo. They relate to the determination of the Territorial boundary and the choice of the Canberra site and so in turn to Federation, and they still legally define the ACT-NSW border. They are highly significant.

The first study was funded by the National Estate Grants Program, and second by an ACT Government heritage grant.

Matthew Higgins

The wrong mob? – *continued*

with members of the Ngunnawal community. Competing native title claims are based on intra- not inter-community disputes.

In her conclusion, Ann argued that the group offered joint management of Namadgi National Park was not 'the wrong mob' at all, and that those claiming to be 'respected local historians and experts' were the same identities who had previously argued that both the Ngunnawal (sic) and the Walgal or Wolgal were extinct. Such people, said Ann, tended to know nothing about Aboriginal people nor Aboriginal

history and were mostly descendants of local settlers who were uninformed and unqualified in the context of their research and had a conflict of interest in their research outcomes. Ann said she hoped the offer of joint-management of Namadgi National Park would be accepted by the Ngunnawal and that both indigenous and non-indigenous families in the ACT could forge agreements in a positive atmosphere of mutual respect in the 21st century.

Len Haskew

Commemorative issue of NPA *Bulletin*

To mark the 40th anniversary of the formation of the NPA, a special issue of the *Bulletin* will be published in March 2000. The commemorative section will be printed as a special 40-page supplement and the normal material restricted to four pages. Thus there will be less space for regular news and articles but, by increasing the size of the current issue, it is hoped that the effects on the continuity and currency of material will be minimised.

60 Years of Photographing the Australian Alps

On Sunday September 19, the Namadgi Visitor Centre echoed to the sound of popping champagne corks as a couple of hundred people crowded in to witness the launch of Reg Alder's photographic exhibition. Titled '60 Years of Photographing the Australian Alps', the exhibition includes 44 of Reg's photos covering a diverse range of subjects and places from the ACT, NSW and Victorian Alps.

The proceedings were opened by Namadgi manager Virginia Logan, who introduced head of Environment ACT Colin Adrian who took pleasure in opening the exhibition. Brett McNamara spoke on the cross-border theme in Alps management and mentioned that

the exhibition should tour to Jindabyne. Joss Haiblen eloquently spoke of Reg's long-time relationship with the mountains. Finally, Reg spoke about some of his early experiences and his early camera equipment. The unveiling of the exhibition was a great personal joy to this man who knows the mountains so well. As NPA members will be aware, a large number of Reg's photos are represented in the collection of the National Library.

Not only do the photos cover a wide time span (one shows damage from the 1939 bushfires in Victoria), but a range of subjects too. These extend from portraits of people like Lindsay Prior, to huts and various other European and Aboriginal cultural

features, and includes many places of great natural beauty. Also on display at the opening was a series of Reg's Kodachromes that appeared in a 1946 *Sydney Sun* supplement, and an album of black and white prints from 1941.

The opening was a great reunion for NPA members and others associated with the mountains. Afterwards, Reg and a number of friends adjourned to drinks and dinner courtesy of Alastair Morrison. Reg's exhibition continued at the Visitor Centre until October 22 and was the opening event in a series of talks and exhibitions at the centre continuing through into 2000.

Matthew Higgins



Launching '60 Years of Photographing the Australian Alps' at Namadgi Visitor Centre 19 October 1999. Left to right: Graham Sully, Colin Adrian, Joss Haiblen, Reg Alder, Virginia Logan. Photo Fiona MacDonald Brand.

Opposite page: Main display of '60 Years of Photographing the Australian Alps'. Photo Reg Alder.

The program of special events at Namadgi Visitor Centre is set out on page 23.



Talks and exhibitions focus on Namadgi

Twenty-four illustrated talks and exhibitions are being given at the Namadgi Visitor Centre, all focused on Namadgi or closely related topics. Beginning in September with the exhibition of Reg Alder's photographs, the program continues until June.

Talks in December and February (there are none in January) will cover native title and Namadgi; huts of Namadgi and the Snowy Mountains; Namadgi's more than 900 sites of significance; co-operative park management in the Australian Alps; and bushwalks in Namadgi off signposted tracks.

The park had its genesis in a 1963 proposal by the NPA, and founding NPA member Fiona MacDonald Brand will give an illustrated talk on March 19 titled *The Push for a National Park in the ACT: celebrating 40 years of the National Parks Association (ACT)*.

Other talks from March to May will cover research in the park;

issues and trends in management of Namadgi; separate talks on Aboriginal sites, peregrine falcons, and feral pigs in Namadgi; the Victorian Alps; and, finally, a talk on possible answers to the many questions that come up about the area from how cold-blooded animals live in the snow to how 'Namadgi' should be pronounced.

In November, historian and NPA member Matthew Higgins gave an illustrated talk, *Surveyors at the Snowline*. (See his article in this *Bulletin*).

Other talks in October and November covered research into alpine frog population decline; progress on the re-establishment of native bush at Boboyan Pines; the work to re-establish the brush-tailed rock wallaby; and research into the effects on native animals of fox poisoning, the rabbit calici virus and rabbit warren destruction.

Exhibitions from December to the end of the series include *The Other*

Mountains of Australia, a photographic exhibition by Allan Fox (December 19 – January 30); *Huts of Namadgi and the Snowy Mountains*, co-ordinated by Jim Hart, Kosciusko Huts Association Photographic History Project (February 6 – March 12); *The Wild Paradise*, a photographic exhibition by Andrew Tatnell (March 19 – April 26); and *Historic Huts of Namadgi*, an exhibition by the wildlife artist Helen Fitzgerald (April 30 – June 11).

An exhibition of more than 30 colour prints by the wildlife and landscape photographer Helen Fallow ran from October 24 to December 5.

Talks commence at 3:00 pm and last up to 1½ hours. Detailed programs are available from Environment ACT outlets, and further details can be obtained from the Namadgi Visitor Centre on 6207 2900.

Graeme Wicks

Pigs, brumbies, two legged ferals and dunnies

The field visit to Kosciuszko National Park (described on page 10) unearthed a wide variety of issues being faced almost daily by NPWS staff. Some general impressions are summarised in the following paragraphs but no priorities are intended in the order of listing.

Clearly many of the issues being addressed by the various people we met were common to the park as a whole, although priorities and emphasis tended to vary from area to area. Some general impressions gained might be summarised as follows.

Horses (of the ridden variety)

Horse riding activity occurs mainly in the northern areas of the park. Within the horse riding fraternity (and even more widely) there seems to be a fair degree of ignorance as to where people are allowed to ride and where not, and to be on the safe side they generally play it conservatively. The fact is that riding is a legitimate activity pretty well anywhere except in the declared wilderness and alpine zones. Some areas that would be attractive to riders (including some with excellent views into the Jagungal wilderness) remain virtually unused by riders. Similarly, incursions by riding parties into the 'no go' areas have been very rare in recent times.

The perception of the park as being 'locked up' extends beyond just the horse fraternity, and is especially strong in the neighbouring communities, as we found talking to some of the locals at Khancoban.

There are only three licensed commercial trail riding operators in the park, and these have very good working relationships with park staff. They are limited to 20 horses per party, and are regulated as to where they can go on particular trips. They are regarded as having a record of environmental responsibility that is superior to

that of private recreational horse parties, which remain virtually unregulated.

Some of the private groups can be quite large. When we visited Long Plain Hut a group of at least a dozen horse floats (some with multiple berths) were in camp, and we saw another group of similar size departing from the general area. The fact that such groups are unregulated can lead to congestion, and to the risk of environmental damage.

The obvious answer would appear to be a permit system for private as well as commercial groups, and this concept has a lot of support from the various user groups as well as the park service. However, politics got in the road of the last attempt at introducing such a system, and it foundered.

Horses (of a feral variety)

On this trip NPWS staff confirmed that the Pilot area has the worst brumby problem in the park, but these things have a habit of spreading, and we were told there is now a small mob in the sensitive alpine area of the South Ramsheads near the Kosciuszko summit. There are also brumbies in northern Kosciuszko, and one must wonder how long it will be before we again see them in Namadgi.

It was made abundantly clear that brumbies are a politically extremely sensitive issue, and as a result virtually nothing is being done in the way of control. Even the mob on the Main Range will stay there until ministerial approval is obtained for their removal, and we hope they are not joined by too many of their southern cousins in the meantime.

Pigs

Feral pigs are a problem to some degree in virtually all areas of the park, as any bushwalker will attest to. While their numbers are not large in relation to, say, those on the NSW western river plains, they exist

in a very sensitive environment. Control measures in the park are mainly trapping and shooting (no poisoning).

Two legged ferals

Pig hunters have been a major problem for both NPWS and other park users in recent times. Using 4WD vehicles they have been illegally accessing management trails and remote areas of the park, and generally creating mayhem. They are also suspected of having been involved in such accidental atrocities as the burning of Broken Dam Hut.

Perhaps even worse, it seems they have been deliberately adding to the pig problem rather than helping to solve it. There is evidence that some groups have actually been importing pigs into the park, and have been trying to sustain breeding stock. All-in-all pig hunters are even more of a problem for park managers than the pigs they are supposedly hunting.

The service, and particularly the Khancoban unit, has put a lot of effort into this problem in close cooperation with the local police, and has achieved some notable successes. There have been 18 successful prosecutions, and penalties have typically involved four figure fines, so hopefully this will act as a significant deterrent to potential perpetrators. At the time of our visit (mid October) there had been no evidence of illegal 4WD entry this season, so perhaps all that effort is paying off at last.

Motor bikes (trail bikes) do not seem to be a problem. Some of the locals were riding in the Dargals, but there does not appear to be any wider activity of note. Perhaps they've all gone to Brindabella National Park?

Dogs

There has been a lot of pressure from neighbouring landholders in the Khancoban area for increased dog

control, and this has taken the major share of funding for control of all ferals in that area of the park. It seems that recent research has shown dogs travel even greater distances than was previously thought. Consequently there's a good chance that the sheepkillers down that way could have come from deep inside the park, making it that much harder to deal with them.

Frogs (not ferals!)

More corroboree frog sites are still being found, but there are low numbers in each. A captive breeding program has commenced at Snakey Plain.

Bushwalkers (arguably feral)

Jagungal remains a very popular destination. There were 90-95 cars parked at Round Mountain last Easter following an article in *Wild Magazine*. Packwalkers tend to concentrate their camping at the Tumut River headwaters, and this area is being overcamped. Also, some of the tracks up Jagungal itself are becoming eroded and in need of water barriers. A monitoring program is being developed to determine the extent of the problems around Jagungal and potential solutions. However, it would also help if the bushwalking community itself could develop a stronger minimum impact ethic.

Mountain bikes (the sort you pedal) are allowed on virtually all management trails, including those in wilderness areas. They are not a problem in the Jagungal area nor did we hear of them being a problem in the Pilot area which is now preferred.

Jounama Pines (definitely feral)

It seems Jounama differs from our Bobeyan in that it was planted more as a large scale experimental arboretum of exotic pines, rather than as a radiata monoculture. All of the Jounama radiata have been harvested and only the other pine species remain, virtually none of which have commercial markets.

Like Namadgi, pine wildings are a problem in the Yarrangobilly/Jounama area, and like Namadgi the local volunteers do much of the



With ranger Craig Smith on Round Mountain. Photo Max Lawrence.

eradication work. We were told the Talbingo Bushwalkers had removed 5000 pines, 2000 cotoneasters, and 900 hawthorns. Good on them.

Cultural heritage

The 'use it or lose it' criterion poses some very real dilemmas for much of the parks cultural heritage. The examples we saw were Long Plain Hut, the Kiandra courthouse and Matthews Cottage, Caves House at Yarrangobilly, the Nordic Ski shelter, and Cabramurra township itself. It is hard to see these buildings being commercially viable in a context that preserves their heritage values and the natural qualities of the national park in which they are located. Their preservation, if indeed it is to proceed, will be a costly business. We face a very similar dilemma in Namadgi with Gudgenby Homestead. We did not hear any simple solutions on this trip.

Fire management

On our trip we passed the sites of both the Talbingo and Jindabyne fires of last summer. Both burnt substantial areas, but could have been much worse had the authorities not been successful in establishing and maintaining effective perimeters. During our

visit to Round Mountain we were also shown areas of regrowth from fires that occurred in 1986 and earlier. It is very obvious, even to the uninitiated, that the effects of fire in the sub-alpine environments are very long lasting.

Fire management is a costly exercise for the NPWS in Kosciuszko, even when there are no fires. On the philosophy that prevention is better than control, the service maintains fire towers and also funds flights by fixed wing spotting aircraft over the park during summer. During high fire danger periods chartered helicopters are held on standby at Jindabyne airport.

Alpine tracks and dunnies

A continuing theme of our trip seemed to be dunnies, but I don't think this was tied to any greater than usual need on our part. It's just that the service is going through a phase of updating the technology and improving visitor facilities, and has some beautiful new dunnies to show off. The *piece de resistance* undoubtedly is the new loo at Charlottes Pass. If it actually functions as well in this harsh environment as they hope it will, a

continued on page 20

PARKWATCH

Rare and exciting find in the Australian alps

Who would've expected that a routine inspection of a Peregrine Falcon nesting area would reveal arguably the rarest item of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance in the Australian Alps national parks? An Aboriginal digging stick. And it was the Alps own eagle-eyed Brett McNamara who found it!

Finding any wooden item of Aboriginal origin still remaining in the Australian Alps was considered so unlikely, that it took some persuading of various experts before it was authenticated. While these

discussions raged, the Canberra Archaeological Society was successful in obtaining an ACT Heritage grant to study the site and the stick. Neither the local Aboriginal organisations nor the Heritage Council wanted the stick removed for further study; the stick remains on site in-situ.

The occurrence of a digging stick in the Australian Alps national parks, is remarkable. The effects of sun, heat, bushfire, dampness, rain, frost and snow, mitigate against the survival of wooden artefacts in situ. This digging stick was preserved because it was in an undercut of a cliff where the microenvironment is

one of extreme aridity and shade. Its location beneath the undercut would also have protected the stick from bush fires.

from the Alps, Winter - Spring, 1999.

Snow gum frost hollow

On Monday 30 August there was a planting at the Aranda Snow Gums Heritage Site. Lake Ginninderra College horticultural students grew the Snow Gums from seed collected on site and were there to plant them.

The interim Heritage Places listing is for the best preserved example in Canberra of a remnant Snow Gum patch edging an intact frost hollow. The planting celebrates the start of the Friends of Aranda bushland's project to conserve an example of the transition from the treeless Limestone Plains through Snow Gums via the endangered Yellow Box/Red gum grassy woodland to the wooded slopes of the Aranda Bushland.

Sustainable Times, October, 1999.

Pigs, brumbies - continued from page 19

similar mansion will be erected at Rawsons Pass for summit visitors.

There is a major effort under way to upgrade the walking tracks in the alpine area. The steel mesh track above Thredbo is becoming worn and slippery, and steel is no longer the preferred material. Neither is concrete paving as laid down between Charlottes Pass and Blue Lake, as this is succumbing to frost heave. The chosen material now is tunnel scoria, which is the ground up granite extracted when digging the Snowy tunnels. Work is in progress on the old summit road, and work will commence next on the section between Rawsons and Muellers Passes. Work will eventually extend around the whole Lakes Circuit, but this could take a decade.

New wilderness proposals

Kosciuszko and surrounding areas are currently the subject of a Comprehensive Regional Assessment as part of the Southern Regional Forest Agreement process. There are various proposals to extend declared wilderness areas, some of which take in the Western Fall (the steep western fall from the Main Range area), and the Indi area (nearer Khancoban town).

The local rangers advise that if the Indi proposal proceeds they will face

considerable management problems. In particular, the area takes in Mt Youngal and its associated housing, fire tower and aeriels, and also the Murray power stations, pipelines and transmission lines. Weeds, especially blackberries, are a problem, and these would be much more difficult to manage under a wilderness regime (which requires a much more detailed approval process for control activities). Also, the area is a possible alternative route for the Bicentennial Trail, which presently follows the dangerous route of the Alpine Way. It also joins the Murray River, and its declaration would exclude use of the river for commercial rafting expeditions. Rangers do not see similar management problems with the Western Falls proposal.

A bottom line

To sum up, these are only some of the issues that face rangers and NPWS field staff in their day-to-day management of our precious park. Staff have a very complex set of issues and circumstances to address, and they are setting priorities daily. I think we should be very appreciative of the job they are doing.

Max Lawrence

Over 1 million hectares of native bush cleared between 1990-95

The long awaited results of the Agricultural Land Cover Change, 1990-95 project undertaken by the Commonwealth Bureau of Rural Sciences have been released.

It is estimated that over the 1990-1995 period approximately 1,218,010 hectares were cleared for agriculture (cropping), grazing and other activities, principally urban and infrastructure development. Estimated annual rates of decrease in woody vegetation for the continent due to clearing for agriculture (cropping) and grazing total 293,170 hectares. Together with other activities such as development, clearing totalled 309,080 hectares. A further 34,420 hectares were cleared for forest, plantation and on-farm tree management activities annually.

The methods used by the BRS to detect clearing results in a very conservative native vegetation loss rate, as it is restricted to detecting clearing in vegetation with a canopy

cover of more than 20%. Accordingly, it excluded large areas of native vegetation including sparse woodlands and shrublands.

Life Lines, Vol. 5 No. 2 1999.

More development in Victoria's parks

The Minister for Conservation and Land Management, Marie Tehan, announced at a recent Public Estimates and Accounts Committee Hearing that the deal, between the preferred operator, Mr Ken Latona, for the development of the Prom Lighthouse as an 'eco-tourism' venture had fallen through. Mrs Tehan had previously announced that there would not be exclusive use of the lighthouse. She also indicated that the 50 year length of lease Mr Latona was seeking and the issue of native title were also factors in the deal falling through. In an article published in the Sunday Age, Mr Latona indicated that he had negotiated to have exclusive use of the lighthouse and that Minister Tehan's announcement represented a change in the government's agreement.

However, the Government is still determined to go ahead with all developments in the current management and master plan for the Prom. This includes a 45-bed lodge at Tidal River; a 20-bed lodge somewhere in the vicinity of the half-way hut (initially to be temporary demountable huts) and extra accommodation at the Lighthouse and at Tidal River. At this stage Parks Victoria will develop the commercial guided walkers' tour, sometime before December, with the long-term aim of securing a private operator to take over the tour and to erect more substantial roofed accommodation.

The VNPA remains opposed to any increase in roofed accommodation and to Parks Victoria conducting a commercially guided walking tour.

People Caring for Nature, July, 1999.

Trees for energy. A greenhouse and forest policy blunder

The director of Total Environment Centre, Mr Jeff Angel recently issued a disturbing media release

warning that "burning so-called 'forest waste' at Liddell Power Station and the proposed production of charcoal at Dubbo to feed a silicon smelter at Lithgow will harm forest industry reform, environment protection and set back green energy growth."

Mr Angel was responding to the Forest Minister, Kim Yeadon announcement of August 2 that sawmill waste and thinnings from native forest are to be burnt for electricity. We understand several plants are to be located around the state. According to a source close to the Forest Minister there is half a million tonnes of wood waste being produced annually that is not suitable for paper or timber production. The productive use of former waste sounds terribly like the previous arguments from the 1970's supporting woodchipping for paper production.

According to a briefing from NSW Forest Products Association, the Association is working with the NSW State Government and State Forests (ie the Forestry Commission) to 'introduce legislation aimed at securing clear rights to the different types of resource able to be traded by the introduction of carbon credits.' In other words, the logging industry wants the Government to allow long term contracts to burn native forests in furnaces!

It is the least efficient sawmill operations which make the most wood waste. Without effective Government regulation, the economic forces within an energy market for wood waste will encourage inefficient mill operations, reducing the incentive to invest in new machinery and use wood for higher value uses.

The forests of north east NSW will also be drawn into the furnace with previously unloggable trees that were safe from the woodchippers now being burnt for electricity. These trees provide essential wildlife habitat and the scheme heralds an intensification of logging.

The Colong Bulletin, September, 1999.

Natural Heritage Trust grant for Gudgenby

The Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group Inc has been successful in its application to the Natural Heritage Trust for a grant to assist in the revegetation of the Boboyan Pines area. The grant of \$15 300 covers the period to October 2000 and provides assistance for the following work to be undertaken:

- planting and seeding of 80 hectares of cleared pine forest;
- monitoring the progress of revegetation, and allied functions;
- control of weeds in the rehabilitated area; and
- provision of a number of fenced exclosures which will provide areas of accelerated regeneration.

Rehabilitation will continue to rely on voluntary work parties so group president Eleanor Stodart would like to hear from anyone willing to participate in this important work. Alternatively, just come to a work party, details of which are set out in the Calendar.

Syd Comfort

Ginini Flats Management Plan

The September Bulletin article on Ginini Flats discussed a plan to close Mount Franklin Road but confused the issue by printing "and" instead of "at". The proposal, supported by NPA, is to close the Mount Franklin Road at the Mt Franklin carpark. We expect to have a revised draft of the management plan for comment in November but do not expect this draft to include the recommendation to remove the carpark from the slopes of Mt Ginini and close the road at Mount Franklin.

Eleanor Stodart

Tennent Homestead volunteers

Thank you to all those people who volunteered to participate in work parties at Tennent Homestead. The Park Service hopes to start work soon and I would like to to update the 'Volunteer Register'. If you would still like to be involved, or to add your name to the list, please contact me on 6281 4268.

Len Haskew

Book reviews

Living with Platypus. G A Williams and M Serena, Australian Platypus Conservancy, Whittlesea, Victoria, 1999, 39pp, \$5.00.

Goff Williams and Melody Serena formed the Australian Platypus Conservancy with the aim of increasing knowledge of platypus populations and their ecological requirements. For about four years they have worked with Melbourne Water to ascertain platypus numbers in waterways around Melbourne, and they have found that platypus do live in surprising proximity to human constructions and activity, even occurring under busy road bridges.

They also are studying platypus in a rural setting, in the upper Wimmera catchment in western Victoria, where overclearing, overstocking and removal of water for irrigation have produced gully erosion and both stream and dryland salinity.

With this experience they are well placed to produce a guide such as this, which should help Landcare groups, country councils, and townplanners to plan their works in a way which will improve habitat for platypus (and, therefore, for all the little creatures that platypus need for food) as well as achieving their more immediately human-oriented aims. It should also be of interest to schools which have environmental studies in their program.

Although of a fairly large (A4) format the guide is a modest production, being printed in one colour only, a dark grey blue, which provides adequate contrast for both text and the scattering of photographs, and with a soft cover. The text is easy for the busy person to read, being presented in short sections under each heading.

The first half of the guide gives a brief overview of platypus biology, their unique shape and unique reproductive system, their distribution, swimming ability, burrows, feeding, and some general results of the Melbourne and Wimmera studies.

The second half provides the practical information on how bank stabilisation and other human constructions can be done in such a way as to improve platypus habitat. For example, for their burrows platypus need at least some areas of steep banks overhung with native vegetation. Fallen branches in streams are valuable for increasing habitat for invertebrate life. Willows clog streams with their roots but can be removed without disturbing the streams by poisoning and later cutting down, with native vegetation being established as the roots decay naturally. Culverts and pipes for roadworks can all be made platypus friendly with a little thought. Platypus are burrowing animals and will use pipes to reach artificial ponds. If these pipes have certain features, such as adequate diameter and breathing bays if long, they can aid rather than prevent use by platypus.

Household chemicals, increased salinity, and nutrient enrichment from fertilisers and human waste all create problems which can be minimised by thoughtful planning. And we can all directly take responsibility for preventing the injuries caused by tangled fishing line and plastic rings by not leaving fishing line around and by cutting all plastic rings (such as those sealing plastic lids onto jars or wrapping six packs) before disposing of them.

Most Landcare and Parkcare groups are doing their best to improve the environment for native species. Those involved with work around streams will find that this book provides some hard background information to help them justify what they are doing, and will also guide them to work more effectively.

This book can be obtained from the Australian Platypus Conservancy, PO Box 84, Whittlesea, Vic 3757, for the modest sum of \$5.00.

Eleanor Stodart



Klaus Hueneke in 1995

One Step at a Time. By Klaus Heuneke, Table Top Press, Canberra, 1999. 255 pages. RRP \$22.95.

This book, presented in a soft covered, medium format is in two parts. The first is autobiographical and the second, a collection of reminiscences and observations made over years of travelling. The author has used a variety of writing styles and a number of black and white photographs to help convey his moods and feelings; for this book is very much one of introspection.

The first part of the book introduces the reader to the Heuneke 'clan' and through them to the nature of the author himself. His father's journeys through Europe in the 1930s and love of outdoor activities, and the family's 'bush' holidays after emigration from Germany are offered as reasons for the author's enduring love of the Australian bush in general and the mountains of the south east in particular. The account of the migrant experience will ring a familiar, if not long silent, chord with many readers and also provides an interesting description of a past era in Australia. Similarly, the author's first experience of Thredbo in 1958 makes a striking comparison with today's commercial developments.

In part one the author also gives an open and, at times, frank account of his journey into manhood. At the conclusion of this part, the book delivers the reader to the start of a series of descriptions of physical journeys.

Part two opens with a narration about the author's return trip to Europe in 1977. This is the first of

Book reviews

18 such stories, all of which are independent of each other and of a length and style which allows a quick skim or a slower, more thoughtful read. The early stories are more observations and descriptions rather than the revelations of self proffered, in part one. However, his descriptions of adventures in places such as the Kiandra to Kosciusko crossing, Round Mountain, The Rolling Grounds, Rotten Swamp and Mimosa Rocks will appeal to many NPA members familiar with these places. The stories of the high country in particular have sufficient geographical detail to allow the reader to follow them on a map.

Other events as varied as an archaeological dig in the MacDonald Ranges and logging protests in the Tantawangalo State Forest both shed light on the interests and nature of the author and describe the conditions and occurrences at the time.

Many of the author's travelling companions are mentioned in the book. Some, like Reg Alder and Graham Scully, are well known to NPA members. One, however, is given a special place. The late Neil Wilson, who appears in photographs on the front of two of the author's other books (*People of the Australian High Country* and *Kiandra to Kosciusko*) had been a close companion of the author over the years. His passing in 1998 seems to have given cause to a return to a more reflective style for the descriptions of the last two journeys. The last of these, a solo walk to Mount Bogong, describes the emotions and irrational mind games that many solo walkers would have experienced. It also describes one man's way of dealing with this aspect of human frailty.

One Step at a Time will offer different things to different people. Readers of Klaus Heuneke's other works will find this an interesting addition. Bush walkers looking for new ideas will also find value in its pages, while others will recognise themselves at various times and will profit from reflection.

Martin Chalk

Calendar

	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Committee Meeting	Thur 2		Thur 3	Thur 2
Environment sub-committee ¹	Thur 9		Thur 10	Thur 9
General Meetings			Thur 17	Thur 16
Christmas Party ²	Sun 12			
Gudgenby work parties ³	Sat 4		Sat 12	Sat 11
Illustrated talk - 40 years of the NPA ⁴				Sun 19

Further Details

- 1 - Neville Esau 6286 4176
- 2 - Outings Program
- 3 - Meet Yankee Hat carpark 10am, Eleanor Stodart 6281 5004
- 4 - Fiona MacDonald Brand will deliver this talk in the Namadgi Visitor Centre commencing at 3 pm.

General Meetings

Thursday 17 February. Swamp Disaster. David Tantor, a member of the NSW NPA and long-time swamp watcher, will talk about Wingecarribee Swamp. In August 1998 this swamp was badly damaged by catastrophic geomorphological events during a heavy storm. What happened? What is the significance of the swamp which is home to three plant species on the endangered list? What can be done to stabilise the situation and what are the prospects for rehabilitation?

Thursday 16 March. Forty Years On. The National Parks Association of the ACT turns 40 this month. Join us for an evening of reminiscence and fellowship enlivened by tales, some short, some tall but all entertaining. Afterwards, a glass of champagne and a commemorative cake. Be there and be part of NPA history.

New members

Rita Law, Isabella Plains
 Chris Elford, Yarralumla
 Paul and Penny Mlakar, Ainslie
 Hugh Brocklebank, South Bruce
 Wayne Deeker, Kippax
 Rosemarie and Ian Hawke, Curtin
 Grace Holroyd, Rivett
 Henry and Robbie Berenson, Macgregor
 Gerda van de Kamp, Yarralumla

Red dot

If the association records show a member as not having paid the subscription for 1999 a red dot has been placed on the address label and no further *Bulletins* will be posted until the subscription is received. Please ring Dianne in the office if there are any queries about this.

Special events at Namadgi Visitor Centre

December 12 3pm Namadgi and Native Title: Researching the Historical Evidence, by Ann Jackson-Nakano.

December 19 to January 30 The Other Mountains of Australia, an Exhibition by Allan Fox.

February 6 to March 12 Huts of Namadgi and the Snowy Mountains, an exhibition co-ordinated by Jim Hart, Kosciuszko Huts Association

February 12 Off the Beaten Track in Namadgi, by Murray Dow.

February 20 Behind the Scenery: Namadgi's Sites of Significance, by Joss Haiblen

February 27 Can Feral Pigs Recognise State Borders?: Co-operative Park Management Across the Australian Alps, by Brett MacNamara

March 5 Science in High Places: Research in Namadgi National Park, by Trish MacDonald.

March 19 The Push for a National Park in the ACT: celebrating 40 years of the National Parks Association (ACT), Fiona MacDonald Brand.

National Parks Association (ACT)

NPA Christmas Party – Sunday 12 December

details in Outings Program



NPA members on a recent outing with the Friends of the Mongarlowe River view the Monga waratah in bloom and learn of plans to start logging again in the Monga State Forest. Photo Reg Alder.

NPA Bulletin

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22 March daywalk
Wednesday walk
Leader: David Large
Phone: 6291 4830

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

25 March Saturday daywalk
Bungonia Tops
Leader: Col McAlister
Map: Caoura 1:25 000
Phone: 6288 4171

1A/B

An easy loop walk taking in the three main lookouts with breathtaking views (Bungonia Lookdown, Jerrara Lookout and Adams Lookout). A side trip to view Bungonia Gorge and the Shoalhaven Gorge from Mt Ayre. Time and energy permitting, an optional side trip towards Jerrara Falls and Bungonia Falls. Meet at 8.00am at the Netball Centre carpark, Northbourne Avenue Lyneham. 280kms, \$60 per car (including \$5 park entry fee).

17 - 23 April one week carcamp and/or packwalk
Coolah Tops National Park
Leaders: Wayne Veide, Max Lawrence
Phone: Wayne 02 6553 4351 (Wingham)
Max 6288 1370

One for the diary. Coolah Tops is one of the new generation of national parks, and is located on the Divide to the west of the Hunter Valley. The intention is to leave Canberra on the Monday before Easter, and return on Easter Sunday. Full details in the autumn program.

NPA outings program

January - March 2000

Outings guide

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

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

Points to note

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

All persons joining an outing of the National Parks Association of the ACT do so as volunteers in all respects and as such accept sole responsibility for any injury howsoever incurred and the National Parks Association of the ACT, its office bearers and appointed leaders are absolved from any liability in respect of injury or damage suffered whilst engaged in any such outing.

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

Walks gradings

Distance grading (per day)

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

Terrain grading

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



Sunday 12 December 1999

NPA Christmas Party

Contact: Max Lawrence

Phone: 6288 1370

Our Christmas Party this year will be at Nil Desperandum in Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. Because of access problems (a number of locked gates through private property), it will be necessary to form car convoys starting from just outside of the main entrance gates to TNR (near the works for the new visitors centre). Convoys will leave at 11 am and 12 noon sharp, so don't be late or you'll miss out. A continuous shuttle will work for departures, so within some limits, you'll be able to leave pretty much when you want to. Bring a picnic lunch and refreshments, and let's celebrate Christmas together. Also, don't forget to bring along donations of gear and goodies for our fun-raising auction!

Field trips for NPA research projects

Contacts: Clive Hurlstone 040 7783 422 (mobile)

Ray Polglaze 6247 1024

A number of field trips will be held over the first quarter of the year 2000 for NPA research projects on 'Conservation management of ACT parks and other public lands'. These day trips will be to plantation forests, Namadgi National Park, and other parks and reserves. Their object is to see first hand what the conservation issues are. The trips involve short walks, and lots of looking and talking. The two held so far have been really interesting and not at all strenuous. The next trip will be to the northern Cotter catchment. For more information please contact Clive or Ray.

19 December Sunday daywalk

Mt Gingera

Leader: Colin McAlister

2A

Map: Corin Dam 1:25 000

Phone: 6288 4171

Escape the summer heat by taking a high country walk from Mt Ginini carpark to Mt Gingera via Pryors Hut and return, a total of 14km. The climb from the hut to the summit is about 200m, but the views are well worth the effort. Meet at the carpark on Urrarra Road just off the Cotter Road at 8.00am. 120kms. \$24 per car.

4 - 9 January 2000 one week packwalk

Bogong High Plains Circuit

Leader: David Large

3A/B

Map: VICMAP Bogong Alpine Area 1:50 000

Phone: 6291 4830

Our first event of the new millenium. A six day packwalk described by John Chapman in *Bushwalking Australia* (Lonely Planet). Walk includes a 800m descent and ascent on the fourth day. Contact leader as soon as possible so that transport arrangements can be set up. Cost will depend on numbers and mode of transport.

9 January 2000 Sunday daywalk

Carruthers Peak via Blue Lake

Leader: Brian Slee

2A/C

Map: Mount Kosciusko 1:50 000

Phone: 6261 3509(w), 6281 0719(h)

Our first daywalk of the new millenium! Park at Charlotte Pass, and after crossing the Snowy River head off-track northwards. Proceed above Hedley Tarn, taking in views of it and Blue Lake. Rejoin track and return via Carruthers Peak and either track or Club Lake (off-track). Afternoon tea Jindabyne. Numbers strictly limited to minimise impact, so phone early to book. Insect repellent a necessity! 430kms, \$86 per car.

16 January Sunday daywalk

Mt Lincoln

Leader: Geoff Barker

3B/C/E

Map: Corin Dam 1:25 000

Phone: 6242 0947(h), 040 0799 0102(mobile)

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. Start from the Smokers firetrail carpark off the Corin Dam road, and walk down to the headwaters of Blue Gum Creek through open forest. Climb to the peak at 1460m, and enjoy great views of Canberra and various prominent Namadgi peaks. Return to cars via Emu Flat. 80kms. \$16 per car.

22 January

Closing date for Bundanon bookings (see 5 March)

Have you booked for Pittwater? (see 17-19 March)

22 January Saturday evening walk

Southern Namadgi

Leader: Martin Chalk

1B/C

Map: Yaouk 1:25 000

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

A dusk-into-night walk somewhere in the Grassy Creek/ Boboyan area. Avoid the summer heat, eat dinner by sunset, and walk by moonlight. Oh! And see some interesting country too! Contact leader by preceding Wednesday for details. 140kms. \$28 per car.

23 January Sunday daywalk

Cooleman Ridge

Leader: Yvonne Barros

1A

Map: Canberra street directory

Phone: 6231 5699

A nice stroll around the tracks on Cooleman Ridge, enjoying this fine part of Canberra Nature Park with its views over Canberra and the Murrumbidgee. Meet at 9.00am at Kambah Village shops. 0kms, \$0 per car.

26 January Australia Day daywalk

Big Hole and Marble Arch

Leader: Max Lawrence

2A/E

Ref: Kain 1:25 000

Phone: 6288 1370

Our January midweek walk is a public holiday! Meet at Canberra Railway Station Kingston at 8.30am. A pleasant walk on a dedicated walking track to the Big Hole, a vast unfenced sinkhole (beware, 114m deep!!), and Marble Arch, a limestone cave through a ridge followed by a narrow and spectacular limestone gorge ending in a swimming hole. Drive via Captains Flar with some gravel. It may be necessary to wade or paddle across the Shoalhaven River. 180 kms, \$36 per car.

30 January Sunday daywalk

Tuross Falls

Leader: Mike Smith

1A or 2B/E

Ref: Belowra 1:25 000

Phone: 6286 2984

Meet at Canberra Railway Station at 7.30am. Drive to cascades on headwaters of Tuross River above Tuross Falls east of Cooma. Either (1) walk along footpath to overview falls, (2) cross river and walk to top of falls with a scramble to the base of the falls for the adventurous, and/or (3) swim at the cascades if hot for an easy afternoon. 300 kms, \$60 per car.

5 February Saturday daywalk

Ramshead to Kosciuszko

Leader: Steve Hill

3A/C/E

Map: Mount Kosciuszko 1:50 000

Phone 6231 9186(ah)

A day of fabulous views at a time when the wildflowers should be at their best, but will only proceed if good weather is in prospect. From the top of the Crackenback chairlift, walk direct to the Ramshead (2190m), descend to Leatherbarrel Creek headwaters, cross the Swampy Plains River below Cootapatamba Hut, and climb Mt Kosciuszko from the south to join the madding crowds on top. The return to the chair may involve climbing North Ramshead if there is time. A long drive, a long walk, an early start and a late finish, largely off-track, and requiring good fitness. Minimum impact walking means numbers will be strictly limited, so book early. 425kms, \$85 per car, plus chairlift.

6 February Sunday daywalk

Brindabella Range Ramble

Leader: Steven Forst

2/A

Ref: ACT 1:100 000

Phone: 6251 6817(ah)

Meeting in the carpark off Uriarra Road near the Corter Road at 8.30am. A fire trail walk through the tall 'shady' forest between the Corter 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.

12 February Saturday work party

GBRG Work Party

Contact: Eleanor Stodart

Phone: 6281 5004

The Gudenby Bush Regeneration Group's primary concern is the rehabilitation of the area in the middle of our National Park formerly occupied by the notorious Boboyan Pines. Work parties are held each month in conjunction with the parks service, and usually involve weed removal and planting of native vegetation. All activities commence at 10.00am at the Boboyan Pines (Yankee Hat) carpark.

12 - 13 February weekend packwalk

Goodradigbee River, Wee Jasper

Leader: Fiona MacDonald Brand

1A

Ref: ACT 1:100 000

Phone: 6247 9538

Contact leader by Wednesday for details. A relaxing and easy weekend on the Goodradigbee River near Micalong Creek. Great campsite with swimming and fishing. 160 kms, \$32 per car.

20 February Sunday daywalk

Mt Twynam and Watsons Crag

Leader: Steve Hill

4A/C/E

Map: Mount Kosciuszko 1:50 000

Phone: 6231 9186(ah)

This walk will proceed only if the weather is likely to be good. From the Charlottes Pass carpark we go on track to the Blue Lake lookout, then off-track to the top of Twynam (2196m) and out on to Watsons Crag for unsurpassed views of the 1700m fall from the Main Range peaks to the Geehi River. An early start and a late finish, with a demanding walk in between. For fit walkers. Minimum impact walking means numbers will be strictly limited, so book early. 430kms, \$86 per car.

23 February daywalk

Wednesday walk

Leader: Ken Free

Phone: 6295 8894

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

27 February Sunday daywalk

Monga State Forest

Leader: Len Haskew

1A

Maps: Monga, Araluen 1:25 000

Phone: 6281 4268

Rejoin the *Friends of the Mongarlowe River* and have another look at a different aspect of this beautiful but threatened area. This time we will explore some of the rainforest diversity and if time permits, have a look at the old growth forest which is under threat of logging. Meet at Canberra Railway Kingston at 7.45am. 200kms, \$40 per car, plus a donation for the *Friends*.

4 – 5 March weekend packwalk

Bibbenluke Mountain

Leader: Phil Gatenby

3A/D/E

Map: Corang 1:25 000

Phone: 6254 3094

Bad weather frustrated Phil's last attempt at this, but he feels the signs are more auspicious this time round. A walk in the western Budawangs from the Wog Wog entrance. Mostly on tracks but with some scrub and a bit of rock scrambling in places. Contact leader by Wednesday 1 March for more details and bookings. 250kms, \$50 per car.

5 March Sunday excursion

Bundanon

Leader: Len Haskew

Map: *Cartoscape's* Shoalhaven Region (free from 1800 024 261)

Phone: 6281 4268

Bundanon, situated on the Shoalhaven River about 30kms west of Nowra, is the Boyd family gift to the people of Australia. It is open to the public on the first Sunday of the month – light refreshments are available and there are grassed areas for picnics. Admission charges are \$15 (or \$10 for Pension or Seniors Card holders). Contact Len *no later than 22 January*, as firm bookings have to be made well in advance of a proposed visit. Bundanon is about 275kms from Canberra, making the return drive 550kms (\$110 per car).

11 March Saturday work party

GBRG Work Party

Contact: Eleanor Stodart

Phone: 6281 5004

Help restore the bush at Gudgenby. All activities commence at 10.00am at the Boboyan Pines (Yankee Hat) carpark.

~~19~~ – 20 March long weekend packwalk

Folly Point

Leader: Steven Forst

2A (pack), 3B/C/E (day)

Map: CMW Budawangs

Phone: 6251 6817(ah)

A walk via the Endrick River to Folly Point. First day is an easy packwalk to a camp site in The Vines area. A daywalk the next day out to Folly Point (famous Budawang views) for lunch, returning to The Vines camp. Walk out Monday. Contact leader by Wednesday /5 March. 340kms. \$68 per car.

20 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.

~~16 - 17~~ OR

17 – 19 March hostel weekend

Pittwater YHA

Leader: David Large

Phone: 6291 4830

Joint NPA/FBI activity. Enjoy a weekend at Pittwater ("the most beautiful hostel on earth"). Numerous walks in area. Visits to North Head Quarantine Station Museum and Sydney Harbour National Park also planned if time permits. An opportunity to utilise NPA's YHA group membership. Cost for Friday and Saturday nights \$17 (dorm.), \$21 (double) per person per night. Saturday only \$22/\$26. Bring own food and linen. Numbers limited, and early response required to confirm booking – so get in and phone the leader early! Transport arrangements and costs to be advised.