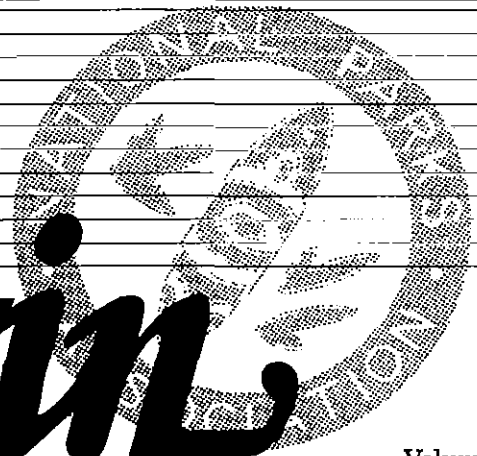


NPA Bulletin



Volume 38 number 1
March 2001

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION (ACT) INCORPORATED



Environment Sub-committee report

Willows and wild horses

Thredbo Diggings car camp

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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

President Clive Hurlstone 6288 7592(h);
040 778 3422(w)
Vice President David Large 6291 4830(h)
Immediate
Past President Eleanor Stodart 6281 5004(h)
Secretary Len Haskew 6281 4268(h)
Treasurer Mike Smith 6286 2984(h)

Committee members

Steven Forst 6251 6817(h) 6279 1326(w)
Judy Kelly 6253 1859(h)
Timothy Walsh 6285 1112(h)
Eleanor Stodart 6281 5004(h)
Max Lawrence 6288 1370(h)
Neville Esau 6286 4176(h)
Jacqui Cole 6241 9984(h)

Convenors

Environment Sub-committee David Large 6291 4830(h)
Outings Sub-committee Max Lawrence 6288 1370(h)
Bulletin Working Group Syd Comfort 6286 2578(h)

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.

Telephone/Fax: (02) 6282 5813
Email: npaact@spirit.com.au
Address: PO Box 1940, Woden ACT 2606
Internet: <http://www.spirit.net.au/~npaact>

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

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NPA Bulletin

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

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

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Cover photo: Lunch stop on the Thredbo River Track between the village and Dead Horse Gap. Photo Adrienne Nicholson

Environment Sub-committee report

Members will be aware of a number of problems that have caused a hiatus in our activities and that little work has been carried out with only a few meetings held over the past six months. I'm pleased to say that we are now back on track and we are moving on with a number of projects.

We need to complete the 1999/2000 projects in order to acquit the grant we received from Environment ACT. Clive Hurlestone has agreed to coordinate these projects. They include:

- NPA input to the Second Namadgi National Park Management Plan to take account of the claim for recognition of native title;
- development of a Plan to Manage Remnant Native Vegetation in ACT Forests; and
- comments on implementation plans for Murrumbidgee River Corridor, Canberra Nature Park and Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve.

Two additional projects are to develop submissions on the recently

released ACT Nature Based Tourism Strategy and a plan of management for wild horses in Kosciuszko National Park. A working group convened by Tom Heinson is looking after the Nature Based Tourism Strategy and Gary Thompson is leading the group on wild horses.

If you would like to assist in any of these projects, please contact me or Clive, Tom or Gary. Any help is very welcome.

The Nature Based Tourism Strategy is likely to cause us many problems. It is not clear just what is proposed. One matter of immediate concern is the proposal to develop Gudgenby Homestead as a commercial accommodation and food outlet. This proposal was rejected by members last year.

Clearly, if this went ahead it would only lead to many more requests for additional resources and facilities. The strategy looks to develop Namadgi National Park for eco-tourism and seems to pay little attention to the values of a national park. This issue is explored

further in the letters printed on pages 16 and 17.

The wild horses issue is very emotive and members have differing views. These mainly relate to the question of shooting wild horses. The *Report on the Cull of Feral Horses in Guy Fawkes River National Park* in October 2000 makes interesting reading and members should read this report before reaching conclusions. My own position is that I have seen the damage done by wild horses in Kosciuszko National Park and hope they can be removed.

The protagonists to keep them in place are mainly drawn by people who enjoy the "sport" of brumby running. I have no argument with them. I only have a argument with them conducting their sport in KNP. If they want to indulge in such a sport then let them do so on private land.

Di Thompson sets out her views on the feral horse problem in her article on page 4.

David Large

Foreign correspondent - from our man in USA

In September of last year, association member Barry Ridgeway and his companion embarked upon an 11-day exploration of an American wilderness - the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in Minnesota. Given the populated *nature of the USA when compared to Australia*, Barry initially had a certain scepticism about the remoteness of this wilderness. However, his report of the trip, sent to the NPA, freely admits that the million or so acres of lakes, forests and rivers soon had him in its grasp. The daily routine of paddle and portage set the pace for

exploration beyond the reach of the casual traveller.

Given the autumnal timing and the location of the wilderness, weather was always to be a factor in their journey. Indeed, delays caused by rain and storms required them to re-assess their objective on day four. Nevertheless, the combination of solitude, weather extremes, stillness and the call of the loons combined to impress on Barry that a country of 250 million people, too, can have national parks which offer genuine wilderness experiences.

Martin Chalk

ACT Alive, Sunday March 18

The association again plans a display for ACT Alive so volunteers to assist would be welcome. Note the change in venue and the later date. Details are in the Outings Program.



New Members

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

Jennifer Ballard	Queanbeyan
Helen Corrigan	Dickson
Valerie Elder	Watson
Rosalie Grant	Aranda
Peter Hann	Chifley
N and D Hanson	Deakin
Brian O'Neill	Fisher
N and L Page	
Margaret Power	Deakin
Ben Schimer	Gowrie
Sylvia Sun	Canberra
John Tassie	Chifley
Alan Walker	Murrumbateman
Pauline West	Kaleen

Willows and wild horses

Last year, Di Thompson was appointed to the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service Snowy Mountains Advisory Committee. In this article, Di reports on some issues which the committee has considered.

Willows and wild horses are just two of the issues on the Snowy Mountains Advisory Committee's (SMAC) agenda. Others include the Walker Enquiry into the Thredbo landslide, the legacies of the Snowy Mountains Hydroelectric Scheme, new reserve additions, resorts, waste management, relationships with landholders and adjoining shire councils, bushfire strategies, park usage fees, feral controls, Alps Liaison and eco tourism.

SMAC membership is eclectic. We come from a diverse range of backgrounds and expertise, including local councils and communities, resorts, tourism, indigenous communities, science, conservation and the rural communities. Depending on the circumstances, SMAC members also work on sub-committees and working groups. Two such recently formed groups relate to the control and management of willows and wild horses.

These issues are both topical and emotive. Public knowledge is generally low and each attracts more than its share of misinformation. It is some years now since Fiona McDonald Brand and Tim Walsh drew the association's attention to willows as a problem in our midst. Since then park authorities have made various assessments of their distribution, identified the more invasive willow types and begun programs of control.

Kurt Cremer, a SMAC member, is a CSIRO willow expert. Kurt recently made a presentation on willows to the committee, and impressed on members that there was a rare and very limited "window-of-opportunity" to contain or even eradicate some willow species in our region. He also advised that not all willow species required such urgent control and intervention. As we all know, willows have been planted extensively in Australia over the last 150 years, for the protection of river banks, for

stabilisation, and for ornamental and sentimental purposes. These plants spread through accidental striking of broken branches and by further planting. However the planting of additional species in more recent decades, with both male and female trees growing within pollinating distance of each other, started to produce seeds and seedlings and this has resulted in an exponential growth and spread of many species.

The two really aggressive species in our region are *Salix fragilis* and *S.nigra* (commonly known as the crack willow and the black willow respectively). The black willow parent population is sourced from the Tumut River. However the black willow creates a massive seed supply, and over the last 10 years seeds have blown more than 100km, with sites now recorded on the Goodradigbee, Queanbeyan, Molongo and Murrumbidgee Rivers near Canberra. I can only conclude that given the flightpath of those seeds to our region, that seeds would have also germinated in the Naas, Gudgenby and Orroral Rivers.

I hope that Kurt will be able to give a presentation on willows to the NPA in the near future. There are some excellent free publications available on willow management and willow identification, details of which are set out below.

Now to wild horses. Many people have not been aware until very recently that up to 30 wild horses spend the summer months in the Alpine region of Kosciuszko National Park (KNP). The horses are usually in several groups, and over the last six years have been moving to the area above 1850m, generally in the Rams Head area and in the headwaters of the Swampy Plains River and Leatherbarrel Creek.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) has formed a Wild Horse Management Steering Committee (WHMSC), with representatives from horse riding organisations, local communities, a vet, alpine ecologist, NPWS staff and yours truly representing nature

conservation. This WHMSC has been brought together to develop a plan of management for wild horses in the Alpine area. Two formal public consultation processes have been held – a forum in Jindabyne in January and an information evening in Queanbeyan on February 13.

There was almost unanimous agreement at the Jindabyne forum that wild horses be removed from the Alpine area and the sooner the better. The next issue is how?

The NPWS is particularly sensitive to community opinion and political backlash on this issue (generated to a large extent by talkback radio and other media). A direct consequence has been that the approach to the management of wild horses in KNP is limited in its scope and definition to the removal of wild horses in the Alpine area (that is, above 1850m). The terms of reference for the WHMSC do not cover wild horses in other parts of KNP or the much broader issue of horse riding.

NPWS public presentations outline the problem – that "wild horses have expanded their populations beyond traditional areas, they are now above the tree line along the Main Range", and of course they "make a significant impact on the fragile alpine environment". However, of concern to conservationists, are other NPWS statements that it "recognises the cultural value of wild horses" and "that the welfare of wild horses is paramount" as opposed to any statement referring instead to the humane treatment of horses. The NPWS obviously needs further support and encouragement to make stronger statements concerning the paramount importance of the welfare and protection of native flora and fauna, to provide scientific evidence on impacts, and "that horses are introduced and have no natural predators".

There are several theories about where the alpine horses have come from, one of which maintains that they are being pushed up from Cowombat Flat because of the increasing population pressure in

that area. They are not thought to be part of the Dead Horse Gap population.

As to the process so far. NPWS and the WHMSC members were concerned to ensure that the initial public consultations be small, manageable and successful. However, there continues to be strong opinion from those outside the immediate local region, that the Canberra, Sydney and resort communities form a significant constituency of key stakeholders in KNP and that all should be brought into the community consultation process. I believe that for the time being we have a depth of community comment on the issue of wild horses in the Alpine zone. Further public input will be required when the debate is extended to wild horses and horse riding elsewhere in the park.

It became very clear to the conservationists who attended the forum and the information session, that wild horses and brumby running in KNP are intrinsically linked and presents a much larger problem than many of us thought. This raised a whole new set of circumstances that we must consider. It can be argued that removal of the wild horses from the Alpine area was an easy trade-off for many in the horse riding fraternity. Basically the real issue is access. Furthermore, brumby running is alive and well. Some riders operate like hunters, putting the catch back in many instances or introducing new blood, to ensure the sport is sustained and built up. Readers should be aware that this is a sport, an activity, carried out by a few families, at public expense and resulting in the large areas of destruction in KNP, the jewel of the NSW national parks system. I believe the general public has been duped by the emotive images portrayed through links to "Man from Snowy River" into associating heritage values with wild horses, without consideration of horse numbers, distributions, impacts, the reason for creating national parks, and so on.

What is at stake is the potential for annual musterings (brumby runs) endorsed by WHMSC and the

NPWS – under the guise of keeping numbers down, and increased (read this as unlimited) access to the park – both by horses and 4-WDs.

Neither in Australia nor overseas has mustering alone kept wild horse populations down. Wild horse populations, without predators, increase at a rate of between 15 per cent to 20 per cent a year, so their numbers double every four to five years. Wild horses have not been officially managed in KNP for 20 years. In fact, the *Report on the Cull of Feral Horses in Guy Fawkes National Park* by Dr Tony English explains that not only is mustering ineffectual as a single tool, but that there are significant animal welfare concerns in relation to the horses being mustered, yarded and transported.

The horse riding community is pushing hard to be allowed to reduce the wild horse numbers. If locals (without accreditation and other independent evaluative and monitoring constraints) get this task, then brumby running will be institutionalised, as they will ensure that there are always sufficient numbers of wild horses in all parts of the park for ongoing annual culls.

In the northern part of KNP, the Tantangara, wild horses are now crossing the ranges into the ACT. One participant at the information sessions firmly stated that wild horses were elsewhere in Namadgi National Park too. The ACT Government shot, what were then, the last wild horses in Namadgi National Park in the late 1980s. One theory is the current horses have been so "chased" by horse riders on the Tantangara Plain that they are being pushed up over the border. I had hoped that ACT Parks and Conservation would be able to support the NPWS by eradicating any reintroduced wild horses in the ACT. I believe they plan a wait and see approach with some initial thought being given to the possible construction of a fence (or barrier) to stop the horses coming into the ACT. The potential for damage to the fragile bogs and ponds in those border gaps by fencing workers may be worse than the horses.

I'd appreciate hearing from you if you sight wild horses in KNP, and of any realistic suggestions for removal of wild horses in that area. Also I'm happy to forward an electronic version of the Tony English report for those who would like to know more about the aerial culling of wild horses at Guy Fawkes National Park. My contact details are: 6288 6084 (h) thompson@webone.com.au (h) dthompson@gststartup.gov.au (w).

For more information on willow management and identification See <http://www.ffp.csiro.au/publicat/articles/willows>

For the following free booklets, write to Bob Trounce, NSW Agriculture, Locked Bag 21, Orange, NSW, 2800, or fax him on (02) 6391 3605.

Cremer, K W (1996), *Willow identification for river management in Australia. Technical Paper 3*. CSIRO Forestry, Canberra, 22pp.

Cremer, Kurt (1999), *Willow management for Australian rivers*. Natural Resource Management, Special Issue, Dec. 1999, pp 1–22.

Trounce, Bob and Cremer, Kurt (1997), *Willow control*. Publ. by NSW Agriculture. 6pp.

Di Thompson

Total fire bans

Tony Corrigan, Manager ACT Parks and Conservation, has provided the following information on the action taken by his service on days of total fire ban.

For Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve the risk of fire is computed specifically for the reserve and on the basis of this a decision is made. If the ban is to apply to the reserve the reserve is closed to the public; otherwise the reserve may remain open even on days of total fire ban. Thus during this season Tidbinbilla has been closed on only one day

Namadgi National Park is closed on days of total fire ban in the following way. The park is not closed to pedestrians although as far as possible they are warned about the fire danger. Similarly, occupants of the camp grounds are advised of the situation but are not evacuated. Roads are closed where they could become a fire trap because they are the only road in or out as, for example, to Orroral.

Thredbo Diggings car camp, February 2001

Two leaders arrived at Thredbo Diggings on Thursday evening to a camping ground under perfect conditions. Clear sky, calm air and delightfully comfortable temperature; very still on the river giving wonderful reflections. There were about five other groups in the camp area, so we had oodles of room and settled ourselves nearest the easy fine gravel slope accessing the river. Our space included a fireplace with hotplate and suspension chain, a picnic table and benches, both open and shady areas, room to spread out tent spaces and accommodate a camper-van. The pit toilets were close by but not too close. With a close-to-full moon and brilliant stars, we needed no torches. Idyllic conditions when we retired at about 10.30.

That evening, a wombat chomped his (or her) way past soon after we went to bed. I watched him for some time but he just grazed around the camp untroubled. Each evening a wombat grazed around 'our' area, even while we were still sitting round our campfire. Most of the groups camped at the Diggings reported a wombat around their camp; wombats always have featured in my mind-picture of this particular campground.

High, thin wispy clouds came up some time during the night, then a breeze; it intensified becoming a blustery wind roaring down the valley. By Friday morning, it had started to rain intermittently, and things did not seem too promising. However, we were able to breakfast between showers and were never confined to tents or car shelter.

Phasmids (stick insects) in vast numbers were dropping from the sky (the trees really, but it seemed from the sky generally). It did not take us long to work out that the brown ones with a cream lateral stripe and beautiful mauve transparent hind wings were males, while the females

were a rich leaf-green and more robust. The males could fly, in a manner of speaking, but the females did not; most of the individuals stranded through having landed on the river, were males. They were everywhere and we did get used to them, but fewer would have been better. Huge flocks of little ravens (we rough-counted hundreds at a time) wheeled and settled and we discovered they were feasting on the insects.

We set off for a morning Bullock's Track walk, with other NPAers expected to arrive around lunchtime. Many flowers were out, including two orchids; ladies' tresses (*Spiranthes sinensis*) with their myriad tiny rich pink flowers arranged spirally up the stem, in moist but open ground, and parson's bands (*Eriochilus cucullatus*) with up to three pinky mauve flowers per stem, favouring open woodland. Many species from the daisy family were flowering; billy buttons (or whatever), different yellow and white paper daisies, raggedy multi-headed yellow ones, native yams, *Brachycomes*, etc. Conspicuous red-berried bushes, seemed to be of two forms, one with green foliage and very red berries, the other with more blue-green foliage had berries more pinkish. A reedy lagoon area (of maybe two acres) to the right of the track was bright with patches of yellow fringed lillies (*Nymphoides*).

We called in to the Bullock's Flat Ski Tube terminal for an ice cream, pit stop and to watch the train come and go. Hardly bustling; about four passengers alighted, maybe eight boarded. Trying to be helpful, the chap in the shop told us we couldn't get coffee at the lower terminal, but we could up at Blue Cow! We went on to Bullock's Hut sitting out a heavier rain shower reading the visitors book, then returned to the Diggings along the river section of the

track, on the lookout for another track shown on the information boards (we found no sign of either end of this cross-track and remained confused). This part of the track is more undulating, passing through denser bush but with many glimpses of the river appearing as both mini-white-water sections and large still pools. We'd a leisurely ramble, botanising, enjoying the bush, and passing the time of day with fly-fishermen we came across from time to time on/in the river (none seemed to be catching anything).

Reg and Fiona had arrived by the time we returned to camp, and a leisurely lunch followed. Margaret re-walked Bullock's Track with them while Adrienne remained about camp then went to meet the others returning. Surprise, surprise, Fiona wound up her afternoon activities with a swim! Pre-dinner and dinner in very pleasant conditions; though cloudy, there had been no rain for most of the afternoon.

Our last two campers (Phil and Jayne) arrived about 7:30, already fed. We spent a pleasant evening chatting, though not around a campfire, the evening being comfortably warm. However, the moon managed only a brief appearance through the trees low on the horizon before being engulfed by cloud.

Saturday saw two levels of activity being undertaken: less strenuous and more strenuous! The first group wandered up the Thredbo River track from the village to Dead Horse Gap and return. We enjoyed (after the golf course!) open woodland and grassland, interspersed with fine views along the river; mini-rapids, still pools and waterfalls. We encountered an abundance of wildflowers and also came across many insects and spiders, including

continued on page 19

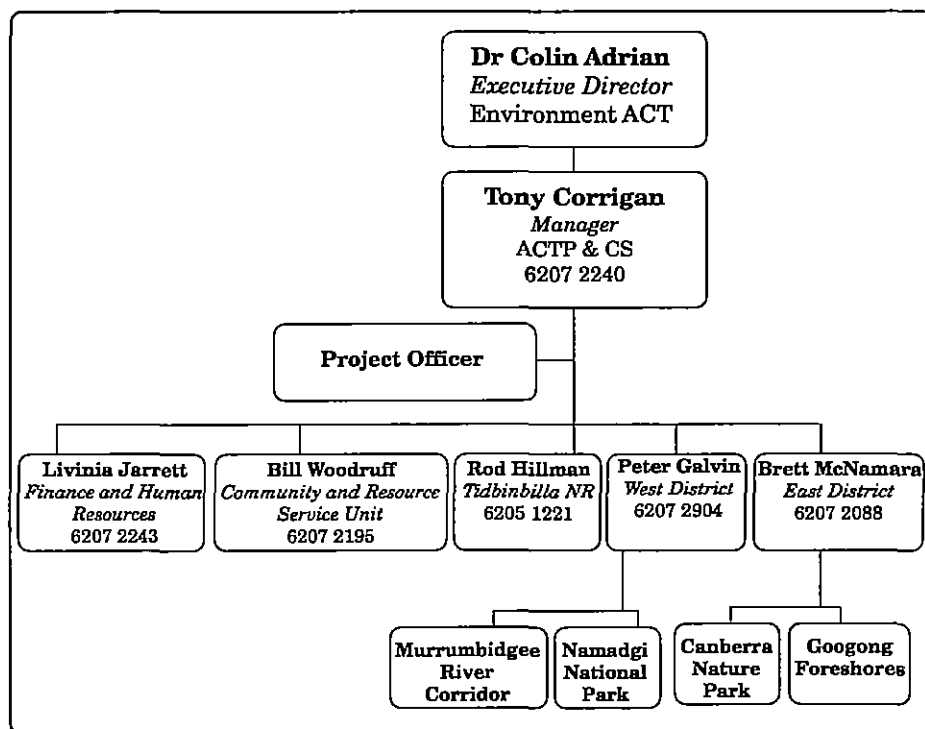
ACT Parks and Conservation Service operational changes

I would like to thank the National Parks Association for this opportunity to introduce myself and to explain some of the operational changes that the ACT Parks and Conservation Service has implemented over the past few months. Firstly a little about myself. I was appointed to the position of Manager, ACT Parks and Conservation Service in August last year. I have a long association with the ACT Parks and Conservation Service having worked as a ranger for the past 15 years. During my career I have worked in Canberra Nature Park, Googong, Tidbinbilla, Namadgi, the Murrumbidgee River Corridor and as a rural ranger.

I have a thorough understanding of the excellent natural and cultural resources that this agency protects on behalf of the community. The challenge is to maintain these values while making places available for the enjoyment of visitors and tourists.

The ACT Parks and Conservation Service has recently implemented some operational changes to enable better service to the people of the ACT and to ensure continued high quality management of the ACT's reserve system. These changes include the creation of two new districts, one east of the Murrumbidgee River Corridor and including Googong Foreshores and Canberra Nature Park and another including the Murrumbidgee River Corridor and Namadgi National Park. The following is a summary of the new structure.

It is important to note that the ACT Parks and Conservation Service is also responsible for the day to day administration of rural



lands. This allows for a holistic and catchment based approach to non urban land management in the Territory. By working in a cooperative manner with other land owners through Land Management Agreements, natural values and good productive use of the region can be sustained.

As you are probably aware, Parks and Conservation headquarters is located at Athllon Drive. The East District main office is at Grimwade Street Mitchell, while the West District is administered from the

Namadgi Visitor Information Centre just south of Tharwa.

I personally value the partnerships between community groups such as the NPA and Environment ACT, and look forward to developing our relationship. I would like to take this opportunity to invite all the NPA's members to contact me on 6207 2240 should you wish to discuss any issues.

Tony Corrigan

Manager
ACT Parks and Conservation
Service
Environment ACT

New conservation reserve maps

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service has produced black and white maps of south-east NSW showing the new conservation reserves in the area. The maps, with accompanying notes, are available from the service, free of charge

Climbing Mustag-Ata

Francis Lawrence, our guest at the association's February meeting, came to Australia from France in 1973, has lived in Canberra since 1975 and will be remembered as an Olympic torchbearer here last year. An avid traveller and climber, in 1989 he espoused the idea of climbing the highest mountain in each continent. Part way on this quest having conquered Elbrus in European Russia, he recognised that Everest and Vinson would be beyond his financial resources and thus stood in the way of his reaching his goal. So he shifted the goal posts and directed his energies to climbing peaks in remote and wilderness areas. And thus to Mustag-Ata located in China's western Xinjiang Province.

In July of last year Francis set out from Islamabad by minibus in a group of 14 people. Following the Karakorum Highway they travelled through spectacular country; along the Indus valley for many miles; along tortuous and narrow mountain roads at one point making a rough crossing of the partly cleared rubble from a huge landslide; climbing, climbing to high passes; through verdant high meadows; across the border into China and so to their base camp. Francis's commentary on this section of the journey showed a deep awareness of the people he saw and met along the way.

We were told that Mustag-Ata at 7546 metres is not technically a difficult climb calling for extremely high skill to surmount steep rock and ice faces, but that it is very demanding in that long distances at high altitude need to be covered. Slides of the mountain clearly illustrated the long snow- and ice-covered slopes on the way to the summit. Becoming lost in this white expanse, particularly in bad visibility, is a great risk which indeed did overtake a climber from another group at this time. There is also the risk posed by crevasses.

There followed a period for acclimatisation and then the trek to camps 1 and 2. Throughout the time



Francis Lawrence with association member Mieke van den Bergh.

Photo courtesy Francis Lawrence

on the mountain the party was subject to extreme cold with Francis's thermometer at times forced on to its bottom mark of -25 degrees. During this time some members suffered serious frostbite. Apparently if this is to be endured, the ears are the favoured location! The long treks on snow, at times quite soft, made for extremely tiring progress and led some members to favour snow shoes in these conditions. From these high slopes Francis was able to see high peaks in distant ranges which he had climbed on previous expeditions.

When the time came for the assault on the summit Francis was a member of the small group to make the attempt. He gave us some insight into his mental processes as he pondered on making the decision about the final stage of the climb; balancing the drive to reach the top against the demands of the trek up and return, and his physical state. He and two others from the group succeeded in reaching the summit which lay above some rocky outcrops, and marked it by erecting their national flags including the Australian flag. They retraced their steps down the mountain and back to base camp.

Their return trip to Islamabad was in a very different mood from the outward journey and in a relaxed way they took in the country and its people with a spell of a few days in the Hunza Valley.

Francis illustrated his talk with some magnificent slides, answered questions at the conclusion of his presentation and stayed on to

discuss his travels over a cup of tea. The meeting enthusiastically endorsed the vote of thanks proposed by President Clive Hurlstone.

After the meeting Francis passed on to me the two short notes reproduced below.

"In general, wild places and traditional communities are not doing well in most countries around the world. I have seen primitive villages in the Himalayas, once only accessible on foot, instantly disfigured, polluted and overcrowded all because of the building of a new road.

"Answering the cry for help by sponsoring a third world child is a most humane thing to do but at the same time it disturbs me that so little is done to limit the phenomenal overpopulation taking place right now. India's population increases by 52 000 every day. More and more it seems that only tourists with their dollars, despite their heavy demands on the environment, can help to keep the remaining wild places with a functioning ecosystem."

"Altitude. On average, the temperature drops by 1 degree for every 160 metres increase in altitude. No humans live permanently above 5000 metres. We humans lose 10 per cent of our power and oxygen for every 1000 metres increase in altitude, so a climber on top of Everest without supplementary oxygen has only 10 per cent of the energy he would enjoy at sea level. As a result, as soon as a climber rises above 5000 metres he is in a process of dying. This can take two months at 6000 metres, one to two weeks at 7000 metres and three to four days at 8000 metres. If we were to find ourselves suddenly at 7000 metres unacclimatised, we would all perish within 20 minutes. Mental capacity is also greatly affected by altitude; one can go from bliss to despair in seconds and normal intellect is severely restricted at extreme altitude.

Otherwise, climbing is real fun!"

Syd Comfort

Fish of the high country

Members and friends who braved the wet weather on the night of the November General Meeting were rewarded with a fascinating presentation by Dr Mark Lintermans. The essence of his talk was its absolutely delightful presentation. Mark's talk was not only very informative but it was also one of the most entertaining that I have experienced at an NPA meeting. The subject of his address was the plight of native fish in a changing alpine environment and what the future holds for them.

Mark is a senior fisheries scientist with the Wildlife Research and Monitoring Unit, Environment ACT, and he has worked for the ACT Government for 19 years. He has also spent seven years with the Centre for Cooperative Research for Fresh Water Ecology in Canberra. His principal area of interest has been the upper Murrumbidgee catchment, but it was obvious to the people at the meeting that his interest and enthusiasm extended to all native fish species.

Mark began his talk by pointing out that Australia has very few native fish when compared to the rest of the world. The Mississippi River is home to about 327 native species, Japan has about 127, whereas Australia can only muster about 200 inland fish. This is not really surprising as Australia is a very dry continent. Only four species of native fish actually evolved in fresh water, the ancestors of all others came from the sea. The three species of the upper Murrumbidgee catchment, trout cod, Macquarie perch and the two-spined blackfish are all threatened, having been adversely impacted by the construction and operation of large impoundments and the depredations of introduced species.

While very critical of acclimatisation societies and others who have introduced a variety of exotic fish whose mere presence is a great threat to native populations, Mark has a grudging respect for the efforts of those responsible for the introduction of trout to Australia. Apparently trout eggs, packed in

sphagnum moss were transported here in sailing ships. Mark is also critical of groups such as *Coarse Anglers*, who, in Mark's words, "catch Carp in Lake Burley Griffin, kiss them and then throw them back!"

The construction of dams and reservoirs alters or destroys fish habitat and this is widely regarded as one of the most important causes of native fish decline in Australia. The major classes of habitat modification caused by impoundments are:

- barriers to fish passage – upstream movement for spawning and recolonisation is prevented and contributes to the fragmented nature of many fish populations. Fish are injured when they "fall over" dam walls
- alterations to flow regimes – impoundment partially reverses the seasonal nature of flows as water from spring and autumn rains are stored for release in summer. The release of cold water at an inappropriate time removes water temperature cues for fish to commence spawning.
- sedimentation – Macquarie perch, along with some other native species, normally deposit adhesive eggs amongst rocks and gravel on stream beds. Sedimentation can either smother spawning sites rendering them unsuitable, or smother the eggs themselves. The establishment of sand and gravel extraction facilities can further exacerbate this problem by destabilising river channels and resuspending fine sediment. Urban development and general land degradation from overclearing and inappropriate land management also contribute to general siltation
- reduction of instream habitat – streams are often narrow and shallower below dams because they are no longer periodically flushed by floods.
- reduction in water quality – the release of a cold slug of water during the breeding season inhibits spawning behaviour. The

clearing of riparian vegetation below dams brings about a loss of shade for fish. Often the water below dams is very shallow.

- introduction of exotic species – the present operation of dams and reservoirs facilitates the maintenance and spread of introduced species, which are a major source of native fish decline. The abundance of carp has been shown to be directly related to the proximity of large impoundments. Goldfish and redfin perch all have a greater proportion of small individuals in regulated rivers, indicating greater recruitment success in these environments.
- (Another potentially serious threat from introduced fish is the spread of foreign diseases and parasites to native fish species.)

What can be done?

- strategies for environmental flow releases need to be developed.
- minimum environmental flows should be based on the 80th percentile flow from the pre-regulation hydrological records.
- the environmental flow strategy should mimic natural daily and monthly variability.
- water releases should be such as to ensure that there are no adverse effects from thermal pollution.
- the environmental flow strategy should include provision for 'channel forming' flows to maintain stability of the river channel.
- an 'adaptive management' approach should be adopted so that alterations can be made as necessary.
- a systematic monitoring program should be established.

Mark believes that if an environmental flow regime is adopted it will aid considerably in the conservation of threatened fish species, but that other actions such as limiting water extraction, erosion control and management of riparian vegetation are also necessary if the health of our rivers is to be restored.

Len Haskew

Parkwatch

Birds of Mulligans Flat

There is now a walking path at the Yellow Box/Red Gum Grassy Woodland at Mulligans Flat with signs about the habitat and the birds you might see. There is also a brochure with a map and a comprehensive bird list for the Nature Reserve. If you want a copy of the brochure call 6207 2113.

Sustainable Times, November 2

Topical Media releases

Wilderness Society welcomes move by Premier Beattie to protect World Heritage rainforest Nature Link threat

Date: 08 November 2000

Premier Beattie and the Queensland Government are to be congratulated for the decision to not allow the "Naturelink" cableway in the World Heritage-listed rainforests of the Gold Coast hinterland to proceed.

The route chosen for the cableway would have posed a threat to some of the world's most important rainforests. These forests are far too valuable an asset to the people of Queensland to risk for the sake of the commercial interests of one developer.

When it comes to areas of outstanding global and universal biological significance like this, it is imperative that government's demonstrate the capacity to step back from a development at any cost mentality and respond to the needs of the environment and concerns of the community.

The Premier has ably demonstrated this capacity with this decision.

Conservationists Support NPWS Park Fire Management

Date: 09 November 2000

Summary: The Nature Conservation Council of NSW opposes claims by the NSW Farmers Association who have criticised NPWS fire management practices.

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW opposes claims by the NSW Farmers Association who have criticised NPWS fire management practices.

At a Public Meeting to be held in Armidale today, the NCC is concerned that the NSW Farmers will use the emotion generated from recent fires to circumvent the scientific planning process that the NPWS has conducted to manage for fire hazard as well as biodiversity.

"The NCC supports the NPWS as a fire-fighting agency and as a land manager. The NPWS has an extremely good record in managing fire in terms of both planning and operations", said Dr Judy Messer, Chairperson of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC).

"Of the recent 219 fires that effected the north coast NPWS managed lands, 82 fires had escaped from neighbouring lands and entered onto NPWS managed lands. Only 35 fires spread from NPWS managed lands onto adjoining property."

"Within NSW, three times more fires enter National Parks from neighbouring land than escape from the parks. This demonstrates that NPWS is very effective in containing fires to within their lands" Dr Judy Messer continued.

In regards to bush fire planning, the NPWS has established clear and regular communication with landholders neighbouring National Parks.

"There is a process for park neighbours to provide input and feedback into fire management activities on park and farmers are informed of exactly what hazard reduction is to be carried out each year." said Dr Judy Messer.

ACF Media Alert

November 2, 2000

International press exposes Australian land clearing!

Australia's standing as the biggest land clearer of all developed nations recently made international news in three countries in the same week. Britain's Sunday Telegraph ran a major article headlined "Millions of birds die as Australian farmers clear bushland", following similar coverage in The South China Post

and on Swiss television. The Telegraph said that 264 bird species at risk of extinction include the red-tailed black cockatoo, the regent and orange-bellied parrots and the hooded robin. It said koalas are suffering from land clearing, and that for every koala lost, 10 000 insects, birds and reptiles are killed.

"It's bizarre to find that the international media care more about the impacts of tree clearing than our own politicians," ACF Executive Director Don Henry said. Following the failure in August (2000) of the Queensland Government to bring in laws to stop clearing in that state, it was estimated that a wooded area the size of 50 football fields is lost each day.

habitat Australia, October 2000.

Salinity and all that

A recent edition of The Australian carried a CSIRO warning that "50% of birds in agricultural areas face the threat of extinction over the next 50 years, because of salinity - we're talking probably 70 to 80 species.' A couple of days later, the same newspaper published the findings of a Newpoll survey that showed strong public support for the environment. It is the fourth most important issue for Australians after education, health, and unemployment but before family issues, leadership, taxation and interest rates.

Despite flares from a litany of scientific studies and strong public support, some governments have still not adequately tackled the land clearing issue, and are impeding efforts to move the nation onto the path of ecologically sustained development.

Life Lines, Spring 2000.

Parkwatch continued on page 19

Bulletin mailout

Many thanks to Judy Kelly who has coordinated the *Bulletin* mailout for this issue. She would be pleased to hear from volunteer helpers. Her phone number is 6253 1859 (h).

NPA Bulletin



NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION (ACT) INCORPORATED

NPA outings program

March – June 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.



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 views 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 on 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.

28 March Wednesday daywalk

Mts Majura and Ainslie

Leader: Rob Forster

2A

Map: Canberra Street Directory

Phone: 6249 8546

Meet at 9.00am at the Antill St Hackett access to Canberra Nature Park (just past the last house). Walk up trail to Mt Majura, then along ridgeline to Mt Ainslie. Return via lower route back to cars. Total climb 290m.

1 April daywalk

The Historic Corn Trail

Leader: Len Haskew

2A

Map: Monga 1:25 000

Phone: 6281 4268

Meet at Canberra Railway Station carpark (Kingston) at 7.30am. Walk the Optimist Section (so called because in the 1830s it was considered that only an optimist would even think of putting a road through it) with the Friends of the Mongarlowe River. This will be a 12.5km walk, mostly downhill, from the top of the Clyde through former forestry land which has never been harvested to the Buckenbowra River. The Friends have organised a bus to take us back to the top of the Clyde. Afternoon tea in Braidwood. 120kms, \$30 per car, plus share of bus cost.

7 April Saturday Work Party

Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group

Contact: Eleanor Stodart

Phone: 6281 5004

Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre Tharwa 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.

8 April Sunday daywalk

Mt Gudgenby

Leader: Ken Free

4A/C/D/E

Maps: Rendezvous Creek, Yaouk 1:25 000

Phone: 6295 8894

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 7.00am for a long tough day conquering one of the best peaks close to Canberra. The views from the top are well worth the sometimes very steep and challenging climb. Some rock scrambling and regrowth. Walkers need to be fit and well equipped. 140kms, \$35 per car.

15 April Easter Sunday daywalk

Mt Aggie to Bendora Arboretum

Leader: Rob Forster

2A

Map: Tidbinbilla 1:25 000

Phone: 6249 8546

Attractive views over both the Brindabella and Cotter Valleys. Walk follows fire trails to the Arboretum, and we will probably do a car shuffle back to our starting point. Meet at Uriarra Road carpark just off the Cotter Road at 8.30am. 120kms, \$30 per car.

22 April Sunday daywalk

Tantangara Plain

Leader: Brian Slec

2A

Map: Tantangara 1:25 000

Phone: 6281 0719

Meet at Kambah Village shops for 7.00am departure. Park 6km north of Kiandra and walk to Gooandra Hut (under restoration) for morning tea. Descend to Tantangara Plain and cross Tantangara Creek on way to Witses Hut for lunch. Return same way. Gently undulating walk on tracks, some spongy hollows on plain. Afternoon tea Adaminaby. Bring your insect repellent. 280kms, \$70 per car.

25 April

Wednesday daywalk

Leader: Col McAlister

Phone: 6288 4171

NPA's midweek walk this month falls on Anzac Day. Phone leader for details, which will be determined nearer the date.

28 April Saturday daywalk

Compo Canyon

Leader: Mike Smith

2A/C

Map: Captains Flat 1:25 000

Phone: 6286 2984

Meet at Canberra Railway Station Kingston at 8.30am. A walk from carpark at the southern end of Googong Reservoir past London Bridge limestone arch, old London bridge homestead, Curley Falls and then wade across the Queanbeyan River to Compo Canyon. Return to cars by similar route. Old footwear for crossing the river would be advisable. 50kms, \$12 per car.

29 April Sunday daywalk

Big Hole and 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 in Deua National Park on a dedicated walking track. Our destinations are 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. Drive through Captains Flat with some gravel. It will be necessary to paddle across the Shoalhaven, so bring sandals or thongs, etc. This walk was originally scheduled for Australia Day, but had to be put off because of hot weather and park closures. April should be perfect. 180kms, \$45 per car.

4-6 May three day packwalk

Jillicambra Mountain

Leaders: Pat and Eric Pickering

3B/C/D/E

Map: Belowra 1:25 000

Phone: 6286 2128

Joint walk with FBI. The Jillicambra massif covers an area of about 40 square kilometres, and its triple peak rises 850m above the Tuross River which flanks it on three sides. The walk starts at the junction of the Tuross River and Woila Creek. Approach will be via a 5km spur. First night's camp will be part way up the mountain. Day 2 will involve a 200m climb with day packs to the peak with its splendid rock formations and views, and return down a steep spur to the Tuross to camp. The final day will be an easy but wet-foot return to the cars. Total climb 1000m with some rock scrambling. For details and bookings contact leaders by mid April. 400kms, \$100 per car.

6 May Sunday daywalk

Tinderry North Peak

Leader: Max Lawrence

2A/C/D/E

Maps: Tinderry, Michelago 1:25 000

Phone: 6288 1370

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.00am. For fit walkers a solid climb of nearly 800m (on the vertical axis!), mostly on the steep Mt Allen and West Tinderry fire trails. Final 2km to the summit is through bush, and involves some rock scrambling. Views to everywhere. 120kms, \$30 per car.

12 May Saturday work party

Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group

Contact: Eleanor Stodart, Syd Comfort

Phone: 6281 5004 (Eleanor),

6286 2578 (Syd)

Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre Tharwa 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.

13 May Sunday daywalk

Rob Roy

Leader: Col McAlister

2A/B

Map: Tuggeranong 1:25 000

Phone: 6288 4171

A loop walk through the southernmost part of Canberra Nature Park. Partly on fire trails, partly off track with a steep climb to the top of Rob Roy from the Monaro Highway side. Great views in most directions. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. Small distance, short car shuffle, \$0.

19 May Saturday daywalk

Lake George

Leader: Margaret Aston

1A

Map: ACT 1:100 000

Phone: 6288 7563

Meet at the coast road junction at Bungendore at 9.30am. An easy walk along the lake road with time for bird watching. Bring lunch, binoculars and a copy of the NPA *Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT*. Finish with coffee at the Woodworks Cafe. Bungendore is about 40kms from Canberra, depending on where you start from. Make your own travel arrangements.

20 May Sunday daywalk

Honeysuckle Circuit

Leader: Pat Meithke

2D

Map: Corin Dam

Phone: 6241 2798

A wonderful circuit through some of the best ACT ridge and granite boulder country. Up the ridge to the W of Honeysuckle carpark to admire its huge summit boulders, across to the Orroral Ridge, N to Emu Flat clearing, E to a steep scrubby drop across to an amazing cube boulder, and S back to the cars. 11kms, all offtrack, often steep and fairly scrubby, but a wonderful day out. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.00am. 80kms, \$20 per car.

23 May

Wednesday daywalk

Leader: Ken Free

Phone: 6295 8894

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

26 May Saturday daywalk

Mt Coree and Devils Peak

Leader: Matthew Higgins

2A/B/D

Map: Cotter Dam 1:25 000

Phone: 6247 7285

Climb two stunning peaks in the northern Brindabellas. We'll ascend Coree from near Blundells Arboretum, then walk to Coree Flats, climb Devils Peak, then descend to the start. Some history, a good deal of great native forest, excellent views from both peaks. Steep climbs, about 14kms. For the fit. Book with leader, numbers limited. 90kms, \$22 per car.

26-27 May 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 previous Wednesday for details and bookings. 160kms, \$40 per car.

30 May

Wednesday daywalk

Leader: Mike Smith

Phone: 6286 2984

NPA has two 'monthly' midweek walks this month. Phone leader for details, which will be determined nearer the event.

3 June Sunday daywalk

Urambi Hills Circuit

Leader: Col McAlister

2A/B

Map: Canberra Street Directory

Phone: 6288 4171

A loop walk from Kambah Pool, over Urambi Hills to Pine Island, and back to Kambah Pool via Red Rocks Gorge. Delightful views from several places. Meet at Kambah Pool upper car park at 8.30am.

9-11 June long weekend carcamp

Bournda National Park

Leaders: Adrienne Nicholson and Margaret

Aston

1A

Map: Wolumla 1:25 000, Bournda NP guides

Phone: Adrienne 6281 6381, Margaret 6288 7563

Camping by Lake Wallagoot in the Bournda National Park with most mod cons including shelter shed and hot showers. Coast and forest walks and bird watching. Do as little or as much as you like to enjoy this restful scenic area. For details and bookings contact either Adrienne or Margaret by the preceding Wednesday. 400kms, \$100 per car, plus camp fees.

9-11 June long weekend packwalk

Mt Elliott

Leader: Steven Forst

2A/B

Map: CMW Budawangs

Phone: 6219 5236 (w), 6251 6817(h)

A packwalk from the Nerriga entrance to Morton National Park, camping in the Vines area. A day walk from camp to Mt Elliott for views over Hollands Gorge before returning to camp. Walk out the following day. Contact leader by the preceding Wednesday. 340kms,

\$85 per car.

9 June Saturday work party

Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group

Contact: Eleanor Stodart, Syd Comfort

Phone: 6281 5004 (Eleanor), 6286 2578 (Syd)

Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre Tharwa at 9.15am or Yankee Hat carpark at 10.00am. We may be weeding or seeding a newly burnt area. Because this is best done while the ash is fresh the date of the work party may be changed. Please check with leader. Tools will be provided.

16 June Saturday daywalk

The Long Flat

Leader: Martin Chalk

3A/B

Maps: Colinton, Bredbo 1:25 000

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

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.00am. The walk will start at the Mt Clear campground. We will travel south along Grassy Creek to the NSW border, and then follow it along to the most southerly point of the ACT. We will return along the Long Flat and generally follow the old farm track back to base. A walk through some rural history of the ACT. 160kms, \$40 per car.

24 June Sunday daywalk

Red Rocks on the Murrumbidgee

Leader: Steve Hill

1A/C/E

Map: Tuggeranong 1:25 000

Phone: 6231 9186

A relatively easy walk, mainly on track, but involving a little rock scrambling along the Murrumbidgee Corridor from the confluence of Tuggeranong Creek to Red Rocks. We might divert to 'the canyon' along the way (some more mild rock scrambling). This is one of the most scenic stretches of the river and, if we are quiet, we will be overwhelmed by a huge variety of native birds and kangaroos. Meet at the Urambi Hills carpark near the corner of Athlon and Learmonth Drives at 10.00am for a pleasant day. No vehicle costs.



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: 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 Shop 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.

Tuggeranong dry stone wall

Recently, after bagging the heights of Urambi in the summer heat, members paused a while to contemplate the greater task of digging out, gathering, transporting and building the dry stone wall near Pine Island.

The combined memories of the party were unable to advance any facts about its origin but it was suggested that it could have been built by convict or Chinese labour. In the period in which it had been built, labour from these sources would have been unlikely.

The Sites of Significance in the ACT (National Capital Development Commission) at volume 4, pages 34 to 36, refers to the wall as a boundary marker and states that it is commonly referred to as "the old stone wall" defining the boundary between the Lanyon and Yarralumla properties.

It appears that the construction period is uncertain, as it is stated that it was probably built between 1867 and 1875 by Cunningham of Lanyon in order to protect his stud stock against his neighbour's scrub stock. No information on the type of labour used in its construction is given.

Reg Alder

Researching traditional life in Namadgi

As part of the excellent and worthwhile Special Events at Namadgi National Park Visitor Centre Dr Josephine Flood presented an illustrated talk on the above topic on 12 November 2000. Dr Flood is a well-known archaeologist and author of four books on Australian Aboriginal prehistory and rock art. Her presentation was an outline of her research undertaken in the ACT high country between 1969 and 1974. Josephine Flood is well-known too, to many NPA members and indeed, I think it would be correct to say that there would be many who assisted her in her field work.

Dr Flood began her presentation with a discussion of the two-way migration of the Bogong moth, (*Agrotis infusa*). Although the moth is also found in New Zealand, it is only the Australian moth that has a migratory habit. The moths leave the wheatbelt region of north-western NSW and Queensland flying south to (probably) escape the heat, and pass through Canberra around the beginning of October, on their way towards the ACT peaks. Mt Gingera and Sentry Box Mountain are among the favoured 'camping' areas, where they occupy clefts, fissures and small caves in compact formations. The very large populations of moths aestivate for a period of several weeks when they do not seek food.

Early records of the Bogong moth migration talk of the moths forming a 'dark cloud' as they travel towards the peaks, and of thousands of ravens and currawongs following this congregation.

Dr Flood stated that the moths were important in the diet of the local Aboriginal communities for approximately four months of the year. The moth's body consisted of about 27 per cent fat and 20 per cent protein and so were a rich source of food. Indeed, 1 kilogram of moths is the equivalent of about 3000

calories. It is thought that moth gathering was primarily a male activity. Names on the map such as Dicky Cooper Bogong suggest that moth gathering areas may have been 'owned' by particular groups.

The moths were caught with nets in the rock shelters or were knocked down with sticks and collected on kangaroo skins. Then fires were lit and later the moths were placed on hot stones which acted like hot plates for about a minute. They were then either eaten straight away or ground into a paste for later consumption (probably by the rest of the tribe who remained in the lower valleys). Josephine Flood informed her audience that they tasted like roasted chestnuts and she gave some humorous accounts of some of her colleague's reactions to a feast of Bogong moths.

As well as the rich food source provided by the moths, the Aboriginals also relied heavily on possums and both the tubers and flowers of the yam daisy (*Microseris scapigera*).

The second part of the presentation was directed at the evidence of occupation left by the Aboriginal community. Although ethnological and historical accounts are rather patchy, Dr Flood believes there is sufficient evidence to say that the Walgalu people lived in this area all year round. They lived in the lower regions in winter and the men, at least, moved to the higher country in summer. Carved wooden artefacts have been discovered throughout the area, as well as lethal (barbed on both sides) spears. There is some evidence that waterproof shelters were constructed. Around the local area there are some fine examples of both ochre and pipe-clay quarries. Axe grinding grooves can be found in local streams, (some within the urban area at Latham and Theodore), there are scarred trees, particularly red gum, from which

shields or coolamons were made and there are also 'canoe' trees in the district (eg, at Lanyon). Stone artefacts are abundant in the area – 1000 stone tools were found near the top of Gibraltar Falls in what is the barbecue area today.

Dr Flood has done a lot of archaeological work at the local rock painting sites. At the Yankee Hat site (which has been dated at about 1500 years old) there is a possible representation of the Bogong moth. The Rendezvous Creek site possibly shows early contact with Europeans – one of the artworks could be a man on a horse. An excavation at Bogong Cave (near Tidbinbilla) turned up pestle type artefacts which when subjected to UV light showed evidence of being used to grind Bogong moths at least 1000 years ago.

Excavations at the Birrigai Rock Shelter site reveal evidence of continuous occupation over a period of about 21 000 years. This site was used even after European occupation and Dr Flood believes it was a safe retreat.

Also mentioned were the various stone arrangement sites, (eg Mt Namadgi), and the kangaroo tooth necklace from the Cooma area found in a burial site at least 7000 years old. The necklace consisting of 370 pierced teeth is the oldest tooth necklace found so far.

The basis of Dr Flood's presentation was her book *The Moth Hunters an Aboriginal Prehistory of the Australian Alps*, published by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies in 1980 and now out of print. Unfortunately is also on the 'endangered species' list in libraries which means (according to Dr Flood) that together with books on sex it is most likely to be stolen!

Len Haskeew

The South Coast forests - from Nowra to Narooma

Early this year huge new national parks were created in the NSW South Coast, covering places that for many of us in Canberra and the surrounding region are like a second backyard. The South Coast forests stretch from Nowra down to Narooma, and from Batemans Bay inland almost to Canberra. Below is a summary of the things we won - and the things we lost - in the Southern Regional Forest Agreement.

What we won

- The South Coast's state forest estate was more than halved in area, with about 200 000 ha (2000sq km) converted to national park.
- Now 70 per cent of public land in the South Coast is protected in national park - an increase of over 60 per cent from last year.
- Habitat for over 400 native species, or one fifth of Australia's terrestrial animal species (mammals, birds reptiles and amphibians), has been securely protected in national parks.
- Many of the conservation movement's "icon" high conservation value forests have been protected, for example:
- Virtually all state forests east of the Princes Highway, between Batemans Bay and Jervis Bay, are now in national parks, extending Cudmirrah, Conjola and Murramarang National Parks, and creating the new Meroo National Park.
- Most of Monga and Buckenbowra State Forests, across the highway from Clyde Mountain, have become the new Monga National Park.
- All of Croobyar State Forest, next to Pigeon House Mountain, has been protected.
- Large areas in Dampier, Badja, Tallaganda and Bodalla State Forests have been protected.
- Three national park corridors connecting the forests of the



Meroo Beach. Photo Fiona MacDonald Brand.

escarpment to those on the coast have been created (last year there were none): between Morton National Park and the coast south of Sussex Inlet; between Pigeon House Mountain and Lake Tabourie; and between Wadbilliga National Park and Wallaga Lake National Park (including Gulaga/ Mt Dromedary).

- With the protection of Monga/ Buckenbowra and parts of Badja, there is now a contiguous corridor of forested national parks stretching for over 300 km north-to-south between Kangaroo Valley and Victoria.

continued on page 13

New South Coast national parks

The near South Coast, with its coastal escarpments, lakes, beaches and scenery, has always been a popular area with members. Some of our activities there have involved visits to state forests, which, with public access encouraged, provide opportunities for driving, camping, picnicking and bushwalking. These areas, however, have always been under the threat of intensive logging with the attendant loss of the biodiversity of a natural growth area.

The NSW Government has recently added almost 320 000ha of land to the conservation network of south-eastern NSW. This will create 89 new conservation reserves, further additions to 18 existing national parks and nature reserves managed by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) as well as seven new flora reserves covering 8000ha to be managed by State Forests of NSW.

There has been a long, ongoing campaign, initiated by Mylo Dunphy, to have the coastal lake areas north of Batemans Bay declared national parks to preserve their uniqueness from development and their resources from exploitation.

The areas of most significance are:

- Meroo National Park is a new

national park which incorporates areas formerly managed by State Forests, Shoalhaven City Council and the Lands Department. Over the past few years an attempt was made for this area to be managed conjointly. The area was surveyed, public interest meetings held and a draft management plan produced for public comment. The establishment of Meroo National Park under the management of the NSW NPWS is significant in that the area will be under the control of a single authority and the threats of logging and development will be removed. The new park has an area of 3600ha and connects the coastal lakes of Wallaga, Meroo, Termeil, Tabourie and Burrill. It also provides a link through Morton National Park to the tablelands.

- With its extension from the coast to the Princes Highway, Murramarang National Park has been expanded from 2000ha to almost 12 000ha, and thereby adds significantly to the protection of the Durras Lake catchment.

- Monga National Park of 25 000ha combines the former Buckenbowra and Monga State Forests to provide a crucial link between the Deua and Budawang National Parks as well as providing protection for old growth forest, pinkwood rainforest and a range of threatened plant and animal species.
- Kooraban (14 000ha) and Gulaga (4000ha) National Parks, which are respectively 15 and 10km south-west of Narooma, provide protection for important koala and frog habitats and a significant Aboriginal sacred site on Mt Dromedary (Gulaga National Park). The reserves formerly known as Wallaga National Park and Gonna Nature Reserve have now been added to Gulaga National Park.
- Additions to Conjola National Park between Sussex Inlet and Milton combine the former Cudmirrah and Conjola National Parks to form a significant link to the expanded Morton National Park and the Southern Highlands.

Reg Alder

The South Coast forests – from Nowra to Narooma

continued from page 12

What we lost

- Almost 200 000 ha of native forests still remain in the state forest estate, and are therefore available for logging. The government assessments during the Regional Forest Agreement process determined that all but a few hectares of these were high conservation value and worthy of protection
- Woodchipping will continue (at least 70 000 tonnes per annum), and sawlogging will increase to 48 000 tonnes per annum (remember, this is in less than half the area of state forests compared to last year, so the

same amount of logging is equivalent to a doubling of impact on the ground).

- A wood-fed power station is proposed for Batemans Bay, which would decimate the local native forests far beyond what sawlogging and woodchipping are currently achieving. Along with a potential charcoal production plant, logging levels may rise to up to 350 per cent times current levels – and with only half the state forests to do it in, this means a 700 per cent increase in impact compared to last year

- Icon areas, containing huge areas of sweeping old growth forests, rainforests, threatened species habitat, and important water catchments, have remained unprotected and available for logging. These include large areas of Badja (Tuross Wilderness), Dampier (Deua Wilderness) and Wandella State Forests, along with the remaining part of Monga State Forest (next to Clyde Mountain).

Andrew Wong
Forest Campaigner
The Wilderness Society, Canberra

“They want the Blue Mountains!”

After almost a decade and a half of committed campaigning the Blue Mountains area was deservedly declared a World Heritage Area recently.

Yet many present members of NPA can remember when there was no Blue Mountains National Park. Its declaration was also due to the work of conservationists.

The following extracts from an article, written in 1939, give a little insight into the birth of the idea for a national park in the area. The article has an added interest for us in that it contains one of the first published photographs by Reg Alder. A scanned copy of the photo accompanies this article.

The Miss Dorothy English referred to in the text and who is also the subject of Reg's photo is better known today as Dot Butler. (How she came to be eating an ice-cream in such a remote area is another story. Perhaps the Editor may be able to prevail upon Reg to write an explanation of the event for a subsequent edition of the Bulletin).

Len Haskew

Bush Walkers Plan to Preserve Beauty Spots

ANY Sunday morning, if you get up early enough and go to Central Station you will see people of all ages, carrying packs, some wearing shorts, who have renounced their Sunday morning “lie in” to go walking in the bush.

Call it “hiking” if you will; the name does not detract from the growing popularity of the idea which has been fostered so well, during the last seven years, by that shy and retiring organisation, the New South Wales Federation of Bush Walking Clubs.

YOU, as “a citizen who shares in the joys and sorrows of this Commonwealth”, are probably not even aware that this Federation of Bush Walking Clubs has added nearly 1,800 acres of beautiful park lands to your personal property in recent years.

The new park is called Garawarra, and it joins National Park at Governor Game's Look Out.

For a long time it has been a popular resort for hardy bush walkers who were vigorous enough to climb up and down from Burning Palms beach; now it has been preserved for all time for the people, thanks to the offices of the federation, which is going to see that it is kept in its natural state.

Not content with this victory, the federation has its eye on other beauty areas.

Like Hitler planning a new coup, but with somewhat different motives, the hon. secretary of the federation, Mr. C. D'A. Roberts, spread a map out on his desk last week and said simply, “We want the Blue Mountains next.”

Mapping the mountains

TO some extent, the Mountains already belong to the federation by right of topographical conquest, because among the many activities of bush walking clubs, surveying the Blue Mountains in association with the Lands Department has been one of their regular self-appointed tasks.

Now the department has been able to publish a map of the mountains, showing all its tracks walks and its many features of interest.

The hope of the federation is that soon it will be able to persuade the authorities to set aside about 150 square miles of mountain territory to make a grand National Park, on the same basis as those in Canada.

Since it was formed in 1932, the Federation of Bush Walking Clubs has done splendid work, it has seen a marked advance in the popularity of bush walking.

What was once the intermittent pastime of a few people has gradually developed into a regular week-end occupation, which calls for dozens special trains, from Friday to Sunday night cater for its patrons

Barefoot Walkers

ON the question of wearing apparel there has been some debate among regular walkers; it is by no means a closed subject.



Reg Alder's photo published in the Sydney Morning Herald, 23 January 1939.

Many men insist you must wear heavy boots, others that sandshoes are best; there are even some Spartans who will walk only barefooted and among them is Miss Dorothy English, one of the most enthusiastic Sydney girl walkers.

Miss English sets a good example to girls by wearing a simple rig-out of khaki shorts and shirt; but the beginner walkers are by no means the only ones who go wrong in their dress.

At the other extreme is to be found the super-experienced walker, who will wear anything, as long as it is comfortable.

Often his or her costume is slovenly in the extreme, and such types are as much an eye-sore in the bush as the rubbish left by careless picnickers.

Perhaps some of them are off on what bush walkers refer to as “tiger walks”. In such cases they may be excused.

Miss English is one of several girls who accompanies the men in her club on “tiger walks”. On a recent trip, 15 of them had to climb up a sixty feet waterfall.

THE problem of costume and equipment has been scientifically tackled by Mr. Paddy Pallin, well-known to all bush walkers.

Through years of experimenting he has been able to reduce the camp load for one person, for one week, from 80lb to 40lb.

The Sydney Morning Herald, Women's Supplement, Monday, January 23, 1939.

Max Lawrence looks at the association's 2000 Christmas party held on Caloola Farm



Leonie Bubb and David Large.



Eleanor doing her thing.



Left to right: Margaret Aston, Steve Hill, Adrienne Nicholson.



Left to right: John Webster, Les Pyke, Beverley Hammond.



Left to right: Steven Hill, Barbara Edgar, Rob Forster.

Letters on Gudgenby Homestead

The Kosciusko Huts Association has forwarded to the NPA copies of letters written to Brendan Smyth, Minister for Urban Services, on Gudgenby Homestead, and the Minister's reply. These letters are reproduced below, as is a letter received from NPA member, Robyn Barker.

Dear Minister

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of Kosciusko Huts Association's interest in the future management of Gudgenby Homestead in Namadgi National Park.

Kosciusko Huts Association (KHA) has been working in partnership with Namadgi National Park management for over ten years to conserve European cultural heritage in the park. Significant projects over that time include the conservation of Brayshaw's and Westerman's, two homesteads that were built early last century. In addition, over this period, KHA has been undertaking routine maintenance of other huts throughout the park.

Gudgenby Homestead and its precincts have been of close interest to KHA members for many years. Many of our members are also members of the National Parks Association (NPA). Through them, KHA has closely followed the recent debate on the future of Gudgenby homestead. We particularly note from that debate that NPA received a letter from you stating that you wanted the building maintained and used. KHA supports this view, and it is in this context that we wish to be involved in discussions on the future of the homestead and its precincts.

There are many examples, both in Australia and overseas, where buildings within National Parks have been retained and used in a manner sensitive to their location and environment. An example in Kosciuszko National Park is Currango Homestead that is used for low-key accommodation. Our members have experience of others in a range of locations.

I might also mention that KHA has proven expertise in conserving and maintaining heritage structures within both Namadgi National Park and Kosciuszko National Park. We mention this because we are aware that the 1920 cottage on the

Gudgenby site is in a very poor state and needs urgent conservation attention. In the broader context of the overall management of the site, KHA could provide resources and expertise towards ensuring that this building is appropriately conserved.

Would you please let KHA know what stage your deliberations on the future of Gudgenby homestead and its precincts have reached, and

confirm that you will invite KHA to any future discussions you, or your Department, have with community groups on this matter. A copy of this letter has been sent to the National Parks Association (ACT).

Yours sincerely

Maurice Sexton
For and on behalf of KHA
21 November 2000

Dear Mr Sexton

Thank you for your letter of 21 November 2000 concerning future management of Gudgenby Homestead.

As you have indicated in your letter the Government is committed to retaining Gudgenby Homestead. We regard the building as an important link with previous grazing activities in Namadgi and believe that an appropriate level of public access to the site will enhance many people's understanding of land management and conservation issues.

To arrest deterioration in the fabric of the building some recent work has been undertaken such as rabbit control, external painting, upgrade of electrical systems, bathroom renovations and a new water supply. These works also provide the necessary infrastructure to permit public access to the site.

As you point out in your letter, Currango Homestead is one of many examples in Australian national parks where public use of a cultural asset is encouraged. This adaptive re use helps ensure the protection of our cultural heritage whilst at the same time adds value to visitors' understanding of their natural and cultural environment.

I recently released the *Nature Based Tourism Strategy for the ACT*. That Strategy raises the need for adaptive re use of Gudgenby Homestead and within that framework I intend to quickly review the existing management arrangements to ensure long term protection of the site. That review will consider a number of options including low key public accommodation.

Another important point you make in your letter concerns the 1920 Ready Cut Cottage on the eastern side of the river. For want of an appropriate adaptive re use this building has become run down and needs urgent restoration. I welcome your offer to assist in this regard and have instructed my department to speak to you concerning planning and long term maintenance of assets in the Gudgenby precinct.

The responsible officer in my department is Rod Baxter in Environment ACT. He will contact you in due course but you may also wish to contact him directly on 6207 2204.

Thank you again for raising Gudgenby precinct with me and I look forward to working with Kosciusko Huts Association to achieve some important community benefits.

Yours sincerely

Brendan Smyth MLA
Deputy Chief Minister
27 December 2000

Editor

NPA Bulletin

In the September 2000 *NPA Bulletin* (Volume 37 Number 3) the NPA outlined possible options for the future of Gudgenby House as discussed at the July 2000 general meeting. I think NPA members should be very concerned about options 2, 3 and 4, which support Environment ACT's proposal for "developing low key guesthouse accommodation and food and refreshment facilities at Gudgenby Homestead", and would like to make the following observations.

Unlike the more disturbed and expansive Currango area in Kosciuszko National Park, the Gudgenby area in Namadgi National Park contains some of the most significant, well-preserved and fragile Aboriginal sites in the Southern Highlands. These are some of the last signs of at least 21 000 years of Aboriginal occupation in the Canberra region before European settlement. They include:

- initiation site/ceremonial stone arrangements on Mount Namadgi and other summits (the most extensive and well preserved site is only a day walk from Gudgenby House);
- rock paintings at Yankee Hat, Rendezvous Creek and Nursery Swamp;
- grinding grooves along Middle Creek and Gudgenby River;
- rock shelters at Yankee Hat, Rendezvous Creek and Gudgenby Valley;
- campsites and stone arrangements, possibly grave sites at Gudgenby Valley; and
- other unknown Aboriginal sites yet to be recorded.

Because these sites are in the proximity of Gudgenby House, they could be at risk of being accidentally or intentionally disturbed or destroyed by increasing numbers of visitors attracted to the area by a commercial development such as that proposed by Environment ACT. Once such a commercial development is allowed to go ahead, apart from setting a dangerous precedent, it will inevitably create pressures for further development



The Gudgenby area from Boboyan Road Lookout with Yankee Hat, Scabby Range and Mount Kelly (left), Mount Burbidge (centre) and Mount Namadgi and Rendezvous Creek Range (right). Gudgenby House lies in the shrouded valley below. Photo Robyn Barker

and increased access to some of the aforementioned very sensitive sites. To date these sites have been protected by their remoteness, but how long will this last once more and more people are pumped into the valley by the lure of commercial facilities (eg, accommodation, car parks and cappuccinos at Gudgenby House)?

If the Namadgi Visitor Centre was deliberately located on the periphery of the park near Tharwa for reasons of ecological and cultural sensitivity, then why should a commercial development be allowed in the heart of the park at Gudgenby House? Gudgenby Valley is so close to Canberra that it really isn't necessary to create overnight accommodation in the park.

Is the NPA allowing itself to be excessively influenced by the pervasive marketing arm of Environment ACT? Does the NPA care any more about preserving quiet development-free reserves for nature and cultural heritage? What would such developments do to the historical integrity of the Gudgenby House site itself? Why can't it be managed in a subtle and sympathetic manner like Mount Franklin Chalet?

I believe that the Gudgenby House issue represents a real crisis of direction for the NPA. We are at the crossroads. Can we afford to support a dangerous pro-development

precedent in the sensitive heart of Namadgi National Park? After all, history has shown us that small developments later get expanded into bigger ones and so on once the gate has been opened.

Last year the NPA celebrated 40 years of conservation and its greatest achievement – a national park for the ACT. Where to from here, major compromises or a strong resolve to diligently protect that which we love?

Robyn Barker

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Wilderness 2000 protection plan

The Colong Foundation, in association with other environment groups, including NSW National Parks Association has produced the Wilderness 2000 Protection Plan which seeks to reserve 1.5 million hectares under wilderness laws.

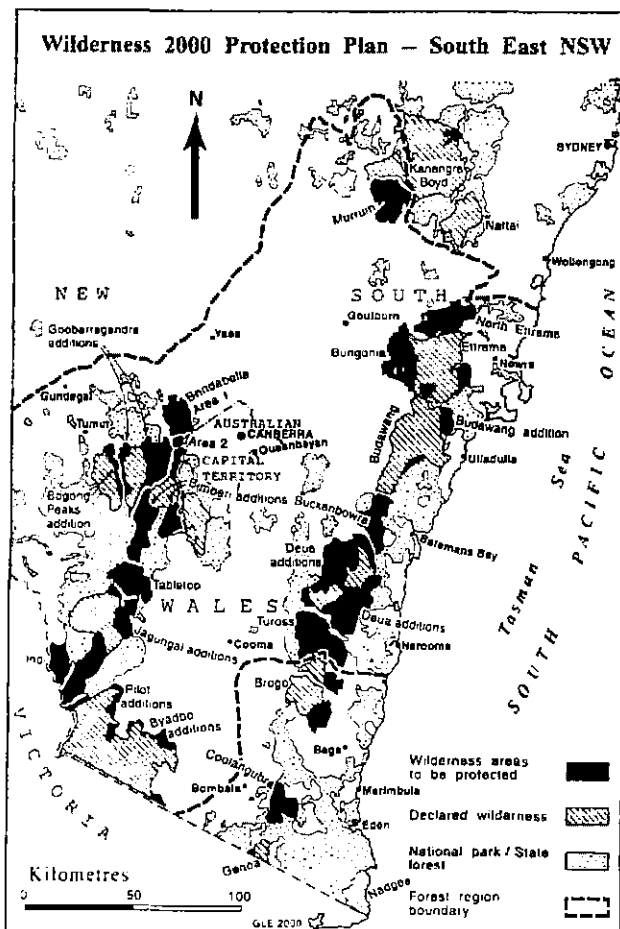
The following article has been extracted from *The Colong Bulletin*, November 2000. The original article, written by the foundation's Director, Keith Muir, begins with an account of the efforts of the Carr Government in NSW to preserve significant wilderness areas in NSW. It gives a broad overview of wilderness across the entire state. This extract will concentrate on the area closest to us - south-east NSW.

Through wilderness management, the least disturbed natural areas in national parks will be fully protected from development and damaging use. Only declared wilderness ensures the interests of native plants and animals remain paramount. It also helps to safeguard against the short-sighted actions of future governments - who may push for park development as has happened to many protected park areas across the globe. NSW national parks are among the best managed and protected in the world and this Plan will help secure these reserves for the next millennium.

Public opinion surveys during the last two decades have consistently shown strong public support for forest and wilderness protection. For example, the 1996 Newspoll commissioned by the Australian Heritage Commission found that 99 per cent of people believe that wilderness should be conserved.

Southern wilderness

On the South Coast and in the Kosciuszko Region proposals for 16 new wilderness areas and additions will be placed on exhibition for three months (see map of south east NSW). These areas are mostly public lands and suitable for immediate reservation. The environment groups' Wilderness 2000 Protection Plan could protect up to 380 000 hectares of wilderness



on the South Coast and in the Kosciuszko Region, including 64 000 hectares of former state forests. The wilderness boundaries of the Plan are in most cases consistent with those developed by the Federal Government's environment department.

The environment groups do not accept the draft NPWS wilderness assessment guidelines that have raised the wilderness identification standards, ignoring the evidence accepted in previous assessments that areas disturbed by past use can be rehabilitated. The usual factors that limit wilderness are disturbance and development. These factors may degrade wilderness but it must be remembered that all protected wilderness areas contain the odd clearing, and even the most intact bushland is not necessarily pristine.

The NPWS has made its wilderness exclusion criteria more

stringent for the Southern Wilderness Assessments when compared to past practice, which has drastically reduced the area recommended by the NPWS for protection. About half of the wilderness quality land may be omitted from the protection plans as these guidelines exclude bushland if these areas were subjected to even minor disturbance.

The wilderness hotspots in the South include:

- Northern Kosciuszko, the Deua River and Tuross River headwaters, where about 13 000 hectares of NPWS identified state forest wilderness

may not be protected from logging. These forests are part of long-standing reserve proposals that date back to the 1940s and are an essential part of the Wilderness 2000 Protection Plan. Further logging of these areas would cause substantial soil erosion and sediment pollution of the streams, placing at risk the long term integrity of national parks downstream. The Government wilderness policy of protecting all NPWS identified wilderness must continue, especially in these key areas;

- Tabletop wilderness that may be reduced to half and Bungonia and North Ettrema areas also substantially reduced due to small areas of mining or minor disturbance such as earlier grazing, despite these areas being essentially undamaged.

Len Haskew

Parkwatch – *continued from page 10*

Gammon Ranges victory for conservation

In 1975 a small fish the Snail Darter protected under the US *Endangered Species Act*, prevented the completion of a \$116 million dam on the Tennessee River in the USA. Twenty-five years later in South Australia the welfare of another fish, the Purple-spotted Gudgeon, endemic to a series of gorges in the Gammon Ranges has helped ensure the protection from mining of the Gammon Ranges National Park.

The fact that only a very small percentage of the State conserved in National parks is actually safe from mining makes this an important and all too rare victory for conservation. *Xanthopus, October 2000.*

Alpine Way now fully sealed!

Visitors to the Snowy Mountains will have smoother access following the completion of sealing of the Alpine Way through Kosciuszko National Park.

National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) Snowy Mountains

Region Manager, Dave Darlington, said the sealing of the Alpine Way would provide a positive economic boost for the Snowy Mountains through increased year-round visitation and the flow-on employment in the region.

The sealing of this road completes an improvement program begun by NPWS in early 1990s, said Mr Darlington.

The road was a construction track for the Snowy Mountains HydroElectric Scheme and it has required extensive reconstruction.

The improvement program carried out over the last 20 years has included reconstruction of a number of sections of road, improvements to drainage, rehabilitation of quarries, replacement of bridges and finally, sealing what was a gravel road.

Its a great improvement for the environment as the gravel road resulted in erosion and sedimentation problems. This has now been rectified with reconstruction and sealing.

Resort Round-up, October 2000.

Greenhouse gas to go back underground

CO₂ is a major greenhouse gas and there is a growing view that the geological disposal of CO₂ could be one of the most environmentally acceptable ways to halt the rapid rise of CO₂ emissions without adversely impacting on economic development. At this stage it appears possible to store CO₂ underground for thousands of years.

The proposal is focused on the Gladstone-Rockhampton region in Central Queensland. It involves injecting CO₂ in a semi-liquid form in places like coal seams, depleted oil and gas fields, large voids and cavities or into unusable or saline aquifers.

Overseas experience and knowledge of Australian geology suggest that this option may hold the greatest potential for Australia. *Groundwork, September 2000.*

Compiled by Len Haskew

Thredbo Diggings car camp, February 2001 – *continued from page 6*

a mountain grasshopper. At the top of the track, a few hundred yards slog up the bitumen afforded views into Victoria, also cloudy but with sunshine patches on various mountains. A swim back at the Diggings rewarded some of this group.

The others set out from Dead Horse Gap and walked to the Chimneys and Teddy's Hut (two walls only standing) and back. These two did everyone's share of tussock hopping, scrub bashing, rock scrambling, navigating the unknown, etc, but happily reported fantastic 360o views at lunchtime from the pinnacles of the Chimneys. Their day's efforts were topped off back at camp with a swim also, by which time the sun

was declared to be well and truly over the yard-arm and we relaxed utterly around our campfire which, with occasional prodding, sustained us through another chatty evening. The day had been somewhat cloudy but had remained fine, and thus kept comfortably cool. Asked about the highlight of the day, one member responded "ah well, it was definitely ... oh no, there's *another* b... stick insect crawling up my sleeping bag!"

Sunday dawned ethereal, with mist moving up the Crackenback slopes all along the valley, while the ridge tops glowed through, bathed in sunshine, above. The scene was set for a sunny and probably really hot day. Reg and Fiona rose with the

birds and departed early. Adrienne wandered off for a morning's exploration with camera, Margaret went off birding, and Jayne relaxed for a while and then walked Bullock's Track before more relaxation (she said she had letters to write, but ...). Our only seriously active person was Phil who drove off to Thredbo to walk to the top of the Crackenback chairlift, along the Ramshead Range to Dead Horse Gap and return to the village along the river track.

Aah! the delights of car camping; a beautiful spot to settle for a few nights, good company to relax with and flexibility of activities to cater for all levels.

Adrienne Nicholson

General meetings

Our General Meetings are held at Forestry House, CSIRO Forestry and Forest Products, Wilf Crane Crescent, off Banks Street Yarralumla and the meeting commences at 8.00 pm.

Thursday 15th March 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.

Thursday 19th April 2001

Managing the Southern Region.

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

The Southern Region of the Service manages 1800sqkm of Parks extending from just south of Wollongong to the Victorian boarder and from Cowra in the West to the coast. Also as an outcome of the Southern Forests Decision more than 300,000ha will soon be added to the reserve system.

Dr. Fleming will talk about the recent reorganisation of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and the effect of these changes for an expanded Southern Region.

Thursday 17th May 2001

The Story of Green Guard – A new environmentally friendly way to control Locusts.

Dr. Richard Milner, Research Scientist, CSIRO Entomology.

Locusts breed and begin to swarm in some unique and biologically diverse parts of Australia's arid zone. How can they be controlled before they descend on more important, economically that is, agricultural regions.

Thursday 21st June 2001

Rethinking Salinity Control in the Murray-Darling Basin

Dr. Baden Williams.

The Decade of Landcare has been a tremendous success in raising public awareness of land, water and biological degradation but logical solutions and their implementation for salinity control have been less than impressive.

Every review of dryland and irrigation salinity since the early 1980s has produced higher and higher estimates of damaged areas

and yet more devastating predictions for the future. We have been through a series of 'admitting the problem' and 'best-bet solution' stages and yet seem to be falling further and further behind in devising successful controls.

It would appear that we are still not recognising and acting upon one or more key aspects to this problem. This talk will challenge a number of scientific, social, and political concepts associated with current salinity control strategies in the Murray-Darling Basin.

Thursday 19th July 2001

Over the Plains and far away.

Gary and Dianne Thompson.

A talk on the experiences of a 4 day camel safari in the Lake Eyre area of South Australia in the spring of 2000. The trip involved a step back in time and a mini experience of what exploration would have been like through the desert areas in years past, the heat, lack of water and other discomforts.

Calendar

	March	April	May	June
Committee meeting	Thu 1	Thu 5	Thu 3	Thu 7
Environment Sub-committee ¹	Thu 8	Wed 11	Thu 10	Thu 14
General meetings	Thu 15	Thu 19	Thu 17	Thu 21
Bulletin Working Group ²		Tue 10		
ACT Alive ³	Sun 18			
Gudgenby Regeneration ⁴	Sat 10	Sat 7	Sat 12	Sat 9

Further details

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

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