

NPA Bulletin

Volume 37 number 4
December 2000

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION (ACT) INCORPORATED



**Australian Alps National Parks cooperative
management**

Some reflections from the West

News from the *Bulletin* Working Group

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National Parks Association (ACT) Incorporated
Inaugurated 1960

Aims and objectives of the Association

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

Office-bearers, committee and convenors

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<i>Vice President</i>	David Large 6291 4830(h)
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The NPA (ACT) office is located in MacLaurin Crescent, Chifley, next to the preschool. It is staffed by volunteers but, at present, not on a regular basis. Callers may leave phone or email messages at any time and they will be attended to. Mail from the post office box is cleared daily.

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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) 6286 2578.

Deadline for March issue: 1 February 2001.

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

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Cover photo: Brumby yards between Smokers Trail and Blue Gum Creek. Photo Martin Chalk

News from the *Bulletin* Working Group

The October meeting of the group was attended by Muriel Edwards, Betty Lewis, Martin Chalk, Len Haskew, Reg Alder, Graeme Wicks and Syd Comfort, and apologies were received from Judith Webster, Greg Foster, Fiona MacDonald Brand, and Barbara de Bruine.

After a frank evaluation of the September issue, discussion focused on three matters: format of the Outings Program, alternative page layouts, and the "free" distribution of the *Bulletin* to school and other groups.

In the September issue, the Outings Program, printed on green paper, was incorporated into the *Bulletin* proper rather than being a separate sheet. This arrangement

was well received by members and will be continued.

Currently *Bulletin* pages are laid out in three columns with each page contained by a ruled border. Alternative layouts of two columns, both with and without borders, were examined and it was agreed to trial one such layout, probably with the March 2001 issue.

The *Bulletin* is distributed free to many ACT schools and colleges, but as this is no longer supported by a government grant it costs the association approximately \$2 per copy. The group concluded that this expenditure is justified as providing a resource to the schools and good publicity for the association. The suggestion was made that, as

students use the Internet as a reference source, placing the *Bulletin* on the Net could make it more available.

Muriel Edwards who has done such a good job of coordinating the mail-out of the *Bulletin*, told the meeting that she would be unable to continue in this role but will continue to assist in editing. The meeting expressed sincere appreciation of her work over the past three years. The association needs a volunteer to take over this coordinating role.

The convenor thanked all members of the group for their support during the year.

Syd Comfort
Convenor

Christmas greetings

The President and members of the Committee extend to all association members best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.



Christmas party

The NPA Christmas Party will be held at Caloola Farm from 11 am on Sunday December 10. Further details are contained in the Outings Program.

Office volunteers needed

Members will be aware that the association office in Chifley is now operated by volunteers. Neville Esau, who is coordinating the office arrangements, would like to hear from any member who could take a place in the office roster. Neville's phone number is 6286 4176.

Volunteer sought

The *NPA Bulletin* is packaged and posted out each quarter by a group of volunteers, a task occupying about three hours. A volunteer is urgently required to take responsibility for coordinating this activity. For more information, please ring Syd Comfort on 6286 2578.

Correction

The author of the book *The Vision of Edna Walling*, quoted in the article "Edna Walling as a conservationist", *NPA Bulletin*, September 2000, should read Trisha Dixon.

Martin Chalk photographic exhibition

An exhibition of photographs by association member Martin Chalk will be held at the Namadgi Visitor Centre from 8 December 2000 to 31 January 2001. Martin, well known to members as walks leader, author and photographer, has contributed many fine photos to the *Bulletin*, including the front cover in this issue and that spectacular scene at Lego Land featured in the September issue. The coming exhibition titled *High Plains and Mountain Tops* reflects on the essence of the alpine area and those who once lived there, subjects which have always fascinated Martin. The exhibition will be a major drawcard at the Visitor Centre over the summer holiday period.

Syd Comfort

Some reflections from the West

Every weekday morning as I jockey for position on the busy Kwinana freeway on my way to work, I obtain a magnificent view that lifts my spirits for the day. The view is north along the broad stretch of the Canning River, across the even broader Swan River and up to the low tree-covered hill called Mt Eliza. The trees mark the renowned Kings Park, the 400 hectares of botanic gardens and remnant bush that forms a natural heart for the ever sprawling city of Perth.

The view immediately to the east and west of Kings Park is less than attractive: tall residential buildings and office towers. The striking contrast of this sort of collocation of new, often ugly and crass development beside attractive natural features was my first, and has remained my strongest single impression of Perth and the nearby region since I arrived here in January.

I see this contrast around the Swan, a beautiful great harbour with some extensive foreshore parks that is continually being compromised by the obsession to have the largest, most imposing and tasteless mansions right on the water's edge. I see it as I drive to the local shops and pass a council reserve of typical scraggy Swan plains scrub amidst the suburban neatness, or at nearby Booragoon Lake where the scores of cormorants and ibis nest in the fringing vegetation less than 20 metres from the heavy road transports that thunder along the six-lane Leach Highway.

One of my first and lasting *positive* impressions of Perth is the surprising number and location of suburban bush and lake reserves. Both are related to particular characteristics of the coastal plain. Whereas a lot of land adjacent to the infant cities of Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Adelaide was cleared last century for farms and orchards, the Swan coastal plain was infertile sand. What are now well established Perth suburbs were just bush as recently as the 1940s and 50s. So if the developers

left a gap in the subdivisions, it was often a gap of original bush rather than a paddock or orchard. Hence you find jarrah woodland in small council reserves and around the edges of golf courses and cemeteries dotted with xamia palms and grass trees.

The lakes were formed between the north-south lines of sand dunes. While some were drained and built over, those that remain provide metropolitan habitat for a great variety of waterbirds, long-necked tortoises and, where there is still fringing vegetation, small marsupials like the bush rat and southern brown bandicoot or quenda. As in other cities, the reserves and lakes are under great pressure from weeds, particularly watsonia and bridal creeper, popular usage, fires and pollution.

On a broader scale the contrasting edge between city and country, while not as defined as in Canberra, is nevertheless sometimes quite sharp. The limestone walled small blocks marking housing subdivisions in the northern growth area of Joondalup come to an abrupt halt at a four-lane road from where jarrah-marri forest extends north in a narrow band for more than 30 kilometres through two national parks, Neerabup and Yanchep. To the east the 250 to 300 metre high Darling escarpment forms a partial buffer to suburban spread, and a number of small national parks provide attractive walking and picnic spots within 40 minutes of the city centre. The plateau above the escarpment is largely covered with jarrah-marri forest in a belt averaging about 40 kilometres wide that stretches more than 300 kilometres south until it reaches the karri forests.

This was my most pleasant WA surprise; I had no idea such a large area of forest was so close to the city. Sure it's been logged intensively for many decades. But there are still many old marri trees remaining with their spreading crowns and clusters of big "honkey" gumnuts and smaller numbers of old jarrah.

The forests are riddled with old logging access tracks but many are now little used and form pleasant and easy walking tracks. Easy, because the only major changes to the topography are the creek gullies and river valleys that cut down into the plateau and the changes in elevation are rarely more than 200 metres.

So why wasn't this plateau forest so close to Perth more extensively cleared? We can partly thank the widespread presence of the *Gastrolobium* species, a genus of pea flowers which evolved a method of protecting themselves from seed-eating and browsing animals. They have in their leaves monofluoroacetate, a poisonous substance now commonly known as 1080. Over many years native animals developed immunity to this poison, but introduced species are highly susceptible. Hence the early settlers lost tens of thousands of head of stock as they were moved through the forests and browsed on plants like York Road poison (*Gastrolobium calycinium*) which was named after the track to Western Australia's oldest inland town. The forests became places for stock and therefore settlers to avoid. By the 1880s the enormous value of jarrah timber had been recognised and it soon formed, along with sandalwood, the state's major export earner. While the forests were extensively and often wastefully logged, their commercial timber value provided a later line of defence against broad-scale clearing.

The symbiosis between the native animals and the *Gastrolobium* species has enabled an internationally acclaimed, targeted wildlife conservation initiative to be conducted, Western Shield. This is an extensive aerial fox baiting program that involves laying pieces of dried meat treated with 1080 at the rate of about five baits per square kilometre. The result is that there has been such a marked recovery of native species that three which were until recently recorded

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Charlie Hill (1921 – 2000)

Charlie Hill, NPA member for nearly 30 years and life member since 1988, died peacefully on 5 October at the Banksia Ward of Jindalee Nursing Home, Canberra, at the age of 79. Clive Hurlstone, supported by numerous NPA members attended a packed Thanksgiving Service at St Aidans on 10 October.

After an active and productive life, Charlie was a victim of a crippling form of Parkinsons Disease which rendered him bed and chair ridden, a vast change from his former mobility. Charlie's wife,

Audrey, and the family steadfastly supported him day by day, helped at times by visits from friends.

Charlie joined the Department of the Navy in 1938 and served in the Navy itself from 1944 to late 1945. The war interrupted his ambitions to gain tertiary qualifications in Engineering. Through his rise to senior positions in the Navy Department, he left Melbourne for Sydney, and after six years there returned to Melbourne, then moved to Canberra in 1960. He retired in 1981 and Charlie and Audrey travelled extensively around New Zealand, UK and Europe and, then, Alaska early in his retirement.

Charlie always led an active life. He enjoyed sports such as squash and tennis, and backyard cricket with the grandchildren. He was an enthusiastic skier, both downhill and cross-country, firstly in the Victorian Alps, then locally in the Brindabellas, and later, in the Snowy Mountains. He made his first skis in the late 30s. With the support of Audrey, he taught all three children to ski, firstly with him on his skis, then on small, handcrafted skis.

Charlie's great love of the mountains and the outdoors was long-standing and, shared by the



family. He became a member of the Melbourne Mens Walking Club in 1942. He took part in virtually all activities in the clubroom, at dinners, at programmed outings, adventurous exploratory walks, week-long ski trips on the Bogong High Plains, Mt Buller weekends, and committee work. Bert Bennett tells the story of how the two of them, after being weatherbound for several days on Mt Cobbler, caught up the original program by a nearly non-stop walk across the plateau to Koonika, Speculation, Cross Cut Saw, Howitt, the Howqua Valley, and then to Fred Frys!

Charlie and Audrey became involved in the National Parks Association during the early 1970s and he took part in the NPA's efforts to form the Namadgi National Park (and its subsequent extensions) in 1983. He was very active in all aspects of the NPA and was heavily involved in Committee work both in relation to the administration of the park and in its conservation. He was a long-standing member of the Walks Committee and led many interesting day walks on behalf of members. In partnership with other members, Charlie took great interest in progressing the Glendale trees revegetation project and in

building the Yerrabi Track to the magnificent views of southern Namadgi Park from the Boboyan Trig. He was an enthusiastic participant and leader of many enjoyable car camps including the now legendary Bournda Reserve weekends.

Charlie and Audrey bought a campervan in 1979, which became the mode of transport and accommodation for many around Australia and regional holidays during the 80's. It had the spare wheel on the front, covered with a "Smiley Face" which became the instantly recognisable symbol that Charlie and Audrey were involved in whatever activity was going on at the time.

Stephen Hill

New data base established

All association member information has recently been re-entered to form a new membership data base. Members are requested to check the detail of the information on the *Bulletin* posting label and advise any errors, misspellings or omissions to the office or to Neville Esau on 6286 4176.

Australian Alps National Parks cooperative management

Brett McNamara, an officer of the ACT Parks and Conservation Service, is on a four-year secondment as coordinator of the Australian Alps National Parks cooperative management program. This article covers the address that he gave to the September general meeting of the association.

The national parks and reserves in the Australian Alps cross state and territory borders and comprise over 1.6 million hectares of protected areas. To assist conservation agencies to manage these resources in a consistent and compatible manner, the ministers responsible for their management in 1986 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in relation to the cooperative management of the Australian Alps.

Areas covered include:

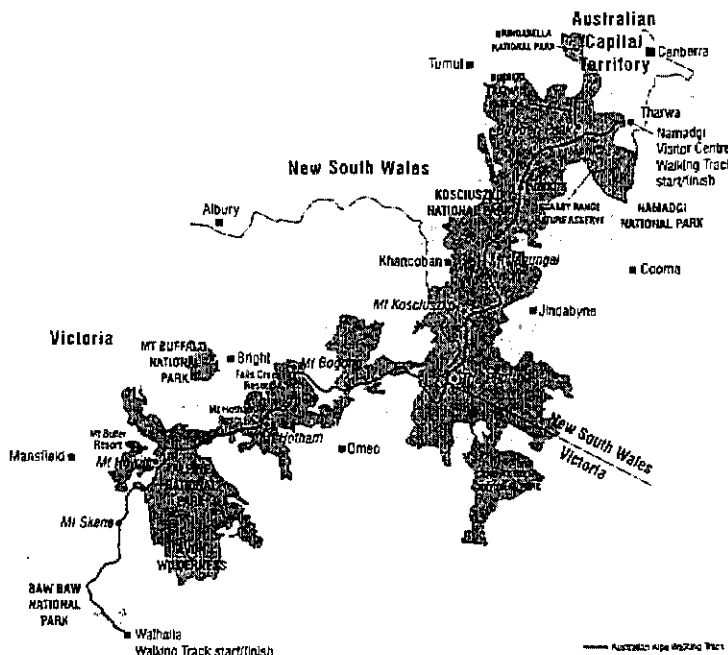
Victoria	Hectares
Alpine National Park	645 615
Snowy River National Park	98 100
Avon Wilderness Park	39 650
Mount Buffalo National Park	31 000

New South Wales	Hectares
Kosciuszko National Park	690 000
Brindabella National Park	12 000
Scabby Range Nature Reserve	3 449
Bimberi Nature Reserve	7 100

Australian Capital Territory	Hectares
Namadgi National Park	105 900

Organisation and finance

The MOU provides for the establishment of the Australian Alps Liaison Committee (AALC) to coordinate cooperation between alpine park agencies. This committee is comprised of a senior officer from each of the state and territory park services together with an senior officer from the relevant Commonwealth department. The ACT member is Tony Corrigan, Manager ACT Parks and Conservation Service. The implementation of the program is coordinated by the full-time



Australian Alps National Parks.

Map from AALC 1999-2000 Annual Report

secondment of an officer from one of the participating services. Brett currently occupies this position.

Much of the achievement of the program comes through working groups established to direct the implementation of the annual cooperative program.

Working group members are selected on the basis of their specialist skills and operate as a team with staff from other land management agencies in managing the Australian Alps national parks. Further detail on the working groups is provided later in this article.

The annual government contributions to support the program total \$400 000, made up of \$120 000 each from the Commonwealth, Victoria and New South Wales and \$40 000 from the ACT. Most of the expenditure is allocated through an annual works program which comprises projects which are selected so as to:

- further implement the Alps Strategic Plan;
- apply to park management in at

least two states or one state and the territory;

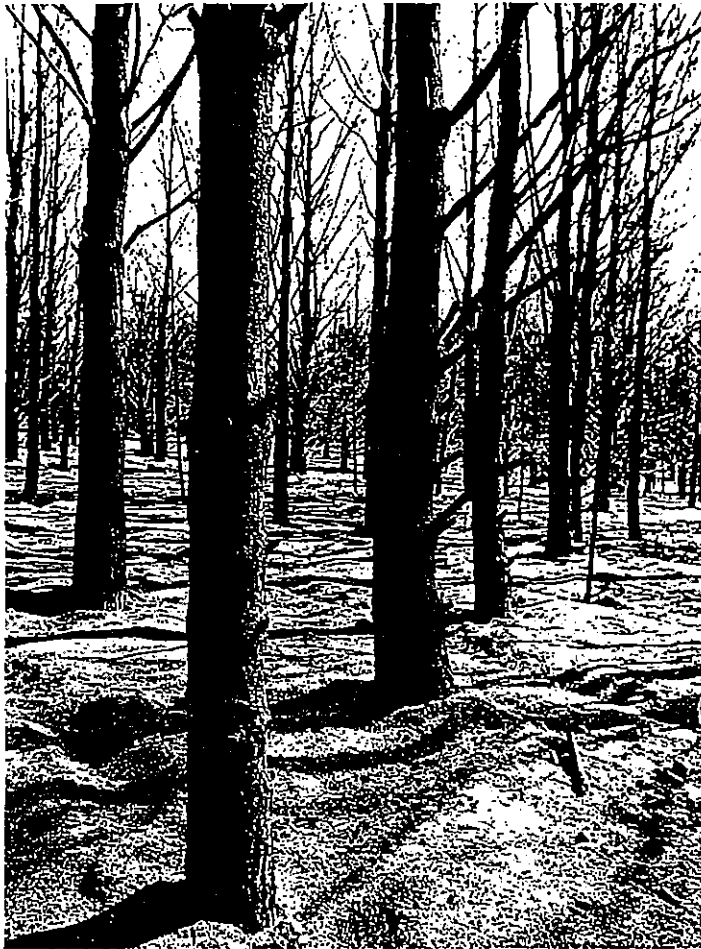
- have direct cross-border benefits; and
- have support for continuation and maintenance by agencies.

Community Relations Working Group

Increased public awareness of the important values of the Australian Alps national parks is a major goal. In addition to providing press releases and media stories, information displays and schools information kits have been developed and workshops conducted.

Recent publications include *Explore the Australian Alps* and *Wildguide: Plants and Animals of the Australian Alps*, both of which have been reviewed recently in the *Bulletin*. An *Alps National Parks Touring Map* and a very attractive video based on individual connections with the region have been produced.

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Burnt pines

This photo of the Boboyan Pine Plantation showing trees killed by the 1983 bushfire was featured in a draft Policy Plan and Development Plan for the Gudgenby Area published by the National Capital Development Commission in 1984, before the national park was declared. It is reproduced here by courtesy of the National Capital Authority. The publication presents an outline of the history of the pine plantation and a discussion of options for the future of the area. What I found of particular interest in this article is that it emphasises that the future of the pines has been recognised as a significant issue for nearly 20 years. In the intervening time the association has been active in promoting the restoration of the pines area to native vegetation, the Namadgi National Park Management Plan has endorsed this course of action, and revegetation has now been underway for nearly three years. The article by ranger Steve Welch on page 10 describes the current state of this challenging task.

Syd Comfort

Australian Alps National Parks cooperative management *continued from page 6*

Natural Heritage Working Group

Supported with seed funding from the Australian Alps Liaison Committee and other organisations, CSIRO Publishing commenced work in 1999 on the new *Kosciuszko Alpine Flora*. This is due for release in December 2000.

In December 1999, this working group seconded Dr Peter Coyne to undertake a study to identify and document the status of significant natural features of the Australian Alps and the threats to them. The report has identified over 1000 such features.

Also in 1999, Michelle Walter commenced a PhD at the University of Canberra, partly funded by AALC, on the population ecology of feral horses in the Australian Alps. As results become available, models will be fitted to the data to assess trends in the population under a variety of future potential management scenarios.

Cultural Heritage Working Group

This working group has developed a cultural heritage implementation strategy and identified gaps in the knowledge of cultural heritage in the Alps.

In November 1999, an indigenous issues awareness workshop was conducted providing participants from all four agencies with valuable insights into Aboriginal culture and contemporary issues.

Recreation and Tourism Working Group

The group hosted a five-day international best practice Human Waste Management Workshop in March 2000 involving 84 delegates from Australia and overseas. For next year a best practice workshop on walking track construction is planned.

In April this year, work commenced on renovating five kilometres of the

Australian Alps Walking Track within Namadgi National Park. This will divert the track from Booroomba and Honeysuckle roads to a route providing a greatly enhanced experience for walkers.

Conclusion

Whilst accepting that there are some impediments to cross-border cooperation, such as differing objectives and priorities amongst agencies, Brett is satisfied that a culture of goodwill and open communication exists between agencies. There has been national and international recognition of a unique cooperative program which he hopes may be extended in the future.

Brett rounded off his presentation by screening the outstanding video *Stories Among the Snowgums: a journey through the Australian Alps*.

Syd Comfort

Gene technology in agriculture: implications for consumers and the environment.

The guest speaker at the October general meeting was Dr Linda Tabe, a research scientist with CSIRO's Division of Plant Industry. For a period of 10 years or so Linda has been using gene technology to produce a weevil-resistant pea that will require less chemical pesticide. Linda's presentation covered not only her own work, but also the basics of gene technology, the regulatory systems that are in place and the scientific and social implications of the technology. The Bulletin notice about her talk foreshadowed the raising of some current issues for discussion. This was certainly the case, and Linda faced vigorous questioning from members. Linda answered all queries frankly and fully and with good humour. Her excellent presentation was accompanied by informative transparencies - a photocopy of these is available for inspection at the office. The article below is an edited version of the notes that Linda gave us.)

A gene is a recipe for a protein and it is made of DNA (a long string-like molecule consisting of two strands wound around each other to form a helix.) The building blocks of genes are known as bases and when these are decoded a gene can be copied. So one gene can give rise to millions of copies of its protein product. Gene technology allows scientists to make a plant resistant to an insect pest by giving it a gene that tells it how to make the protein.

Mankind has practised the genetic modification of plants for millennia, initially selecting favourable characteristics for cultivation and later, deliberate cross breeding between closely related species. Over the last few years plant breeders have used chemicals or X-rays to produce mutations or random changes. Gene technology continues this tradition but it has the ability to make the alterations deliberate and precise.

Linda's work involved developing peas with in-built weevil protection.

Peas are susceptible to attack by weevils, beans are resistant. Beans contain a protein, amylase inhibitor, that is toxic to weevils. In the laboratory, under very precise conditions, the inhibitor was introduced into pea cells and new pea plants were developed that were weevil resistant. This was a long, slow process involving years of testing in laboratories and closed glass houses. Eventually the 'new' pea was tested in the field, in line with the rules of the Genetic Manipulation Advisory Committee. The new product is just now entering a further phase of development and testing before commercial release.

The regulatory system, in Linda's opinion, is precise and rigorous and as a result of this only two GM crops, cotton and carnations, are presently grown commercially in Australia. (Details of the Australian

continued on next page

RISKS OF PLANT GENE TECHNOLOGY

to the environment

Escape of genes by out-crossing and development of herbicide resistant weeds

Development of pests resistant to biopesticides
Effects on beneficial insects

Creation of new plant viruses

Threats to biodiversity of agriculture

to human health

Transfer of antibiotic resistance genes to other organisms

Changes in allergens or toxins

Unknown long term effects

to society

Ethical objections

Domination of world food production by multinational corporations

BENEFITS OF PLANT GENE TECHNOLOGY

Less use of chemicals in agriculture

New, more specific strategies against pests and diseases
Less impact on beneficial insects

New strategies against viruses

Preservation of biodiversity by increasing the efficiency

Increased levels of beneficial nutrients, vitamins, anti-oxidants etc in food

Decreased levels of allergens or toxins

Healthier plant oils, oral vaccines

A better nourished world population

Better tolerance of produce to harvesting storage and transport

Table taken from one of Linda's slides

NPA Bulletin

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION (ACT) INCORPORATED

NPA outings program

December 2000 – March 2001

Outings guide

Walk gradings

Distance grading (per day)

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

Terrain grading

- A – Road, firetrail track
- B – Open forest
- C – Light scrub
- D – Patches of thick scrub, regrowth
- 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.



9 December Saturday work party
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group
Leader: Eleanor Stodart
Phone: 6281 5004

Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre at 9.15am or Yankee Hat carpark at 10.00am. Weeding, wilding removal or other work for rehabilitation of the Boboyan pine area. Tools will be provided. Early finish for Christmas celebrations.

10 December (Sunday)
NPA Christmas Party
Contact: Max Lawrence
Phone 6288 1370

This year's Christmas Party is at Caloola Farm. We're looking to get things under way from about 11am, so bring a picnic lunch. For those who haven't been to Caloola, head south from Tharwa past the Namadgi Visitors Centre and turn left immediately after you cross the bridge over the Gudgenby River at Naas (if you get to Fitz's Hill you've gone too far). Caloola is then about 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.

17 December Sunday daywalk
Square Rock
Leader: Judy Kelly
2A

Map: Corin Dam 1:25 000
Phone: 6253 1859

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. From Smokers Gap carpark we will climb an initial steep pinch and then stroll along the designated walking track to take in the pleasures of Smokers Flat, the lookout taking in views over the Orroral Valley, and Square Rock itself. A fairly gentle day in one of the nicest areas of our own national park. 50kms, \$12 per car

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 Slec

Map: Mt 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 the 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. 430kms, \$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 8.00am so 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 of southern Namadgi. There may be a short car shuffle. Phone leader for details.

20-21 January weekend packwalk

Table Top Mountain

Leader: Steven Forst

Map: Denison 1:25 000

3A/B/C

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

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

2A/ E

Phone: 6295 8894

Meet at Canberra Railway Station, Kingston, at 8.30am. A pleasant walk on a dedicated walking track to the Big Hole, a vast unfenced sinkhole (beware 114m deep!), and Marble Arch, a limestone cave through a ridge, followed by a narrow, spectacular limestone gorge ending in a swimming hole. Drive through Captains Flat with some gravel. It will be necessary to paddle across the Shoalhaven, so bring sandals or thongs, etc. 180kms, \$45 per car.

28 January Sunday daywalk

Mt Gingera from Ginini

Leader: Barbara Edgar

2A

Map: Corin Dam 1:25 000

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

Meet at the carpark on Uriarra Road just off the Cotter Road at 8.30am. A walk from Mt Ginini carpark to Mt Gingera via Pryors Hut and return, a total of 14km. The climb from the hut to the summit is about 200m, but the views are well worth the effort. 120kms, \$30 per car.

30 January to 8 February

Wollemi and Goulburn River National Parks

Leader: Graham Scully

Phone: 6230 3352

Wollemi is second in size only to Kosciuszko among the NSW national parks, and has an awesome reputation for ruggedness. This exploratory visit will 'nibble at the edges' to give participants an overall feel of the park for possible future walks. Graham has a huge amount of information and suggestions from people who know the area, so the program is flexible and will be decided by participants. Maximum number of ten. Distances and costings to be worked out later. Phone leader for details and bookings.

31 January

Wednesday daywalk

Leader: Col McAlister

Phone: 6288 4171

NPA has two "monthly" midweek walks in January. Phone leader for details, which will be determined nearer the date.

4 February Sunday daywalk

Brindabella Range Ramble

Leader: Steven Forst

2/A

Map: ACT 1:100 000

Phone: 279 1326(w), 251 6817(h)

Meet at picnic area carpark on Uriarra road just off the Cotter road (near Duffy) at 8.30am. A fire trail walk through the tall 'shady' forest between the Cotter River and the Brindabella Road. Nestled in a south east facing valley this moist temperate/alpine eucalyptus forest provides for pleasant walking even in summer. Some views of Canberra. 80 kms, \$20 per car.

9-11 February three day car camp

Thredbo Diggings

Leaders: Adrienne Nicholson and Margaret Aston

2A

Map: Mt Kosciuszko 1:50 000

Phone: 6281 6381 (Adrienne), 6288 7563

(Margaret)

Friday walking for those who can make it for a long weekend (unofficial). Possible Saturday walk Dead Horse Gap along Cascade track to Cascade Hut and return. Other options include using the chairlift from Thredbo and walk to Kosciuszko and back. Option exists on Sunday to link up with Steve Hill's Mt Townsend expedition. Half or full day walks, or simply relax by the river around the campsite. Bookings for the campsite cannot be made so 'first in best positioned'. Please phone one of the leaders by Wednesday 7 February. 430kms, \$108 plus \$15 for vehicles without permit.

10 February Saturday work party

Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group

Leader: Eleanor Stodart

Phone: 6281 5004

Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre at 9.15am or Yankee Hat carpark at 10.00am. Weeding, wilding removal or other work for rehabilitation of the Boboyan pine area. Tools will be provided.

11 February Sunday daywalk

Mt Townsend

Leader: Steven Hill

4A/C/E

Map: Mt Kosciuszko 1:50 000

Phone: 6231 9186

A day of fabulous views when the wildflowers should still be in full bloom. This walk will proceed only if the weather is likely to be sunny. We drive to Thredbo (2.5 hrs) and catch the chair to the top of Crackenback. We walk along the track towards Mt Kosciuszko and then along the Main Range track to Muellers Pass. We turn off to climb Mt Townsend. If there is time we will stroll north along the spur to Alice Rawson Peak for some additional stunning views. The walk will require good fitness, will be partly offtrack, and will involve some climbing. It brings with it an early start and late return to Canberra, but the sights are absolutely worth it.. Ring leader by Friday evening to register and for details of the meeting place. 430kms, \$108 plus \$15 for vehicles without permit.

18 February Sunday daywalk

Pig Hill

Leader: Colin McAlister

2A

Map: Umburra 1:25 000

Phone: 6288 4171

A pleasant walk mainly through timbered country on fire trails. Excellent views to the north and also to the east across the Murrumbidgee to Belconnen. Total climb of about 400m. Meet at Uriarra Road car park just off the Cotter Road at 8.30am. 50kms, \$12 per car.

24-25 February weekend packwalk

Corang River

Leader: Phil Gatenby

4A/D/E

Maps: Corang, Endrick 1:25 000

Phone: 6254 3094

A walk in the headwaters of Corang River in the Budawangs. We will visit Corang Lagoon and a few other places on and near the river. Opportunities for swimming if the weather is hot. Second day may include a climb to the top of Corang Peak. 250kms, \$63 per car

25 February Sunday daywalk

Bungonia Gorge

Leader: Mike Smith

2A/E

Map: Caoura 1:25 000

Phone: 6286 2984

Meet at Southwell Park netball centre on Northbourne Ave Lyneham at 8.00am. A steep walk on track down to the junction of the Shoalhaven River and Bungonia Creek. Follow creek upstream through spectacular Bungonia Gorge which involves some rock scrambling. Climb (400m) out via the extremely steep 'Efflux' route. 220kms, \$55 per car.

28 February

Wednesday daywalk

Leader: Ken Free

Phone: 6295 8894

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

2-4 March three day packwalk

Micalong, Goobarragandra and Tumut Valleys

Leader: Ross Walker

3A

Maps: Bobbys Plains, Lacmatalac, Blowering

1:25 000

Phone: 6254 7117

A three day walk based around a section of the Hume and Hovell track. After initial camp at Bossawa campsite, subsequent camps at The Hole and on Walls Creek. The last day will involve a walk into Tumut. Walkers should be fit as some steep climbs are involved. Contact leader after 1 January and by 9 February for details and bookings (numbers limited). 200kms, \$50 per car.

3 March Saturday daywalk

Rendezvous Creek

Leader: Rob Forster

3A/B

Map: Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000

Phone: 6249 8546

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. A delightful walk through typical Namadgi woodland and valley starting from Rendezvous Creek - Boboyan Road, and exiting to the Nursery Swamp carpark in Orroral Valley. Car shuffle required. 110kms, \$28 per car.

4 March Sunday daywalk

Monga

Leader: Len Haskew

2A/B/C

Maps: Monga and Araluen 1:25 000

Phone: 6281 4268

Join the *Friends of the Mongarlowe River* on a walk to the ancient Eucrophias of Monga (if you're a Tolkien fan you'll be enthralled by this place). Meet at the Canberra Railway Station, Kingston at 7.45am. 200kms, \$50 per car plus a donation to the *Friends*.

10 March Saturday work party

Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group

Leader: Eleanor Stodart

Phone: 6281 5004

Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre at 9.15am or Yankee Hat carpark at 10.00am. Weeding, wilding removal or other work for rehabilitation of the Boboyan pine area. Tools will be provided.

10-12 March long weekend carcamp

Wallaga Lake

Leader: Len Haskew

Map: Central Tilba 1:25 000

Phone 6281 4268

A carcamp at Ocean Lake Caravan Park (fee), 7kms north of Bermagui.

Day 1: Meet at 10.30am at Pams General Store, Tilba Tilba, just off the realigned Princes Highway. Climb Mt Dromedary for view of Montague Island and much of the coast. Return through a delightful stand of rainforest. The climb is steep - 800m in 5.5kms, but its mostly downhill on the way home. Bring a camera. Those unable or unwilling to undertake this considerable climb may be able to arrange a 4WD lift to the saddle by contacting the Umbarra Cultural Centre on 02 4473 7232 (at a fee).

Day 2: A coastal walk of about 9kms from Wallaga Lake to Bermagui. A fairly easy walk mostly near the sea. There are ample rewards in the form of coffee shops, fish and chips shops and a pub when we get there! When sufficiently refreshed and rested we'll walk off our excesses by returning the 9kms back to the Lake (car shuffle is definitely an option). Plenty of birds, bring binoculars.

Day 3: For those who can stay on an extra day Len will see if he can arrange a trip to Wallaga Lake with members of the local indigenous community.

Please contact Len two weeks beforehand (ie by 24 February) if you would like to go so that accommodation can be organised at the caravan park. 400kms, \$100 per car.

11 March Sunday daywalk

Mt Twynam and Watsons Crags

Leader: Steve Hill

4A/C/E

Map: Mt Kosciuszko 1:50 000

Phone: 6231 9186

A day of fabulous views not available from Mt Kosciuszko. This walk will proceed only if the weather is likely to be sunny. We drive to Charlotte Pass carpark (2.5hrs) and follow the Main Range track to the Blue Lake lookout. We climb Mt Twynam (2196m, third highest in Oz). Then we trek to the spur known as Watsons Crags for unmatched views of the grand Western Fall wilderness and far beyond. The walk requires good fitness, will be largely offtrack and will involve regular climbs which are steep in parts. It brings with it an early start and a late return to Canberra, but the sights are supremely rewarding. Ring leader by Friday evening to register and for details of the meeting place. 430kms, \$108 plus \$15 for vehicles without permit.

16-18 March

Grose Valley and Blue Gum Forest

Leader: Ross Walker

2/3A

Map: CMA Blue Mtns- Burragorang

1:150 000

Phone: 6254 7117

Day 1: Victoria Falls lookout to Acacia Flat campsite via Blue Gum Forest. *Day 2:* daywalk to Govetts Leap Falls and Pulpit Rock and return. *Day 3:* Acacia Flat to Govetts Leap lookout. A walk for fit packwalkers bearing in mind there are sections of steep ups and downs in the valley, which is 600m deep. Contact leader between 1 January and 23 February for details and bookings (numbers limited). 650kms, \$162 per car, plus share of taxi fares.

18 March Sunday daywalk

Wee Jasper

Leader: Col McAlister

1A

Map: H&H track notes

Phone: 6288 4171

A fully guided tour of the magnificent Careys Cave and a stroll through part of the Wee Jasper Nature Reserve. Booking and prior payment essential. Please contact leader before Wednesday 28 February so that special tour(s) can be arranged. Departure will be from the carpark off Uriarra Road near the Cotter Road at 8.00am. 160kms, \$40 per car plus cave entry fee for each person.

24-25 March weekend packwalk

Mt Burbidge

Leader: Martin Chalk

2A/D/E

Maps: Rendezvous Creek, Yaouk 1:25 000

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

We will try again this year and hope for better weather. Walk from Yankee Hat carpark across old Gudgenby station to Middle Creek. From the cascades, up the southern arm to camp below Mt Burbidge. Sunday morning will see a packless scramble up Burbidge followed by a return along our Saturday route. Be prepared for rock scrambling and regrowth. Call leader by the previous Wednesday for bookings. 140kms, \$35 per car.

25 March Sunday daywalk

Mulligans Flat Bird Walk

Leader: Beverley Hammond

1A

Map: Canberra

Phone: 6288 6577

The Mulligans Flat Bird Walk was launched on 1 November. Bring a snack, field guide and binoculars for this 6km amble. Meet at the Mulligans Flat Nature Park carpark about 2.5km north of Gungahlin Town Centre on the Gundaroo road at 9.00am.

24 March to 7 April extended packwalk

Wilson's Promontory, The Sequel

Contact: Syd Comfort

Phone: 6286 2578

Strict regulations apply to walking in this park, and early bookings and advance payment are required by the park management. Following Syd's November Prom walk we have a number of spaces we've been able to defer to March - April. So some of you who were unable to go in November will get another crack at it. The details are essentially as for the November expedition - Drive to Wilson's Prom 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. Contact Syd for details. Expressions of interest in leading The Sequel especially appreciated.

Something different to look forward to in our winter program...

29 July Sunday daywalk/shuffle (?) (date to be confirmed)

A winter walk on snow shoes to the Paralyser

Leader: Brian Slee

1B (in snow)

Map: Mt Kosciuszko 1:50 000

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

Our first snowshoe walk. Need to be fit, but snowshoe experience not necessary. Snowshoes (worn with ordinary boots) can be hired from Jurkiewicz (Fyshwick) and Wilderness and/or Paddy Pallin (Jindabyne). From Guthega climb on to the Paralyser from Farm Creek and follow ridge to trig point and beyond. Superb views of Main Range and Perisher. Early start (to secure parking) and early finish. Book early with leader, bearing in mind that walk will be dependent on favourable weather outlook. 430kms, \$108 per car, plus \$15 for vehicle without permit.

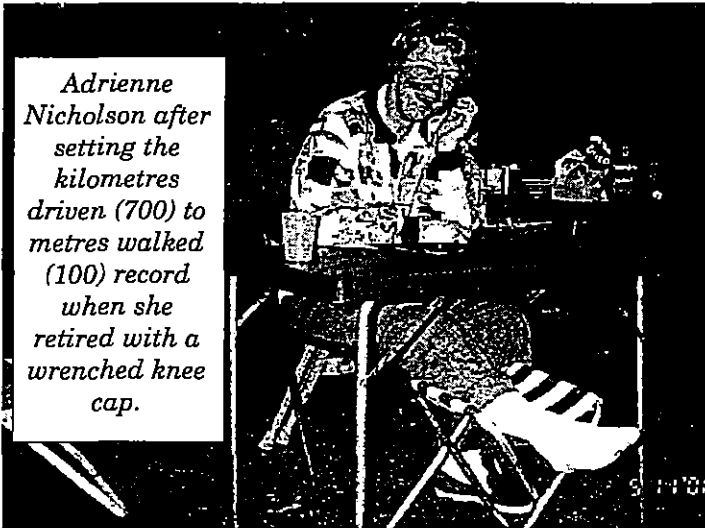


Warrumbungle and Kaputar National Parks

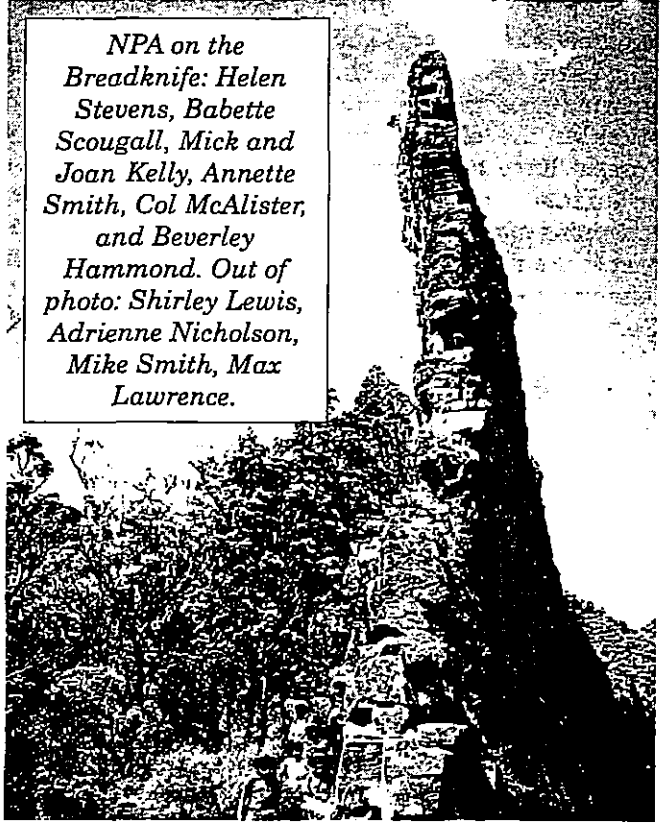
Max Lawrence has provided these photos of an NPA car camp held in the Warrumbungle and Kaputar National Parks in November 2000.



The Summit Yulladunida Crater, l to r: Wayne Veide, Annette and Mike Smith, Col McAlister.



Adrienne Nicholson after setting the kilometres driven (700) to metres walked (100) record when she retired with a wrenched knee cap.



NPA on the Breadknife: Helen Stevens, Babette Scougall, Mick and Joan Kelly, Annette Smith, Col McAlister, and Beverley Hammond. Out of photo: Shirley Lewis, Adrienne Nicholson, Mike Smith, Max Lawrence.



Fellow ACT NPA members Helen and Jimmy Stevens at their property "Chitty", adjacent to Warrumbungle National Park. They were wonderful hosts to our car camp.

Gene technology in agriculture continued from page 8

procedures are available on: <http://www.health.gov.au/tga/genetech/iogtr.htm>. US information is available from <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/biotechnology/>.) Risks are weighed by regulatory agencies according to their probability. Risks such as the transfer of antibiotic genes from GM crops to other organisms are regarded as highly unlikely on the basis of current scientific evidence. Mandatory safety testing is a prerequisite for the release of any new GM food onto the market. There has

been no reported health or environmental problem associated with large-scale use of GM crops grown in the USA since the mid-1990s. Conversely, there are now indications that the promised benefit of GM crops are being realised. Linda drew attention to a Swiss research group that has recently reported the development of GM rice containing enhanced levels of pro-vitamin A. This crop has the potential to help alleviate the suffering caused by vitamin A deficiency that afflicts 70 per cent

of children under the age of five in Southeast Asia.

Linda concluded by saying, "Gene technology in agriculture has been portrayed as either a magic bullet that will solve all the problems of agriculture, or a disaster that will see the end of the world as we know it. As always, the truth is somewhere in between. Wisely used, it can increase the efficiency and sustainability of agriculture and offer benefits for human health."

Len Haskew

Namadgi National Park Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Project

This article is reproduced from Environment ACT's year 2000 annual report edition of The Scribbly Gum newsletter with the kind permission of the editor and the author.

The Gudgenby Bush Regeneration (previously called Boboyan Pines) Project is showing moderate success to date. Weeds within the clear-fallen areas are largely controlled (blackberry infestations may be increasing), pine wildings are removed before they grow to any size and eucalypts and acacias are showing good growth rates across much of the cleared land. ACT Forests have been encouraged to undertake clear-fall of the remaining marketable pine over the next year and we are well on the way to seeing the last exotic pine in the Gudgenby valley.

The removal of the Boboyan pines in the Gudgenby Valley of Namadgi National Park (NNP) began late in 1997. Shortly thereafter a program to recreate natural ecosystems in the area previously under pines commenced. The project to date has about 203 hectares of the 380 hectare (total area) pine forest cleared, burnt and seeded, with a further 32 hectares felled and ready to be burnt.

Initially a working group was formed from a number of experts in associated fields. This group provided advice on the first stages of revegetation.

The assistance of a number of volunteer groups along with the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group (GBRG or Gudgenby Bushies) and the input of Namadgi staff and resources has been invaluable in the progress of this project.

Broadcasting a seed mix after a high intensity controlled burn of the pine slash has produced relatively good seedling growth across the old pine compartments. The vast majority of this, at times strenuous task, has been undertaken by volunteers.

Seedlings totalling over 4000 locally propagated, mixed native, over-storey species have been planted in areas where seeding strike rates are low. The use of tree guards has been trialed on these plants, with mixed results. Plastic tree guards on bamboo stakes (total cost 85c each) are inefficient in wind prone areas. Two litre cartons processed as tree guards with bamboo stakes (total cost 33c each) appear to be the best option and one thousand of these have been purchased for trial.

Wayne Sayer (from NNP) built a greenhouse at Glendale depot that will provide a suitable growing environment for seedlings to be used on the project over the next ten years. Over 3000 tube stock seedlings are currently growing here. The cost of having 3000 seedlings grown at a commercial nursery would exceed the building costs of the greenhouse.

The Gudgenby Bushies, having undertaken a Greening Australia seed propagation course, have grown 600+ seedlings at Greening Australia's Aranda depot. The Friends of the Botanic Gardens have also grown several hundred seedlings for the project on a volunteer basis with NNP supplying the seed and materials.

Greenfleet is a campaign that raises funds from motorists' subscriptions and uses these resources to combat greenhouse emissions. Their Carbon Busters program supports the planting of native trees. Greenfleet have agreed to raise and plant 15000 seedlings at the Boboyan pines next Spring.

Weed control of invasive weeds in the newly cleared areas is the highest priority of the project beyond establishing over-storey species. The relatively good growing season over the last two years has contributed



Some seedlings from seed broadcast in July 1998 are now over six feet tall.

Photo Eleanor Stodart

to extensive weed invasion in the newly disturbed areas. Weed control activities, however, have kept this invasion to a manageable level. Weed control activities include herbicide spraying of briar rose, nodding thistle, blackberry, St John's Wort by park staff and contractors.

The Gudgenby Bushies, the Ist Canberra Scouts, the Crowajalong Venturers, and Green Corps have, with the aid of hand tools dug out nodding thistle, blackberry, pine wildings and St John's Wort and cut & dabbed briar rose over most of the Hospital Creek area and much of the Bogong Creek revegetation area. In addition last financial year two GBRG work-parties, one National Parks Association work-party and several days effort by the Green Corps team have removed over 2000 pine wildings from adjacent bushland.

Exclosures designed to eliminate grazing pressures and ensure the establishment of native vegetation islands (providing a future seed source) have been built. A Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) grant to GBRG has enabled a contractor to be paid for the construction of eleven rabbit and kangaroo proof exclosures (20 x 20 metre) at Hospital Creek. Additionally three larger exclosures (50 x 50 metre) have been constructed within the Bogong Creek compartments. A 100 x 50 metre exclosure has been erected

continued on next page

Walking and talking the land



During Aboriginal Reconciliation Week, association member Flora Macdonald organised an inspection of some Aboriginal sites around Canberra. Here, Aboriginal Heritage Officer Dean Freeman explains seed grinding at a Theodore site. Photo Reg Alder

Over the first weekend in September, the group Australians for Reconciliation, led by Flora Macdonald, organised a most interesting program of activities within Canberra and the Tharwa Outward Bound Centre. Five NPA members were among the 70 people who took part.

An Aboriginal Heritage Officer with the Parks Service, Dean Freeman, and several Ngunnawal people accompanied two busloads of participants who were all interested in walking and talking the land.

Saturday was occupied with visiting an axe grinding grooves site, a scarred trees site, a tool making site and an ochre site, all within the city boundary.

After a barbecue meal at the Outward Bound Centre, people sat around the campfire and listened to speakers, before going to bed.

Next morning, people gathered in a large tent and shared their life stories with each other. Mrs O'Shea, Mr Williams and Matilda House spoke of their lives as children on Holywood Reserve, Yass. Other people spoke of why they wanted to be involved in the reconciliation process.

The afternoon session ended with a smoking ceremony conducted by Matilda and the painting of a banner to commemorate the weekend.

Fiona MacDonald Brand

Namadgi National Park Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Project *continued from page 10*

adjacent to the Yankee Hat carpark to accommodate the 2000 Olympic Landcare seedlings to be planted in Spring.

Water quality monitoring was carried out by GBRG volunteers using a borrowed Waterwatch kit until June '99. Interest in this activity was very low and the program is no longer carried out. Little or no variation in test results (indicating the pines project is not having a detrimental effect on waterways) may have contributed to the demise of Waterwatch.

We may try to assess stream quality next Spring by collecting macro invertebrates under the AusRivas program.

Water quality assessment will continue to be undertaken on samples sent to Ecowise every 6 months. This will be paid for by the GBRG NHT funds.

Green Corps

A Green Corps Major Project in Round 14 and Round 17 for the

Gudgenby Bush regeneration area was gained with the support of the Gudgenby Bushies and we have applied for a similar project in Round 19. The Green Corps members gain experience and training whilst greatly assisting the project in the following activities:

- tree planting
- rabbit control
- wood collection and splitting (for NNP's picnic areas)
- track construction
- pine wilding control
- fencing
- weed identification and control
- seed collection
- plant propagation
- broom monitoring

Volunteers including the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group Inc, National Parks Association, ACT Venturers, the Namadgi volunteer program participants and others have been responsible for most of the seeding, weed control, plant propagation and pine wilding removal at Gudgenby

along with establishing transects for monitoring, setting up photo monitoring sites, and help with an ANU research program. Chris Webb, an Honours student with the Department of Forestry, ANU, is investigating the impact of kangaroos on seedling revegetation.

In addition to the NHT grant, the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration group were successful in obtaining an Olympic Landcare grant to plant 2000 seedlings adjacent to the Yankee Hat carpark (the completion of the planting will coincide with the Olympic torch relay entering Canberra).

Thank you to all who have contributed to this, the biggest revegetation project of its type in this region. Special thanks to the core group of the Gudgenby Bushies who attend the monthly workparties and to staff and volunteers involved with the slash burns.

**Steve Welch
Ranger**

PARKWATCH

Australian alps walking track re-route

In April this year work commenced on the 5km re-route of the Australian Alps Walking Track (AAWT) within Namadgi National Park. The project, which aimed to divert the track of two relatively busy public roads, was identified as a high priority in the AAWT Management Strategy, 1997. The project received funding from the Australian Alps Liaison Committee and was matched by a \$10 000 from the ACT parks and Conservation Service.

More than 90% of the new track is complete. The remainder will be completed in Spring with the installation of decking on a number of bridges together with track signage and appropriate markers. This re-route between Booroomba Rocks carpark and the Honeysuckle Creek Plateau takes the AAWT alignment of Booroomba Road and Honeysuckle Road. By taking the track off roads the walkers experience and safety will be greatly enhanced.

The lower 2km of new track follows a formerly overgrown, disused 4-wheel drive track while the top 3km of the track has been benched in by hand. It gently follows the natural contours of the land where possible to minimise drainage problems. Water diversion bars have been installed along the length of the new alignment with hardwood steps located in steeper areas. Several watercourses have had footbridges placed over them with very little disturbance to the environment. This not only prevents wet feet but also impacts on water flow.

The sourcing of materials was carefully planned to obtain an environmentally sound outcome. The hardwood steps and bridge spans were all salvaged from a new powerline easement tree clearing activity. The decking for the 8 footbridges was obtained from an Australian firm, specialising in the use of mill waste from durable eucalypt species that may otherwise not be used.

from the Alps, Spring 2000.

Topographic map resurvey: 3rd edition 1:25000 maps

The Land Information Centre (LIC) is in the process of resurveying the 1:25000 map series commonly used by bushwalkers. The current edition maps are well known for marking topography reasonably accurately, but many fire trails and walking tracks are either not marked or completely wrong. These errors are largely due to the maps being based on ground surveys and aerial photography dating back to the 1970's.

Recently the LIC has commenced surveying for a 3rd edition map series. These maps should start appearing in local map shops soon. The resurvey is based on new aerial photography and a small amount of ground surveys.

Comparing the new maps to the old 2nd edition the following changes can be seen:

- They are on the GDA94 datum and not the old AGD66 datum. This means the 1 kilometre grid marked on the map has changed. The difference is about 200m. This also means that grid references read from old maps will not transfer correctly to the new maps. (The new maps have the old AGD66 datum marked faintly on the margins, so you can read old grid references. This means that from now on you must specify from which map datum a grid reference is taken to avoid confusion.)
- They are printed on glossy paper.
- The cadastral information is printed in more detail.
- There is a 1:25000 aerial photo on the back, of the full map area!
- Roads and tracks and vegetation boundaries should be more accurately shown.

The Bushwalker, August 2000.

Hooded plovers under cover

The Hooded Plover is a small wading bird found in coastal shallows, inlets and along sandy beaches. They are often very difficult to spot amongst the seaweed or the edge of salt lakes.

Disturbance by four wheel drives is a major threat to the survival of these birds. In every state except Victoria, where it is illegal to drive on beaches, off-road vehicles on beaches have been responsible for destroying nests. In the Coorong region of South Australia, a scientific survey has found that 87% of nests were run over by off-road vehicles, destroying eggs and chicks. Wandering dogs can also disturb, chase and kill flightless Hooded Plover chicks.

Wildlife News, April-June 2000.

So long and thanks for all the beef

Queensland's Brigalow Belt stretches in a 350-kilometre swathe from the New South Wales border north to Townsville, and is characterised by *Acacia harpophylla* (brigalow) woodlands. Only 2.2% of the area is protected in conservation reserves.

While grazing pressure, timber cutting, inappropriate fire regimes and exotic weeds (most notoriously the prickly pear) have all placed stress on species and ecosystems of this region the ball and chain is the major culprit. Clearing using large bulldozers harnessed together with a ship's anchor chain weighted by a giant steel ball has been a speciality of the region since the 1960s. Clearing continues at around 2000 square kilometres per year, every year.

This has resulted in the Brigalow Belt now having the largest number of threatened ecosystems of any Queensland bioregion (70 out of a total of 163 vegetation types are considered threatened), and some of Australia's most threatened woodland species. Included in the toll is the northern hairy nosed wombat, which has been reduced to

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PARKWATCH *continued from page 12*

just 70 animals. Eighteen reptile species are considered at risk, including the pretty golden-tailed gecko and Allen's lerista (a burrowing skink that may soon have the dubious distinction of being the first reptile extinction in Australia's history).

Expansion of beef farming is the main excuse for clearing.
habitat Australia, August 2000.

Give help, get a holiday

Residents of Magnetic Island are offering the use of their houses to Canberrans pledging support for their campaign to save the World Heritage listed island.

The island is surrounded by the Townsville-Whitsunday State Marine Park (SMP), which in turn is surrounded by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (GBRMP). The island is under threat from a huge canal estate-style residential/tourism project involving excision of part of the SMP and dredging in the GBRMP to provide spoil to build the canal estate.

Friends of Nelly Bay are challenging this development in the courts and they need financial support. If you can help with their legal costs, in return the Islanders have offered Canberrans the use of their homes for holidays. And your

donation will be tax deductible Wendy Tubman, a former Canberran, has been here letting people know what is happening.

If you would like to help, or just find out more about what is going on Friends of Nelly Bay have a website: www.powerup.com.au/~rodjulie/ or you can contact Wendy on <wtubman@ultra.net.au>
Sustainable Times, August 2000

Some reflections from the West *continued from page 4*

as threatened – the woylie or brush-tailed bettong, the quenda and the tammar wallaby – have been removed from the threatened register.¹

As in other growing cities, the remaining areas of swamp and bush along the narrow coastal plain near Perth are under immense pressures from development. It only takes me about 15 minutes to drive south out of the city. But I fear that by the time I'm ready to head back east in a few years it will take significantly longer. Thankfully national parks protect some stretches of southern coastline – Yalgorup between Mandurah and Bunbury and further south, Leeuwin-Naturaliste that extends for 120 kilometres between Capes Leeuwin and Naturaliste. The parks are often narrow – down to only 100 metres in places – but include sections that are relatively wild and inaccessible.

National parks this year celebrated their Western Australian centenary on November 19, the day when more than 1500 hectares was proclaimed as Greenmount National Park after the scarp on which it lies about 28 kilometres east of Perth. Now comprising 2676 hectares, its name was changed to John Forrest National Park in 1947 after the

distinguished Western Australian explorer, survey-general, Premier and Commonwealth politician. Like the original national parks in other states – Royal in New South Wales, Tower Hill in Victoria and Belair in South Australia – it was for many years a national park in name only as it continued to be subjected to logging, mining and wildflower collection. Kangaroo paw was removed from John Forrest and transplanted to Kings Park.²

Ironically, it was a major development – the construction of the second eastern railway – that really brought the natural values of the area to wider public notice, not unlike the more recent construction of the Gwydir Highway in northern NSW that brought the beauty of the Gibraltar Range to public attention and the declaration of a sizeable national park.

While the extractive industries have now been removed from John Forrest and the rail line has been closed, the park faces other threats because of its popularity and proximity to Perth. A sad example is the Eagle's Nest circuit walking track that was constructed by members of the Perth Bushwalkers' Club between 1993 and 1998 and has already become severely

guttered in places by mountain bikes. This has become an all-too-common sight on walking tracks and the damage is difficult and costly to repair. As I walked this track recently my thoughts turned across the continent to Canberra and our successful campaign in late 1996 and early 1997 to stop the mountain bike championships being held down the western faces of Black Mountain and Mt Majura.

There are only two places for mountain bikes in bush areas – on formed roads or specially designated tracks. In trying to control the problem the glib, unconvincing response often heard is that "education is the key". That is at best half a truth. The unfortunately significant number of irresponsible riders will only take notice of consistent – and therefore costly – policing with warnings and fines.

Stephen Johnston

1 "Bush Telegraph", pp 6-7 in *Landscape*, Department of Conservation and Land Management, Spring 2000.

2 "Premier Park", pp 22-27 in *Landscape*, Department of Conservation and Land Management, Spring 2000.

Book Review

Tilting at Snowgums, by Mark O'Connor, photographs by Klaus Hueneke, Tabletop Press, 1996. RRP \$19.95 inc GST.

Although not new, *Tilting at Snowgums* is worth drawing to the attention of NPA members. The author is a well known Canberra poet and the photographer is a well known Canberra writer, photographer, publisher and NPA member.

Those members who love the Snowy Mountains, in summer or winter, will find that the poems express much of what they have felt while walking, skiing or working on hut repairs, and will allow them to spend time at home reliving their experiences.

Many of the poems are wide-ranging and contain elements of all experiences, of people, place, skiing, history and so on; others are brief word pictures that encapsulate a moment's vision or fleeting feeling. All aspects of the mountains are covered:

the geology, at Ramshead –

Faulted book-leaves of stone...

at Cooleman Gorge –

Water spurts from an old sea-bed ...

the streams –

And the Snowy wriggling below

like an ecstatic worm

released from months of stone...

the weather –

Beneath a bruised sky in deep May...

the first snow –

A shadow's negative

lurking under a stone ...

the flowers –

Schools of silver snow daisies...

the animals –

a conspiracy of currawongs patter through the forest,

their gold-ringed eyes like pirates' earrings

their song, a low kettle-bubbling mischief...

Aborigines –

Here the bodies came, unshod, in summer's warmth

slept round the coals, with a possum skin cloak...

huts of white pioneers –

The wind and the rats gnaw, often in symphony,

at this ragged cathedral...

and modern developments –

The "T"'s skidding anchors...

full of figures strong from friendly gallows...

they exult, while accountants rejoice...

The final poem is "A Ballad of the Man from Snowy River", written to tell in new words an updated and fuller version of the story because the original poem has gone on growing in the imagination of Australians.

The photographs are mainly of natural features, but huts and people are depicted, too. The coloured photographs are grouped in two batches, probably for practical reasons, and the arrangement is aesthetically satisfying. A few black and white photographs are scattered among the poems and include some of historic interest. All are visually pleasing and some satisfy as works of art. With the poems, they make this a book to be opened again and again.

I hope that the glimpse I have given you is enough to make you seek a longer, fuller look.

Eleanor Stodart

Only about 20 copies of this book are still stocked by Tabletop Press and can be ordered direct. Tabletop Press also distributes some 200 titles by other publishers. With a strong focus on the Canberra and Monaro region, titles in the latest booklist are listed for easy reference under 10 headings, including Bushwalking / Bushcraft / Camping Places / Guides / National Parks / First Aid; Canberra and Local Region; and History and Heritage of the High Country. A copy of the list can be obtained from Tabletop Press, 2 Lambell Close, Palmerston, ACT 2913, telephone (02) 6242 0995.

Poems

On some of Judith Webster's travels in the last year or so, birds have made a memorable impression. The first was on a bird watching/wildlife safari in South Africa and the second occasion was closer to home – on Magnetic Island.

Birthday birds

On thirtieth September...

*With pale wing sweep
Three Blue Cranes flew
And in the sky
A halo drew*

*They floated down
To land with care
Soft grey-blue
Their plumage rare*

*Dark fringed wings
They lifted high
In graceful pose...
We could but sigh!*

*Long black tails
Shimmer and shake.
Three Blue Cranes
My birthday make...*

A day to remember!

The Jekyll and Hyde of Magnetic Island!

Sedate and quiet he steps about the shopping mall.

Elegant in tasteful dress –

Subdued yet of artistic design.

Should you approach

His pace will quicken and, head down in timid deference,

he'll hurry away.

BUT!

Come night...

He stalks the garden plots

Emits a plaintive, eerie call.

Louder and louder

Inciting his evil clones

To fearful chorus –

Blood curdling!

Spine chilling!

Frail mortals tremble in their homes (!?)

Desperate and hysterical the cries intensify

An occult babble erupts.

Then silence.

How strange and bizarre...this bird

Bush Stone Curlew

Feathered friend or fiend?

Escapism

The black of night is slowly seen off by the flat light of a new day. Points of light merge into the blue-grey of an ever-changing sky as wispy high clouds gradually assume the colours of a rose garden.

With the improving light comes better visibility. Crunchy, white grass and foggy breath confirm what other senses have suspected for some time.

No other creature is abroad at this hour. Perhaps the residents of the wild take such experiences as this for granted. Then again, maybe we humans are the ones who have been deprived for too long.

The business of dawn must eventually end. I turn my mind and senses to my surroundings on Grassy Creek, in the far south of Namadgi National Park.

In times gone, this valley supported rural families, and before them Aboriginal clans. Abundant grass for stock and kangaroos, plentiful clear water and space to expand must have proved tempting indeed for those free-spirited individuals who lived before the ordered and invasive days of the late 20th century. Thomas and Mary Jane Westerman's humble homestead with its ornate barge boards and flowering garden beds tells of people who considered this valley very much their home.

Clear and calm days are a particular delight. Besides the occasional, celebrating magpie, the only sound is that faint murmur made by the primal forces which exist all around. The gradual march of shadows and scurrying of ants combine to make the only discernible motion. Meanwhile, the ever warming sun brings life and relaxes tired souls. In such a threat-free environment it can be difficult to conceive of life in any other way.

Gently, the leaves stir, giving me pause to focus on things of a larger scale. The sky is now laced with cirrus and a distinct chill enters the valley. The weather is about to change and so is my attitude,

for above all else, these high valleys demand respect. Within a few hours my peaceful escape could be transformed into an ordeal – leaden skies atop truncated hills, spawning deafening winds which threaten to uproot every tree in sight. Just as quickly, horizontal rain can turn to snow. To watch such changes, and wonder at the forces which generate them is one of life's great privileges.

One can only speculate at the activity that such changes would generate in people such as the Westermans. Torn

between preservation of personal well-being and tending stock, many a cold night must have been spent in the upper reaches of this valley, away from a comforting fire and a warm meal.

Many cycles of sun and moon have passed in the valley of Grassy Creek. Each witnesses some change, small though it may be. Despite these changes, the enduring features of the valley are reliably present each time I visit. This guaranteed escape experience makes this one of my favourite places.

Martin Chalk

Calendar

Activity	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Committee meeting	Thu7		Thu1	Thu1
Environment Sub-committee ¹	Thu14		Thu8	Thu8
General meeting			Thu15	Thu15
Gudgenby Regeneration ²	Sat9		Sat10	Sat10
Bulleting Working Group ³			Tue6	
Christmas Party	Sun10			
ACT Alive ⁴				Mon12
High Plains and Mountain Tops ⁵	Fri8			

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
5. Martin Chalk exhibition at Namadgi Visitor Centre

General meetings

Thursday 19th April 2001

Southern National Parks Large and Small

Dr. Tony Fleming, Director of NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service Southern Directorate.

The Southern Directorate of the Service manages 1800sqkm of Parks extending from just south of Wollongong to the Victorian boarder and past Albury in the west to the coast. As an outcome of the Southern Forests Decision more than 318 000ha will soon be added to the reserve system. Dr. Fleming will talk about the management of this diverse and expanding system of national parks.

Thursday 15th March 2001

Three miles above the Silk Road

Francis Lawrence will talk about a recent trip to Mustag-Ata Mountain in Xinjiang Province of Western China. Francis has visited many mountainous regions around the world, where as well the mountains he takes a keen interest in the natural and cultural history of these often-remote places.

Thursday 15th February 2001

Legal Eagles for the environment.

Melissa Honner, the solicitor from the ACT Environmental Defender's Office will speak on the EDO's role in environmental protection and advocacy in the ACT. The EDO provides independent legal aid on environmental issues to the ACT and surrounding NSW community. It also has played a strong role in legal education and legal reform of environmental legislation in the ACT.

National Parks Association (ACT)

New members welcome



Mick Kelly crosses Cave Creek in Nicoli Gorge during an NPA pack walk in October 2000.

Photo Max Lawrence

NPA Bulletin

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