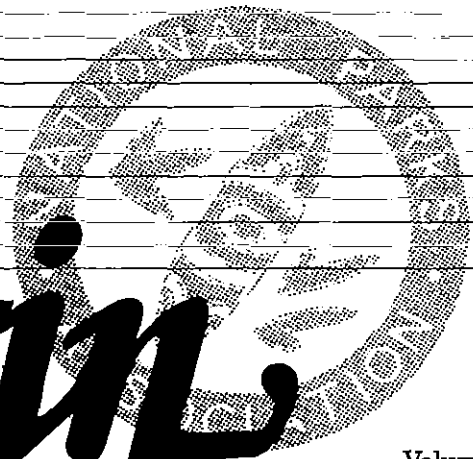


# NPA Bulletin



Volume 37 number 3  
September 2000

**NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION (ACT) INCORPORATED**



**Annual report**

**Lower Molonglo River Corridor**

**The great swamp robbery**

## CONTENTS

From the President: annual report – August 2000 .... 3	<i>Clive Hurlstone</i>
Annual general meeting ..... 3	
Lower Mologlo River Corridor ..... 4	<i>David Pfanner</i>
The great swamp robbery ..... 5	<i>Len Haskew</i>
Frog declines in the Australian High Country ..... 6	<i>Will Osborne</i>
Gudgenby House, which way? ..... 7	<i>Eleanor Stodart</i>
Judith Wright was an early guest speaker ..... 8	<i>Graeme Wicks</i>
Edna Walling as a conservationist ..... 9	<i>Reg Alder</i>
Weeds ..... 10	<i>Muriel Edwards</i>

Vale Glyn Lewis ..... 11	<i>Syd Comfort</i>
Congratulations to two members ..... 11	
An iron bar no match for Premier Carr ..... 12	<i>Len Haskew</i>
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group Olympic Landcare Project ..... 13	
Budawang rescue ..... 14	<i>Len Haskew</i>
Perth parks revisited ..... 15	<i>Fiona MacDonald Brand</i>
A Snowy Hume and Hovell ..... 16	
Parkwatch ..... 17	<i>Len Haskew</i>
Calendar ..... 19	
General meetings ..... 19	
Book Review ..... 19	<i>Eleanor Stodart</i>

### 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

<i>President</i>	Clive Hurlstone 6288 7592(h); 040 788 3422(w)
<i>Vice President</i>	David Large 6291 4830(h)
<i>Immediate Past President</i>	Eleanor Stodart 6281 5004(h)
<i>Secretary</i>	Len Haskew 6281 4268(h)
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#### Committee members

Max Lawrence	6288 1370 (h)
Steven Forst	6251 6817(h) 6279 1326(w)
Judy Kelly	6253 1859(h)
Timothy Walsh	6285 1112(h)
Eleanor Stodart	6281 5004(h)

#### Convenors

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<i>Outings Sub-committee</i>	Max Lawrence 6288 1370(h)
<i>Bulletin Working Group</i>	Syd Comfort 6286 2578(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 \$40	Single members \$35
Corporate members \$30	<i>Bulletin</i> only \$30
Concession \$25	

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) 62862578.

#### Deadline for December issue: 1 November 2000.

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

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*Cover photo: Ranger Steve Welch, Gudgenby Bush Regeneration member Simon Buckpitt and Olympian Monique Allen at the Olympic Landcare site. See also the article on page 13. Photo Eleanor Stodart.*

# From the President: annual report

The past 12 months has seen the National Parks Association of the ACT continue a high level of activity in pursuit of its conservation objectives and the provision of well-organised outings and talks programs for members.

The membership of the association remains steady.

At the last AGM it was pleasing to welcome Neville Esau, Steven Forst and David Large to the Committee. While many Committee members were absent from Canberra at various times during the year, only one meeting had to be rescheduled and I thank Committee members for their cooperation. Our office manager, Dianne Hastie, resigned in March and it was decided to run the office using volunteers. The Treasurer has introduced a new comprehensive accounting system, whilst insurance for those members carrying out activities on behalf of the NPA is being investigated.

## Financial support

The NPA has received substantial financial support from Environment ACT: in June 1999 we received a grant for \$26 250 for projects on conservation management of ACT parks and other public lands.

This June we were awarded a grant for \$28 000, for similar projects.

## Promotional activities

The 40th anniversary of NPA received media coverage and stimulated community interest in the NPA. Other major promotional activities were a staffed display at ACT Alive and the World Environment Day Fair.

The NPA *Bulletin* working group produced three *Bulletins* and a slim special wrapped around the 40th anniversary *Supplement*, and achieved some reductions in cost. The *Supplement* team gave us a wonderful overview of the last 40 years and refreshed many memories. My thanks to all those involved with the *Bulletin* this year.

## General meetings

Eight general meetings were held during the year, including the memorable 40th anniversary celebration. Guest speakers, arranged by Len Haskew and myself, gave great talks on the Southern Forests, the Ngunnawal people, Greening Australia, Wingecarribee Swamp, Alpine frogs, and weeds in the Southeast Region. At the July general meeting a forum was held on Gudgenby Homestead.

## Outings

The Outings Sub-committee again offered NPA members a wonderful range of activities in which to take part, including a really special walk in Monga State Forest and a car camp to Coolah Tops. Thanks go to the outings leaders and convener Max Lawrence.

Hands-on conservation activity in the last 12 months focused on participation in the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group, with activities including fence building, woody weed removal and tree planting.

## Environment Sub-committee

The Environment Sub-committee was convened by Neville Esau until April and then by David Large. Following Government development proposals for Gudgenby Homestead in 1999, a paper on the ecological restoration of the Gudgenby Valley was developed and this led to the debate on the use of Gudgenby Homestead. In conjunction with our environment grant projects there was continuing discussion on project developments, and a number of field trips were undertaken: four to ACT pine forests, one to Namadgi National Park and one to the Lower Molonglo River Corridor.

The association prepared submissions on the draft Gudgenby Valley Recreation Study, and on draft amendments to the 1998 Bushfire Fuel Management Plan.

The NPA's Research Officer, Ray Polglaze, assisted by members of the Environment Sub-committee, completed the following submissions:

- Environmental Flow Guidelines and the Water Resources Management Plan;
- the Draft ACT Budget for 2000-2001;
- comments on Territory Plan Variation 89;
- Lower Molonglo River Corridor Final Draft Plan of Management.

The last two were produced in conjunction with the Conservation Council and, together with the submission on the Draft Budget, involved giving presentations before the ACT House of Assembly Urban Services Committee.

My thanks to Research Officer Ray Polglaze, to Committee members, Past President Eleanor Stodart, Secretary Max Lawrence, Treasurer Mike Smith, Jacqui Cole, Neville Esau, Steven Forst and David Large.

In conclusion I wish to thank all members for their continuing support of the National Parks Association of the ACT.

Clive Hurlstone

## Annual general meeting

At the annual general meeting held on 17th August, the following office-bearers were elected:

*President:* Clive Hurlstone, *Vice President:* David Large, *Secretary:* Len Haskew, *Treasurer:* Mike Smith

Steven Forst, Judy Kelly, Eleanor Stodart, Max Lawrence and Timothy Walsh were elected as Committee members. Clive Hurlstone's President's Report is printed in this *Bulletin*. In the absence of Treasurer Mike Smith, David Large moved that the audited financial reports be accepted and this motion was carried. A motion of appreciation of the work of the 1999 President and Committee was also passed.

Judy Kelly and Phil Bubb gave a very interesting presentation on an NPA car camp at Coolah Tops, illustrated by a series of slides shown by David Kelly. Members then enjoyed a gluhwein supper in what has become established as an NPA tradition.

# Lower Molonglo River Corridor

## Public hearing on draft management plan

On July 14, representatives of the National Parks Association (NPA) and the Conservation Council of the South East Region and Canberra (CCSERAC) appeared before the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Services to present, explain and defend their written submission on the Final Draft Management Plan for the Lower Molonglo River Corridor. They included Clive Hurlstone, Rod Griffiths, Nicola Davies and Ray Polglaze.

Also appearing at this public hearing were representatives of Environment ACT (including the Director, Dr Colin Adrian) and the ACT Sustainable Rural Land Group Inc. reflecting the views of a group of rural leaseholders. Despite the demonstrated need for protection of this important piece of the ACT environment, and despite the excellence of the joint NPA-CCSERAC written submission, neither Environment ACT nor the majority of the attending members of the Standing Committee appeared sympathetic to the NPA-CCSERAC presentation.

The Lower Molonglo River Corridor (LMRC) is an area containing significant natural environment values. These include the nationally vulnerable pink-tailed legless lizard, *Pomadouris pallida* plants, lichens, and a number of threatened species such as the Macquarie perch, two species of birds (painted honeyeater and brown treecreeper), cultural heritage values and important fossil sites.

The importance of the LMRC site, the threats to its environmental values and the management protection required are among the issues addressed in the detailed and complex submission by NPA and CCSERAC. This document of 27 sections setting out 134 specific recommendations also includes a lengthy bibliography and maps. The submission is a model of careful research, thoughtful analysis and conclusions deserving sympathetic

consideration. Drafted by Ray Polglaze, NPA's Research Officer, and reviewed by senior personnel of the NPA and CCSERAC, the paper is too long to review here in detail, but a few of its significant points can be summarised.

The principal issue in the NPA-CCSERAC submission is that important environmental values of the LMRC are not adequately identified or provided for in the Final Draft Management Plan. An Integrated Management Strategy is called for, based on the principle that conservation of the natural environment should take precedence over public use of the area, such as recreation. A well-defined nature reserve should be established immediately under the Territory Plan and managed as a reserve rather than under rural leases. Such a reserve and strategy should include sub-catchment management for fire protection and control of feral animals, and would embody a plan for survey, research, and monitoring. It is recognised that increased funding for management will be required.

The proposed set of recommendations within the NPA-CCSERAC submission is in sharp contrast to vague language in the Final Draft Management Plan, language that leaves a number of policy issues unresolved. To take just one example, that of roads and tracks, the NPA-CCSERAC submission lists 12 specific proposals dealing with roads and walking tracks that need to be incorporated within a revised draft plan of management for environmental protection.

The threats to environmental values and the need for increased community involvement in the process of policy formation and management of a new LMRC Nature Reserve were among the principal points raised by representatives of NPA and CCSERAC. Attention was drawn to the omission of control of recreation activities that threaten environmental values together with the lack of detailed maps setting out



Lower Molonglo Corridor.  
Photo Eleanor Stodart

conservation zones. Finally the absence of plans for monitoring and research was a matter of concern. The process in the development of the Final Draft Management Plan was said to be too narrow, hence a Specific Consultation Group is recommended to provide a forum for discussion among stakeholders with differing points of view.

The Standing Committee and those attending the public hearing also heard representatives of Environment ACT and the leaseholders who presented views on the Final Draft Management Plan and to the NPA-CCSERAC submission. Dr. Adrian reported that eight submissions on LMRC had been received, and found broad consensus among them. He saw some value in the NPA-CCSERAC submission, recognised some modification of the plan of management was possible, but as there was little evidence to indicate serious problems with the existing management of the LMRC by the leaseholders, he foresaw a continuation of the status quo.

Discussion among the various organisational representatives and committee members centred on:

- unresolved boundary issues that Dr. Adrian said will be subject to future negotiations;
- the fears of rural leaseholders who feared unnecessary interference in the matter of fire hazards, fencing and control of feral animals;
- policy and management of grazing; and
- the high cost of implementing environmental recommendations.

*continued on page 5*

# The great swamp robbery

*February's guest speaker was David Tranter - foundation member of the NSW NPA, member of their Southern Highlands Branch and long-time swamp watcher. His topic was Swamp Disaster and he spoke with great knowledge of and enthusiasm for one of his treasured (but badly damaged) places - Wingecarribee Swamp. David illustrated his address with some very compelling slides.*

Wingecarribee Swamp is (was?) located about 13km east of Moss Vale (NSW) and 3km west of Robertson. It was acquired by Sydney Water in 1993. The western half of the original swamp was inundated in 1970 to create the Wingecarribee Reservoir and another section of the swamp has been mined for peat for about 20 years. Peat was widely used in horticulture as a potting mix and soil conditioner, but nowadays by-products of the coconut industry or organic potting mixes are preferred by users such as the Royal Botanic Gardens - but even so, mining continued until 1998 when it was halted by an interim conservation order.

NSW NPA had long recognised the conservation values and important natural functions of the Wingecarribee Swamp, vigorously opposing the mining lease and suggesting that the Wingecarribee Wetlands should be gazetted as a

nature reserve. The swamp of 320ha is the largest montane peat land in Australia and its importance is recognised internationally because of its high diversity of plant species and communities. At least three endangered plant species can be found, including the yellow loose strife which is only found elsewhere in eastern Asia and Japan. This wide dispersion is attributed to Latham's snipe which visits the area in summer. It is also a habitat for the giant dragon fly which has a wing span of about 140mm and a body as thick as a finger. It is a relic of the Jurassic period dating back about 190 million years. The peat in the swamp is a valuable historic record as the deposits contain a 15000-year record of earlier climates, vegetation and Aboriginal history. The area is also listed on the Register of the National Estate.

The weekend of 8-9 August 1998 saw heavy storms in the area and after one downpour David was woken by a neighbour and taken to see great islands of peat floating in the reservoir. The buffer zone between the dredge pond and the reservoir had been breached and a channel formed allowing large amounts of peat and vegetation to reach the reservoir. It appeared to David that the entire base of the swamp had burst and collapsed vertically and had been washed downstream by the force of the

water. All that was left of the swamp had undergone drastic physical change. The formerly relatively level surface is now cracked and with fissures four or five metres deep. The hydrological balance of the area has been destroyed as a deep channel now runs through what is left of the swamp, draining not only the swamp but surrounding farmlands into the once near-pristine reservoir.

David does not think it will be possible to restore the wetland to its previous state, but, nevertheless, he believes the area still has important and unique ecological and environmental values which require determined protection. David believes that not only are such measures vital, but they can be achieved if government agencies, local councils, non-government organisations and the community cooperate and work with a common purpose.

David's address reinforced the need for an innovative and improved catchment-ecosystem-human interaction approach to environmental management. No matter how stable or resilient an ecosystem may appear to be, the Wingecarribee Swamp Disaster graphically illustrates that there is a limit which cannot be exceeded without the possibility of disastrous results.

**Len Haskew**

## Lower Molonglo River Corridor - continued from page 4

The most basic and controversial issue discussed, however, was whether management of the LMRC is better left to leaseholders or should be managed by the community with increased environmental protection. Two Standing Committee members, Chairman Harold Hird and Dave Rugendyke, failed to see the need for additional community consultation and were opposed to additional restrictions on leaseholders who were said to be doing a good job in managing the area better and cheaper than the government could.

The third member of the Standing Committee, Simon Corbell, attended the early part of the hearing but was not present during the later discussion.

In his final statement in response to the NPA-CCSERAC submission, Dr. Adrian expressed satisfaction with the way the area was being managed at present with only minor modifications in implementation plans being needed. He concluded that the ACT Commissioner for the Environment could examine any environmental problems arising in the future.

All in all, a disappointing outcome for the Lower Molonglo River Corridor and for NPA and CCSERAC which had put forth such a major effort in carefully drafting the submission and preparing for the hearing. Those interested in reading how a LMRC Nature Reserve should be established and managed are welcome to consult the NPA-CCSERC submission. Without increased public support for the environment as expressed in specific campaigns for threatened areas such as the Lower Molonglo River Corridor, future disappointments can be expected.

**David E. Pfanner**

# Frog declines in the Australian High Country

By Will Osborne

Applied Ecology Research Group and Cooperative Research Centre for Freshwater Ecology, University of Canberra.

*Dr Osborne prepared this article following an address he gave to the May general meeting of the association.*

The rapidly growing list of frogs, which have suffered from population declines, and extinctions, has raised considerable international concern. While the decline of some species has been attributed directly to the loss of habitat, many disappearances of amphibians have occurred in apparently undisturbed habitats, particularly at high altitudes. In our region, unexplained declines and disappearances of frogs have occurred at higher elevations in the Brindabella and Bimberi Range and in the Snowy Mountains. Failure to readily identify the cause of these declines has led to speculation as to whether they are the result of long-term natural cycles, population fluctuations or are a sign of some form of human impact on amphibians. In the ACT region, the members of the Green and Golden Bell Frog complex (*Litoria aurea*, *L.raniformis* and *L. castanea*), large and conspicuous frogs associated with well-vegetated wetlands disappeared in about 1980. At this time the Alpine Tree Frog (*L.verreauxii alpina*) and the Corroboree Frog (*Pseudophryne corroboree/pengilleyi*) also declined. The Southern Corroboree Frog (*P.corroboree*) is now almost extinct and the Northern Corroboree Frog (*P.pengilleyi*) has declined to low numbers at many breeding sites, particularly at higher elevations.

At the University of Canberra, we have focused our research on the decline of these three species. We have attempted to address the question of whether each species really has declined to a critical level and then, through a combination of observation and experimental work, have attempted to establish the

factors that might be leading to the population declines. Finally, we have initiated a joint program with the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service to attempt to experimentally increase the size of remnant populations of the Southern Corroboree Frog. This is being done by a combination of captive husbandry and *in situ* manipulation of pond water levels to prevent egg and tadpole mortality.

## Is ultraviolet radiation responsible for declines in alpine frogs?

This research relates to our knowledge that there has been considerable depletion of stratospheric ozone over the past two decades, and that this has resulted in increased levels of ultraviolet-B radiation (UV-B). Ozone depletion appears to be most severe in the southern hemisphere and UV-B radiation may therefore be of particular concern for Australian amphibian declines. This is particularly likely to be the case at high altitudes where UV-B levels are significantly higher than in adjacent lowlands. In research that we recently completed (now published in Conservation Biology) we carried out experiments in artificial water bodies established at three altitudes (1360m, 1600m, and 1930m) near Thredbo in the Snowy Mountains.

We compared the survival of eggs and young tadpoles that were shielded from UV-B (by means of clear plastic UV-B filter) with the survival of other replicates not provided with filters. We also established control groups, which had a filter that actually let UV-B through. The results were quite dramatic. At all altitudes the blocking of ultraviolet-B significantly enhanced the survival of the declining species, the Alpine Tree Frog. Without protection from UV-B, tadpoles of the Alpine Tree Frog invariably died. By contrast, a non-declining species, the Common Eastern Froglet (*Crinia signifera*) survived in much higher numbers under all treatments, although there was also a significant

effect of UV-B, particularly at the higher altitude sites. The results strongly support the hypothesis that ultraviolet radiation is a factor in the disappearance of the Alpine Tree Frog at high altitudes – it still persists at a few low altitude sites, always in association with deep artificial ponds with somewhat murky water. This last observation is important, because we know that murky water high in dissolved organic carbon provides a very effective shield against ultraviolet radiation. We are intending to continue our studies this coming summer to include similar experiments that will be conducted in natural water bodies at Kosciuszko.

## Is the decline related to climate change?

Some people have suggested that the world's climate may be changing, a direct consequence of the 'greenhouse effect'. Scientists have developed sophisticated predictive models that show that with increasing global temperatures alpine areas are likely to be amongst the first to be affected. Species confined to these areas are likely to be under significant risk. Many of the endemic frogs found in alpine areas are likely to be particularly sensitive to climatic change – they are dependent on shallow pools, which in the case of the Corroboree Frogs, must continuously contain water for periods of six to eight months. The frogs are particularly vulnerable to dry conditions that may desiccate eggs or cause the shallow bog pools and seepages to dry earlier in the season. Monitoring of populations of the Southern Corroboree Frog over the last 12 years indicates that there has been a substantial decline in the population with a gradual contraction of the geographic range of the species to the wetter more easterly part of its former range (Osborne et al. submitted). Our

*continued on page 7*

# Gudgenby House, which way?

The July general meeting on the desired fate for Gudgenby House, although anticipated with dread by some, proved to be a healthy, constructive debate with input from a broad range of members. (Some Committee members are reported to be so pleased with the involvement that they are dreaming up ways of being controversial in the future). The constructive tone of the discussion was due in no small part to the peacekeeping abilities of our President which I think, need to be given full recognition.

The discussion began with Clive outlining the steps from the announcement of \$225 000 for Gudgenby Visitor Precinct Infrastructure in the ACT Capital Works Budget last September through meetings with Environment ACT. These resulted first in the Committee endorsing the controversial discussion paper advocating demolition and then in the evening's discussion.

A series of speakers emphasised the cultural values of both the house and the surrounding area, the sense of desolation for both European

settlers and indigenous peoples where all traces of their activities are removed, the damage to NPA's reputation as a sensible conservation organisation that a policy advocating demolition would cause, and that such a policy would create a community backlash of support for preservation of the house.

The general consensus was that NPA should work with the Government in a way which conserved the cultural and natural heritage values of Namadgi National Park.

Several options for action were considered:

- 1 Use as a ranger residence. This could be organised through the ranger's contract of employment, and would provide a much needed ranger presence in the southern end of the park. This was seen as probably the best option as it would maintain the house much as it is, without greatly increasing traffic in the immediate surrounds.
- 2 Rented out to small groups or individuals. This could protect against vandalism and achieve some return for maintenance, but there would need to be strict

guidelines for appropriate activities.

- 3 Use for small-scale accommodation. Currango Homestead in Kosciuszko National Park was cited as an example to follow, but it was recognised that Currango had several differences, such as more buildings over a wider area, and that increased visitors at Gudgenby could cause problems with access traffic and sewage and sillage disposal.
- 4 Field study centre with accommodation for students undertaking studies in the area, or for field trips. Cost of maintenance and increased traffic could be problems.
- 5 Make an offer to do some maintenance. Such work parties would be consistent with our involvement with Orroral. The manager's house is one of the earliest Hudson kit homes in the district but it is in poor condition. The meeting had a clear consensus on the points noted above, and having that understanding, the committee will now act accordingly.

Eleanor Stodart

## Frog declines in the Australian High Country - continued from page 6

research, not yet published, examined whether long-term changes in weather patterns may have been responsible for the decline. We found that annual fluctuations and longer-term oscillations (related to the El Nino southern oscillation) characterise the precipitation record in the Australian Alps during all of this century. We found that the onset of the declines in alpine frogs coincided with particularly severe droughts during a long period of below-average precipitation (1979-1987). What is surprising to us, though, is that there has been no sign of recovery despite a return to more favourable weather conditions during the 1990s (excluding the recent drought, which once again had a severe effect on both species of Corroboree Frog).

### Trying to increase the size of remnant populations

In an attempt to prevent the continuing decline in extinction of small remnant populations of the Southern Corroboree Frog, a population augmentation project was commenced in 1997. The aim of this project is to increase the size of several small populations of the species by increasing the numbers surviving from egg to metamorphosis. This is being done by a combination of captive husbandry and *in situ* manipulation of pond water levels to prevent egg and tadpole mortality. The results to date have been very encouraging, showing that we can significantly increase survivorship, via captive rearing, with the greatest level of field mortality occurring during the over-wintering stage.

Working with alpine frogs has been an exciting component of our research program at the University of Canberra. We now believe that several of these unique alpine frogs will be faced with extinction unless the causes of the decline are identified and removed. We hope that our efforts to experimentally increase the size of local breeding populations will give us the extra time that we need to resolve this important conservation issue. Future research will continue to examine climate change and its influence, and new research proposed will examine the role of the newly discovered chytrid fungus, a particularly virulent pathogen found in populations of sick and dying frogs.

# Judith Wright was an early guest speaker

Very early in its existence, the NPA established a connection with Judith Wright, the leading poet and conservationist, who died in Canberra in June.

In 1969 Ms Wright, then living in Queensland, was invited by the NPA to visit Canberra to be the guest speaker at the NPA meeting in April. Anticipating a large audience, the Canberra Playhouse was booked, and despite torrential rain on the night about 200 people attended.

Ms Wright's theme was *Conservation as an Emerging Concept*.

Her message was powerful then, and it is just as relevant and urgent today – even more so. Conservation is still 'the world's most important battle'.

This is how the NPA *Bulletin* of June-July 1969 reported the talk, quoting significant parts of it verbatim:

Judith Wright commenced her talk by quoting an American poet who had witnessed the terrible disaster to Californian beaches and local wildlife when an off-shore oil well blew up.

Nature is much to wreck, but  
man can do it,  
(his last and greatest proof of  
power and will)  
and part of what we ruin, we  
shall rue it.

Yes man can do it; and as many of us here know, he is doing it. Not only as a proof of his power and will, but as a by-result of his will to power. Even when he intends to make the world safer for his own kind and richer as a source of profit, he too often seems through ignorance and greed to end up by making the world more perilous for us all and poorer and uglier as a place to live in. Through *ignorance*. Because the whole of the human development over the past thousands of years has been directed to finding out how to extract, exploit and use the environment, very little thought or research has been given to the environment itself, to its

complexities and dynamic balances, to the ways in which the biosphere has developed and maintained itself. Only when damage begins to become so obvious that it can't any longer be disregarded does this kind of thinking force itself on us. And it has to develop and widen its scope against the whole force and current of previous thinking; and to make itself known and felt as *opposition*, not as continuation of previous thinking. This is to say that any new attitude to our environment, in the face of the deeply-rooted and old-established attitudes, is seen by people holding the old attitude as simply an attempt to hinder what we regard as 'progress', to put an obstacle in the way of what has so long been thought of as our triumphant race towards domination of the world. The advice of conservationists is heard, not as a counsel of wisdom, but as a voice of mean and carping criticism... This is the kind of position that conservationists often find themselves forced into; and it's dangerous for both parties; especially for conservationists, who may find themselves trying to keep popular by compromising on issues they know are perilous, just because they can't muster conviction enough to oppose popular pressures...

The real difficulty, then, lies in the brief time we have to change human attitudes and get the action going. Historically, attitudes change extremely slowly, even where there is obvious need for change; you only have to think of attitudes towards war to realise this. How are we to convince the largely urban populations of today that their continuing well-being will depend on the well-being of the biosphere – the country and marine environments they so seldom see and know so little about? To preach successfully the need for what a Unesco contributor has called 'the joining of man and nature in a non-repressive and creative functioning order' will certainly need a massive alteration in, among other things, the direction of our present education and our

present habits of thought. We must, in effect, cease to be thoughtless predators and become informed managers of a world now given over entirely to our hands. We must regenerate ourselves if we are to regenerate the earth.

I am certain that such deeply-rooted and genetically confirmed attitudes can't and won't be altered solely by rational argument and threats of what will happen to us in some dimly-envisioned future. Our feelings and emotions must be engaged, and engaged on a large scale. Whether scientists like it or not, it is *feeling* that sways public opinion, far more than reason, and it is feeling that spurs us to protest and act. Conservationists, with the world's most urgent battle on their hands, must begin to enlist not only rational recognition of the problem, but human concern, distress and love ... think, that the public can be a most important factor in conservation decisions, and it certainly proves that we can't leave action in such matters to Governments alone. Where we are sure we have an important issue on our hands, conservationists must do the best they can to present the case as strongly as possible, and not avoid appeals to public feeling.

This isn't demagoguery, it's plain common sense. Most National Parks, for instance, at least at the beginning, have been made on what are basically, grounds of feeling, and generally the first moves have come from laymen – people moved by feelings of concern. Most laws that protect nature from exploitation have originated from public pressures of this kind. Scientific arguments and presentation of the case are important, but they alone will not get the message across to Governments and Governments need very strong messages. For the whole concept of conservation, as I said, is only emerging and it faces plenty of overt opposition and a whole history of inbuilt feeling against it, as well as practically all the immediate dollars arguments.

**Graeme Wicks**



# Edna Walling as a conservationist

Edna Walling, today, is being remembered most for the gardens that she designed which took advantage of the local natural features and the use of native plants. During her lifetime she wrote four books and since her death a number of other authors have perpetuated her memory and the contribution that she made to Australian garden design. The most recent has been *The Vision of Edna Walling*, co-authored by Jennie Churchill and Trisha Dillon.

Photographs in her books were all black and white and once she remonstrated with me for taking colour slides, her opinion being that *only black and white photographs* could give the dramatic effect through light and shade in her walled designs. After that, apart from travel, I reverted to black and white.

Edna was born in England on 4 December 1896, moved to Melbourne with her family in 1916 and in retirement to Buderim in the 1960s. She died there on 8 August 1973. Edna wore knickerbockers and in some ways had the appearance which would associate her with the English actress Margaret Rutherford.

I first met her whilst on a visit to a mutual friend at Mooralbark, then very much an outer suburb of Melbourne. On Edna's move to Buderim, our friends followed her there and once again we met. We also found Buderim a magic place and bought a block of land near the Rodgers and Edna. On Edna's death our friends moved back to Melbourne and then our idea of a retirement home there did not seem so good. So we sold.

Today, houses with Edna Walling garden design are regularly opened up for inspection and her work has developed cult status. There is another aspect of her work that does not, in the passage of time, get the publicity that her gardens continue to have.

Edna was also a conservationist in that she was a strong advocate for the retention of Australian flora alongside roadsides. By the 1950s

Edna became more and more preoccupied with conservation issues and this is reflected in her fourth book, *The Australian Roadside*, published in 1952.

In the preface she says: 'To say so much in an appeal for the observation and conservation of the natural roadside beauty was not my original intention but the continued scenes of unthinking devastation have made it difficult to keep quiet, and it is hoped that in the consequence of this book, some readers may not continue to view the roadside plants as so much "scrub", but as the very interesting, fitting and invaluable plants they really are.'

'So vital to the future of the countryside is a keen understanding of native plants as they appear on the landscape that the ecological approach is the only approach to roadside planting. To know what species will survive under any particular circumstances is not enough. For instance, in Australia, as incongruous on the Victorian highway as any exotics can be the planting of Western Australian gums or plants from a Queensland rainforest. The Victorian scene is distinct and the only Queensland scene is distinct; it is vital that we should preserve the individuality not only of each state but also the district in that state. We must therefore look about in the best way to do any roadside planting so that it will not interfere with, but will emphasise, the natural character of the country through which the highway passes.'

It was over 20 years after the publication of *The Australian Roadside* that a forum on roadside conservation resulted in the publication of the forum papers and the establishment of the Roadside Conservation Committee. But Edna Walling's book still remains a basic text on Victorian roadsides. As she notes at the end of the book: 'The roadside is The Front Garden of the Nation.'

The peaceful countryside around her home at Mooralbark started to feel the effects of suburban sprawl

and protests from her began to appear in the main newspapers. Her favourite causes were roadside vegetation and environment issues. In 1950 she presented a well-argued case for the exclusive use of indigenous plantings in all the landscaping for the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne. She initiated a long and bitter campaign to prevent the construction of a restaurant and car park on the top of Mount Dandenong. She also involved herself in protesting against the Lake Pedder scheme and the sand mining of Fraser Island.

She gave support to others, notably Ellis Stone in his wranglings with authorities when they were concreting natural watercourses. Her apprentice was Gwynth Crouch (Taylor) who later became president of the Victorian National Parks Association.

But Edna Walling's main contribution to the conservation cause must have been to bring a new level of awareness. She triggered off the *consciousness of many people* through her articles and books. Her deep love of the bush, her delight in its flowers, its complex ecology and subtle beauty are conveyed to the reader in the most captivating manner.

## References:

- Gardens in Australia - Their design and care.* Edna Walling.
- Cottage and Design in Australia.* Edna Walling.
- A Gardeners Log.* Edna Walling.
- The Australian Roadside.* Edna Walling.
- Gardens of Edna Walling.* National Trust of Victoria.
- History of Gardening.* Peter Spooner.
- Perceptions, Expectation and Experience.* David Yencken and Graham Gunn.

Reg Alder

## Red dot

Does your *Bulletin* have a red dot on the address label? If it does, this is because association membership records show your subscription is overdue. Regrettably this will be the last issue of the *Bulletin* that will be sent to you until membership is renewed. If you have a query about this would you please contact the office.

# Weeds

The guest speaker at our June General Meeting was Geoff Butler, Weeds Officer of the Conservation Council of the South East Region and Canberra (known familiarly as CCSEERAC or the Con Council). The Con Council is an umbrella group for environmental issues and the position of Weeds Officer was set up with an ACT Government Environment grant for joint publicity and public education about the occurrence and management of weeds. The following article is based on Geoff's notes.

The greatest challenge in weed management and education is coping with predetermined ideas of what constitutes a weed. Geoff's talk concentrated on what are termed environmental weeds. Environmental weeds are defined as:

- those introduced species which have become naturalised and have invaded natural ecosystems (a natural ecosystem being one dominated by native plants that are not cropped or routinely grazed by domestic animals); and
- plants that adversely affect the integrity, conservation value or biodiversity of natural ecosystems.

## Several categories

Environmental weeds fall into several categories:

- Garden thugs that have escaped from gardens or landscaping with species planted in the wrong places or erosion control with inappropriate species. Examples of these are the various pyracanthas, broom, *Alnus glutinosa*, several *Prunus* species, pampas grass, fennel, *Sollya heterophylla*, roadside honeysuckle and willow.
- Horticultural escapees such as St Johns wort, briar rose, Patersons curse, gorse, burnt gorse and hawthorn.
- Agricultural weeds that diminish returns from plant or animal agriculture. Examples of these are serrated tussock, African love grass and Chilean needle grass.

The talk left aside discussion of agricultural weeds.

## Problems weeds cause

Among the problems weeds cause are:

- smothering of native vegetation leading to loss of habitat;
- effects on other species, eg the proliferation of currawongs.;
- health matters;
- spread of diseases such as fireblight;
- social and economic costs to the community; and
- changes to landscapes. Lots of environmental weeds are not a problem in urban landscapes and we need to be alert to potential problems when introducing plants to other places.

Using the results of research on agricultural weeds, Geoff estimates that the monetary cost to the Australian community of garden escapees alone could be more than \$6.6 million each year.

As an example of community contribution, in one small organisation among many, volunteers throughout Australia involved in Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers gave 49 700 hours, valued at \$497 000, for environmental weed management work in 1995.

Add to the monetary cost of weed management Australia-wide the loss of natural areas, the associated extinction of plant and animal species and the loss of landscapes and the intangible costs become incalculable. We can also remember that tourism is our biggest industry and we need to protect the natural assets that 85 per cent of tourists come to see.

## How weeds get out of hand

Environmental weed problems generally start sneakily. Some species take many years to find the right niche or conditions, and suddenly exponential growth occurs. For example, *Mimosa pigra* took about 150 years to become a problem in Kakadu. One of Geoff's greatest concerns is how many sleeper weeds may proliferate with global warming.

## Two local examples

Willows in the local region are a good example of an environmental weed that has raised some public sensitivities. At first innocuous enough in the female clone of the weeping willow, they were planted widely where agricultural activities had caused serious erosion damage. They certainly became an integral part of European cultural landscapes, and rightly so. However, male and female plants of numerous species were introduced in later decades and now clog our creeks and rivers.

More recently the aggressive black willow and Matsudana hybrid clones have arrived. This region has now reached a critical stage with willows and they have been banned from propagation and sale in NSW and are not to be used in the ACT. However they are still being sold and are easy to propagate without the middleman of the nursery industry. Willows are currently self-propagating and hybridising on the dams, wetlands, creeks, rivers and streams every season, despite the initial efforts that are being made at control. We have only begun to feel the effects of willows, and will be hearing a lot more in years to come.

*Pinus radiata* is unhappily likely to be a similar example. Wild pines are now easily observed in almost every part of the ACT and region. This is not to deny the importance of this tree to us for softwood production. Cropping is usually intensive and in defined boundaries, and though wildling spread is possible here, the real problem is the way pines are being used widely in rural residential and farming properties. From these extensive linear plantings wildlings are establishing in natural areas. As these reach coning age at 10-15 years, they start spreading wildlings. This will lead to an explosion of the problem. Geoff believes there is an excellent case to seriously restrict where this species should be used, and to take action on pine wildlings now.



NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION (ACT) INCORPORATED

# NPA outings program

September 2000 – January 2001

## Outings guide

Walk gradings	Terrain grading
Distance grading (per day)	A – Road, firetrail track
1 – up to 10km	B – Open forest
2 – 10km to 15km	C – Light scrub
3 – 15km to 20km	D – Patches of thick scrub, regrowth
4 – above 20km	E – Rock scrambling
	F – Exploratory

Day walks carry lunch, drinks and protective clothing.

Pack walks two or more days, carry all food and camping requirements. CONTACT LEADER BY WEDNESDAY OR AS INDICATED IN PROGRAM.

Car camps facilities often limited or non-existent. Vehicles taken to site can be used for camping. BOOK EARLY WITH LEADER.

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

### Points to note

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

All persons joining an outing of the National Parks Association of the ACT do so as volunteers in all respects and as such accept 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, to the nearest dollar, of TWENTY FIVE cents per kilometre DIVIDED BY THE NUMBER OF OCCUPANTS in the car, including the driver, be offered to the driver by each passenger accepting transport. Drive and walk distances quoted in the program are approximate distances for return journeys.



### 2-3 September weekend packwalk

Southern Namadgi Exploration

Leader: Phil Gatenby

3A/B/E/F

Maps: Shannons Flat, Yaouk 1:25 000

Phone: 6254 3094

A partly exploratory walk in the southern part of Namadgi National Park on tracks, open grasslands, and through the bush. Visit the headwaters of Grassy Creek and Sheep Station Creek. Depending on weather conditions a climb (450m) up Sentry Box Mountain may be involved. Contact leader by Wednesday 30 August for details and bookings. 160km, \$40 per car.

### 3 September Sunday daywalk

Pierces Creek Falls

Leader: Mike Smith

2A/D

Maps: Cotter Dam, Tidbinbilla 1:25 000

Phone: 6286 2984

Meet at car park on Uriarra Road just off Cotter Road at 8.30am. From locked gate at start to Pipeline Road to Bendora Dam we will walk up the firetrail to the top of the Hardy Range, then follow the range to the south-west to drop down to the falls on Pierces Creek. Return along creek and forest tracks back to cars. Some steep ascents and descents, as well as thick scrub. 32km, \$8 per car.

### 9 September Saturday daywalk

Sherwood

Leader: Ken Free

1A

Map: Cotter Dam 1:25 000

Phone: 6295 8894

An easy walk on track from Blue Range Hut to Sherwood homestead historic site in spring glory with daffodils blooming. We will also look for early orchids on route. A leisurely lunch plus an opportunity for a side trip to Dowling Trig for the more energetic. Stroll back to cars along same tracks. Meet at car park on Uriarra Road just off the Cotter Road at 8.30 am. 35km, \$9 per car.

**17 September Sunday daywalk**

Fishing Gap to Cotter River

Leader: Barbara Edgar

2A/B

Map: Tidbinbilla 1:25 000

Phone: 6230 5685(h), 6264 2991(w)

Meet at Kambah Village Shops at 8.30 am. Drive to Tidbinbilla, walk on firetrail to Fishing Gap. From there a track drops down to the Cotter River, where we will have a leisurely lunch before returning. The history surrounding this delightful track was written up by Matthew Higgins in the *Canberra Times* of 11 May. 60km, \$15 per car plus entry fee for vehicles without permit.

**24 September Sunday daywalk**

Lower Orroral Loop

Leader: Steven Forst

2A

Map: ACT 1:100 000

Phone: 6251 6817 (h), 6256 5236 (w)

Meet at Kambah Village Shops at 8.30 am. Ideal for beginners. We visit the Orroral Homestead and the old tracking station and then return to the Orroral camp ground via the other side of the river. 100km, \$25 per car.

**27 September Wednesday daywalk**

Leader: Ken Free

Phone: 6295 8894

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

**30 September to 2 October long weekend packwalk**

Talaterang

Leader: Steven Forst

2C/D/E

Map: CMW Budawangs

Phone: 6251 6817 (h), 2656 5236 (w)

Contact leader by Wednesday. After a long drive an easy two-and-a-half-hour walk to camp at the top of Ngairyung Falls – a spectacular spot with views into Pigeon House Gorge. On the second day go without packs to Mount Talaterang and return to camp. On the third day walk out and drive home with lunch at Braidwood. 400km, \$100 per car.

**2 October Monday (long weekend) daywalk**

Old Currango

Leader: Brian Slee

1B/C

Map: Rules Point 1:25 000

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

Depart Kambah Village Shops 7.30 am. Drive to Port Phillip fire trail, via Tantangara Dam, and walk north from there to historic homestead. Lunch on verandah with views to snowy Brindabellas. Daffodils in bloom. Afternoon tea at Adaminaby. A long drive but a rewarding short walk. Contact leader by Friday to confirm road has re-opened. 300km, \$75 per car.

**2 October to 15 October packwalk**

The Great North Walk

Leader: David Large

Phone: 6291 4830

Two weeks packwalking from Sydney to Newcastle. Options to do whole or part of the walk. For details contact leader.

**8 October Sunday daywalk**

Mount Morgan

Leader: Steve Hill

3A/E

Map: Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000

Phone: 6231 9186

A chance to see fabulous views from one of the most spectacular mountain tops in the region, including over much of Kosciuszko and Namadgi National Parks. We climb up the Lone Pine fire trail before turning left, towards the summit at some high alpine frosty hollows. We tour the many view spots on the summit for a view of the things that matter to us. The climb of nearly 700m is steepish in parts, but is mainly on track and no serious bush bashing is involved. Meet at Kambah Village Shops car park at 7.30 am for a fabulous day. 200km, \$50 per car.

**8 October Sunday daywalk**

Multi club day walks and get-together

Contact: Max Lawrence

Phone: 6288 1370

A number of day walks at different levels will be organised from Blundells Flat picnic area near Mount Coree.

**14 October Saturday morning walk**

Black Mountain Nature Ramble

Leader: George Chippendale

1A

Map: Canberra Street Directory

Phone: 6281 2454

Meet in the car park in Caswell Drive opposite Wangara Street, Aranda, at 9.30 am. In a leisurely morning ramble around some of the tracks in this corner of Black Mountain Reserve we will view the varied botany of the forest. Many plants will be in flower. Bring morning tea and wear a hat. Children welcome. It's usually a slow walk, with time for talk and chatter in addition to viewing the plants. We will be joined on this excursion by members of U3A and Friends of the Australian Botanic Gardens.

**15 October Sunday daywalk**

Mount Domain

Leader: Barbara Edgar

1A

Map: Tidbinbilla 1:25 000

Phone: 6230 5685 (h), 6264 2991 (w)

Meet at Kambah Village Shops at 8.30 am. A short walk with a climb of nearly 700m. The track from Fishing Gap to the top is a bit rough in parts but the views are spectacular. 80km, \$20 per car plus entry fee for vehicles without permit.

**15 October to 19 October packwalk**

Namadgi National Park

Leader: Mick Kelly

3A/B/C

Maps: Corin Dam, Rendezvous Creek

1:25 000

Phone: 4472 3959

A walk from the Orroral Valley via Cotter Gap and Leura Gap to Pocket Hut. Return via Oldfields Hut and Murrays Gap with a side trip up Mount Bimbiri. If time permits, we will spend two nights at Pocket Hut and do a side trip to Bluewater Holes. The walk is mainly on fire trails and tracks. Transport to be advised. Please call leader to book in as numbers limited. 100km, \$25 per car.

**20 October to 23 October packwalk**

Waratahs and Views in the Blue

Mountains

Leaders: Pat and Eric Pickering

2C/D/E/F

Maps: Yerranderie, Burragarang 1:25 000

Phone 6286 2128

A four-day walk in the Yerranderie area of the Blue Mountains, possibly taking in Tonalli River, Lacys Tableland, Vengeance Peninsula and the Axeheads. Some steep climbs to 400m. All off track. Contact leaders before Friday 13 October for details. Cars to be arranged.

**22 October Sunday daywalk**

Box Vale Track, Mittagong

Leader: Col McAlister

1A

Map: Mittagong 1:25 000

Phone: 6288 4171

Suitable for beginners. A lovely walk along the route of an historic railway, passing through cuttings, embankments and an 80m tunnel (please bring a torch). Should be many waratahs and other wildflowers. Side (or loop) trip to Forty Foot Falls (and Nattai Valley). Meet in carpark at the ACT Netball Centre, Northbourne Avenue, Lyneham, at 8 am. 360km, \$90 per car.

**25 October Wednesday daywalk**

Leader: Col McAlister

Phone: 6288 4171

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

**28 October and 29 October packwalk**

Mount Kelly area

Leader: Phil Gatenby

3A/D/E

Maps: Rendezvous Creek, Yaouk 1:25 000

Phone: 6254 3094

A walk to an unnamed peak west of Mount Kelly. We will park at the Boboyan Pines and for most of the first day follow the Sams Creek firetrail. Return by way of Bogong Gap. Contact leader for details by the Wednesday before the walk. 140km, \$35 per car.

28 October Saturday afternoon tea  
Barbara and Syd Comfort's garden,  
87 Shackleton Circuit, Mawson  
Leader: Syd Comfort  
Phone: 6286 2578

Enjoy a social afternoon with fellow members in Barbara and Syd's Mawson garden. Share afternoon tea and take up the federation centenary mood by looking over a collection of Canberra memorabilia. From 2.30 pm.

29 October Sunday daywalk  
Monga State Forest  
Leader: Len Haskew  
1A

Maps: Monga, Araluen 1:25 000  
Phone: 6281 4268

Meet Canberra Railway Station, Kingston, at 7.45am. The Friends of the Mongarlowe River will again take us around the forest to look for waratahs in bloom. Last year they were very successful at finding a magnificent display of flowers. The Friends will also tell us about the successful campaign to have much of the forest declared a national park. 200km, \$50 per car *plus* a donation to the Friends.

3 November to 11 November car camps  
Warrumbungles (3 to 6 November) and  
Mount Kaputar (9 to 11 November)  
Leaders: Max Lawrence (Warrumbungles)  
and Wayne Veide (Mount Kaputar)  
Maps: Warrumbungle National Park 1:30  
000 and Mount Kaputar 1:25 000 and  
guide books to both parks.  
Phone: Max 6288 1370,  
Wayne 6553 4351

Come for one or both camps. In each case we will operate from a base camp and walks will range from easy strolls to some more strenuous climbs, but will mainly be on tracks. Of course, lazing in camp is always an (enjoyable) option. Contact leaders for some of the walk possibilities. Please book early as numbers limited. Up to 1400km, up to \$350 per car. Fees also apply.

4 November Saturday daywalk  
Shanahans Mountain/Curtis Hut area  
Leader: Martin Chalk  
2A/B/C/E

Map: Colinton 1:25 000  
Phone: 6292 3502 (h), 6268 4864 (w)

Leave Kambah Village Shops at 8 am for Mount Clear camp ground. From there we will proceed via the hills and dales for lunch at Shanahans Falls Creek. The afternoon will involve a navigation exercise to find Curtis (Demanding) Hut over rough, steep country. Return to cars via the Mount Clear to Horse Gully Hut fire trail. 160km, \$40 per car.

5 November Sunday daywalk  
Southern (most point of) ACT  
Leader: Frank Clements  
3A/B

Maps: Colinton, Bredbo 1:25 000  
Phone: 6231 7005

A near repeat of a walk led by Matthew Higgins last November to survey peg number C39, the southernmost point of the ACT. The walk will include some historical sites and the Long Flat. Meet at Kambah Village Shops at 8.30 am. 130km, \$33 per car.

11 November Saturday daywalk  
Mount McKeahnie  
Leader: Eric Pickering  
3C/D/E/F

Map: Corin Dam 1:25 000  
Phone: 6286 2128

A long and difficult climb to Mount McKeahnie from Kangaroo Creek via Kangaroo Creek. Return via a westerly spur to Smokers Trail and Square Rock. Contact leader for details before Wednesday 8 November.

11 November to 25 November packwalk  
Wilson's Promontory  
Leader: Syd Comfort  
Phone: 6286 2578

Drive to Wilson's Promontory and camp at Tidal River on first day. Then walk two circuits of about six days each in north and south sections of the park with a day or two break between. Strict regulations apply to walking in this park, and early booking and payment will be necessary. Contact leader for details as soon as possible.

18 November Saturday day trip  
Lake Bathurst Heritage Trip  
Leader: Rob Forster  
Phone: 6249 8546

*Contact leader between 6 and 10 November for bookings. A minimum of 10 is required and pre-payment, with cheques for \$22 per person for lunch, tour, etc made payable to Lake Bathurst Functions Centre, is essential.*

Meet at Lake Bathurst Functions Centre at 9.30 am with travel via Bungendore and Tarago. A guided tour of historic sites around the lake, followed by a visit to a private motor museum. Morning tea and lunch are provided. Time for a stroll around the village. Inspection also of property Lansgrove Park with its beautiful garden and spectacular view. Notes will be supplied to starters. 180km, \$45 per car.

22 November Wednesday daywalk  
Leader: Ken Free  
Phone: 6295 8894

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

25 November and 26 November hostel weekend

Hawkesbury Heights, YHA  
Leader: David Large  
Phone: 6291 4830

Another in our regular series of hostel weekends. Numbers strictly limited to 12, so please get in early. Contact leader for details.

26 November Sunday daywalk  
Mount Gingera via Stockyard Spur  
Leader: Barbara Edgar  
3A

Map: Corin Dam 1:25 000  
Phone: 6230 5685 (h), 6264 2991 (w)

A challenging 900m climb for fit walkers. Starting from Corin Dam car park we go to Pryor's Hut and then on to Mount Gingera. The first 500m of the climb is steep, but the rewards, particularly the views and the changing vegetation, make it all worthwhile. Meet at Kambah Village Shops at 8 am. 120km, \$30 per car.

29 November Wednesday daywalk  
Leader: David Large  
Phone: 6291 4830

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

2 December to 6 December packwalk  
Brindabella Odyssey  
Leader: Neville Esau  
Phone: 6286 4176

A five-day packwalk starting from Orroral and involving two crossings of the Brindabella Range. Contact leader for details.

2 December and 3 December South Coast trip  
Green Cape/Mount Imlay, etc  
Maps: Mount Imlay, Pambula, Eden and Kiah 1:25 000  
Leader: Col McAlister  
Phone: 6288 4171

A variable feast. A chance for members to do their own thing but two activities planned. A guided tour of Green Cape Lighthouse at 2 pm on Saturday 2 December (there are other tour times also), and a 9 am start to climb Mount Imlay on Sunday 3 December. Make your own accommodation arrangements at or around Eden. Contact leader for details and other suggestions, including the Pinnacles and Boyd's Tower in the Ben Boyd National Park and cruises from Eden.

**10 December (Sunday) NPA Christmas Party**

Contact: Max Lawrence  
Phone: 6288 1370

This year's Christmas party will be at Caloola Farm. We are looking to get things under way from about 11 am, so bring a picnic lunch. For those who haven't been to Caloola, head south from Tharwa past the Namadgi Visitor Centre and turn left immediately after you cross the bridge over the Gudgenby River at Naas (if you get to Fitz's Hill you've gone too far!). Caloola is then about 7-8km on at the end of the dirt road. Members wishing to sleep over at Caloola on the Saturday night should book with Max.

**27 December to 1 January packwalk  
River or Creek Packwalk**

Leaders: Pat and Eric Pickering  
2C/D/E/F  
Phone: 6286 2128

The intention is to provide a challenging walk but with some relaxation and swimming. And celebrate the new millenium (again!) in the bush. Possible areas are Bundundah Creek, Ettrema Creek or the Shoalhaven in the Morton National Park. Contact leaders for details including transport arrangements and costs. Numbers limited.

**7 January Sunday daywalk  
Kosciuszko Main Range lakes**

Leader: Brian Slee  
Map: Mount Kosciuszko 1:50 000  
2A/C/D

Phone: 6281 0719 (h) 6261 3509 (w)  
Our first daywalk of the new millenium (again!). Park at Charlotte Pass and cross Snowy River. Proceed to Mount Lee via Mounts Clarke and Northcote (views of Lake Albina) or to Carruthers Peak via Headley Tarn and Blue Lake. Flowers, views, lots of wow on this walk! Remnant snow. Insect repellent may be required. Numbers limited. Book early with leader. Early start required. 430km, \$108 plus \$15 for vehicles without permit.

**14 January Sunday daywalk  
Rob Roy**

Leader: Col McAlister  
Map: Tuggeranong 1:25 000  
1A  
Phone: 6288 4171

The southernmost part of Canberra Nature Park. A steep-in-parts climb for wonderful views to the west and east plus different views of Canberra to the north. Meet at Kambah Village Shops at 8 am so that we can miss the heat of the day. Short distance, no charge.

**20 January Saturday evening walk**

Naas Creek/Grassy Creek area  
Leader: Martin Chalk  
Maps: Yaouk, Colinton, Shannons Flat,  
Bredbo 1:25 000  
2A/B/C

Phone: 6292 3502 (h), 6268 4864 (w)  
Leave about 4pm, return about 10pm. An evening walk in the Naas Creek/Grassy Creek area. There may be a short car shuffle. Phone leader for details.

**20 January and 21 January  
Table Top Mountain**

Leader: Steven Forst  
Map: Donison 1:25 000  
3A/B/C  
Phone: 6251 6817 (h), 6256 5236 (w)

Contact leader by Wednesday. A walk from Delaney's Hut, across the Eucumbene River and camping high on Waterhole Creek. Return via Four Mile Hut. 350km, \$88 per car.

**24 January Wednesday daywalk**

Leader: Ken Free  
Phone: 6295 8894

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

**26 January Friday (Australia Day) daywalk  
Big Hole/Marble Arch**

Leader: Ken Free  
Map: Kain 1:25 000  
Phone: 6295 8894

Meet at Canberra Railway station, Kingston, at 8.30 am. 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, spectacular limestone gorge ending in a swimming hole. Drive through Captains Flat with some gravel. It will be necessary to cross the Shoalhaven River, so please bring sandshoes or thongs, etc. 180km, \$45 per car.

**31 January Wednesday daywalk**

Leader: Col McAlister  
Phone: 6288 4171

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



## Rivercare Queanbeyan

Rivercare Environment concerts are held at regular intervals at Queanbeyan Uniting Church on Saturday evenings at 7:30 pm. Indigenous and non-indigenous artists and performers entertain to raise money so that work can continue to clean and vegetate the riverbanks. The contact is Terry Kiernen, phone 6236 6210. Performance dates are: September – Saturday 9th and 30th, October – Saturday 14th, November – Saturday 11th.

## Warm feet

Olive Buckman has passed on the advice set out below with the note that she wished she had known about it in her back-packing days.

To keep your feet warm and dry on cold and even wet days or nights, put on a pair of socks, plastic bags over each, another pair of socks, then boots or shoes.

## Watch this space

A couple of our leaders have foreshadowed other possible Kosciuszko National Park daywalks in January and February. Details in next program.

## Solving the weed problem

- Attitudes. We need to get governments and their agencies, plant nurseries and the community to recognise weeds as a problem. This is quite difficult as many current weed species used to be recommended by government agencies. The Weed Officer is working in partnership with government and the community to change attitudes not only what is grown but the also about the potential hazard of dumping garden wastes.
- Identification. Publicity must be given to what plants are weeds.
- Education. The community must be given clear information on identifying weeds and on how to be responsible consumers. Environmental weeds could be labelled in nurseries but this is expensive. The media is not generally interested in this sort of public education unless there is some sensational aspect to a story, such as *Acacia baileyana* officially changing from friend to foe, or willow removal.
- Legislation. Legislation is a last resort and is not the most

effective form of control. It can include moves such as banning sale and importation of certain plants and seeds. The Weeds Officer is seeking stronger management controls over some species in the ACT.

- Research. eg for sterile clones
- Practical action. Landcare and Parkcare need a lot of monitoring, and it is hard to get enough helpers who are physically able to do some of the work, or, for example, who will accept herbicide use. There is a large turnover of volunteers.

## Conclusion

Of all the massive environmental reforms the community has had to adapt to during the last decade, environmental weeds have attracted the attention of a greater percentage of the population than even water reform. Despite any misgivings any one of us might have about a favourite species being classed as a weed, there comes a time when we must look at the issue objectively. Seek to understand when a plant is a weed. Recognise the costs that are being thrown onto

the shoulders of our children and grandchildren. Relish the search for exciting and new non-invasive alternatives.

Muriel Edwards

## Congratulations

Two long-standing association members have recently accepted important positions within conservation bodies. Life member and former president Neville Esau has been elected President of the Conservation Council of the South East Region and Canberra. Dianne Thompson who has been active in the association in many roles over the years has, on the nomination of the NSW National Parks Association, been appointed by the NSW Environment Minister, Bob Debus, as a member of the National Parks and Wildlife Service Snowy Mountains Advisory Committee. Both members take with them the best wishes of the association as they take up their new appointments.

## Vale Glyn Lewis

Soon after moving to Canberra in 1968 Shirley and Glyn Lewis joined the NPA and became involved in association activities both as participants and leaders. In 1986 Glyn was elected to the Committee and accepted the position of Publicity Officer. He directed much time, energy and thought into ways by which the association and its objectives could become better appreciated. He was involved with school competitions and the organising of events such as the NPA's participation in Heritage Week exhibitions. These events were well supported and were successful.

Glyn also had the vision of a conservation course conducted in conjunction with an adult education agency which would reach widely into the community.



*From June 87 Bulletin Glyn Lewis and Ian Haynes as they appeared in the June 1987 Bulletin with the caption provided by Audrey Hill, '...and if you do that again I'll slap your wrist.'*

He put a lot of effort into curriculum development and searching for an appropriate course structure but, unfortunately, the project did not reach fruition.

Glyn was keen on car-camping, gracing camps with a rather distinguished yellow campervan. He experienced a deep enjoyment of natural places and made his

contribution to their preservation and appreciation by others.

Glyn died in Canberra on 30 July 2000.

Association members extend their sympathy to his widow, Shirley, and other members of the family.

Syd Comfort

# An iron bar no match for Premier Carr

Mike Thompson, member of the Southern Forest Forum, NSW NPA, and the Nature Conservation Council of NSW believes that some of the credit for the NSW Premier's courageous stand against Wilson Tuckey (Federal Minister for Forests) and the Commonwealth Government's Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) 'solutions' should go to Milo Dunphy, who, 'as he stoked the campfire at Murramarang.....helped a younger Bob Carr to appreciate our unique natural and cultural heritage.' The Colong Foundation gives all credit to Bob Carr alone and points out that environmental expenditure has increased more than twofold, 150 new national parks and reserves have been declared, and over 700 000 hectares of state forests have been transferred to the care of the National Parks and Wildlife Service since the Carr Government took office.

On April 15 this year the Premier added 340 000 hectares (about 220000 on the South Coast and the remainder in the Tumut area) to the national parks system. This has resulted in the declaration of 100 new national parks. With a sweep of his pen the Premier took the logging industry and the Commonwealth's RFA process completely by surprise. By not signing off on the RFA he revealed just how hollow were Wilson Tuckey's threats, and Mr Carr managed to temporarily halt the export of woodchips sourced in the Southern Forest Region. No doubt under pressure from the industry the Commonwealth was forced to alter the regulations and at the moment woodchip licences are on a shipment-by-shipment basis. By his actions Bob Carr revealed that the Commonwealth did not have the leverage that they thought was provided by the RFAs. Will other State Premiers be so courageous? Certainly it seems realistic to suppose that it is unlikely that any other RFA will ever be signed in NSW.

The Premier's decision has helped to partially realise the long held dream of some generations of conservationists for a 'Great Escarpment' national park system. The major gap between the Budawang and Deua-Wadbilliga parks will be filled, in part, by the new Monga/Buckenbowra reserve. This is a rich, productive and significant area for the preservation of flora and fauna - highly productive old-growth forest, providing a wonderful haven for wildlife. Its inclusion marks a major achievement by conservationists because its high productivity made it extremely attractive to the timber industry as well. With Monga/Buckenbowra now in the reserve system there is a 350km long reserve link from the Victorian border to Macquarie Pass.

Mr Carr's actions have enhanced Murramarang National Park. The formerly narrow coastal strip has been extended to form a major coastal park of high conservation value, protecting Durras Lake which is one of the least disturbed coastal lakes in NSW. The park has 'grown' from about 2000 hectares to about 10 000. The coastal forests around Cudimirrah have been added to the reserve system as well as other superb coastal lakes such as Conjola, Meroo, Termeil, Burrill and Tabourie.

In the Tumut area remnant woodlands of box and river red gums have been given protection and the habitat of a number of rare and endangered species is now better protected.

Bob Carr and his Environment Minister, Bob Debus, were no doubt influenced by the vigorous campaigning of conservation organisations. The Wilderness Society, the NSW NPA, the NSW Nature Conservation Council and The Colong Foundation come readily to mind as being groups who campaigned long and hard and

vigorously for this great outcome. Our association's involvement with the Friends of the Mongarlowe River has given us an insight into the outstanding work that local community conservation groups can achieve. Together with the Friends of Durras, the Dignam's Creek Community Group and the Peak Alone-Wandella Catchment Association (to mention just a few of those involved) they must feel immensely proud and well-rewarded.

The campaigning is not all over by any means! Sadly, the decision has not protected all of the wilderness forests in the region. Large areas of wilderness are unprotected in the Deua, Wandella and Badja State Forests. Because so much other logging area has been lost to the industry, it seems reasonable to expect that logging for both sawmills and woodchips will intensify in the, as yet, unprotected areas. The Goobarraganda Wilderness area in the Buccleuch State Forest has also been largely left to the industry. This is an area that was previously excised from the park and its return was more or less expected. Campaigners will need to be alert to ensure that logging does not intensify and that potentially destructive utilisation of native forests to produce biomass energy for conversion to electricity is not allowed to happen.

The (politically, at least) vexed question of timber industry restructuring is also largely unresolved and this is another area where conservation organisations must remain extremely vigilant. Col Dorber, executive director of the Forest Product Association, labelled the Premier's decision as a 'sell-out' to the city-based greenies and this gives some indication of what is to come in the future. Warning bells must surely ring loudly, too, when the NSW State Treasurer advocates

*continued on page 13*



*doubling* woodchip volumes from old trees, and also burning them to generate electricity. Mr Egan has allegedly warned that the commercial viability of state forests depends on such a radical decision which would no doubt apply to all state forests, no matter where they were located.

So what are the challenges for the conservation movement as far as the Southern Forests are concerned? They will possibly include:

- catchment protection for the Clyde River;
- vigorous opposition to intensified logging whether for woodchips or biomass energy; and
- permanent protection for wilderness areas left out of the current decision. In our own 'backyard', there are critical gaps

in areas adjoining Kosciuszko National Park.

I have not been able to find any detailed maps showing the proposals. Rumour has it that the various State agencies are still negotiating 'boundary' adjustments and these have to be completed before the agencies make maps available. Meanwhile large scale maps may be downloaded from <http://iprimus.com.au/twiddup>. These maps give a general overview of the new arrangements, but because the scale is so large, it is impossible to discern 'the devil in the detail'.

In the mean time let's be grateful for Milo Dunphy, the activist members of conservation organisations, and above all, NSW Premier Bob Carr who had the political will and courage to make the decisions.

## References

"Expansion of national parks on the nature coast", *National Parks Journal*, June 2000

"Southern forest decision a political deal, says logging industry", *The Colong Bulletin*, July 2000

"NSW southern forests", *Wilderness News*, July 2000

Len Haskew

## Christmas party

Come to this year's NPA Christmas Party on Sunday, December 10, to be held at Caloola Farm. This is a great location for a picnic-party, so join other members and enjoy the day. Full details are in the Outings Program.

# Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group Olympic Landcare Project

On Saturday August 12, Olympic gymnast Monique Allen launched the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group's Olympic Landcare Project. For this project the group is planting 2000 eucalypts and wattles adjacent to the Yankee Hat carpark. Five hundred seedlings were planted last autumn, some by NPA work parties, and the rest will be planted on September 10 to coincide with the Olympic Torch being carried at its closest to Gudgenby, and at the September work party. Monique, who lives locally, was a member of the gymnastic team at the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona.



Joan Goodrum, Simon Buckpitt, Frank Clements, Clive Hurlstone, Eleanor Stodart, Steve Welch, Syd Comfort and David Hall with Monique Allen launching the Olympic Landcare project at Gudgenby.

Photo provided by Eleanor Stodart.



# Budawang's rescue

Many members will recall that four local teenagers were reported as being lost in the Budawang's in early May, this year. Several members of The Sydney Bushwalkers were involved in the successful search for these youngsters. One of the rescuers, **Tony Manes**, wrote an account of the operation for the June 2000 edition of their monthly bulletin *The Sydney Bushwalker*. What follows is a highly edited version of Tony's article. It is printed here with permission of the editor.

The search for four teenagers, Chris, Karen, Alison and Steven began after their planned four-day walk through Morton National Park from Nerriga to Yadboro Flat went wrong. Chris was going for his Queen's Scout award, which required him to navigate unaided through unfamiliar terrain using the skills he had gained during his scouting career.

The search for the missing walkers began on May 2, when *Wilderness Rescue* began seeking volunteers. The volunteers were briefed at Ulladulla Police Station on the morning of May 3 and they were then sent to Yadboro Flat to be assigned into groups and allocated a search area based on the intended duration of stay. Each group consisted of police, bushfire, State Emergency Service (SES), Volunteer Rescue Association (VRA) and volunteer (bushwalker) personnel.

Tony was allocated to an overnight group to search from The Vines via Styles Creek, Holland Gorge and the Clyde River to Yadboro Flat. The SES radio operator assigned to the group just happened to be a member of the Shoalhaven Bushwalking Club, enabling the group to move more quickly through the bush.

The group were driven to The Vines and were met at Styles Creek by a navy helicopter which carried extra rations in case they were needed.

By this time it was 3:30pm and time was running out for the day. A decision was made to head for a clearing on the edge of Holland Gorge before going on to camp for the night in a cave on Mount Houghton.

The party arrived at the clearing about 4:30pm, blowing their whistles all the way. They decided to give one last blow before moving off to camp. They were sure they heard a reply.

'Well, we finally worked out which direction it was coming from and I could see through the treetops, a faint flicker of flame from a fire and above that the arm of a person waving. We asked the person to identify him/herself and his/her companions. Sure enough, it was them, the four lost teenagers. You could hear the happiness in their voices. I told them to stay where they were and I would come up to them. They were in an overhang on the southern edge of Mount Sturgiss, approximately 500 metres from us (as the crow flies). I asked the SES radio operator to set up the radio and contact Base Camp to let them know the situation, while I and another party member went to check out their condition.

'When we finally got to the lost party, everyone was pleased to see us and they were all in good health. I called out to our radio operator to confirm to base that all were well and to get a chopper in quick before dark. The chopper must have been in the vicinity because we hadn't even finished packing up before the first of two choppers arrived. It took us all about another half-hour to get back to the clearing where it had landed. The youngsters were rushed into the waiting chopper. The Navy guys were great, considering visibility was down to about 10 metres when we took off.'

They were flown to Nowra, met by ambulances and taken to the naval hospital. The rescuers were given hot food, drinks, shower and naval overalls.

## Conclusion

'The teenagers did as well as their knowledge permitted. The weather was against them from the start, with low cloud, fog and unfamiliar country. Their maps were useless at the start due to recent subdivision of local farms and no road signage.

They had all the right gear and maps, food for extra days (thanks to one team member's paranoia about getting lost). They made many good decisions, some not so good, and they made the best of each other's company to keep morale high. Eventually they accepted that they were lost; made camp in a high location; made a signal fire and shared their food. They stayed in this location, conserving energy and maintaining safety. **AND** most importantly, they had a whistle, which may have saved their lives, because without it, we may never have heard them over the constant drone of search planes and choppers.

'Hopefully the lessons these teenagers learnt on this trip won't stop them from pursuing their love of the bush. Maybe this incident can help others to understand that if you don't have the knowledge; go with someone who does, or join a bushwalking club.

'One thing I would personally like to see changed is that organisers of such trips/tests, make it compulsory to have at least one experienced person with knowledge of the intended area included in each party for safety reasons. They don't have to lead the trip, but be present in case they are required.'

## Addendum:

The July issue of *The Sydney Bushwalker*, quoting the Canberra Bushwalking Club's June newsletter *IT*, queried the use of whistles in a search and rescue operation. It reported tests conducted in an open forest that showed that a woman's cooee carried approximately 750 metres, a man's cooee 500 metres, a metal pea whistle 350 metres and a plastic whistle 250 metres. *IT* also mentioned the use of a shiny aluminium space blanket to attract the attention of a rescue helicopter in adverse conditions and the use of an old CD for signalling purposes – the centre hole makes sighting easy.

Len Haskew

# Perth parks revisited

One of the highlights of our recent trip to the 'other side' of Australia was to spend a weekend with NPA member Stephen Johnston.

Stephen was a most welcoming host, providing meals and guided tours through the small nature reserves which are scattered through Perth. Despite an overcast sky we set off on Saturday to the river to visit a reserve with a walkway which led past mangroves and out onto a lagoon. Hundreds of sacred ibis were perched on shrubbery around the large lagoon talking and flapping noisily. A stranger, a rufous night-heron, flew in and settled down for a rest.

Then we were off to the Wireless Reserve where *Banksia menziesii*, pea flowers, *Hovea* and grass trees abounded.

We visited the grounds of the old Heathcote Hospital (now a community reserve) where a delightful group of 13-year-old girls were celebrating after a sleepover and barbecue breakfast. There were lovely views of the Swan River from the terrace.

We then returned to the river at Walkers Reserve where ships used to call in the 1800s and early 1900s and walked downstream to the limestone cliffs which border the river. We lunched at a cafe while rain fell but it soon cleared and then we



*Stephen Johnston and Reg Alder on Sullivans Rock, Darling Range.  
Photo by Fiona MacDonald Brand.*

were off for a drive through Fremantle to a large hilltop reserve with a lookout and captured sandhills. Here we saw a magnificent flock of white-tailed black cockatoos.

Sunday dawned sunny and still, so after breakfast we set off for the Darling Range which is only 45 minutes drive to the east. We commenced walking on the Bibbulman Track to Sullivan's Rock, a huge granite domed slab, from the top of which we had excellent views of the range. Carefully walking

down the other side we entered a marri and jarrah forest rich with grass trees and wildflowers. We came to a boot-brushing site established in the hope of preventing the spread of the dieback fungus, *Phytophthora cinnamomi*. Climbing onto Mount Vernon and to another rock slab, we saw dense black clouds rapidly moving in our direction.

Stephen, who had no rain gear, raced back down the track as fast as he could, while Reg and I donned our coats and also walked briskly down the track. Within five minutes the rain fell, but it was still a delight to walk through that bushland and see the tree trunks gleaming in their wet bark. Back at the car we decided that a hot meal in Jarrahdale would be most comforting. Also Stephen wanted to show us the interesting local museum. We drove back to Perth on a different road, through forest and farmland to a hot shower and dry clothes at Stephen's home. There was time now to read the many books he has collected about the local area.

A truly delightful time with Stephen who misses the ACT mountains, but in his usual style is out-and-about learning as much as possible about the environment of Perth.

**Fiona MacDonald Brand**



*Stephen cleaning his boots to prevent the spread of Phytophthora.  
This site is on the Bibbulman Track.  
Photo by Fiona MacDonald Brand.*

# A Snowy Hume and Hovell

In early June David Large led an NPA walk on the Tumbarumba-to-Talbingo section of the Hume and Hovell Track. Other members were Geoff Barker, Steven Forst, Gilbert Hughes, Max Lawrence and Wayne Veide. The highlights were the extent of the snow remaining from the heavy falls a fortnight earlier and the evidence of wild weather generally. The track below Buddong Falls was littered with fallen trees and branches which also shattered the bridge at Moffetts Crossing. Max Lawrence took these photos of the trip.



*On day 1 heading up Burra Creek from Henry Angel Trackhead, Tumbarumba.*



*At Paddys River Dam campsite. How's that for a frost?*



*On day 2 getting up into the snow in the Coffee Pot area.*



*At Coffee Pot, left to right, Geoff, Gilbert, Wayne, David, Steven.*

# PARKWATCH

- compiled by Len Haskew

## Discovering Tuggeranong

Got a few spare hours? Not sure what to do but you would like to get to know more about the ACT? Then why not go on a tour of discovery of Tuggeranong Valley, Tharwa and Lanyon with a helping hand to unveil some of its secrets.

That helping hand comes in the form of two tour brochures for sites of heritage significance in the Tuggeranong Valley, and Tharwa and Lanyon.

The brochures were developed by the National Trust of Australia (ACT), with assistance from PALM, the ACT Heritage Grants Program and the Commonwealth Government's Grant-in-aid Program. They were written by local historian and archaeologist, Dr Peter Dowling, with sketches by Ms Lorraine Downey.

The 'Through the Valley' brochure identifies 15 sites of interest. These include the Murrumbidgee River Corridor, Tuggeranong Schoolhouse at Chisholm, Aboriginal axe grinding grooves at Theodore and Aboriginal scarred trees near Kambah and Wanniasa, Rose Cottage, Hill Station, and a stone ruin on Mugga Lane.

The 'Tharwa and Lanyon' brochure names 13 sites, including Mount Tennent, Tharwa Village (and various buildings at Tharwa), Cuppacumbalong homestead and gardens, and cemetery, Hong Yong's grave site, and William Farrer's grave at Lambrigg.

Copies of the brochures are available from PALM's Customer Service Centre, 16 Challis Street, Dickson; from the National Trust of Australia (ACT) or from the Environment Information Centre at Macarthur House, 12 Wattle St, Lyneham.

*PALM, Newsletter, Winter, 2000*

## Warrumbungle win

In January the Minister for the Environment, Hon Bob Debus, announced that construction of new cabins for accommodation in the Warrumbungle National Park would not proceed. The proposal was

rejected after the NPWS conducted environmental studies.

Park-based resort development and the accompanying infrastructure is in direct contradiction to setting lands aside for conservation. The proposal would also have disadvantaged the local tourism economy. Coonabarabran is only 25 minutes away and provides a range of accommodation; any development in the park would have been in direct competition with local businesses.

A win for common sense.

*National Parks Journal, April, 2000*

## Kamay-Botany Bay

Aboriginal links with the land are to be affirmed by a change of name for Botany Bay National Park to Kamay-Botany Bay National Park, acknowledging the significance of the area for both the local Dharawal people and European settlers. Kamay is the Dharawal name for the area.

As Captain Cook's first landing place in Sydney, focusing attention on this site is a symbolic move to foster reconciliation. NPA State Council at its meeting in March expressed wholehearted support for an expression of prior ownership by Aboriginal people. The meeting noted NPA looks forward to a time when the park would be named solely as Kamay National Park.

*National Parks Journal, April, 2000*

## Grey nurse shark numbers plummet: strong recovery plan needed

Less than 1000 sharks survive on the east coast.

The Grey Nurse Shark (*Carcharias taurus*) is in serious trouble on the east coast of Australia with numbers estimated at less than 1000 individuals. The shark is now absent from many sites where it was once common. Scientists are also concerned that juveniles are missing from the population cohorts. This is thought to be because, with reduced numbers, males and females are not meeting each other on their seasonal migrations.

As protection from targeted fishing has failed to make an impact on the sharks population numbers bold recovery measures must be employed. The Grey Nurse Shark has been upgraded from vulnerable to endangered on the NSW Fisheries Act, following survey data which revealed critically low numbers.

Humane Society International is now seeking to have the listing of the Grey Nurse Shark as at least endangered, if not critically endangered, on the new EPBC Act.

Environment Australia has prepared a draft recovery plan, and public submissions closed on 16 June 2000. The Plan is now being finalised. The draft Recovery Plan is on the web at <[http://www.ea.gov.au/marine/species\\_protection/greynurse.htm](http://www.ea.gov.au/marine/species_protection/greynurse.htm)> *Life Lines, Vol.6 No2, 2000.*

## Our threatened fish

The number of native fish species listed as threatened in inland NSW is likely to double in the next six months. Silver perch and southern pygmy perch are likely to join Macquarie perch and the endangered trout cod, bringing the tally to four. Following Inland Rivers Network's (IRN) nomination of silver perch as a vulnerable species in NSW in December, the NSW Fisheries Scientific Committee (FSC) proposed in February to recommend the species as vulnerable. The FSC noted that silver perch were 'absent in the wild from the majority of its former range' - a strong indictment on past river management given that as little as 40 years ago they were considered much more abundant than golden perch. All of these practices continue today and many are listed by the FSC as probable causes of decline for the species.

The southern pygmy perch was once common in sluggish creeks and wetlands of the mid and upper reaches of rivers in southern inland NSW. The FSC stated in mid April that the species has disappeared

*continued on page 18*

# PARKWATCH

- continued from page 17

from the Murrumbidgee and all but a few billabongs and creeks near Albury on the Murray. As With Macquarie perch and silver perch, thermal pollution from dams and obstruction of fish passage by dams and weirs are likely causes of decline. Without serious commitment of funds for removing unnecessary weirs, installing fishways on necessary ones and mitigating the impacts of thermal pollution these species will remain threatened.

*Inland Rivers Network News, May 2000.*

## Farmers accused of razing forests

A massive clearing of land in which farmers are alleged to have aeri-ally sprayed forest covering an area as big as the City of Bankstown has been stopped by the State Government.

According to the director of the Barwon region of the Department of Land and Water Conservation, Mr Randall Hart, his officers have halted work on three properties covering 130 square kilometres.

The Department is investigating the possibility that up to 80 square kilometres has already been cleared.

The news of the investigation comes as the Premier, Mr Carr, has announced a relaxation of native vegetation clearance legislation, in spite of NSW having the second worst land-clearing record in the nation after Queensland.

Mr Carr has promised farmers he will review land clearing exemptions ... and possibly allow farmers to clear areas, providing they revegetate other parts of their land.

The director of the Total Environment Centre, Mr Jeff Angel, said if the allegations were proved the Government should 'throw the book at them'.

Mr Angel also condemned Mr Carr's proposals as watering down land-clearing legislation.

*The Sydney Morning Herald, July 19, 2000.*

## Rare frog community discovered

An ecological assessment along a proposed extension of a gas pipeline out of Canberra has found a rare community of Green and Golden Bell Frogs in the Southern Tablelands. The frog was thought to be extinct in the area. Charles Sturt University ecologist, Dr Bruce Mullins said discovering this particular population of the frog was particularly significant, as rediscovering this species may mean other remnant populations could exist in the tablelands. It could also mean that the populations found may be resistant to some of the diseases that have been attributed to their decline.

AGL, the company conducting the assessment, said it would review the proposed route of the pipeline to avoid the area, and said that it would use low impact construction techniques if there was a need to pass close to the habitat.

*WetlandLink Bulletin, June, 2000*

## Debus stands firm on horse riding

The NSW Minister for the Environment, The Hon Bob Debus, recently restated the Government's continued policy of not allowing horse riding in wilderness areas. The Minister agreed with representatives of the Colong Foundation at a meeting held on March 14 that horse riding was unacceptable in wilderness. The Wilderness Act states that only self-reliant forms of recreation shall be permitted in wilderness areas and clearly horse riding apart from its significant environmental impact is not a self-reliant form of recreation.

The Colong Foundation had sought a meeting with the Minister to clarify the Government's position on this and other issues following some disturbing aspects of a report which appeared in the SMH concerning a proposed review of the National Parks and Wildlife Act.

Minister Debus confirmed that the Government was committed to a

comprehensive review of the National Parks and Wildlife Act which had not occurred in over 25 years. He believes that the Act needs improvements that will be aimed at equipping the NPWS with the legislative tools it needs to secure the best conservation outcomes.

The Minister assured the Foundation that contrary to claims made by some, the review of the legislation is not about commercialisation in national parks. He said he would rule out anything that is clearly not focussed on good conservation outcomes and he stated the test he would apply to the Act would be whether it improves conservation in our parks and reserves.

*The Colong Bulletin, May 2000.*

## Growth at any price

The Condamine-Ballone River system straddles the NSW-Queensland border. In 1990 it contained 1.2 million hectares of flood plain which fed two national park wetland areas. These areas protect a dozen species protected by international agreements. Only 25% of the original flow now gets into the Narran Lakes Nature Reserve and this could be further reduced. In the words of the Principal Research Scientist of NPWS, Dr Richard Kingsford, 'They have virtually killed that river. But the Queensland Department of Natural Resources is pleased to see that natural resource virtually killed because water resource development has underpinned growth in the regional economy.'

The plan of management for this nature reserve was made last month. Its main recommendation for water management is to encourage the NPWS to continue wagging a finger at the Queensland authorities that deny water to these 'protected' wetlands. We hope that Dr Kingsford succeeds in pricking a few consciences up in Queensland and in Canberra.

*The Colong Bulletin, July 2000*

## Calendar

Activity	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Committee meeting	Thur 7	Thur 5	Thur 2	Thur 7
Environment Sub-committee <sup>1</sup>	Thur 14	Thur 12	Thur 9	Thur 14
General meeting	Thur 21	Thur 19	Thur 16	
Gudgenby Regeneration <sup>2</sup>	Sat 9	Sat 14	Sat 11	Sat 9
Bulleting Working Group <sup>3</sup>		Tue 10		
Christmas Party <sup>4</sup>				Sun 10

### Further Details

1. David Large 6291 4830
2. Yankee Hat carpark 10am Eleanor Stodart 6281 5004 or Syd Comfort 6286 2578
3. Syd Comfort 6286 2578
4. Outings Program

## General meetings

Held in Forestry House, Yarralumla, commencing at 8:00 pm.

### Thursday 21 September 2000

*Australian Alps National Parks Cross-Border Cooperation Management Program.*

State borders go unrecognised by ecosystems, indigenous species and introduced pests. Hear how park agencies have broken down the borders with this internationally acclaimed program.

Presented by program co-ordinator Brett McNamara.

### Thursday 19 October 2000

*Gene technology in agriculture. Implications for consumers and the environment.*

Dr. Linda Tabe, research scientist, CSIRO Division of Plant Industry.

This talk will introduce the technology and raise some current issues for discussion.

### Thursday 16 November 2000

*Fish of the high country.*

Mark Lintermans, Wildlife Research and Monitoring Unit, Environment ACT.

Mark will talk about the plight of native fish in a changing alpine environment and what the future holds for them.

No general meeting in December or January.

## New members

The association extends a warm welcome to the following new members:

Laurie Adams, O'Connor  
Judi Bachmann & Len Ashby, Kingston  
Tony Daukus, Melba  
Ann-Marie & David Dickson, Kaleen  
Gilbert Hughes, Weetangera  
Robyn Kelly, Weston  
Kathryn Maxwell, Kaleen  
Carol Paice, Hawker  
Anthony Patis, Campbell  
Sandy Sutherland, Yass  
Mr G. and Mrs P. Thomas, Aranda.



## Book Review

*Plants and animals of the Australian Alps.* By Barbara Cameron-Smith, Envirobook (Wild Guide), 2000, 96pp, \$16.45

This is a guide for the interested mountain visitor without formal training in botany or zoology. Measuring 19cm by 15, and less than 1cm thick, it is compact and sturdy and so convenient to carry around. It is not exhaustive in its coverage, but provides a good introduction to many of the more common plants and animals.

The first section gives a background to the Australian Alps national parks, their climate, geology and main habitat types, and most of the book is taken up with descriptions and photographs of species. The photographs are of high quality and well reproduced.

The descriptions inform more about habits than physical details. They are conversational, sometimes using questions and answers, sometimes corny, but never staid. For example, under pardalotes - "Best time to see? Autumn." and "The pardalotes have similar paint jobs, except the striated pardalote is *spotless*." For less than half the species dot-points give details of size and diagnostic features, but generally the reader will have to depend on the photographs for identification.

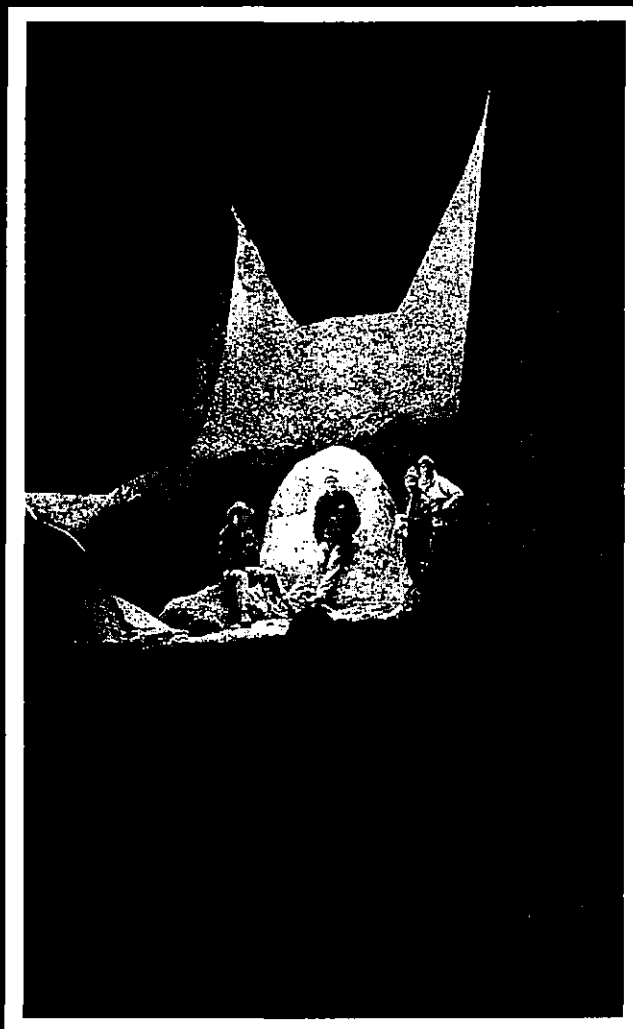
Species are arranged by major groupings - mammals, birds, insects, trees, flowering shrubs and herbs, moss and sedges, ferns and grasses (rather an odd sequence for the plants), and within these groups, by size and colour. The group, and flower colour are shown in the margin for easy access. Each species has a neat habitat symbol which also indicates altitude, and active or flowering times are clearly indicated.

In summary, this guide is well designed for easy use by the non-specialist and I am sure it will be popular. I have two small gripes, however. As an older person I found the greyness of the text irritating; a slightly heavier font would be easier to read. In the habitat symbol, a sloping line between wet and dry mountain forests would have reflected the effect of aspect, as well as altitude (their altitudes are given in a drawing but could easily be missed).

Eleanor Stodart

# National Parks Association (ACT)

*New members welcome*



*Winter walk to Lego Land. This was an alternative destination as Mike elected not to attempt Ginnini Falls after snow. Mike Smith, Max Lawrence, Annabel Wheeler, Steve Hill, (Martin Chalk hiding behind the camera).*

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