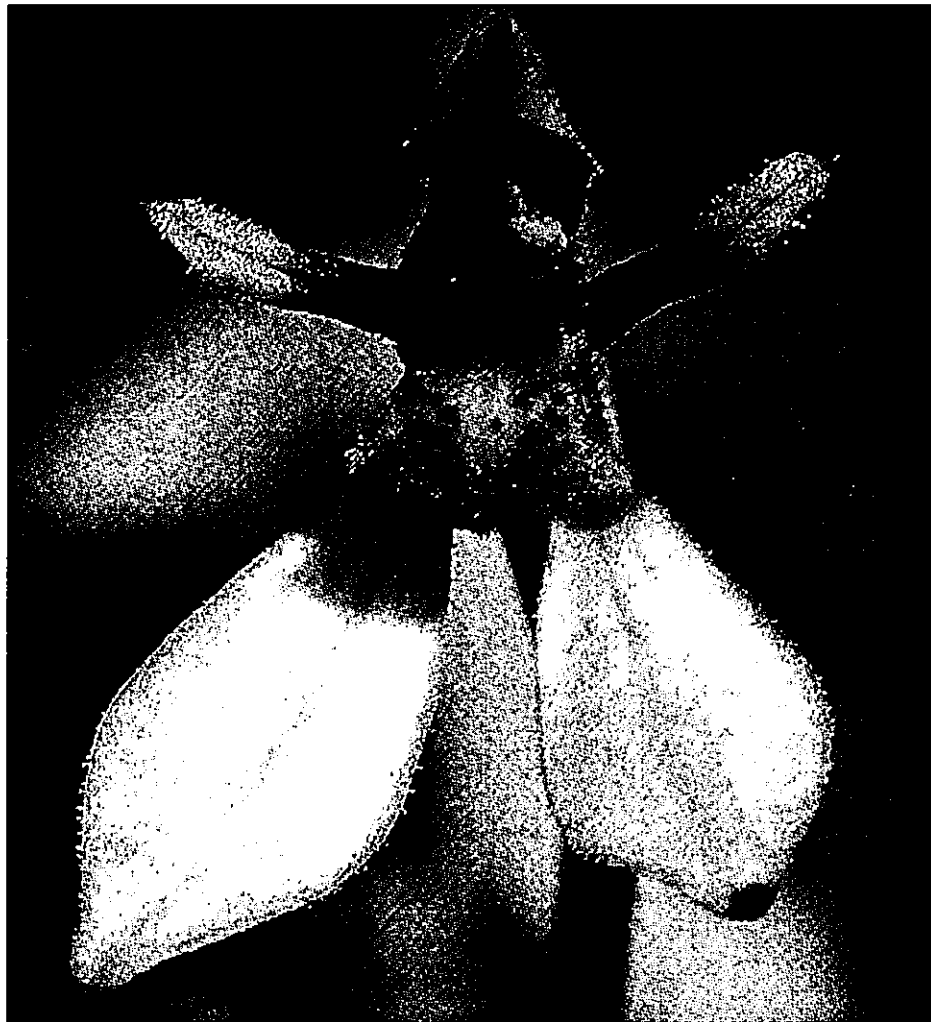


# NPA Bulletin



Volume 39 number 1  
March 2002

**NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION (ACT) INCORPORATED**



**Monga National Park—recreation concept plan**

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**Orchids in autumn**

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**Fire threat in Namadgi**

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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.

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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.

**Deadline for June issue: 1 May 2002.**

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

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*Cover photo: Eriochilus cucullatus or Parsons Bands. One of the orchids discussed in Jean Egan's article on page 5. Photo Tony Wood*

# Early bushfire season caused park closures

Looking back, you could see it coming. A hotter, drier and windier than usual early summer followed an unusually hot, dry and windy spring—and both seasons came at the end of a hotter, drier and windier year. The month of December was among the 20 per cent of the driest Decembers on record in the ACT.

The climax came around Christmas when major fires broke out in six locations. Environment ACT said some of the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day fires were “amongst the most significant and hazardous since February of 1985”.

According to the Emergency Services Bureau the six fires burnt an area totalling 1682ha. By far the largest single fire was in Stromlo Forest, where about 1220ha were burned and large numbers of pine trees were killed. Other fires occurred at Bruce Ridge (100ha burnt), Huntly (80ha), Red Hill (170ha), Oaks Estate (95ha) and Mount Wanniasa (17ha). There was minimal damage to structures.

It so happened that the windiest day in December was Christmas Day, with wind gusts up to 76kmh. The three-month period October to December was the second windiest October-to-December period on record.

December was also one of the driest Decembers on record; this was compounded by most of the rain falling in the first week of the month, with dry and warm conditions in the second half. This followed one of the driest 30 per cent of ACT annual rainfalls, when only 500mm of rain was recorded at Canberra Airport—well below the average of 630.2mm.

## Windier and drier

The 2001–02 bushfire season started in November with windier and drier than average conditions. The Bureau of Meteorology reported also that, as recorded at the Canberra Airport, December and January recorded higher than average evaporation rates and lower than average relative humidity.

The effect was to produce very high fire danger days very early in the season.

Commenting on what was “not normal” about this season, Rick McCrae, of the Emergency Services Bureau’s Risk Management Unit, said

that although drier periods had been recorded in previous summers, they had usually occurred later in the season when winds were often lighter.

Although the December fires were brought under control quickly, the dangerous conditions remained and planned outings in the bush had to be put on hold or cancelled when parks and reserves were closed to the public for periods of up to several weeks.

Ten total fire ban days were declared during a 24-day period from December 20 to January 12. This compares with an average fire season during which the number of total fire bans declared is only about three over the entire fire period.

Readings taken by the Risk Management Unit in Namadgi National Park suggested extremely low moisture levels and it advised on 4 January that:

The highland forests may appear to be consistently extremely flammable. Action needs to be taken to protect them, especially the Cotter Catchment area. Cigarettes and campfires now pose a high risk.

Weather forecasts at the time were predicting continuing dry conditions with the chance of higher than average temperatures and low humidity.

Fire weather conditions were recorded at their most extreme during the period from December 26 to January 11. Against this background, the Executive Director of Environment ACT, Dr Maxine Cooper, determined that Namadgi National Park, except through roads, would be closed to the public.

## Limited re-opening

Although fire dangers remained very high to extreme during the period, they had eased sufficiently by January 11 to allow numbers of parks staff to return to normal duties, and this, together with the slight easing of fire weather conditions, enabled the limited re-opening of Namadgi.

“As conditions are predicted to continue to present a high fire risk we have decided to put in place a simpler regime for the closure of parks and reserves until the end of February,” Dr Cooper said.

Dr Cooper announced that from January 12 the lower lying areas of the Orroral and Honeysuckle valleys would remain open even during periods of total fire ban. These areas were seen as representing a low public

safety risk, given the good vehicular access and availability of permanent water.

The following areas were open, and were expected to remain open, even during days of total fire bans:

- Orroral Valley area of Namadgi National Park, including the Orroral and Honeysuckle Creek Campgrounds, plus the Namadgi Visitor Centre and the Boboyan and Brindabella roads;
- the Murrumbidgee River recreation areas: Cotter Reserve, Pine Island Picnic Area, Point Hut Picnic Area, Tharwa Bridge Reserve, Kambah Pool Reserve, Casuarina Sands Reserve, and Uriarra Crossing Reserve;
- Wood’s Reserve; and
- Murrays Corner swimming area.

It was declared that the following areas would only close during days of total fire bans:

- all of Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve;
- Googong Foreshores on days of total fire bans in NSW;
- the Lower Molonglo Corridor; and
- Deek’s Drive.

## Early February rain

Finally, it was decided that the following areas, which were already closed, would remain closed irrespective of total fire bans, until the end of February or the arrival of soaking rains:

- all ACT Forest areas (excepting Wood’s Reserve and Murrays Corner), namely: Laurel Camp; Vanity’s Crossing, Molonglo Gorge, Gibraltar Falls and Blue Range reserve;
- most of Namadgi National Park except the areas mentioned above; and
- mountain areas of Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve.

Several days of flooding rains early in February enabled the order to be revoked and the Namadgi National Park was reopened to the public on February 5.

Environment ACT has advised that its policy is to close five areas of Namadgi National Park to the public during periods of declared total fire ban. They are the Mount Franklin Road at Piccadilly Circus, Old Mill Road, Bulls Head, Corin Dam Road at Smokers Gap, and Warks Road at the Bendora Road intersection.

Graeme Wicks

# Monga National Park – recreation concept plan

Towards the end of last year the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) sought comments from community groups and individuals on possible recreational uses for Monga National Park. Even though the Environment Sub-committee thought that this was something of a “cart before the horse” approach as no overall management strategies had yet been formulated it was considered important for NPA to voice its opinions on the matter.

Before making a submission, which is summarised below, the sub-committee sought advice and opinion from The Friends of the Mongarlowe River, in particular members Val Plumwood and Robyn Stellar, and from ecologist member of NPA, John Harris.

NPA ACT believes that Monga offers a unique and unrivalled opportunity for education and appreciation of forest values and conservation. At present there are very few short walking tracks in the escarpment area around Braidwood. Nearby parks and reserves offer challenging opportunities for competent bushwalkers but do not attract the more “casual” walker and family groups. Monga could easily provide a facility for such people, as is shown by the use made of the area by children from schools in the local area and Canberra. Monga could offer easy day and shorter walks to experience the beauty of the forest, the pristine water systems and the bird-life of the forest system.

The park needs a well-maintained 2WD loop and well-designed walking tracks with interpretative signs. This could be achieved by rehabilitating River Road, part of Milo Road and constructing a new section of road to the south of the River Road–Milo Road junction. A designated car park could be constructed at the Milo Road–McCarthy’s Road junction. From this road system a network of tracks and boardwalks could be constructed to take visitors through areas such as Penance Grove. Another section of track and boardwalk could take visitors to join up with Lookout Road. The suggested loop would also provide the opportunity for walking tracks into waratah viewing areas,

allowing for short walks along the river suitable for families and school groups.

At present the Corn Trail walking track is used by NPA ACT and others principally as a day walk. A connecting link from Monga National Park to the starting point of the Corn Trail would offer the opportunity for a longer walk and the possibility of camping out. As the Corn Trail is also used by horseriders, their impact would have to be considered when siting and constructing this extension.

On the subject of environmental issues NPA’s comments included the following:

- The *Eucryphia* rainforest and fern groves are sensitive and fragile and need to be protected from the impacts of high visitation. While people should be encouraged and assisted to visit some of these sensitive areas the effects of trampling need to be minimised. Suitably placed raised boardwalks and viewing platforms would help minimise impact and encourage visitation to selected sites.
- There are very fragile areas that need complete protection.
- Increased visitation and picnicking could lead to greater risk of fire. NPA ACT believes that fires should not be permitted outside designated camping areas.
- The collection of firewood around designated camping areas will have an impact over time. This impact can be accelerated if fires are permitted outside approved fireplaces - the “teenage bonfire effect”.

The most important part of our submission commented on what NPA believed to be major issues and among the items mentioned were:

- The Recreation Plan should be part of an overall strategy developed as a result of a comprehensive survey of all environments within the park. This survey should be the basis of all future planning.
- Activities that have a major environmental impact should be confined to appropriate areas or curtailed.
- In recent years, with the deterioration of the forest road system the area has unfortunately become somewhat of a “playground”

for 4WD vehicles and trail bikes who access the “challenging” Turtle Road and roads into Deua National Park. NPA ACT believes that there should be a series of roads maintained to 2WD level to properly open the forest for visitation and appreciation. 4WD vehicles and trail bikes wanting a “rugged experience” should be encouraged to use some of the management roads on the edge of the park which may be unsuitable for 2WD. Roads and tracks no longer required for national park management should be closed and rehabilitated rather than kept open to provide a 4WD experience.

- The Recreation Plan should address the inevitable conflict that occurs between recreational uses of the park which are car-based and those which are based on walking. It is essential that a reasonable compromise be made between these two activities.
- The location of designated camping areas is important to reduce both impact and the risk of fire. NPA ACT suggests that vehicle based camping areas should be located towards the perimeter of the park, preferably in recently logged areas.
- If horse camping and overnight trekking, either private or commercial, are to be permitted in the Monga National Park (NPA ACT would be opposed to this) there must be a horseriders’ code of practice, the activity should be on a permit system to manage numbers and location, and designated horse camps should be separate from vehicle camps. Park management should also be mindful of the impact on adjacent streams.
- If walkers’ camps are permitted away from the designated vehicle-based campsites they should be “fuel stove only” areas.

At the time of writing (January 2002) there has been no response to our submission. Members will be kept informed about this issue. In the meantime though, the Environment Sub-committee would appreciate member feedback and would be very pleased to hear of your thoughts on this matter. (A contact phone number appears in this issue of the Bulletin.)

Len Haskew

# Autumn orchids in Namadgi

Everyone knows that bush walking in the hills around Canberra in autumn is idyllic; by then there are no spring winds and the day temperature is very comfortable for walking. However, what is not so well known is that in autumn some delightful orchids appear that are completely different from those found flowering in spring. So, it is well worth taking a trip out to Namadgi and following one of the marked trails to Booroomba Rocks or Orroral Ridge or Aggie Gap, and enjoying the views, but at the same time keeping your eyes open for orchids.

Many of the autumn flowering orchids have different leaf behaviour to those that flower earlier in the year. In some species there is little or no evidence of leaves at the time of flowering; the leaves only appear after the flower has withered. One of the most common examples is *Eriochilus cucullatus*, commonly called Parsons Bands. This is a pretty little orchid not dissimilar to the spring *Petalochilus fuscatus* or Ladies Fingers (formerly *Caladenia fuscata*). Over the flowering period the leaf, though evident, is not fully developed. Once the flower has withered the heart-shaped leaf will fully develop, often with the withered stem of the inflorescence still attached. Occasionally in spring these leaves are still evident and confusion can occur if flowers are then expected to appear with the leaf.

The genus with the most species flowering at this time is *Pterostylis* or Greenhoods. My favourite is *P. coccinea*, with the contradictory common name of Scarlet Greenhood, because it has stunning red and white stripes. This species, like many of the autumn-flowering *Pterostylis*, forms either a rosette of leaves which will bear no flowers, or a single stalk with narrow stemmed leaves and a single flower. The colour of the flower is very variable and can be scarlet to dull reddish/brown, or even green but it is easily distinguishable by its graceful shape and relatively large size.

Another *Pterostylis* that I enjoy is *P. laxa*, with the common name of Antelope Greenhood because of the long backward pointing lateral sepals. This species is not very common, but even though green the lateral sepals make it very distinctive from other *Pterostylis* species. As with *P. coccinea* the leaf arrangement is either flowerless plants with rosettes or an inflorescence with narrow stemmed leaves.



*Pterostylis laxa*

Three other species of *Pterostylis* with this typical autumn flowering leaf arrangement, are *P. decurva*, (Summer Greenhood), *P. atrans* (Dark Tipped Greenhood) and *P. aff. revoluta* (Large Autumn Greenhood). *P. decurva* and *P. atrans* both have curved hoods and can be difficult to distinguish; however, the labellum of the former is more protruding than that of the latter. The hood of *P. aff. revoluta* is slightly bent but does not have a pronounced curve.

The *Pterostylis* with the smallest flowers found at this time is *P. sp. aff. parviflora* (Brindabellas). The flowering plant of this species does produce a basal rosette but it is often not fully developed until after the flower has withered. The inflorescence produces up to 12 tiny flowers that face inwards towards the stem, unlike most other *Pterostylis* whose flowers face outwards away from the stem.

Examples of the *Chiloglottis* genus (Bird Orchid) can be found throughout the year in the ACT but in autumn one of the most common is *C. trilabra*, a strange little colony-forming bronze orchid only about 8mm across. To really appreciate its unusual shape be ready to go down on your hands and knees to examine it closely.



*Chiloglottis trilabra*

Another strange, insignificant orchid that could easily be missed is *Genoplesium nudum* with an apt common name of Tiny Midge Orchid. This orchid has a stem up to 30cm tall, but those found in the Brindabellas are usually shorter, with five to 40 flowers. However in my experience it is seldom seen in flower, as it has a tendency to self-pollinate resulting in just tiny seedpods found on the inflorescence.

My favourite of all autumn flowering orchids I have kept till last. Really, it is a late summer flowering species but it can still be found till the middle of March, flowering in the leaf litter of open eucalyptus forests. It is *Arthrochilus huntianus* or Elbow Orchid. This strange orchid is a leafless saprophyte, its reddish stem only growing to a height of 15cm and bearing



*Arthrochilus huntianus*

up to eight flowers. The insect-like flowers are greenish with reddish markings and what makes it so unusual is its hinged labellum, giving the appearance of a tiny elbow. Because it is so small and the colours blend so readily with its habitat it is not easy to find but once found it is so distinctive that it cannot be confused with any other orchid.

So this autumn make time for a walk in Namadgi and enjoy. Happy hunting.

For further reading I suggest Anthony Bishop's *Field Guide to the Orchids of New South Wales and Victoria*, 2nd edition, UNSW Press or *A Field Guide to the Native Orchids of Southern Australia*, by David and Barbara Jones, Bloomings Books. Both books are available from the Botanic Gardens Shop.

Thanks to Tony Wood who took the photographs.

Jean Egan

# NPA ACT Strategic Plan 2002-2003

*At the December meeting, the NPA Management Committee adopted a new strategic plan covering the period 2002-2003. The plan identifies the issues and campaigns which the Committee believes should have the highest priority over the next two to three years. A set of objectives and actions to help achieve the priority aims is also part of the plan. The plan has deliberately been kept brief and concise to reflect its purpose as a working document.*

*The plan is not meant to cover every aspect of NPA's work; it focuses attention on a few broad areas. At the same time it is not meant to restrict the ability of the NPA to respond to new issues and events arising in the coming years. This flexibility is always needed. The plan will be updated regularly to reflect changes in priorities, objectives, and actions, to enable the NPA to remain an effective lobbying organisation for the environment in the ACT and Region.*

*All organisations have limited resources, none more so than voluntary organisations such as the NPA. A strategic plan allows us to identify our important issues and campaigns and apply our limited resources most effectively, that is, in ways most likely to achieve our aims and objectives. Although the NPA must react to new issues, we must also be proactive in our work with governments and the community. The plan provides the map and compass to show us where to go and what resources to use in planning and implementing our lobbying activities and building a viable and vibrant conservation organisation.*

*The plan also provides a focus for our dedicated band of volunteers, especially in the sub-committees and working groups, to identify and get behind common goals. Strongly shared goals are the key to harnessing the power of voluntary organisations like the NPA. We are only one of many*

*organisations seeking to influence ACT Government policies and actions on the environment. Often our objectives are totally opposed to those of other voluntary groups who want to use national parks and reserves. Only by concentrating our resources and speaking with a strong, united voice can we hope to achieve our objectives.*

*The Committee would welcome comments from members on any aspect of the plan. All comments will be considered for incorporation in future updates. Your help both in contributing to and in implementing the plan will ensure that it remains a living document, and that the NPA achieves its full potential in promoting and protecting the natural heritage of the ACT and Region.*

*Comments can be sent to the NPA office, PO Box 1940, Woden 2606 or email [npaact@bigpond.com](mailto:npaact@bigpond.com)*

**Neville Esau**

## Strategic Plan

### Introduction

This plan sets out the priorities for NPA ACT over the next two to three years. These priorities are summarised as a series of linked aims, objectives, and actions in each of the priority campaign areas. The plan is intended first and foremost as a working document, guiding our campaign work, our discussions and responses, so that we are always aware of our longer-term aims and objectives when new issues arise. It is not intended to act as a straightjacket on our work and discussions, but to help find the balance between pragmatism and ideology so that our long-term purpose and existence is clear. The plan needs to be updated regularly to remain relevant to our work over the intended time frame.

The plan is divided into eight sections, running from general statements of purpose to specific actions in each priority campaign area. Recommendations for changes in NPA procedures and work practices to help implement the plan are also included. A brief analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, as we currently see them, is included. These factors are important in

understanding our ability to implement the plan.

The plan has been kept as brief and concise as possible consistent with maintaining the integrity of the document. Each of the eight brief sections covers one aspect of the plan.

### Mission

To promote and protect the natural heritage of the ACT.

### Priority campaign areas

- i National park and reserve threats
- ii Protection of woodland and grassland
- iii Promotion and protection of biodiversity values of parks and reserves
- iv Raising our community profile
- v Maintaining a viable organisation through membership and financial management
- vi Providing membership services and communication

### Strategic aims

- To play a leading role in conservation issues in the ACT especially by taking a high profile in the media and public forums.

- To protect ACT and regional national parks and reserves from pressures and threats including creeping development and overuse.
- To ensure that the management of ACT parks and reserves protects conservation values and maximises biodiversity, by developing effective working relationships with policy makers and land management authorities.
- To extend the ACT reserve system by increasing the area of under represented woodland and grassland ecosystems in reserves and the management for conservation of remnant woodland and grassland outside the reserve system.
- To establish an extensive membership and secure financial base through attracting new members, particularly young people with strong conservation values.
- To promote awareness and understanding of our parks and reserves for our members and visitors by providing a range

*continued next page*

# NPA ACT strategic plan *continued*

of activities including walks, outings, work parties, meetings, and social functions.

## Strategic objectives

- Develop an attractive and effective website to disseminate our information, support our campaigns, and facilitate online membership, subscriptions, donations, and bequests.
- Develop a membership recruitment campaign for new and non-renewing members, especially younger members.
- Continue to provide an interesting and diverse outings and meetings programs promoting awareness of our parks and reserves for their biodiversity, catchment values, clean air, and magnificent scenery, which will also enhance the health and well-being of the ACT community.
- Seek additional funding through both Commonwealth Government and State Government sources as well as non-traditional sources including clubs and private funds.
- Investigate ways to employ a combined campaign and administrative officer to support the work of the Management and Environment Committees.

## Actions

- Establish a membership sub-committee to implement our aims and objectives for membership recruitment and finance.
- Create special youth ambassador positions to support membership recruitment for younger members.
- Campaign for the implementation of management plans for the off-reserve components of woodland and grassland systems through legislation and a well funded and managed rural conservation trust.
- Critically analyse new and existing management plans, guidelines, and arrangements for woodland and grassland reserves, to incorporate greater transparency for the protection of areas of high conservation value, both on and off reserves.
- Plan and produce books and other educational material on the

biodiversity and other conservation values of our parks and reserves, especially Namadgi National Park.

- Campaign for the revision of the Namadgi National Park Plan of Management and the completion of the Implementation plans for the other parks and reserves.
- Campaign for a regional wildlife corridor encompassing Kowen Scarp, Molonglo Gorge and Queanbeyan Scarp as indicated in the ACT and subregion strategy.
- Campaign to ensure all built accommodation remains outside the ACT nature reserve system.
- Campaign for an increase in the budget for managing parks and reserves, including feral animal and weed management programs.

## Working differently

### Key changes:

- Decide on our strategic priorities and stick with them; don't try to do everything. Less is better in many circumstances.
- Recognise the importance of our administrative work, fund raising, grant applications, and member support. Remain institutionally sound to continue operating successfully.
- Undertake more community education, awareness raising, and media work on issues and campaigns.
- Promote our message more through publications, member group liaison, exhibitions, and meetings.
- Maintain effective alliances with government, Legislative Assembly members, and the bureaucracy and other conservation groups and the community.

## Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis

To support this plan we need to be aware of our current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and to address these as part of the plan.

### Strengths

- Considerable member expertise

in conservation issues and outings programs.

- Grey power of retired and semi-retired campaigners with some time to spare.
- A history and reputation as a key ACT conservation body.

### Weaknesses

- Lack of solidarity on key conservation issues.
- Concerns for European cultural heritage sometimes overshadow the primary conservation values of parks and reserves.
- Very few younger members.
- Declining financial base

### Opportunities

- Attracting new and younger members through the internet and links to colleges and universities.
- Creating a family and young persons outings program to reach out to a younger generation.

### Threats

- Lack of focus on nature conservation and biodiversity.
- Concentrations of power within government bureaucracies on commercial and tourism objectives for parks.
- Competition from other environment and conservation groups.
- Inability to address effectively declining membership and financial base.



The President of the Association has agreed that if there is widespread interest among members, a forum on this strategy will be held at a General Meeting later in the year.

# Environment Sub-committee report

The Environment Sub-committee is working on establishing a good working relationship with the new ACT Government and raising some very important issues that will affect the future management of Namadgi National Park. A letter outlining our vision for and concerns about the future of Namadgi and nature reserves in the ACT went to the new Minister for Urban Services, Mr. Bill Wood, and to Dr Maxine Cooper, Executive Director for Environment ACT

In summary, the NPA ACT envisages a national park and nature reserve system that sets a benchmark for park management in Australia and around the world. This vision includes:

- preserving our unique ancient landscapes, native wildlife and vegetation in special areas such as the Bimberi Wilderness Area;
- identifying new areas such as rare grasslands and woodland habitats for possible inclusion in our national park and nature reserves;
- providing a well resourced park management team;
- taking great care to prevent impacts from feral animals and weeds and monitoring the general well-being of the park environment;
- having a stronger ranger presence in the park to stop illegal activities and to provide a safe environment for wildlife and recreational users; and
- avoiding inappropriate development paradigms that threaten those special values.

Some of our concerns are: the planning and timetable for the new Namadgi National Park Plan of Management; stopping Transgrid from clearing land in Namadgi and

Brindabella National Parks and rehabilitation of areas that have been cleared; plans to stop feral horses entering Namadgi and managing any now in the park; control of feral animals and invasive weeds; monitoring of illegal activities; keeping management tracks closed to privately owned vehicles; restricting and monitoring recreational horse riding in Namadgi; consulting the NPA regarding any new track development; withdrawing the Development Application for the wastewater treatment plan at Gudgenby Homestead and publicly announcing that the homestead will not be developed for commercial purposes but be used only for management purposes; encroaching urban development at Mulligans Flat (part of Canberra Nature Park); and plans for Gungahlin Drive to cut into the Black Mountain Reserve.

The letter was followed up by a meeting with Mr. Wood and Dr. Cooper in late December. Some of the points made by the Minister and Dr. Cooper in response to NPA's concerns were as follows:

- The Development Application and Preliminary Assessment for Gudgenby Homestead wastewater treatment have been approved. It is unlikely that the homestead will be used as a ranger station but the Government will consider all possibilities for its future use.
- Feral horses are not considered a serious problem in Namadgi at present and feral horse management is a sensitive issue in the wider community.

- The Minister and Dr. Cooper are aware of the possible impact on Mulligans Flat as the new Gungahlin suburbs are developed close to the boundary of the park and are interested in any proposals we might have to reduce this impact.
- The Government has a strong commitment to preventing illegal activities in Namadgi National Park.

In relation to the Gudgenby issue, the sub-committee has sent letters to Chief Minister Stanhope and Dr Cooper outlining our opposition to the proposal, with copies of our submission document. Other actions include forming a coalition with other conservation groups to lobby against the proposal, and raising public awareness of the implications of the proposal.

Sub-committee members continue to monitor activities affecting our national parks and nature reserves in the region by making site inspections, and by writing submissions and letters. These include ongoing monitoring of tree planting at Gudgenby; work towards the new Namadgi Plan of Management; a submission on the recreational use of Monga National Park; a letter to the Department of Planning and Land Management regarding the planning of new suburbs in north Gungahlin bordering on Mulligans Flat Nature Park; and keeping in touch with the work of the Namadgi Interim Advisory Board. All letters and submissions can be viewed on request. It looks as if 2002 will be another busy year for the sub-committee.

**Robyn Barker**

## Interim Namadgi Advisory Board

Recently staff from the ACT Parks and Conservation Service and all members of the Interim Namadgi Advisory Board participated in a two day cross-cultural awareness training workshop at Birrigai. This was one of the most worthwhile training experiences—if not the most worthwhile—of all the participants' lives, and Parks and Conservation deserve full credit for their foresight, commitment to board members and staff, and generosity of time and resources.

The board meets approximately every two months in an advisory capacity. The most recent meeting was

Thursday February 7 with the focus on what has become a broader agenda—reflecting the uptake of the board, an extension of its knowledge base and the ever-present list of issues which arise during the course of park management.

Not surprisingly, a number of items are taking precedence, including the Transgrid investigation and issues flowing from the approval for upgrading the Gudgenby Homestead wastewater treatment system. Other items include:

- the replacement board member;
- Environment ACT indigenous employment framework;

- Stockyard Arboretum wildlings; and
- capital works signage.

Of major interest to NPA is the process for the development of a new Namadgi Plan of Management and the contents of the new plan. An issues discussion paper has been drafted and circulated to board members for comment. This should be made public for comment soon.

For further information, please contact me on 6288 6084 ah.

**Dianne Thompson**  
Environmental Representative  
Interim Namadgi Advisory Board



# Obituary: Betty Wakefield (Richardson)

Betty was born in Adelaide and at four years moved with her family to her grandmother's farm at Goolwa, where she went to school by horse and buggy. When she was 11, the family moved to Kilkenny and she attended the Woodville High School, developing an interest in languages and science.

Against considerable discrimination Betty began a mechanical engineering course at Adelaide University and worked at the Long Range Weapons Establishment.

Lin Richardson was one of the founding members of the Adelaide Bushwalkers. When Betty joined the club shortly after its foundation, she began her lifelong association with Lin. They married in 1949 and moved to Canberra in 1962.

Betty completed a science degree at the ANU majoring in physics and then commenced a teaching career at Telopea Park High which continued until retirement, at Ginninderra High School.

Betty and Lin were never ones to accept convention, and membership of the Humanist Society allowed expression of their views on a range of community issues. They supported the



*Betty and Lin enjoying a cuppa and a quiet moment at Boboyan Trig. This NPA walk had commenced at the Yankee Hat carpark.. Photo Reg Alder*

establishment of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy and Lin still retains the tattered remains of a tent loaned to set up the embassy. Betty, a member of the Labor Party from 1962, was made a life member shortly before her death. Her involvements in other community activities are too many to list.

Betty and Lin joined the NPA in 1968 and made many friends on walks and through attending the monthly meetings. Their love of bushwalking led them to undertake five treks in Nepal from 1976 and to develop a friendship with the Sherpas and a quickening of interest in Buddhism. They ceased active walking in 1991 because of Betty's increasing medical problems, but they continued car-camping activities.

They met a Bhutanese ANU student and offered him a home. This expanded their interest in Bhutan. After retirement they lived in Bhutan during 1994-95, Lin working on computer systems and Betty teaching physics and English. Her generosity was legendary.

On return to Canberra Betty's medical condition gradually deteriorated and after a short period of respite she died in the Canberra Nursing Home.

Caring persons, like Betty, are a great value to our society.

*Betty Wakefield (Richardson), born Adelaide 17 May 1926, died Canberra 10 December 2001.*

**Reg Alder**

## Management of the Boboyan Pines Plantation

ACT Forests planted the Boboyan pines between 1966 and 1969, before Gudgenby Nature Reserve was established. Today the pines are not economically viable, and their removal is part of a staged rehabilitation project for the area.

In 1995 the Boboyan Pines Restoration Plan benefited from extensive public consultation, and work began on felling the pines. The final stage of harvesting commenced in early January 2002 and will remove the last 88ha of the plantation.

The restoration plan details processes for returning the area to native vegetation. Volunteer groups assisted with collecting local native seed, and thousands of seedlings were reared specifically for replanting in the Boboyan valley. A significant area has already been replanted with a mix of six endemic species of eucalypts and acacias.

Current harvesting is a result of improvements in the pulp and saw log markets and the fact that Environment ACT is subsidising the haulage costs using a capital works allocation.

ACT Forests is responsible for the logging of the pines, employing a contractor for harvesting. Environment ACT and ACT Forests approved a harvesting plan specifying the logging work. Essentially this involves felling all the pines—where commercially viable, the timber will be processed for pulp and saw logs, otherwise the trees will be felled and left on site.

The Environment Protection Authority is closely monitoring the harvesting operation to ensure that:

- the provisions of the Environment Protection Act are not breached;
- soil disturbance is minimised;
- possible pollutants are handled appropriately (eg, proper fuel storage and spill procedures); and

- the water quality of Bogong Creek is protected.

The Heritage Unit of Environment ACT continues to advise on the management of heritage sites within the plantation area, particularly the Aboriginal sites identified in the 1995 preliminary cultural resources study.

To ensure public safety during logging, the area has been closed to the public under the provisions of Section 53 of the *Nature Conservation Act 1980* effective until 30 April 2002. Closure may be extended if harvesting is not complete by that date.

Signs at various access points to the Boboyan Plantation advise of the closure and a leaflet is available at the Yankee Hat carpark detailing the work under the restoration plan.

*(Based on an article supplied to the NPA Bulletin by Environment ACT.)*

# International Year of Mountains 2002

An early start from Canberra enabled us to leave from Guthega Dam just after 9 o'clock on a mild January morning and begin the climb up the ridge just beyond the Guthega River. The track is well worn, coursing between resilient scrub stoutly defending its territory, but before long making way for increasing patches of snow daisies, billy buttons, eyebrights and native asparagus. The photographers amongst us were soon releasing tripods to tread their unsteady gait towards the capture of this colour drama. We could look back beyond Guthega to the steep slope of The Paralyser where Brian had initiated members to the delights of snowshoeing a few months ago, and beyond that to the north slopes of Perisher.

We pressed on, not letting up until we reached the crest of the ridge where, leaning against the granite outcrops, we were permitted to stop, nominally for morning tea, but in reality to reduce the population of march flies which seemed to try the patience of some of the party. We were beginning to appreciate the



*NPA group on Tate West Ridge, 13 January 2002, Brian Slee leader.  
Photo Max Lawrence*

almost perfect conditions of this day — mild temperature, light south westerly wind, almost cloudless sky and clear air without a trace of smoke or haze, and this after the weeks of fires which had been the New South Wales summer so far.

If we had continued due north we would have been in The Rolling Ground (how often have I wondered the origin of this fetching name) but we turned west over the high saddle, Consett Stephen Pass, to reach Tate West Ridge and then to follow it north. This ridge forms the last high ground before the precipitous fall to the west into the valleys of the Geehi and thus gives uninterrupted views over a wide arc from Jagungal in the north, over the Victorian Alps, to beyond Watsons Crags to the south. Way below we could glimpse a pocket handkerchief Geehi Reservoir and its access road and were made aware of the daunting task of building both. There was line after line of bluey ranges to the south, one recognised by Stephen (Hill) as Mount Buffalo, an astonishing 140km away but still discernible. Brilliant in the alpine sun, Watsons Crags rugged and near vertical, stepped relentlessly to the Geehi below. The more knowing in the group argued and then settled on the location of Olsens Lookout high on the far side of the Geehi Valley. The photographers

were at it again but somehow managed to catch up, or to telegraph the rest to slow down.

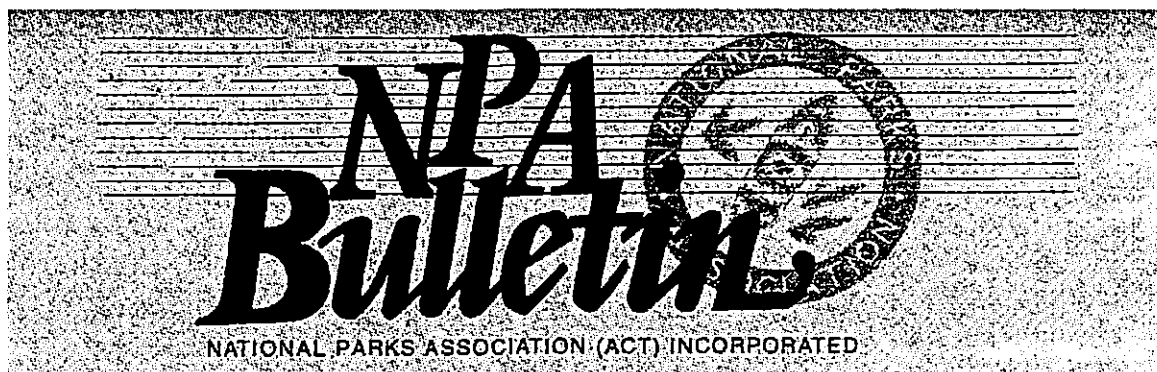
After lunch we followed the ridge to the north where it became a series of high rock formations before falling away to Windy Creek below. We retraced our steps to follow a steep but mainly grassy slope to the creek, our particular goal, to find the remains of Windy Hut. This hut, built for surveyors of the Snowy Mountains Authority in the 1950s, was dislodged by snowdrifts in 1974 and we were unaware of its present state. Following along the creek we found the site, a small platform well above the creek, which was strewn with the timber and iron from which the hut had been built. There were also the remains of a, no doubt cunningly devised, water supply. All very interesting but our investigations had taken us a long way down into the valley so we now had to face the inevitable climb out to regain the ridgeline.

Failing to find an easier way up the slope, we had to settle on a course which, most of the time, crossed a low unyielding scrub which from its stout resistance to any intruder must be Kosciuszko's answer to Tasmania's horizontal scrub. We eventually emerged from the grasp of this scrub, and picking up the track from Consett Stephen Pass

*The United Nations has proclaimed 2002 as the International Year of Mountains (IYM) to increase international awareness of the global importance of mountain ecosystems. In many nations, mountain areas face increasing marginalisation, economic decline and environmental degradation. IYM represents an important step in a long-term process initiated by the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, which placed mountains on an equal footing with climate change, tropical deforestation and desertification as a key issue in the global debate on environment and development. Further information is available on the IYM website, [www.mountains2002.org](http://www.mountains2002.org)*

*Perhaps the Bulletin could make a contribution to IYM through articles by members on the theme of 'mountains'. To start the ball rolling here is an account of a recent day walk in the high country, led by Brian Slee.*

*continued on page 11*



# NPA OUTINGS PROGRAM

March–June 2002

## Outings Guide

### Walk grading

Distance grading (per day)

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

### Terrain grading

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

Day walks Carry lunch, drinks and protective clothing.

Pack walks Two or more days. Carry all food and camping requirements. **CONTACT LEADER BY PRIOR WEDNESDAY OR AS INDICATED IN THE 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 THIRTY 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.

## Insurance

The Management Committee has paid affiliation and insurance fees to the NSW Confederation of Bushwalkers for the current (2001–2002) year. However, it will not be possible to make this payment for 2002–2003 from our “consolidated revenue”. Accordingly, in order to cover this cost, we will be asking NPA “walkers” to make an additional \$6.00 contribution when they renew their yearly subscription. (“Walkers” are defined as members who participate in the Outings Program at least three times each year.)

**9 March Saturday work party**  
**Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group**  
**Phone: Eleanor Stodart (6281 5004), or**  
**Syd Comfort (6286 2578)**

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 pines area. Tools will be provided.

**10 March Sunday daywalk**

**Goulburn history walks**

**Leader: Col McAlister**

**2A**

**Map: Goulburn street map and**  
**Goulburn walking trails pamphlets**  
**Phone: 6288 4171**

A walk taking in some of the heritage buildings in Goulburn and a climb up Rocky Hill to the War Memorial for views of the city. We will visit the Water Works Museum and Riversdale Homestead. Fees will apply. Meet at 8.30am at the netball centre carpark, just past the Dickson traffic lights on Northbourne Avenue. 200kms, \$60 per car.

**18 March ACT Alive**

The association's chance to promote its aims and activities to the community, ACT Alive is a showcase of Canberra's community organisations. It will be held in conjunction with Canberra Day on the lawns opposite Old Parliament House on Monday, 18 March. Varied displays and activities make a good day out. If you can help on the day, please contact Eleanor Stodart on 6281 5004.

**(15), 16, 17, 18, (19) March lo-o-o-ng weekend carcamp**

**Coolendel (by the Shoalhaven River)**

**Leader: Len Haskew**

**Map: Burrier 1:25 000**

**Phone: 6281 4268**

Coolendel is a private camping area with modern amenities on the Shoalhaven 30kms west of Nowra. There is a 2.5km river frontage for swimming; rapids for canoeing and liloing; many half or one day hikes of all degrees of difficulty; old gold mine sites about an hour's walk away. You should have contacted Len by 18 February for bookings. Coolendel has camping fees. 550kms, \$165 per car.

**16-18 March long weekend packwalk**

**The Vines and Beyond**

**Leader: Steven Forst**

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

**Map: CMW Budawangs**

**Phone: 6251 6817(ah), 6219 5236(w)**

A walk to explore areas beyond the Vines. Day one is an easy packwalk to a campsite in the Vines area between the Endrick

River and Quilts Mountain. Next day explore one of several interesting areas in the vicinity. Walk out Monday. Please contact leader by preceding Wednesday. 340kms, \$100 per car.

**16-18 March long weekend packwalk**

**Broggo River**

**Leaders: Pat and Eric Pickering**

**1C/D/E/F**

**Maps: Yowrie and Puen Buen 1:25 000**

**Phone: 6286 2128 for details, bookings**

A hard walk in the upper reaches of the Broggo, on the edge of the tableland east of Cooma. A different area from last year's walk but still a long descent of 900m (and return) to the Broggo River with wading, possible compulsory swims and rock scrambling. For experienced walkers. Solitude guaranteed.

**24 March Sunday daywalk**

**Mulligans Flat**

**Leader: Matthew Higgins**

**1A/B/C**

**Map: Canberra Street Directory**

**Phone: 6247 7285**

A chance to explore some of the Flat's history (school site, 1880s road, 1911 border markers) and the area's renowned natural values including part of the Bird Walk. The walk is fairly easy and leisurely, with good views. About 10kms, some off track. Book with leader, numbers limited.

**27 March Wednesday daywalk**

**Coree Falls**

**Leader: Max Lawrence**

**2A/B/C/E**

**Map: Cotter Dam 1:25 000**

**Phone: 6288 1370**

Meet at 8.30 am at the pine forest carpark at the Uriarra/Cotter Roads intersection. The walk starts from the arboretum at Blundells Flat and proceeds via Pabral Road with a final descent through light scrub to the falls on Coree Creek. Exploration of the falls involves some rock scrambling and steep grades. 90kms, \$27 per car.

**29 March-1 April Easter carcamp**

**Dignams Creek**

**Leaders: Geoff and Den Robin**

**Map: Wandella 1:25 000**

**Phone: (02) 6493 6552**

A music lovers treat. Attend the magical Four Winds Festival at Bermagui 30 and 31 March, camp at Geoff and Den's bush property on the westerly slopes of Gulaga (Mt Dromedary). Gentle walking in adjacent Kooraban and Gulaga National Parks between the music and an early ascent of the mountain on 1 April. For

ticket and full program see the website [www.fourwindsfestival.org.au](http://www.fourwindsfestival.org.au) 550kms, \$165 per car. Please phone leaders by 21 March.

**7 April Sunday daywalk**

**Mt Tantangara**

**Leader: Brian Slee**

**2A/B/C**

**Map: Denison 1:25 000**

**Phone: 6281 0719 (h)**

Depart Kambah Village 7.30am. Drive to Adaminaby and follow Snowy Mountains Highway to Alpine Creek Fire Trail. Walk north on trail through forests to Boggy Plain then the trig on Mt Tantangara, mostly on brumby tracks. Continue west to Tantangara (Harvey's) Hut for lunch. In afternoon, walk west to ridge for fine views of Jagungal, Tabletop and the frost plains north of Kiandra. Return same route or, if sufficient vehicles, utilise car shuffle. Afternoon tea at Adaminaby. 250kms, \$75 per car.

**11 April Thursday daywalk, plus**

**13-14 April weekend packwalk**

**Victorian Alps Spectacular:**

**Mt Buffalo Plateau, Mt Speculation and**  
**Mt Howitt (including Cross Cut Saw)**

**Leader: Ross Walker**

**2-3A/C/E**

**Maps: Vicmaps Howitt-Selwyn**  
**1:50 000, Buckland 1:25 000 and**  
**Eurobin 1:25 000**

**Phone: 6254 7117**

*Those who can, travel on Wednesday 10 April for a 16km walk on Mt Buffalo plateau on Thursday. Others can travel on Friday pm to meet up with the group for the weekend. On Saturday 13 walk up to Mt Speculation via Cross Cut Saw ridge; return to cars via Mt Howitt on Sunday. Sections of the Mts Speculation/Howitt walk are rated hard so participants need to be fit and have a good head for heights. Contact leader by 31 March. Numbers limited. 1400+kms, park fees apply. Notes: Ref Lonely Planet *Walking in Australia*. Views on these walks are spectacular but wasted in poor weather. Trip will be postponed if weather forecasts are poor close to the time.*

**13 April, Saturday work party**

**Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group**

**Phone: Eleanor Stodart (6281 5004), or**  
**Syd Comfort (6286 2578)**

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 pines area. Tools will be provided.

**21 April Sunday daywalk**  
**Kowen Forest historic sites and Molonglo Gorge**  
**Leader: Col McAlister**  
**2A/B**

**Map: Bungendore 1:25 000**  
**Phone: 6288 4171**

Visit the sites of Glenburn homestead, Colverwell graves and Collier's homestead. Then walk down Molonglo River to Blue Tiles and on through Molonglo Gorge. Meet at Canberra Railway Station, Kingston at 8.30am. Car shuffle. 40kms, \$12 per car.

**24 April Wednesday daywalk**  
**Leader: Ken Free**

**Phone: 6295 8894**

April mid-week walk. Phone leader for details to be determined nearer the date.

**25-28 April extended weekend packwalk**

**Quiltys Mountain circumnavigation**

**Leader: Steven Forst**

**3A, 2C, 2B, 2A**

**Map: CMW Budawang**

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

An extended packwalk around Quiltys Mountain, taking advantage of ANZAC Day, the intervening Friday, and the weekend. Campsites will include Styles Creek and Piercy's Cabin clearing and the Vines area. If conditions permit, visit Mt Haughton, Hidden Valley and the Bora Ground. 340kms, \$100 per car.

Ring leader by preceding Tuesday.

**3-12 May extended packwalk**

**Mittagong to Katoomba**

**Leader: Max Lawrence**

**2 to 4A/B/C/E**

**Ref: Robert Sloss, *Katoomba to Mittagong Track***

**Phone: 6288 1370**

Expressions of interest invited from fit, well-equipped, experienced packwalkers for this toughie. We'll be walking 145km over eight days (18km average) plus a rest day at Yerranderie. One day involves 28kms including Beloon Pass. Lots of rocks and water to splash in along the Nattai (3 days), the Wollondilly, the Kowmung and the Cox's. We'll be training to Mittagong, spending the last night in Katoomba, and possibly 'rent-a-car-ing' home. In order for supplies to be placed in Yerranderie, a change of gear to be posted to Katoomba, and bookings to be made, intending participants should make their interest known by the end of March and be prepared to make a definite commitment by 19 April. Numbers limited so get in early. Costs to be determined.

**11 May Saturday work party**  
**Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group**  
**Phone: Eleanor Stodart (6281 5004), or Syd Comfort (6286 2578)**

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 pines area. Tools will be provided.

**12 May Sunday daywalk**  
**Mt Gingera and Brumby Flat**

**Leader: Steve Hill**

**3A/E**

**Map: Corin Dam 1:25 000**

**Phone: 6231 9186**

A chance to visit Mt Gingera with a difference. Start with the usual walk from Ginini car park to the southern summit (1857) for fabulous views, then a short drop down to Brumby Flat, a beautiful, secluded alpine frost hollow. Visit some ancient snow gums and another view with a difference, then on to a quite spectacular viewpoint just below the northern summit (1847), before dropping down to Prior's Hut. The walk is partly off track but involves no serious bush bashing. Meet at the pine forest carpark, Cotter/Uriarra Roads intersection at 8.30am. 150kms, \$50 per car.

**18-19 May weekend packwalk**

**Mt Scabby**

**Leader: Philip Gatenby**

**3A/C/E**

**Map: Yaouk 1:25 000**

**Phone: 6254 3094**

A walk to one of the ACT's highest peaks and the headwaters of the Cotter River. The views from the top are spectacular. A total climb on the first day of just under 900 metres will be involved. There may be some rock scrambling. Contact leader for details by the Wednesday before the walk. Numbers limited. 140kms, \$42 per car.

**22 May Wednesday daywalk**

**Leader: Adrienne Nicholson**

**Phone: 6281 6381**

May mid-week walk. Phone leader for details, to be determined nearer the date; possibly an orchid search in Namadgi.

**26 May Sunday geological ramble**  
**Meditation on the Canberra Landscape**

**Leader: Gerry Jacobson**

**Maps: Canberra 1:100 000 topo;**

**1:50 000, 1:100 000 geological**

**Phone: 6281 3850**

A morning walk viewing the geology of Canberra from the Red Hill ridge. Meet 9.00 am at the Deakin Offices carpark off Kent Street. Walk up the ridge to the Red

Hill summit. A guided visualisation to appreciate the structure of the Earth beneath our feet. Finish with coffee and geological maps at the summit café. 0kms, \$0 per car.

**29 May Wednesday daywalk**

**Leader: David Large**

**Phone: 6291 4830**

Second mid-week walk this May. Phone leader for details, decided nearer the date.

**2 June Sunday daywalk**  
**Tidbinbilla Range and the Pimple**

**Leader: Steve Hill**

**3A/C/E**

**Map: Tidbinbilla 1:25 000**

**Phone: 6231 9186**

A day of fabulous views and a huge variety of life (including rare vegetation) on a quite rugged mountain range right on our doorstep. Climb to Snowy Corner from the top of the Lyrebird Trail (steepish, but passing through a great variety of beautiful forest) and on to Tidbinbilla Mountain for a 360 degree view. Follow north along the ridge and down to the Pimple for a late lunch and a stunning view of the Cotter Valley. Return to the ridge and down the spur (1556) to meet the Mountain Creek trail at the 'Cherry Tree'. The walk is mainly off track, on rocky ground but no serious bush bashing is involved. Meet at Kambah Village shops carpark at 8.30am for a fabulous, maybe strenuous day. 80kms, \$24 per car.

**8 June Saturday daywalk**

**Canberra Sculpture Stroll**

**Leader: Col McAlister**

**1A**

**Map: Canberra Street Directory**

**Phone: 6288 4171**

A stroll around some of the many sculptures in the Parliamentary Triangle, Civic and the ANU. Meet at rear carpark of the Australian National Archives, off Queen Victoria Terrace, at 9.00am. Small car shuffle may be required depending on group. 0 km, \$0 per car.

**8 June Saturday work party**  
**Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group**

**Phone: Eleanor Stodart (6281 5004), or Syd Comfort (6286 2578)**

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 pines area. Tools will be provided.

## 8-10 June long weekend packwalk

### Long Point

Leader: Steven Forst

2A/2A/2A

Map: Caoura 1:25 000

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

Ring leader by preceding Wednesday. A walk down Long Point overlooking the Shoalhaven Gorge. Camp by the river. A daywalk to explore Lake Louise as far as Bungonia Gorge or beyond. A long climb out on Monday. 250kms, \$75 per car.

## 15 June Saturday daywalk

### Woden Valley Ridges

Leader: Pat and Eric Pickering

4A

Map: ACT 1:100 000

Phone: 6286 2128

Joint walk with Family Bushwalkers. Start near the Woden Bus Interchange and walk "cross country" to the Red Hill and Isaacs ridges, then on to Mt Waniassa and Mt Taylor. Follow the ridge to the north and finally walk back to Woden. Undulating, with a total climb of about 580 metres. Mainly track or footpad, with some off-track walking through grassy areas. Meet at the carpark opposite the Hellenic Club, Callam St. Woden Town Centre at 8.20am. No transport involved.

## 22 June Saturday daywalk

### Split Rock

Leader: Martin Chalk

3A/B/C/E

Map: Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000

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

A long but rewarding day walk into the Bimberi Wilderness. The "warm-up" starts from the Orroral carpark and proceeds to Cotter Gap. After a well-earned rest we continue the climb to the granite outcrop above Cotter Gap. A self-catered lunch will be taken amongst the tors and the views. Return via the same route. Depart Kambah Village shops at 7.30am.

85kms. \$25 per car.

## 26 June Wednesday daywalk

Leader: David Large

Phone: 6291 4830

June mid-week walk. Phone leader for details, to be determined near the date.



## Specials this Program

### 6/7 April, Canberra Two Day Walk

A non-competitive event conducted as the Australian leg of the *International Marching League's* annual program. It involves completing 10, 20 or 30 kms (dependent on age) each day on recreation, equestrian or foot paths around Lake Burley Griffin and other localities around central Canberra. Entry fees are payable and medals/pins awarded at completion of second day. See website [www.bigfoot.com/~aussie\\_walk](http://www.bigfoot.com/~aussie_walk)

Entry form and information from:

Canberra Two Day Walk Inc.

PO Box 3114

Weston Creek ACT 2611

### Nature and young people: a slide show

3 May, Friday

7-9 pm

Namadgi Visitor Centre

On Friday May 3, Liz Leyshan will complete a 700km walk along the Australian Alps Walking Track. The purpose is to raise funds for a solar system for The Crossing, a not-for-profit environmental education camp being built on the Bermagui River.

Earthcare design and a strong sense of purpose will provide a unique experience for young people from Canberra, Wollongong and the coastal region. With surfboat access, a long term vision of a "Sea to Summit" walk and a program incorporating energy efficiency, water conservation, simple living, sustainability and land care. The Crossing is a visionary concept which needs support from its wider region to create a new future for youth camps.

To support her fundraising efforts Liz has organised two "BYO slide" show evenings with the theme of young people and nature. The first is at the beginning of the walk in Melbourne, and the second is to be held with the support of ACT Parks and Conservation Service and the Kosciusko Huts Association at Namadgi Visitor Centre at the end of the walk. Of course, both Liz and The Crossing will have a few of their own slides to contribute.

Please bring along your smile, love of a visual feast and \$5.00 support. Supper will be provided. People wishing to have their slides shown are asked to bring no more than five slides and to arrive at 6:30pm.

Graham Scully

## 15 May-17 July Long distance walk

### French Alps Walk-GR5

Leaders: Leonie and Phil Bubb

4A Guaranteed no scrub bashing!

Phone: 6248 6769

Start in the Vosges Mountains in Alsace mid-May, proceed to the Jura mountains on the border with Switzerland, cross the Lake of Geneva to the Alps, through the Alps to Nice or Menton hoping to arrive by mid-July.

We intend this to be not merely a pleasant walk, but a superlative one! With long daylight hours, we shall take at least an hour for lunch, and a long time at every viewpoint in order to etch the wonders on our memories. We shall stay at mountain refuges and gites d'etape (dormitory-style hostels) so need to carry only clothes and lunch—we can idle along like day walkers.

Paths are well made and usually well graded, even to the steepest passes.

Anyone interested in joining us for a week or two of this walk please get in touch. A good, but not exceptional level of fitness is needed. We do not walk fast, but keep on keeping on. On a recent mountain walk we met a group of English women, most in their sixties, completing a fortnight-long walk of similar difficulty to the GR5.

Expect to spend about A\$60 per day including lunch, a beer on arrival and a glass or two of wine with dinner. We can provide information about other walking locations and modestly-priced accommodation.

So if you feel like a change from the bush, wish to raise your eyes to mountains garnished with snow, and want to banish the heavy pack from serial day walking, come and join us!

# Australian Bush Heritage Fund—protecting Australia's wild places

We have driven through mile after mile of bleak landscape. Only vast tracts of introduced buffleggrass can be seen, where once the rich, diverse brigalow woodlands supported an abundance of wildlife and varied vegetation communities. Many of the animals, birds and plants which once inhabited this country are now threatened.

As we pass, huge bulldozers are working again, this time using blade ploughs to slice off below ground, the roots of the regrowth that is trying to recolonise the plains. Smouldering windrows form great black scars across the landscape.

This is central Queensland, where the heart of tree-clearing mania still beats with passion and where much of Australia's land clearing – about 560 000 hectares annually – occurs. Brigalow (*Acacia harpophylla*) communities have just been listed as threatened under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, such has been the effectiveness of this clearing regime. And while our governments play political point-scoring games over state versus federal responsibility, marked by cries for compensation and accusations of farmer-bashing, the destruction goes on.

Our arrival at our destination, Carnarvon Station Reserve, is a relief not only for the eyes but also for the heart. Here in the midst of this destruction is 59 000 hectares of outstanding country, a beautiful remnant that has just been protected forever by people like you and me. The Australian Bush Heritage Fund, a non-profit organisation based in Tasmania, is channelling the rising community

concern about the degradation of our environment and the growing list of threatened species, into direct and positive action. It is using our donations, support from Trusts and Foundations, and contributions from the National Reserve System Program, a division of the Natural Heritage Trust, to buy outstanding pieces of intact habitat and manage and protect them in perpetuity. It is comforting to know that if governments can't or won't ensure that Australia's unique environment is adequately protected in reserves, then there is an organisation that is working resolutely to this end.

The Australian Bush Heritage Fund was formed in 1990, when now Senator Bob Brown, used his US Goldman Environment Prize as a deposit on two forested properties in Tasmania which were destined to be woodchipped. Through his initiative and enthusiasm the ABHF was formed and, in addition to paying off these first two properties, Bush Heritage has developed into the national, independent, "go-ahead" organisation that it is today, with 13 reserves and a growing and committed supporter base.

Bush Heritage now manages for conservation three properties in New South Wales; four in Queensland, five in Tasmania including Erith Island in Bass Strait and one in Western Australia. These properties protect a wide array of ecosystems, and provide a safe haven for numerous species of birds, animals and plants, many of which are threatened. The search for new properties goes on continually.

The community plays a vital role in the management of Bush Heritage reserves. Each reserve has a committed

and active group of people termed Conservation Partners. These people, supported by the staff and some contractors, work to control weeds, erosion and feral animals as well as maintaining fencing and any infrastructure. With larger properties such as Carnarvon Station Reserve, Volunteer Rangers give up a month or more of their time to work on specific conservation projects on the reserve.

Bush Heritage's ability to continue this work depends on us, the community. With each new reserve comes more responsibility and greater conservation effort. Donations, bequests, or offers of high conservation value land are means by which each of us can support Bush Heritage and be part of the purchase and protection of Australia's dwindling wild places. All donations over \$2 are tax-deductible.

Carnarvon Station Reserve, the latest and largest of the areas protected by Bush Heritage, is also the most diverse. As we set up camp, the setting sun turns the abundant bluegrass downs to gold, and we can be glad that these, and the 16 other threatened regional ecosystems on the property, now have some measure of protection.

If you would like to be a part of protecting Australia's wonderful natural heritage and acquiring new conservation reserves, please contact Australian Bush Heritage Fund on Freecall 1800 677 101, email to [info@bushheritage.asn.au](mailto:info@bushheritage.asn.au) or check the website [www.bushheritage.org](http://www.bushheritage.org)

**Kate Fitzherbert**

*This article first appeared in The Sydney Bushwalker, October 2001 and is reproduced with permission.*

## International Year of Mountains 2002

*continued from page 10*

were well set on the return path and could expect a leisurely way back to the cars. But by now, what had earlier been a nice idea borne of consideration for us on the part of our leader had become a driving force. To be fair, afternoon tea in Jindabyne rated a mention in the walk description and in that setting seemed an appropriate way in which to cap off the day. What we did not know was that the cafe in Jindabyne closed at 6pm. So the

pressure was now on us to keep moving to meet this dead-line. Reluctant legs were coaxed to greater effort and enabled us to beat closing time by a few short minutes. Shades of the bad old "6 o'clock swill" days!

One would like to think that the glorious mountain ranges we rejoiced in during this walk are safe for all time. Perhaps we can help to ensure this.

**Syd Comfort**

### Volunteers, ACT Alive!

ACT Alive showcases Canberra's community organisations. It will be held on Monday, 18 March in conjunction with Canberra Day on the lawns opposite Old Parliament House. Anyone who can give an hour or two to promote their association by talking to people and 'minding' the display, please call Eleanor Stodart on 6281 5004.



*Clockwise from above*

- Margaret Power, Ross Walker, Tim Walsh, Janet Thompson, Maxine and Neville Esau
- Jacqui Cole and Evan Brown
- Leonie and Phil Bubb, Judith Webster (l to r)
- Annette Smith, Adrienne Nicholson and Mike Smith
- Phyl Goddard, Betty Campbell, Thea Exley and Margaret Aston (l to r)
- Les and Margaret Pyke with Babette Scougall
- Roger Farrow, Christine Kendrick and Janet Neale (with bells on!)

*Photos by Max Lawrence*

# Christmas Party at Nil Desperandum 2001





# Concern about Mulligans Flat

*The association is concerned about the impact of planned residential development bordering on the Mulligans Flat Nature Park. These concerns are set out in the President's letter to the Department of Planning and Land Management, the text of which is copied below.*

The NPA ACT is very concerned about the planning of residential housing in the new suburbs of Forde and Bonner directly adjacent to Mulligans Flat Nature Park in North Gungahlin.

Mulligans Flat protects one of the largest remnant communities of the endangered Yellow Box/Red Gum Grassy Woodland in the ACT and NSW. It also contains a variety of native trees, tussock grasses, shrubs and small flowering plants. This unique habitat provides a vital refuge for approximately 150 native birds including the hooded robin, brown

tree creeper and the nationally endangered regent honeyeater. The Canberra Ornithologists regard Mulligans Flat as one of the best spots for bird watching in the ACT. Indeed, Mulligans Flat is a special sanctuary for native birds.

The reserve is also home to wildlife such as the red-necked and swamp wallabies, sugar gliders, black shingle-backed lizards and spotted burrowing frogs.

We are very concerned that no buffer zone has been incorporated into the planning for new suburbs to provide protection for Mulligans Flat's unique habitats, bird communities and other wildlife. Threats from residential housing directly adjacent to Mulligans Flat include:

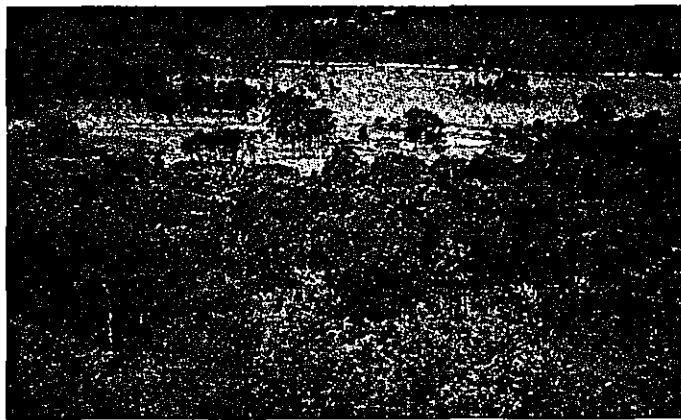
- Disturbance and predation by domestic cats and dogs on native wildlife especially feeding and nesting birds;
- Noise pollution from residential

housing, schools, shops and roads such as Horse Park Drive;

- Disturbance of Aboriginal and European cultural heritage sites;
- Increased illegal activities such as dumping of rubbish and taking of plants, rocks and fallen timber which provide habitat for wildlife;
- Increased access for illegal activities such as mountain biking, horseriding and motorbike riding.

At present Mulligans Flat is a quiet area reserved specifically for nature conservation but how long will this last with encroaching residential housing?

The NPA ACT proposes that the perimeter of Mulligans Flat should be protected from residential development by a buffer zone of open space. This will help to protect our native woodlands, grasslands and wildlife communities especially the native birds.



*Bushland on the northern side of Mulligans Flat.  
Photos by Robyn Barker*



*Encroaching residential development to south of Mulligans Flat.*

## Letter to the Editor – Gudgenby Homestead

Recently there has been some confusion over the name of the principal residence on the Gudgenby property in Namadgi National Park – “Gudgenby Homestead” or “Gudgenby House”. The matter is compounded by there being two residences in what was the Gudgenby property, one lived in by the previous owner and the other by the station manager.

Although the term “house” may be applied to a residence, “homestead” has the specific meaning of “the

owner's residence on a sheep or cattle station” (Oxford Australian Reference Dictionary) The first Gudgenby Homestead was built c1844 by Charles McKeahnie and only replaced in 1964/5 by the present building which continued to be used as the residence of the owner of the property. Thus in accordance with the definition of the term, this building should be known as “Gudgenby Homestead”. Further, this name has been officially recognised and used by the Parks and Conservation Service, the National

Trust and the Australian Heritage Commission.

The manager's house was built c1927 from a kit retailed as “Hudson Ready-cut” and remains on the eastern side of the Gudgenby River, opposite to the homestead on the western side.

Applying the term “house” to the principal residence at Gudgenby can only cause confusion when by definition and official usage, “homestead” is the appropriate term.

**Reg Alder**

# PARKWATCH

## Welsh ornithologist takes a look at NSW western birds

Efforts by State Forests to protect threatened native bird species and conserve woodland bird habitats will receive international recognition in a forthcoming BBC documentary. Acclaimed Welsh ornithologist and television presenter, Iolo Williams, travelled to State forests in western NSW to feature the conservation work in the documentary, to be screened in Australia and overseas.

State Forests wildlife manager, Dr Jim Shields, said the documentary highlighted the organisation's efforts to protect threatened bird species like the malleefowl. He said "We have had great success in developing methods to monitor malleefowl populations, and through implementing initiatives like fox threat abatement programs we have been able to protect malleefowl mounds in Goonoo State Forest."

*Bush Telegraph, January, 2002.*

## Sunburnt country

Many of our natural systems will be adversely affected by climate change, and this will in turn affect our tourism industry. Alpine ecosystems, for example, are highly vulnerable to global warming and scientists expect less snow and shorter snow seasons in the future.

A "low change" scenario for 2030 indicates that a 0.3°C warming and no change in precipitation would reduce the snow covered area by 18%. Under a "high change" scenario for 2030—warming of 1.3°C and an 8% reduction in precipitation—the snow area declines by 66%. This will reduce the area available for skiing, and the alpine habitats for animals such as the mountain pygmy possum.

Coral reefs will also be affected by warmer oceans, rising sea levels and increased cyclone intensity. Scientists say natural adaptation will probably be too slow to avert a decline in the quality of the world's reefs.

In native forests and woodlands, warming and lower rainfall could threaten many eucalypt species and harm most frogs and mammals. Wetlands, riverine environments and rainforests will be affected by reduced rainfall, disturbance from more frequent flooding or fires and invasion by pests, weeds and exotic species.

*ecos, July-September, 2001.*

## Peter Garrett helps with woodland fight

"The proposals for this chunk of bush at East O'Malley highlight the threats to woodland throughout the ACT and I commend the hard work you have all been doing to protect them", said Peter Garrett on 27 September as he supported local environment groups highlighting the plight of our grassy woodlands and grasslands.

Despite the ACT containing some of the largest and most diverse grassy woodland and woodland remnants in the country, providing a stronghold for many nationally threatened, rare and declining species, these endangered ecosystems continue to be whittled away in the ACT, placing their future at risk.

The groups associated with the woodlands and grasslands campaign are very pleased to have the support of the Australian Conservation Foundation, and in particular Peter Garrett, on this issue. Canberrans are rightly proud of the city's reputation as the Bush Capital. However, if this is to continue, we must protect the bush we have left.

*Sustainable Times, October, 2001.*

## New web sites

The Conservation Council and the Environment Centre both have new web sites that are well worth a visit. They can both be found at [www.ecoaction.net.au](http://www.ecoaction.net.au) The sites include information about each organisation and how to join as well as regularly updated news and events pages. Publications like *Sustainable Times* will soon be available through the websites as well. Please have a look at the sites and let us know if you have any suggestions.

*Sustainable Times, October, 2001.*

## From The Canberra Bushwalking Club Inc. President's Annual Report

One of the major stated aims of our constitution is to foster conservation of our countryside and preservation of our national parks. To this end, our annual broom clearing commitment near Cotter Hut has been maintained and work has begun under Michael Maconachie's direction, on monitoring the condition of the Ginini Wetlands—the home of the club's logo, the

Northern Corroboree frog. This work is being carried out in conjunction with ACT Parks and Conservation Service, under a grant received from the Natural Heritage Trust.

The club has during the year been involved in discussions with ACT Parks and Conservation Service on a number of issues, and also has a voice on a number of NPWS advisory committees in areas of concern to us: namely, the Alpine Walking Track committee, and KNP Summit Committee. The club is represented on a National Parks Committee which is looking at the management of wild horses in the Alpine region. We have also advised NPWS of our interest in being represented in input to the Morton Budawang plan of management. Closer to home, we have been following the development of the ACT Government Nature Based Tourism Strategy, and its likely impact on Namadgi National Park. We have recently submitted a letter of concern at the proposed commercial development of Gudgenby Homestead.

*ii, October, 2001.*

## Lake Pedder—30<sup>th</sup> anniversary

The journey continues in the effort to restore what was once "the jewel of Tasmania's South-west". Drowned under the flood waters of the Gordon Hydroelectric Scheme in 1972, Lake Pedder captured a spirit that endures to this day. Lake Pedder is regarded as one of Australia's great wilderness icons, alongside Kakadu, Uluru and the Great Barrier Reef.

Tasmania's South-west National Park was inscribed on the World Heritage register in 1982; the expectation of the World Heritage Committee when they included the flooded Lake Pedder in the listed area was that the existing body of water would eventually be drained and the original lake restored. In May 2002 people will gather to commemorate and celebrate the beauty of the original lake and to take further steps on the pathway to its restoration.

*Wild, October-December, 2001.*

## Carnarvon Gorge campground

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) reports that its most popular mainland campground, Carnarvon Gorge, is to close.

This will end an era of camping in this part of Carnarvon National Park—  
*continued next page*

## PARKWATCH *continued from previous page*

begun as geographical expeditions and ending as family stopovers after a few hours' drive.

The decision to close the campground was made because of continuing concerns about safety, soil compaction, septic and grey water disposal and water supply. Although facilities were upgraded substantially in recent years, they were only just able to cope with existing demand.

About 20,000 people spent about 60,000 nights camping here in 2000-01 with a similar number of day visitors.

As access roads are sealed, this section of the park is likely to attract even more visitors.

Consultation with interested parties last year resulted in significant support for moving camping facilities off the park.

Following advertising for expressions of interest, QPWS began discussions with the operators of Oasis Lodge and the Takarakka campground near the Gorge entrance. Up to three times the number of available campsites and improved visitor facilities might be available eventually.

The campground is likely to be closed before Easter 2002 by which time alternatives are expected to be available.

*NPA News, October, 2001.*

### Transgrid in suburbia?

Last year I wrote an article about how landscaping was used to commemorate the mud-mortared stone part of the Tuggeranong boundary marker complex which marked the boundary between the Yarralumla and Lanyon properties. The boundary marker, built in about 1870, also includes a dry stone wall portion between the Murrumbidgee River and Athllon

Drive and a ditch and bank section at the eastern end. The bank is believed to have been topped by hawthorns to form a hedge enclosure. This type of fencing pre-dates wire fencing and the arrival of rabbits and is rare in the Canberra district. The boundary marker was included on the ACT Heritage Places Register as part of a variation to the Territory Plan as from 12 December 1997.

A small five metre section of the ditch and bank still exists. Or at least it did until last month.

Last summer the poplars on the eastern side of Lake Tuggeranong were removed after a fire. As part of the rehabilitation of the area Canberra Urban Parks and Places, the government authority responsible for maintenance of the lake foreshore, "landscaped" the listed site and planted trees over the top of the ditch and bank. The Society has raised the issue with the ACT Heritage Unit who are investigating what happened.

*Canberra & District Historical Society Inc., Newsletter, Dec 2001-Jan 2002.*

### Kosciuszko Resort plans go from bad to worse

When the Government announced the "overhaul of planing in Kosciuszko" in February this year [2001], NPA vigorously opposed the stripping of the NPWS's resort management powers.

As more details come to light, Government now appears to be moving quickly to restrict NPWS's powers even further. The initial proposal, prompted by a planning inquiry leading from recommendations of the Coroner's Inquiry into the Thredbo landslide, was for the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (DUAP) to be the consent

authority for developments greater than \$2million. Now the current proposal is for consents for all development to be approved by DUAP.

NPWS will then have no formal role in any approvals, given that Government also proposes to remove the need for ski resort and lodge owners holding leases in Kosciuszko National Park to gain NPWS consent before proceeding with a development proposal. This would make the Kosciuszko ski resorts the only place in NSW where leaseholders are not so constrained.

*National Parks Journal, December, 2001.*

### The end is nigh for old men in a sea of wheat

The solitary paddock tree—the giant eucalypt providing shelter for a huddled mob of sheep or surrounded by field of wheat—is a familiar sight on a drive through the bush.

But it could one day be a memory, with a NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service project officer, Phil Gibbons, warning that, unless action is taken, these survivors of two centuries of land clearing will die of old age, disease and neglect.

Because nearly every seedling that grows at their bases is grazed by cattle and sheep, or ploughed under for monocultures, the trees will not be replaced.

It is predicted that all these elderly specimens will be gone in 40 to 185 years.

Dr Gibbons and his colleague, Miles Boak, also found that in parts of NSW more than 50 per cent of some vegetation groups comprised remnant patches of trees covering less than a hectare.

"These trees are the relics of what was left after European settlement," Dr Gibbons said. "But a lot of these trees are reaching the end of their life span and this process is being accelerated by increasing rates of dieback."

The parks service, Greening Australia and the Department of Land and Water Conservation have launched a program to raise awareness of the importance of paddock trees and to encourage farmers to fence remnants from stock so that seeds can grow.

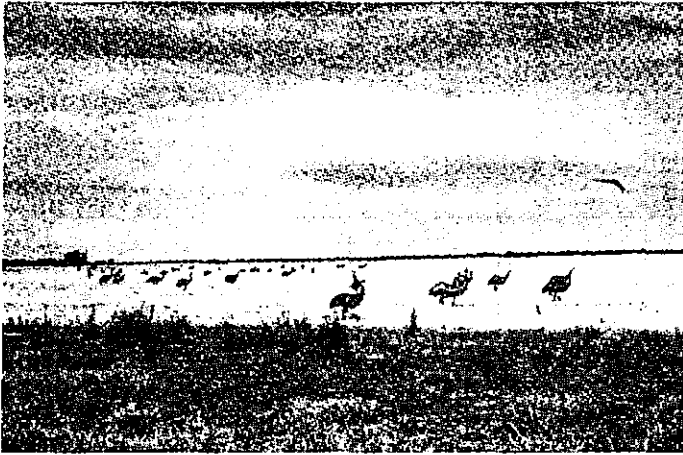
*The Sydney Morning Herald, 19 December, 2001.*

Compiled by Len Haskew



*NPA President, Clive Hurlstone, reads the minutes at our last Forestry House meeting, November 2001. Guest Jennie Gilles spoke on Wetlands for our Suburbs. Photo Reg Alder*

# Nature thrives at the home of black opal



*Emus in wheat stubble, north of Walgett.*

I had the idea that Lightning Ridge – “home of black opal” – would be a Wild West town set in heaps of mining waste and surrounded by semi-desert. But as I drove north from Walgett and passed through rich and varied plant communities spaced on the parklike plains I began to get a different picture.

There are unexpectedly tall trees – I learned later they were mainly coolibahs and bimble box, among others – and it was obvious, even from a passing car, that there were many different species of smaller trees, bushes, flowering plants and grasses.

I had lots of questions by the time I arrived in the township, and an advertisement gave me a lead on where to go for answers. The advertisement was for Lightning Ridge Nature Tours.

An informal half-day tour confirmed my impressions. I could understand why the area around the Ridge used to be known as “the Garden of Eden of the Western



*Jan Cooper collecting nardoo seeds.*

Division”. The reason is high rainfall and a mixture of black soils on the plains that support lush growth and red soils on the ridges that grow the drought-resistant species.

Lightning Ridge Nature Tours was started last year (2001) by Jan Cooper, MA, Dip Ed, the guide and proprietor. It is a business that allows

her to indulge her enthusiasm for native plants and the interaction between them and the animal and human life of the area.

Jan developed her interest during many years at Bourke and other outback centres before she came to the Ridge. She has links with native plant groups around Australia, including Greening Australia and the Australian Plant Society network, and has contributed an article to the society’s NSW newsletter on arid zone plants within a short radius of Lightning Ridge.

She is fluent in the common names, the botanical names and the Aboriginal names of the plants – and that is only the start. She can tell you about their role in the ecological community, their growth, flowering and fruiting habits, their commercial and other uses, and their role in the history of exploration, if they have one. She knows the grubs that live in the wood and the butterflies that feed on the nectar. And a lot about the bird and animal life.

When I asked the name of a bush I had photographed her inspecting, she replied: “It has the usual five or more common names. I follow the book *Plants of Western NSW* and call it native honeysuckle, or nepine. It is the one with the very sweet fruit – a favourite treat for Aboriginal kids, and very acceptable to

non-Aboriginal adults.”

Jan has experimented with native plant propagation, and is keen to see local species used in rehabilitating worked-out mining areas. She also draws on her extensive knowledge of Aboriginal lore and tries them for food, and has made infusions for medicinal and health purposes. She has even distilled a small phial of perfume from the flowers of the gundabluie wattle. This wattle is the source of commercial bush tucker seeds used in dessert recipes.

Sparing a thought for the fate of Burke and Wills, I sampled some nardoo seeds from a patch of moist ground on the outskirts of the township. The unripe seeds had a slight almond taste.

Lightning Ridge Nature Tours offers a variety of full-day, half-day and two-hour tours. Tour and other information is available on [www.wj.com.au/janstours](http://www.wj.com.au/janstours). The 2002 program is due on the website in early March.

Another operator – Black Opal Tours – provides an excellent two-hour tour with emphasis on opal mining and history within the township and nearby fields. This tour is a good way to start a visit to the township and the opal mining activities.

*Lightning Ridge, Turning Back Time*, by Barbara Moritz, describes and illustrates some of the earliest homes and mining structures of the area. Published by the Lightning Ridge Historical Society Trust, it features a map showing the location of each.

Another small publication, *Lightning Ridge, A Visitor’s Guide*, with text and colour photographs by Margaret and Warwick Schofield, is an excellent introduction to the plants, mammals, birds and reptiles of Lightning Ridge, historic landmarks, and mining methods, types of opal and things to do.

More generally available, Len Cram’s *Beautiful Lightning Ridge, 100 Years of the World’s Most Famous Black Opal Field* is a lavishly illustrated – and low-priced – history of the community and mining operations and a description of opal features.

Lightning Ridge is a self-aware town that promotes itself as a tourist destination and source of black opal. It is keen to preserve its history

*continued page 17*

# Association news

## NPA Website

Robyn Barker reports that the NPA website is, in the jargon, up and running. The site is hosted, free of charge, by Australian Sunsite which is a joint server initiative of the ANU and Sunmicro Systems. This organisation aims to disseminate Australian information of national and international interest. The website is located at: <http://sunsite.anu.edu.au/canberra/npaact>

## Apology

I apologise to author Jean Egan and to readers for the corruption of two photos which illustrated Jean's orchid article in the December *Bulletin*. There was a problem in the scanning of the photos which was not picked up by the printers during production nor by me when checking the proofs.

SFC

## Changeover of Outings Convenor

After coordinating the association's outings program for nearly six years Max Lawrence is stepping down and making way for David Large. It is wonderful to see that David, who had health problems in 2001, is actively involved in walking again and will bring his enthusiasm for walking to the position of Outings Convenor. Max has been very successful in encouraging members to lead outings and in coming up with ideas for new activities and different walks. He has hosted convivial walks meetings and in his breezy style seen that the association has always had a program full of interest and variety. He has produced copy for the printed

program, always complete, accurate and on time and ready for publication in the *Bulletin*. Our Christmas parties at Nil Desperandum were made possible by Max's organisation of the convoys needed on those occasions. Not the least of his achievements has been to bring the recalcitrant insurance issue to a resolution. All members would endorse a 'well done' to Max.

SFC

## New guide to Canberra bushwalks

Member Graeme Barrow has just released the fourth edition of his guide to family bushwalking in and around Canberra. The book will be reviewed in the June *Bulletin*.

## ACT Alive

The association will again take part in ACT Alive which is a showcase of Canberra's community organisations held in conjunction with Canberra Day. ACT Alive will be held on the lawns opposite Old Parliament House on Monday, March 18. See Outings Program and note on page 11.

## Congratulations

Congratulations to long-term member Thea Exley who completed her PhD studies last year. The subject of her thesis was *Art Competitions in Australia in the Twentieth Century*, studied with the Art History Department of the ANU. Thea joined the NPA ACT in the 1970s, was a regular walker with us for many years and also worked with an earlier committee in an advisory capacity on management of our archives. After her retirement from the Australian

Archives in 1986, Thea returned to further studies (first, a second BA, this time in Art, then a graduate diploma, followed by a PhD). We look forward to seeing Thea back walking with us now that her studies are behind her.

Babette Scougall

## Introduction of the Environment Monitoring Form

An important part of the association's contribution to protecting our natural areas is the observation and reporting by members of environmental problems and illegal activities in reserved areas. To date, this reporting has been on an informal basis, frequently by phoning the President. The association has decided that the use of a standard form for reporting would improve both the recording and actioning of these incidents. A copy of this form is enclosed in this *Bulletin*. In addition to providing headings under which incidents may be reported, the form provides guidelines and a list of relevant contacts. Members are urged to become familiar with the form and to use it during walks and other trips into national parks and nature reserves. Further copies will be available at general meetings.

## Help needed

Margaret Aston who co-ordinates the post-out of the *Bulletin* would like to hear from any member able to help her. This involves three or four hours once a quarter. Margaret has a band of regular assistants but because people are frequently unavailable for one reason or another, she needs to have a good-sized pool of volunteers to draw on. Margaret's phone number is 6288 7563.

## The home of black opal

*continued from previous page*

and to ensure that the growing township maintains and improves its way of life. There is strong interest in heritage and history, but as yet conservation of the natural habitat is barely on the agenda. Jan's voice is one of the few raised in the cause and, she says, "there's a long way to go".

But what's there is fascinating just the same.

Graeme Wicks

*Car bodies help fill a disused mine pit—the problem or the solution? Photos by Graeme Wicks*



# Book Reviews

## Guardians of the Bush Capital

*Guardians of the Bush Capital*, by Amanda Caldwell. The Conservation Council of the South-East Region and Canberra. 2001, 61 pages. Available from the Conservation Council, PO Box 1875, Canberra 2601. (\$15.00 inc postage.)

Subtitled *A Snapshot of 100 Years of Community Conservation in Canberra*, the book was funded by the Commonwealth Government's Centenary of Federation program. Nicola Davies in her Director's Message encapsulates the thrust of the book:

*told from the environmentalists' point of view, it looks at Canberra's conservation activities from the early days of settlement and the building of the city, through the period of extraordinary growth presided over by the National Capital Development Commission, and on to the period of self-government of the Australian Capital Territory.*

Amanda recalls that from the establishment of Canberra until about 1958 there were few formalised or organised conservation activities conducted within the local community. Indeed, as she points out, most of the decisions about planning, development and growth were willingly left to the bureaucracy. Not even with the establishment of the National Capital Development Commission were statutory requirements for community participation endorsed. The expectation for the community's right to participate grew as result of public movements protesting such issues as the Vietnam War, nuclear threats and land rights. At much the same time people began to express concern about the destruction of the natural environment and to demand the establishment of national parks and reserves to preserve the environment for its own sake.

As we all know it was about this time that the NPA's vision of "a national park for the national capital" had its genesis. Amanda interviewed our Fiona MacDonald Brand, OAM, who very capably told the story of NPA and its untiring effort to see the dream become a reality. As well as having her recollections recorded by Amanda, Fiona was also able to remind a wider audience of NPA's primary role in the establishment of our national park when she was

interviewed by ABC Radio about *Guardians of the Bush Capital* and when she spoke again at the launch of the book at the Canberra Museum and Gallery.

In the early section of the book Amanda has drawn much of her material from official documents and



*Fiona MacDonald Brand speaking at the book launch. Photo Reg Alder.*

newspapers, but from Fiona's contribution on, she has relied upon interviewing members of the many dedicated voluntary conservation groups that are so much part of today's Canberra. Of particular interest to NPA members are quotes from Clive Hurlstone and Eleanor Stodart.

Many contentious issues are recalled: Black Mountain Tower, toxic waste, urban infill and the Yankee Hat carpark to mention just a few. Also recalled are some significant gains like the reservation of Mulligans Flat, the rise and rise of the Landcare groups and the remediation of the Boboyan Pines.

Because it is mainly a book of recollections some of us may take issue with some of the statements and conclusions drawn by the interviewees. I know that on a couple of occasions I thought to myself "That was not the way I remembered it". But, perhaps, that it is one of the strengths of this interesting little book, and it shouldn't be seen as a criticism. In a small way the reader is able to "get into the mind" of some of the environmental "movers and shakers".

I have some reservations about the design of the book — I find coloured type on coloured pages difficult to read, especially at night.

But even if you have to sit in the garden to read this informative and well written book I highly recommend

it. Not only does it portray the invaluable role of conservation groups as initiators and watchdogs for the environment but, also as Nicola Davies says:

*If this book generates discussion and encourages further investigation of some of the issues raised, the Conservation Council will have met its primary goal of increasing awareness of Canberra's environmental history. For it is only by understanding what has gone before that we can all the better plan the journey ahead.*

Len Haskew

## Bringing Birds Back

*Bringing Birds Back*. Nicki Taws. Greening Australia, 2001.

All NPA members would be aware that Greening Australia has been involved in extensive plantings of revegetation belts and patches in farmland in the ACT region. Farmers have often provided anecdotal evidence that these shelter belts improve productivity by increasing lambing rates and so on. One hoped-for result is an increase in the number of insectivorous birds, and to test this Greening Australia teamed up with CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems and the Canberra Ornithological Group to do some surveys.

To publicise the program and to help farmers check for themselves which birds are coming back to their properties, Greening Australia has launched a glovebox guide, *Bringing Birds Back*. Its tall narrow shape also lends itself to pockets, and the spirex binding means that it opens easily. The author is Nicki Taws, who some years ago was the NPA's research officer.

The guide gives some encouraging results of the surveys done to date, and some information about how to make a farm more bird friendly. Most important, it has photographs and notes about the 20 birds most commonly seen in revegetation patches, and also 10 birds recorded as declining in numbers in the region over recent years but found to occur in revegetation (with one more included in the 20 most common).

The notes help identify the birds and their habits and give their occurrence in the revegetation sites

*continued next page*

## Book Reviews, *continued from previous page*

surveyed. Some birds appear when the revegetation is three years old, others from when it is four or five years old. What is really encouraging is that some of the birds have begun breeding at older sites.

Revegetation sites surveyed range from 14 months to 14 years. Surveys have been carried out for two years, so as yet one cannot say that they have proved that revegetation brings back birds, but they certainly indicate that it does. Some control sites in natural bush and in farm paddocks are included in the surveys. I am pleased to be able to note that NPA's *Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT* is cited as a reference.

The new book is a very handy guide to some of the commoner bushland birds of the region. I hope it is also successful in encouraging more farmers to revegetate with natural bush. It is very discouraging to see people still installing belts of *Pinus radiata* today, as one can on the way to Braidwood, when help is at hand to select and acquire suitable native plants and seed. Fortunately, nearer Braidwood there are some healthy stands of native vegetation and two of the survey sites are east of Braidwood. The surveyed area covers the area bounded by Braidwood, Bungonia, Boorowa, Binalong and just south of Queanbeyan.

Copies are free to farmers interested in revegetation and can be obtained from Greening Australia in Aranda.

Eleanor Stodart

### **Australian Plants for Canberra Region Gardens and other cool climate regions**

*Australian Plants for Canberra Region Gardens and other cool climate regions*, Society for Growing Australian Plants, Canberra Region, 4th edition, revised 2001.

Over the years the Society for Growing Australian Plants, Canberra Region (SGAP) has done a lot to make the growing of Australian plants easier for the Canberra gardener. Their regular spring and autumn sales are well attended and have a huge turnover of reasonably priced tubestock.

They have recently begun a program to help reduce the numbers of invasive plants in Canberra gardens. People can take invasive plants they

have removed from their gardens to the tip on specified days and exchange them for non-invasive natives that grow to similar size. This program has the benefit of replacing invasive plants with others, and the wider benefit of letting people know that it matters.

They have also released the fourth revised edition of their book, *Australian Plants for Canberra Region Gardens*, now including and other cool climate regions in the title, and with an attractive photograph of the rogal bluebell across front and back covers.

Begun as a booklet in 1973, revised to 59 pages in 1976, revised again in 1983, it is now 207 pages, lists over 1000 plants and even has a coloured insert of eight pages to illustrate just a few of the very wide selection. Although the 1973 booklet is cited as the first edition, it actually was preceded by a self-described 'pamphlet' roneoed in 1971, which at 24 pages seems to me to have been a little bit more than a pamphlet.

This new edition begins with the kind of background information needed by someone starting out in native plant gardening, such as the soils of the area, the need for water (but not too much), factors to consider in planning, preparation, planting, and care and choosing of plants. A section on propagation in previous editions has been reduced to notes on courses and references, as SGAP plans to publish a separate booklet on propagation.

The list of recommended plants forms most of the book. The plants are given their scientific names, with common names occasionally forming part of the description. They are grouped under headings of practical use—ground covers, clumping plants (includes grasses), small shrubs, medium shrubs, tall shrubs, trees, climbers and container plants. An index means that you can find a plant by scientific name regardless of size or shape.

Each plant has a very brief description, an indication of hardiness and area of origin, and a set of symbols indicating conditions needed—degree of sun, drainage, frost tolerance, heaviness of soil and season (presumably of flowering). Height and width are given for most species except the climbers. A lot of information is given in a very compact form. The main problem is that several

of the symbols are rather similar to each other and too much care is needed in checking them out.

Those who followed the recent controversy about the removal of Cootamundra wattle, *Acacia baileyana*, will be interested to know that it is not included. Nor is the Western Australian bluebell, *Sollya heterophylla*, which also invades the bush from gardens. However, silver wattle, *Acacia dealbata*, which is a local species with an annoying propensity to sucker, is included.

This book represents an enormous amount of work, in the practical experience of society members over more than 30 years, in the assembling of that experience for this book, and in checking the detail. It will be a very useful reference for all people wanting to expand the native plants in their gardens, whether they want to concentrate on local hardy plants or collect an interesting variety from around the country.

Eleanor Stodart

### **General Meetings:**

**Uniting Church Hall,**

**Parkinson Street,**

**Weston.**

**'Third Thursdays' 8.00 pm**

### **New members**

The association extends a warm welcome to the following new members and invites them to participate in NPA activities.

Margot Pearson, O'Connor  
Rosemary Hansen, Kingston  
Jan Dempster, Calwell  
Norman and Jocelyn Bowman,  
Campbell

Kaye Campbell, Pearce  
Gerda van de Kamp, Weston  
Sharon Johns, Campbell  
Brian and Margaret Versey, Curtin  
Susan Walters, Lyons  
Margaret Winsbury, Cook  
Catherine Crowe and Barbara Hicks,  
Farrer  
Carole Fullalove and Ian Tranter,  
Queanbeyan

## General Meetings

### Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2002

#### *Facts, Tracks and Ferals*

Dianne Thompson, David Large and Clive Hurlstone.

A four-day visit to the Southern and Northern Regions of Kosciuszko National Park at the end of October last year gave NPA members from the ACT and NSW an opportunity to view and discuss park management issues with NPWS staff. Issues included: new additions to the reserve system, feral animal control; and horse-based recreation in northern KNP.

Hear about some of the achievements and problems of KNP managers from your intrepid investigators.

### Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2002

#### *When Macropods Attack!*

Chris Webb

This talk will explore the dark side of kangaroos, namely their potential to impede the growth and survival of woody seedlings. In addition, it will canvas options for controlling macropod browsing damage, including tree guards, electric fencing and chemical repellents.

Chris carried out the research for the project on which this talk is based in the Boboyan pines bush regeneration area in Namadgi National Park.

## National Parks Association Calendar

| Activity  | March            | April           | May    | June   |
|---|------------------|-----------------|--------|--------|
| <i>Public Holidays</i>                          | Mon 18<br>Fri 29 | Mon 1<br>Thu 25 |        | Mon 10 |
| Committee meetings                              | Thu 7            | Thu 4           | Thu 2  | Thu 6  |
| Environment Sub-committee meetings <sup>1</sup> | Thu 14           | Thu 11          | Thu 9  | Thu 13 |
| General meetings                                | Thu 21           | Thu 18          | Thu 16 | Thu 20 |
| ACT Alive <sup>2</sup>                          | Mon 18           |                 |        |        |
| Bulletin Working Group <sup>3</sup>             | Tue 19           |                 |        |        |
| Gudgenby Bush Regeneration <sup>4</sup>         | Sat 9            | Sat 13          | Sat 11 | Sat 8  |
| World Environment Day                           |                  |                 |        | Wed 5  |

#### Further details

<sup>1</sup> See contacts page 2.

<sup>2</sup> See Outings Program.

<sup>3</sup> Syd Comfort 6286 2578.

<sup>4</sup> Yankee Hat carpark 10 am, Eleanor Stodart 6281 5004, Syd Comfort 6286 2578.

### Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2002

#### *Collaboration between Charles Darwin Foundation and the National Park Service: Conservation in the Galapagos Islands.*

Dr Mark Gardener

Mark, a weed ecologist, worked on the Galapagos Islands for two years as head of the Introduced Plants Program at the Charles Darwin Research Station. He has first-hand experience in how a very special place is being managed to maintain biodiversity.

### Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2002

#### *Firewood, a Burning Issue.*

Kathryn Maxwell

From collection to burning, the use of firewood has environmental impacts. What are they, and can they be reduced to make firewood use more sustainable?

Kathryn has been involved both locally and nationally with the campaign to make the firewood supply industry more environmentally responsible and will have some interesting things to say about the long process to bring about change.

## NPA Bulletin

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