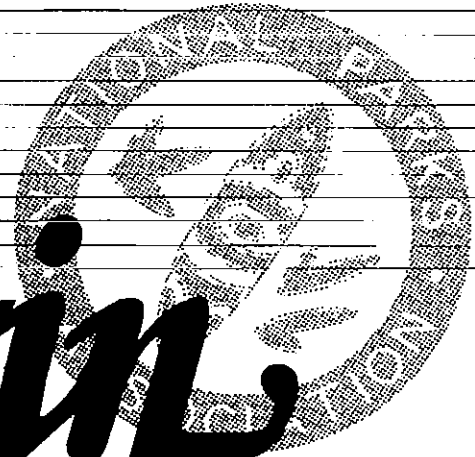


# NPA Bulletin



Volume 40 number 3  
September 2003

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION (ACT) INCORPORATED



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**Annual Report**

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**Namadgi community forums**

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**Fleming on the Bibbulmun**

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### National Parks Association (ACT) Incorporated Inaugurated 1960

#### Aims and objectives of the Association

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

#### Office-bearers

*President* Kevin McCue 6251 1291 (h)  
*Vice-President* David Large 6291 4830 (h)  
*Secretary* vacant  
*Treasurer* Steven Forst 6251 6817(h), 6219 5236(w)

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 Rod Griffiths 6288 6988 (h)  
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 Lyndall Young 6286 3277 (h)

#### Immediate Past President

Clive Hurlstone 6288 7592 (h), 040 778 3422 (mob)

#### Convenors

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The NPA ACT office is in MacLaurin Crescent, Chifley, next to the preschool. It is staffed by volunteers but, at present, not on a regular basis. Callers may leave phone or email messages at any time and they will be attended to. The post office mail box is cleared daily.

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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 December 2003 issue: 1 November 2003.

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

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**Cover photo:** *At the start of the bushfire recovery walk, tackling Cooleman Ridge. See David Large's article on page 13. Photo from Bushfire Recovery Team*

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# Annual report — August 2003

It is that time of the year again—a time to review our gains and losses, and not just for taxation purposes. At this time last year our association was seriously under threat of disbanding because of an apparent lack of purpose. When the NPA ACT was established its main goal was to have an area of our ACT bushland declared a national park, and that was accomplished in 1984 after 24 years of lobbying. That generation of Canberra-based environmentalists did extremely well and we acknowledge their commitment, especially the contribution of our life members.

Younger generations and newcomers have never known the ACT without Namadgi National Park. For the last 20 years they have used its proximity for weekend outings to the bush, taken their interstate and international visitors there to see native plants and the associated birds and animals in their natural state, or just enjoyed it for bushwalking and solitude. They have taken it for granted really, our Bush Capital.

NPA ACT really struggled to form a committee at the 2002 AGM but just when we started coming to grips with our uncertain future the fires swept away many homes, much of our bush—and our lack of purpose. All those forces arraigned against our previous generation of NPA conservationists have suddenly reappeared. There are demands to burn the 10 per cent of park that remained unburnt, to build tracks throughout the wilderness areas and to return introduced animals to graze there.

This is a challenge we must meet to conserve at least some of South East Australia's precious biodiversity for future generations. Isn't it enough that more than 90 per cent of the South East has been remodeled by Europeans with introduced animals and exotic plants,

our axes and ploughs and concrete and bitumen? The last remnants of the native grasslands, wet and dry sclerophyll forests and unique flora and fauna must not be allowed to be destroyed. Too many birds and animals have already been extinguished in the short 200 years of European colonisation. Our present generation must take responsibility for this act of vandalism. Only by accepting the responsibility will we embrace the need for conservation of this continent's unique biodiversity.

So in a perverse way the fires have rekindled our *raison d'être*. NPA ACT is once again refocused on Namadgi National Park, to conserve what our founders had established. Members have been out in Namadgi helping to clear away the damage, to monitor water and flora and fauna, to locate and map rabbit holes and warrens. Regeneration of native flora in the former Boboyan pine plantation at Gudgenby has continued; some of the regrowth singed but most of it a wonderful example of what can be accomplished, and a testbed of local techniques. Members have also been busy writing submissions to the various bush fire inquiries and letters of approval or disapproval of our political leaders' actions. Yet other members have organised and led bushwalks and outings, one especially targeted for those affected by the bushfires had some 200 participants.

The quality of our *Bulletin*, good as it was, has continued to improve and our flagship publication has now been supplemented by an email newsletter. As I write, the NPA ACT web page has been recreated as a gateway for the public. Further contributions from members to all three of our information outlets would be most appreciated.

We have lobbied governments together with fellow Alps national parks members, the NPAs of NSW and Victoria. We have also participated in regular briefings with the Conservation Council of the Southeast Region and Canberra and with the Colong Foundation of NSW. Committee members have met regularly with Environment ACT and the Interim Namadgi Management Board to exchange views on a wide range of issues affecting the park, from boundary changes to recreational activities.

We have started to write down our seemingly self-evident policies and will consult with the indigenous community and fellow conservationists before publishing them. We have been busy but there is more to be done—much more—if we are to ensure the survival of Namadgi National Park as we know it. We will acclaim some changes, such as expansion of the wilderness area, and the addition of a Ngunnawal language term to the English language term 'wilderness'—ie, wilderness/appropriate Ngunnawal word. We will oppose the reintroduction of grazing by feral animals and the expansion of wheel-assisted recreational activities.

We need more young members, and hope that more members will consider participating in the Committee and our other working groups and activities. Anyone interested in helping NPA ACT or joining the committee is welcome to ring me for more information.

Members are also encouraged to write to the media and our representatives in parliament supporting NPA ACT policies on Namadgi National Park and conservation issues in general.

With your help we will have another rewarding and successful year.

**Kevin McCue, President**

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## Annual General Meeting 2003

The Annual General Meeting of the association was held on August 21. The minutes of the previous AGM were accepted and President Kevin McCue presented his report, reprinted above. The Treasurer, Steven Forst, presented the financial statement which showed a profit for the year of \$3 350. Steven explained that this was largely due to the audit being done on a *pro bono* basis and through a reduction in *Bulletin* costs by the Bulletin Working Group. An observation from the floor drew attention to the healthy financial position and the opportunity this presented

to undertake new projects. The President said the Committee was hoping to revise the *Field Guide to the Trees of the ACT* and was examining a further publication. The meeting accepted the Committee's recommendation that Eleanor Stodart and Syd Comfort be granted honorary life membership of the association. Max Lawrence conducted the election of Office-bearers and Committee members and all present warmly congratulated the appointees. The membership of the 2003/04 Committee is shown on page 2. The meeting passed a vote of appreciation

of the work of the 2002/03 President and Committee. The President introduced guest speaker David Scott, Planning Co-ordinator for the Namadgi Management Plan, together with Geoff Butler, Co-chair of the Interim Namadgi Advisory Board. David outlined considerations relating to recreation that are under study in the revision of the Namadgi Management Plan and in the question session that followed he and Geoff ranged over many associated issues. At the conclusion of the meeting members enjoyed a special AGM supper and chat.

**Syd Comfort**

## Namadgi community forums

On 18, 19 and 20 June Environment ACT held a series of community forums to give people an opportunity to workshop selected topics of relevance to the new Plan of Management for Namadgi National Park. The Wednesday 18 and Thursday 19 meetings were held in Canberra, and Friday's meeting at Shannon's Flat, in NSW south of the park.

The three topics discussed at each meeting were access and recreation; tourism; and feral animals and pest plants. Several NPA members attended the Wednesday meeting, which was by far the best attended, with well over 50 people, and one attended Friday's meeting with 14 people. Thursday's meeting, when NPA members were attending their general meeting, had about 25.

At both Wednesday's and Thursday's meetings access and recreation was the topic of most interest and contention. Trail and mountain bike riders were very vocal in demanding greater access to the park. With the large attendance at Wednesday's meeting, people were asked to select one topic to discuss and we divided into three very uneven groups, with the access and recreation group being by far the largest. Judy Kelly's summary of that discussion appears below.

"The group consisted of conservationists, horse riders (quiet), motor bike riders, 4WDers, and mountain bike riders. The last three wanted greater access and said that it was no use "locking up" Namadgi. An NPA member queried why the term "wilderness" wasn't being used, but this was not addressed. The same NPA member said he valued Namadgi for solitude; Environment ACT representatives said that solitude was a

relative experience (or words to that effect).

"The model presented for zoning the park was the 'recreational opportunity' spectrum. I asked for an alternative model to be presented for a means of contrast but this doesn't seem possible.

"A mountain biker spokesman suggested multiple use trails but this was opposed by the conservation side because of incompatibility amongst users (eg, at Cascade Trail near Dead Horse Gap mountain bikers ride too fast, safety issues in Aranda Bushland and Black Mountain Reserve where illegal riders speed along walking tracks)."

In the tourism group people were quite well in agreement, perhaps because no tour operators were present. Points raised included the need for a licensing fee so that group activities could be checked more thoroughly than at present, inappropriate activities could then be stopped (some present activities such as building cairns appear to be unchecked now) and numbers regulated. All agreed no tourist accommodation should be built in the park.

The group discussing pest management issues began by acknowledging that the January bushfires will have a major effect on the distribution and importance of pest plants and animals in the park. The bushfire created new opportunities for control but also new opportunities for invasive weeds and unhampered movement of surviving feral animals. The ongoing wild pig program was seen as a success, and the control of dogs at park borders as necessary for adjoining rural properties. Rabbits, with the failure of calicivirus to persist, are a continuing problem in open valleys with warren destruction being needed. Other actual or potential pest animals discussed were

cats, deer, foxes, goats, horses, trout and Indian mynahs.

Pest plants are a major concern post fire. More light reaching the ground through destroyed canopies benefits reshooting blackberries. Broom is controlled because of limited distribution. Chilean needlegrass has the potential to colonise open valleys and would be very difficult to control. It may be necessary to recognise that some weeds cannot be controlled with current technology.

Some of the general comments on pests were the needs to decide broad priorities, to monitor the outcomes of control measures, to support research on new technology and biological control, and the opportunity for education and community involvement in park maintenance and recovery.

At Friday's meeting concern was expressed at the Aboriginal lease, with farmers wanting equal access. There was pressure for commercial interests such as chalets at Mount Clear, kangaroo culling, and horse riding, and for greater access for 4WDs, horse riders and wheel chairs, with purpose-built trails so they would not impact on the environment. There were also demands for upgrading Boboyan Road. Concern was expressed at the spread of weeds, kangaroos and dogs from the park and the need for better fencing, also for the 'need' for the southern unburnt part of the park (9 per cent of total area) to be burnt immediately. The discussion had an unfortunate threatening tone, with suggestions that if people did not get what they wanted they would cut fences and let goats and deer into the park.

**Eleanor Stodart**

### Meeting to review plans of management

The Kosciusko Huts Association has organised a public meeting to review plans of management for the Kosciuszko and Namadgi National Parks.

Representatives from the KHA, KNP and NNP will give a short summary of progress to date and will be available for questioning.

The meeting will be held on Wednesday 3 December 7.30–9.30 pm in the Studio Room, 1st Floor, Griffin Centre.

Supper will be provided, admission is \$5.00.

Enquiries: Graham Scully, 6230 3352

# ISSUES

## Shaping Our Territory

*Shaping Our Territory* is the recently released report from the Non-Urban Study commissioned by the ACT Government to provide advice on the best pattern of future non-urban land use in the ACT in the wake of the January fires. This preliminary report has two principal purposes, namely:

- to provide a useful reference document setting down in one place many of the facts and considerations which should govern strategies for land use in the ACT; and
- to provide an accessible survey of options and opportunities which

should allow all interested members of the public to have their say.

The study is strategic. Overseen by an expert steering committee, it has been conducted by a consultancy team working with the Bushfire Recovery Taskforce and has considered more than 160 public submissions. It is designed to provide a wide range of ideas and options to stimulate and focus public debate which will be closely studied before a final report is prepared.

The report has been published in two forms, an overview of some 30 pages and a full report running to 200 pages.

Both contain coloured maps and diagrams illustrating proposed options and are laid out in a very accessible form.

This report will stand alongside the other reports and studies already underway in influencing the shape of the post-fire Canberra and have a significant impact on Namadgi and other conservation areas.

Responses to the report are sought with a closing date of September 23.

**Syd Comfort**

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## Canberra Spatial Plan update

In the background of the very visible McLeod Report and the Non-urban Study, the development of the Canberra Spatial Plan is progressing. As part of the Canberra Plan it will provide an integration of land use policies adopted following consideration of these other studies.

A two day "Future Directions Summit" was held on June 12 and 13 at which some 300 people were asked to evaluate four growth concepts for the ACT. These concepts are:

- current trends—planning and development areas unchanged;

- a city beyond the border—maintain existing urban areas with new development over the border;
- a city within the border—protects existing urban areas but allows new greenfield development within the ACT; and
- a city contained—not spreading the city outwards but increasing densities in centres and corridors and developing other areas such as brownfields.

The summit aimed to identify the advantages and disadvantages of each concept rather than provide a ranking

between them. Two impressions came through to me: a strong support for the retention of the open and natural spaces of the ACT and favouring of the desirable elements of each concept rather than acceptance of an individual concept as outlined.

The findings of this summit will be incorporated in a publication, *Towards the Canberra Spatial Plan* which will be another step in the development of a *Draft Canberra Spatial Plan*.

**Syd Comfort**

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## Namadgi Plan of Management

The July general meeting of the association saw some lively discussion on the revision of the Namadgi Plan of Management that is now under consideration. Some members were concerned that in recent community consultation there was considerable pressure for increased access to the park perhaps at the expense of its natural values. Eleanor Stodart has outlined these discussions in a separate article—*Namadgi community forums*.

Rod Griffiths reminded the meeting that the management plan must conform with the Territory Plan which requires that wilderness areas have the primary

function of conserving natural values, recreation uses being a secondary function. Any shift in this emphasis would require legislative changes.

Di Thompson drew attention to some other issues being raised in relation to Namadgi. There is the relationship between Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve and Namadgi and the possibility of the Cotter becoming a gateway to natural areas providing easy access and entry to different activities.

There is the issue of the types of zones that could be identified in the park and the impact this could have on current wilderness areas. There is the

matter of naming wilderness areas—perhaps dual naming would be appropriate while still providing the same protection. There is room to be open about these issues.

There are suggestions that the Bicentennial Horse Trail may need to be rerouted where it cuts the Boboyan Road. What is the NPA position on this?

There are also arguments for mountain bike access to Namadgi from Kosciuszko perhaps using Leura Gap. Would this threaten wilderness values?

**Syd Comfort**

# Thank you

After a group of volunteers, under the direction of ranger-in-training Adrian Brown, had toiled away in the hot sun of February, scattering eucalypt seeds over burnt-out acres in Gudgenby Valley, Syd Comfort voiced the suggestion that NPA should have a thank you celebration once the bushfire danger season was past. This celebration would be a thank you to all the rangers and park workers whose brave and

exhausting efforts saved sections of Namadgi National Park from the fierce bushfire which raged over the area in January and February. Consequently, late Friday afternoon 30 May grateful NPA members, representatives from the Interim Namadgi Advisory Board and rangers and park workers from Environment ACT, met together in the Visitors Centre near Tharwa.

Our President, Kevin McCue,

explained the purpose of the gathering and Matilda House, the Co-chairperson of the Interim Namadgi Advisory Board, welcomed us all onto Ngunnawal land and acknowledged Ngunnawal Elder Agnes O'Shea who was present. Fiona Brand replied to Matilda's welcome and Geoff Wells spoke on behalf of the Environment Service. We all drank a toast of friendship and goodwill and proceeded to demolish the savouries and cakes provided by NPA members under the direction of Adrienne Nicholson.

Many stories were quietly told of personal encounters with the bushfire, and sadness at the loss of rangers' homes and possessions. Pain was expressed at witnessing the destruction of the forest and animals at Tidbinbilla and on the main range and Cotter Valley.

It was a relief the summer was over and some restoration could begin with the cooler weather. Everyone present clearly treasured Namadgi National Park.

**Fiona MacDonald  
Brand**



*Agnes O'Shea (left) with Matilda House and Matilda's grandchild. Photo Barbara Comfort*

## The Integrated Nature Conservation Plan

At the association's May general meeting Greg Keen, an officer with the Wildlife Research and Monitoring section of Environment ACT, outlined progress in the establishment of an advanced system for the management of nature conservation information within Environment ACT. Greg has been responsible for much of the development of this system which is known as the Integrated Nature Conservation Plan (INCP).

### Purpose

The purpose of the INCP is to facilitate the assessment of, and reporting on, the efficiency of the ACT Government's approach to the conservation of the ACT's natural and cultural environment. It will be used to

assist in reporting on the progress and effectiveness of management plans and their budgeting and in planning future actions.

### Guiding principles

The development of the system will be guided by the following principles:

- it will build on existing Global Information System (GIS) databases and other Environment ACT and ACT-wide information;
- it will be a single reference point for consistent, comprehensive and authoritative data prepared by Environment ACT;
- it will enhance the use and application of existing GIS databases;

- it must be capable of reporting government priorities for natural resource management;
- it will provide for partnerships with the community and clients;
- it will establish the framework for priority setting and budget allocation by Environment ACT;
- it will establish a secure foundation for future planning and management of the ACT's natural resources.

### Target audience

The priority users of the INCP will be the field and policy officers who are directly responsible for the creation and implementation of the ACT Government's environmental policies.

*continued next page*

# Gudgenby Regeneration Group news

The annual general meeting of the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group saw Eleanor Stodart step down as President, a position that she has held since 1999. During that period, Eleanor made a very important contribution to the group and set the direction for the work that has been done. More than half of the pine plantation has been cleared and resown and good growth achieved in most areas. In addition, successful programs of monitoring and weed suppression have been carried out. Eleanor can look back with satisfaction on the achievements of her period as President.

The following office-bearers were elected for the coming year:

President—Clive Hurlstone;  
Secretary—Eleanor Stodart;  
Treasurer—Syd Comfort;  
Committee—Martin Chalk.

Brett McNamara, Manager West District ACT Parks Service, attended the AGM and gave some important insights into management of Namadgi National Park since the January bushfires. Unfortunately he was not in a position to provide specific plans for the removal of the remaining pines in the Gudgenby area that the group is committed to regenerate. This is clearly related to the broader issues of pine management in the ACT.

Syd Comfort

GBRG work parties  
Second Saturday of  
each month  
Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre  
9:15am or  
Yankee Hat car park at 10:00am



Above. Clive Hurlstone, the new president of the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group, and Eleanor Stodart, past President.

Below. Lunchtime spent sheltering from the cold wind.

Photographs Fiona MacDonald Brand



## The Integrated Nature Conservation Plan *continued from previous page*

The system will also be available to community groups involved in nature conservation in the ACT, auditors assessing action on implementation plans, and business units that manage the relevant data.

### System outputs and searches

A wide range of output documents will be available both in text and spatial and map formats such as:

- a list of management actions for every implementation plan;
- overlay of particular spatial data sources to compare information (eg,

weed coverage in yellow box woodlands); and

- spatially pinpoint an area-of-interest and to access a list of reports and plans that relate to that point

Greg demonstrated to the meeting the types of output that will be available.

### Implementation

Introduction of the system is being managed by an INCP Steering Committee and will clearly take some time to provide all the planned facilities. Staged progress is planned with initial emphasis on utilising available data and

linking data to management actions. It appears that the provision of services to voluntary conservation organisations is some distance down the track.

Syd Comfort

The new NPA ACT website is ready

[www.npaact.org.au](http://www.npaact.org.au)

# BUSH FIRE

## Response to McLeod Inquiry

The report of the Inquiry into the Operational Response to the January 2003 Bushfires in the ACT (McLeod Inquiry) was released recently and the NPA contributed to a response to this report prepared by the Conservation Council of the South East Region and Canberra. Five areas within the report of considerable interest to the council were considered.

The first group of recommendations considered relates to fuel management. In summary the report contends that insufficient fuel reduction burning took place before the January 2003 bushfires, particularly in Namadgi National Park, and that fuel reduction burning should be increased in the future. The council drew attention to its membership of the Bushfire Council in recent years and its long standing support of, and submissions to, the Bushfire Fuel Management Plan process. The contribution of the council has aimed at managing bushfire risk whilst ensuring that adequate consideration is given to conservation values when planning and preparing for and responding to bushfires in the ACT. Whilst the council recognises, and indeed supports, the need for fuel reduction burning, the council will continue to advocate that bushfire management activities in conservation reserves should be underpinned by science, and have as an aim the maintenance of ecological sustainability including the maintenance of biodiversity and ecological processes, as well as bushfire risk management. The council recommends that more be done to engage the community in understanding the issues involved in the *Bushfire Fuel Management Plan*.

The second group of recommendations of interest to the council relates to fire access trails. The maintenance of fire access trails is a key element in bushfire management

planning and the council is seeking active involvement in a review of the adequacy of the existing trail network. However there is a need to proceed with caution to ensure that bushfire risk is reduced whilst conservation values are maintained. It is also important in the water catchment to ensure that runoff from track erosion does not reduce water quality. Thus the council is opposed to the recommendation that a risk assessment to assist in determining access needs across the ACT be conducted by the Emergency Services Bureau (ESB) as this is likely to mean that bushfire risk is the only criterion used for assessing access needs. The council contends that positive solutions can be found if the park values and bushfire management are dealt with in a holistic manner, but this is unlikely if assessments are the sole responsibility of ESB.

The third group of recommendations of interest to the council relates to the relationship between fire management and land agencies. The council supports the principle contained in the Bushfire Fuel Management Plan that places a responsibility on all government land agencies to prepare fuel management strategies that are consistent with the individual plans of management. This reflects the core principle that bushfire management varies across the landscape according to tenure and value, management objectives and issues. The council supports the recommendations that allow for a stronger, more mutually supportive relationship between land management agencies and the ACT Bushfire Service. The council also welcomes the proposal for additional resources, as implementation of fuel management activities has been hampered by cuts in available resources.

The fourth group of recommendations of interest to the

council relates to bushfires and land planning. In particular the council welcomes the recognition that although bushfires do not recognise land-use boundaries and can spread broadly across a range of landscapes, appropriate bushfire risk management must vary across the landscape. Different land tenures have different values, objectives, uses and managers, and bushfire risk management needs to be varied accordingly. It is now accepted as international best practice that whilst it is appropriate to manage for the "worst case scenario" fire event at the urban interface, this can be unacceptable and impractical in areas such as national parks due to both adverse implications for the ecological values of the park and the inaccessibility of some of these areas due to topography. The development of the bushfire abatement zone, with an appropriate set of bushfire protection planning principles will allow this to be done.

The final recommendation of interest to the council relates to the *Bushfire Act 1936*. The council agrees that the Act ought to be reviewed and redesigned to reflect contemporary needs. However, the council would be concerned if the revision reflected the current advisory role of the Bushfire Council. The council has been concerned about the effectiveness of the advisory nature of the current Bushfire Council for some time. In particular this advisory role appears to have lessened the expectation amongst the Bushfire Service that recommendations of the Bushfire Council need to be acted upon.

The council concluded the letter expressing a keenness to work through the issues raised, over the coming months.

Syd Comfort

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## Fisher Parkland remnant cleared

Fisher Parkland is an area south of Fisher managed by Canberra Urban Parks and Places (CUPP). Nestled between Mount Taylor and Coolman Ridge, it contains remnants of the linking vegetation between these two

units of Canberra Nature Park, as well as eucalyptus plantations. During the January 2003 fire almost all of the Parkland was burnt. Subsequently, large areas have been cleared, on safety grounds, of the former plantation trees

and ground cover. This, coupled with the significant reduction in canopy cover within the Parkland, has significantly increased the potential for weed spread and soil erosion.

*continued next page*



# UPDATE

## Outline of NPA volunteer bushfire recovery efforts

The NPA has been involved with volunteer bushfire recovery efforts since February. This effort has been conducted in conjunction with Namadgi National Park management and staff and has not only allowed the NPA to contribute in a real way to the recovery of a special place that is dear to all of us, but has also seen the development of closer relationships between ourselves and the Park staff.

This table lists the tasks, both completed and in work, that the NPA has contributed to. It will be published in each issue of the *Bulletin* with additions as they come to hand.

RECOVERY TASK	NPA COORDINATOR	STATUS
Rabbit warren surveys	Martin Chalk	Orroral & Boboyan Valleys & Nursery Swamp completed. Gigerline Gorge is next.
Bulldozer containment line repair	Annabel Wheeler	Complete
Bushfold Flat clean-up	Max Lawrence	One fire damaged shed removed and the remains of Russell Reid's Hut cleaned up. Some fencing material rolled up. Approximately 5km of fencing to go!
Yerrabi Track revitalisation	Phil Gatenby and Martin Chalk	This task is still in the definition stage. The scope of work is likely to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Revised interpretation resources</li><li>• Realignment of the track</li><li>• Track stabilisation</li></ul>
Seeding in central Namadgi	Martin Chalk	This task has been scheduled for the week 8 to 12 September inclusive.

For any details about these work parties, or other matter associated with the NPA bushfire recovery effort, please contact Martin Chalk in the first instance. Ph 6268 4864 (w) 6292 3502 (h).

### Fisher Parkland remnant cleared *continued from previous page*

Of particular concern has been the partial clearance of the broad-leaved peppermint (*Eucalyptus dives*) remnant in the midst of the Parkland. This remnant has around 60 native plant species within its boundary. However, 33 per cent of the existing tree cover has been removed from the remnant. The local landcare group was able to negotiate with CUPP to limit the extent of bobcat access to the remnant during the clearing operation as the use of this machinery had been a major contributor to ground disturbance in other parts of the Parkland. As few people wander into the remnant area it is hard to see the justification for the extent of clearing undertaken.

In the Tuggeranong Urban Parks and Sportsgrounds Plan of Management, published by CUPP, the Parkland is described as semi-natural open space. One of the management services identified for the Parkland is the management of vegetation with the conservation of remnant vegetation as an aim. The process following the bushfire, justified on the grounds of safety, has compromised this management aim. It is now clear that the process was flawed; as there was no general community consultation on the fate of the Parkland and only limited meaningful consultation with the local landcare group.

These actions compare unfavourably with the effective management regime that had been in place previously and which looked after and preserved the *E. dives* remnant. The process following the bushfires has threatened this remnant, making a mockery of the principles of the draft Action Plan 27 "ACT Lowland Woodland Conservation Strategy".

An opportunity to undertake a full environmental assessment of the remnant area which would have allowed for full community consultation has been missed. It is a lesson that all land managers should note.

Alan Ford

# Concern about Hume and Hovell Track

*The association has followed up difficulties experienced by an NPA walking group on the Hume and Hovell Track by taking its concerns to the NSW Premier. The letter to Mr Carr is reprinted below.*

Dear Mr Carr

I am writing to draw your attention to a very serious matter affecting the Hume and Hovell Walking Track in Southern NSW. A group of bushwalkers from the National Parks Association of the ACT has recently completed walking the complete length of the track by finishing the Tumbarumba to Albury section.

By way of introduction I should state that our Association considers the Hume and Hovell Walking Track to be a magnificent achievement by a small, dedicated group of officials and volunteers. We believe it is a major

recreational facility with the potential to bring significant economic benefits to the rural and regional districts it passes through. However, we are concerned that a few local people are doing their best to sabotage the track and in doing so, are putting the lives of walkers in danger.

To be specific. At the time our members walked the section of the track from the Samuel Bollard campsite to the Great Aussie Resort the track markers were missing for several kilometres. We understand that persons unknown, who disagree with the idea of the walking track, regularly remove them. On this occasion our members, all experienced bushwalkers and able navigators, were delayed for several hours. This vandalism, which we understand has been extended to physical harassment of Boy Scouts using the track, could have serious, if not fatal consequences. It is not hard to envisage overseas visitors walking the track becoming lost in the

rugged terrain because the track markers have been removed. The consequences of this both to the individual and the reputation of the Track could be devastating.

I urge you to ensure that the managers of the Track be given adequate resources to conduct a publicity program to explain the benefits of the track to the local community and the dangers to human life of interfering with track markers. The creation of a "Friends of the Hume and Hovell Track", along the lines of the groups formed to support the Bibbulmun and Great South West Walks in WA and Victoria respectively, might also be useful to improve local understanding of the benefits of the track.

Yours sincerely  
Kevin McCue  
President

## Yerranderie car camp

April was a beautiful month for the workers—two long weekends in a row, the first being Easter and the second Anzac, and both within the ambit of school holidays. So ten of us set forth to Yerranderie for the Anzac weekend car camp scheduled in the NPA Outings Program.

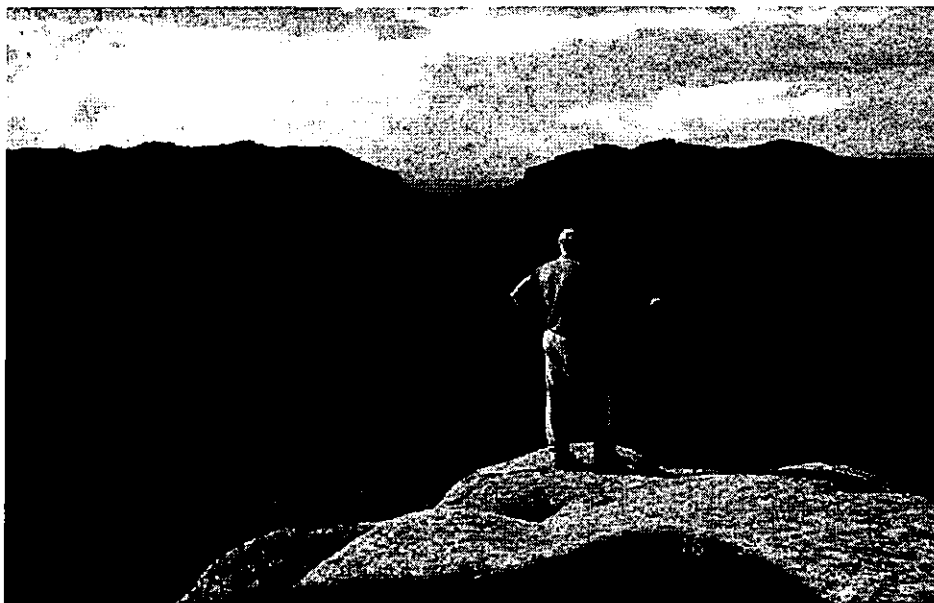
Yerranderie is an old mining town

(now a ghost town) in the Blue Mountains. Its heyday was in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and its fate was finally sealed by the filling of Warragamba Dam in the 1950s. Yerranderie is only about 90km as the crow flies from the Sydney GPO, and its ore used to be carted out by road to Camden, a relatively short

hop. But today it can only be publicly accessed from Sydney via Oberon, a trip of around 300km. From Canberra it's much the same, and still takes around five hours with the last 60km being a rough dirt track which alone takes about two hours to drive, preferably in a 4WD. Yerranderie is also the midpoint (and the only feasible resupply point) for bushwalkers doing the 140km Ensign Barralier Track between Mittagong and Katoomba.

Most of our gang arrived in camp on the Thursday before Anzac, and they completed a walk to Byrnes Gap on Friday. My crew arrived later on Friday, and together we did the guided tour of the old town and its mines. This was especially interesting for those of us who had heard Reg Alder's reminiscences of his visits there in the days before World War Two.

It rained overnight, but on Saturday morning the overcast was high enough to clear the peaks, so we took the opportunity to dash up Yerranderie Peak and Bartlett Head for what we could see of their fabled views. On Saturday arvo we got in the cars to check out a walk for Sunday taking in Mt Colong, Colong Swamp, Tonelli Gap and the direct route back to Yerranderie. It rained again



*Col McAlister looks to Byrnes Gap from Bartlett Head on an earlier visit, in better weather. Photo Max Lawrence*

*continued next page*

# Royal National Park coast walk

This is one of the great classic walks, and it features in all of the good books. It also featured in the NPA Outings Program as an overnight walk on the weekend of March 29-30.

David Large was our leader, and he took 10 of us on a memorable stroll through the nation's oldest park, and for that matter one of the oldest in the world. The logistics involved a drive to Bundeena on the southern side of Port Hacking, and a walk the same afternoon to Garie Beach where we had the YHA hostel to ourselves for the night. On Sunday we strolled on to Burning Palms, where we enjoyed a swim in the surf, and then a climb over the escarpment (less enjoyable) to Otford Railway Station. The plan here was to take a train to Cronulla and then a ferry back to Bundeena and our cars, but a bus bit was substituted for the train bit due to track works following the Waterfall train disaster. The ferry bit was great, and even the drive home on Sunday night was a nice conclusion to a full and happy weekend.

Throughout we had idyllic weather, and absolutely unhindered views of the



*Mike Smith checks out the Era Beach shacks. Photo Max Lawrence*

wonderful coastal scenery. If only we'd been able to organise a repeat prescription for Yerranderie.

Our crew comprised David Large (leader), Lyndal Young, Rob Forster, Susan Walters, Eleanor Stodart, Tim

Walsh, Janet Thompson, Muriel Edwards, Mike Smith, and me.

**Max Lawrence**

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## Yerranderie car camp *continued from previous page*

overnight, but this time it was still coming down in the morning. Undeterred, the optimistic tough nuts among us (others classified them differently) took on Mt Colong. But when the H<sub>2</sub>O got in the way of even seeing our GPSs, let alone each other, we decided to retreat to camp. We found some had already fled, so we decided to do likewise. A wet pack up, a wet and muddy trip out, in which Bob Haskew's 2WD Pintara was definitely the star, and a mixed grill dinner at the Paragon in Goulburn completed our adventure.

Despite the wet, it was never cold and I didn't hear a single whinge (but I suspect there were some). We had a good gang, we had a beaut time, and we're determined to go back (at least I am!). Keep an eye on the program next autumn for a reprise. Our crew was Graham and Helen Scully, Mick and Joan Kelly, Bill and Mollie Cox (Batemans Bay Bushwalkers), Barbara Edgar, Bob Haskew, Susan Walters, and me.

**Max Lawrence**



*NPA members on Yerranderie Peak, April 2003. Photo Max Lawrence*

# “All is not lost”

In May, a small group of us undertook a day walk into the grey/green world of southern Namadgi. Although this walk was planned before the January fires, it proved an opportune outing to experience the mountains in their pristine condition.

After an hour's drive through a landscape of blackened trees dressed with green leafy coats, set amid bare, grey soil, the site of the Mount Clear area was a welcome and restful change. Our ultimate objective was to walk down the Long Flat and savour that serene and remote part of the ACT and the history that it has to offer. However, the overcast and cool conditions ensured that any savouring would have to be undertaken on the move.

As we travelled along the border track (now a graded and considerable dirt road) I decided to try to locate some of the survey reference trees that were drawn to our attention by Matthew Higgins in his 1996 project *Surveyors at the Snowline*. It took some time to locate the first such tree. Reference tree E40 was placed by Freddie Johnstone's survey team in 1915, but the intervening years have not been kind. We found the tree on its side, luckily with the weathered survey mark still visible. With hopes and anticipation suitably buoyed, we continued with eyes peeled.

As we climbed to the highest part of the walk and into the clouds, the forest took on a feel of timeless enchantment—what bushfires?

And enchantment it must have been, for as I turned to see how the group was travelling, reference tree D40 was peering at me through the mist. Although dead, the tree is still erect and is a fine example of the surveyor's art. A little further on, my eyes came to rest on reference tree R39. This tree is still alive and the blaze provides an indication of how slowly the tree has grown over the last 88 years. The next 'discovery' was reference tree E39—a rather sad remnant adjacent to the border fence.

Once away from the border line we enjoyed a partly overcast day and took the chance to visit the historical sites on the Long Flat and beyond; Chalker's Chimney, standing watch over its lonely setting and Sam Aboud's venerable toilet with its commanding view.

These fragile links to our past survive. Of course they will eventually succumb to the forces of nature but for one small group of travellers, they offered a feeling of stability and consistency, at least for that day in May.

**Martin Chalk**



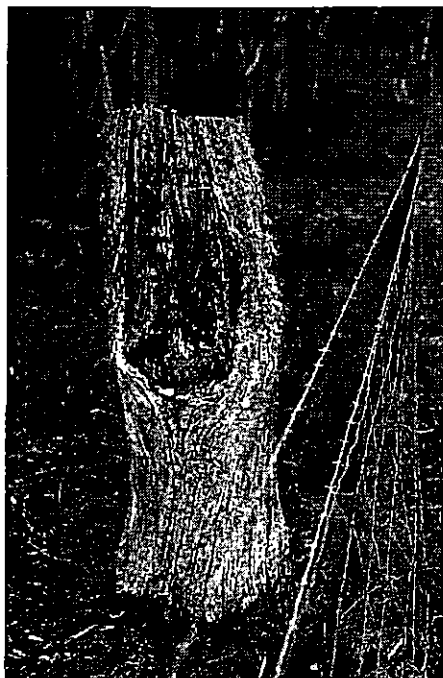
*Johnstone's Reference trees are still to be found in the vicinity of the border track.*

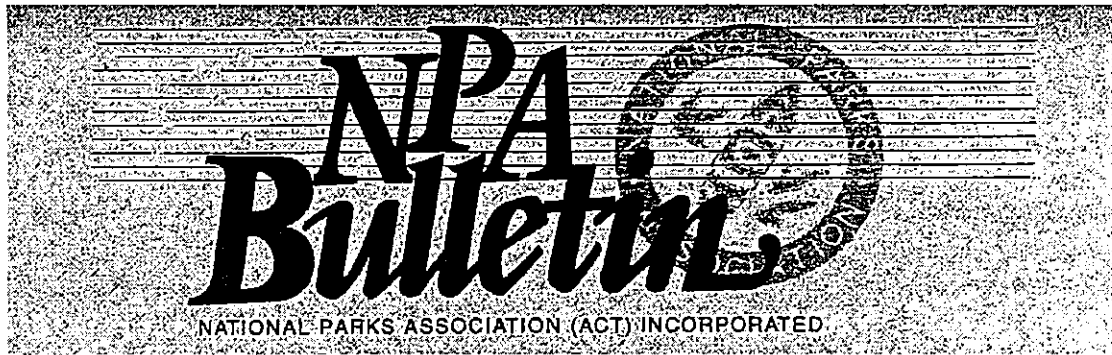
*Above, D40 (the relic without the hat).*

*Photo Syd Comfort*

*Below, E39(left) and R39 (right).*

*Photos Martin Chalk*





# NPA OUTINGS PROGRAM

## 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 and environmental and field guide studies.

## September–December 2003

### 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.

**6–7 September, weekend pack walk**

**Wadbilliga River**

**Leader: Philip Gatenby**

**Grading: 3B/E/F**

**Map: Yowrie 1:25 000**

**Contact: 6254 3094 or**

**philip.gatenby@dewr.gov.au**

Wadbilliga River rises in Wadbilliga National Park and is a tributary of the Tuross River. The plan for this walk is to explore the upper reaches of the river where the scenery is rugged and spectacular. Most of the walk will be off tracks and some steep climbs may be involved. Not for beginners. Contact leader by Wednesday for more details. 300 kms drive, \$90 per car.

**13 September, Saturday work party  
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Goup**

**Contact: Syd Comfort 6286 2578 or**

**Clive Hurlstone 0407 783422 (m)**

**or clive.hurlstone@csiro.au**

Meet at Namadgi Visitors' Centre, Tharwa at 9:15am, or Yankee Hat carpark at 10:00am. Spreading Acacia and Banksia seed. Tools will be provided.

**14 September, Sunday day walk**

**Sentry Box Summit**

**Leader: Steve Hill**

**Grading: 2C/D/E**

**Map: Yaouk 1:25 000**

**Contact: 6231 9186 or**

**landahill@webone.com.au**

One of the few Namadgi walks in an area largely missed by the January fires. A chance to see fabulous views from a surprisingly interesting mountain monolith in the region and to see the southern end of Namadgi National Park opposite Yaouk. Climb up a steep, but entirely manageable spur to a rocky peak (1696 metres), then visit and explore the summit region (1727 metres) and return a similar way. The climb of nearly 600 metres is steepish in parts, is off track and involves some mild rock scrambling. Meet at Kambah Village Shops car park at 7:30am for a stupendous day. Drive 170km, \$56 per car.

**21 September, Sunday day walk**

**Canberra Nature Park; Curtin to**

**Mt Taylor and return**

**Leader: Col McAlister**

**Grading: 2A/B**

**Map: Canberra Street Directory**

**Contact: 6288 4171**

Start walk from Dunstan St. car park at North Curtin District Playing Fields, then over Oakey Hill to Mt Taylor returning through Lyons and Curtin. A chance to view some of the recovery from the January bushfires. Meet at 9:00am at Dunstan St playing oval car park. Drive 0km, no charge.

**24 September, Wednesday day walk.**

**City stroll**

**Leader: Col McAlister**

**Contact: 6288 4171**

NPA September mid-week walk. A gently stroll through the grounds of the ANU and Civic to look at some 50–60 sculptures and some of the trees on the Lindsay Pryor Walk. Meet at National Museum car park at end furthest from Museum at 9:00am. Drive 0km, no charge.

**27 September, Saturday work party**

**Namadgo National Park—Recovery**

**Monthly work party**

**Contact: Martin Chalk, 6292 3502(h),**

**or martin.chalk@tpg.com.au**

**Details to be determined**

**28 September, Sunday day walk**

**Brindabella Ramble**

**Leader: Steven Forst**

**Grading: 3A**

**Map: ACT 1:100 000**

**Contact: 6251 6817(h) or**

**steven.forst@aca.gov.au**

Meeting at the 'forest' car park on Uriarra Road near the Cotter Road at 8:30am. A walk along the Old Mill Road and Warks Road in the Brindabella Range. A walk to check out the regrowth in this once tall wet forest. Drive 85km, \$25 per car.

**11 October, Saturday work party**

**Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group**

**Contact: Syd Comfort 6286 2578 or**

**Clive Hurlstone 0407 783422 (m)**

**or clive.hurlstone@csiro.au**

Meet at Namadgi Visitors' Centre, Tharwa at 9:15am, or Yankee Hat carpark at 10:00am. Weeding. Tools will be provided.

**12 October, Sunday day walk**

**Gooandra**

**Leader: Brian Slee**

**Grading: 2A/C**

**Map: Tantangara 1:25000**

**Contact: 6281 0719 or**

**brianslee@iprimus.com.au**

Depart Kambah Village shops at 7:00am and after following Boboyan Road and Snowy Mountains Highway, park off highway 6km north of Kiandra. Walk on fire trail to Gooandra Hut for morning tea. Descend to Tantangara Plain and Cross Tantangara Creek on way to Witses Hut for lunch. Return route may vary according to conditions. This is a chance to view excellent hut restoration work in this remote area and will be followed by afternoon tea at Adaminy. Return drive 280kms, \$75 per car.

**18 October, Saturday day walk**

**Ridges above Nursery Swamp**

**Leader: Martin Chalk**

**Grade: 3A/B/D/E**

**Map: Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000**

**Contact: 6268 4864(w), 6292 3502(h)**

**or mchalk@tpg.com.au**

If you have yet to witness at first hand the effect of the fires on the montane forests of Namadgi, this walk is for you. During the fires, Nursery Swamp was at the edge of the conflagration. The swamp and grass were burned, as were some of the trees. Observations from the valley floor suggest that the ridge of Nursery Hill seems to have escaped the worst—unlike the ridge on the opposite side of the valley. This walk will take in half of the Nursery Hill ridge and the valley floor. It will afford grand views across Gudgenby and allow participants to see the differing effects of the fires and the variations in the recovery process. Drive 85km, \$25 per car.

**19 October, Sunday day walk**

**Kowen Forest—historical sites and**

**Molonglo Gorge**

**Leader: Col McAlister**

**Grading: 2 A/B**

**Map: Bungendore 1:25000**

**Contact: 6288 4171**

Visit sites such as Glenburn Homestead, Colverwell graves and Collies' Homestead. Walk down Molonglo River to Blue Tiles and then out through Molonglo Gorge. Short car shuffle. Meet at Canberra Railway Station, Kingston at 8:30am. Drive 40km, \$12 a car.

**22 October, Wednesday day walk**

**Mt Rob Roy area**

**Leader: David Large**

**Grading: Moderate**

**Map: Williamsdale 1:25000**

**Contact: 6291 4830 or**

**david.large@bigpond.com**

NPA October mid-week walk, in Mt Rob Roy area. Either a through walk to Williamsdale or circuit from South Lanyon to Banks. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8:30am.

**25 October, Saturday work party**

**Namadgo National Park—Recovery**

**Monthly work party**

**Contact: Martin Chalk, 6292 3502(h),**

**or martin.chalk@tpg.com.au**

Details to be determined

**26 October, Sunday day walk (start of daylight saving)**

**Joadja Creek—Heritage tour of the mining operations.**

**Leader: Colin McAlister**

**Contact: 6288 4171**

A guided tour which “brings alive the stories of the residents, buildings and ruins that now cover the property once owned by the Australian Kerosene Oil and Mineral Company in the 1800’s.” At its peak the shale mining town housed 1200 Scottish miners and their families. Bookings essential – please do so before Sunday 19 October. Cost of tour per person, \$22.50, concessions (incl seniors) \$16.50. Cost includes morning tea. Meet at ACT Netball Centre carpark, Northbourne Ave. Lynham at 8:00am. Return drive 360km, \$110 per car.

**29 October, Wednesday day walk**

**Leader: Syd Comfort**

**Grading: Moderate.**

**Contact: 6286 2578**

NPA second October mid-week walk. Details to be determined nearer the time; contact leader. Details will be emailed to Wednesday Walkers list.

**1 November, Saturday day walk**

**Long Point**

**Leader: Steven Forst**

**Grading: 2A**

**6251 6817**

**Map:**

**Contact: 6251 6817(h) or**

**steven.forst@aca.gov.au**

A walk into the Shoalhaven Gorge 600m below our starting point. Lunch on the beach by the river before the trek back up to the cars. Meet at the Netball Centre car park, Lynham at 8:30am. Return drive 250kms, \$75 per car.

**7-9 November, Three day pack walk**

**Bimberi Circuit**

**Leader: Max Lawrence**

**Grading: 3 A/C/E**

**Map: Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000**

**Contact: 6288 1370 or**

**mlawrence@netspeed.com.au**

Over three days we will walk from Yaouk on fire trails to Oldfields Hut, Murrays Gap and back to cars via Yaouk Gap. Optional off-track side trips will be made to various peaks along the way, such as Morgan, Bimberi and Murray. Drive 200kms, \$60 per car. Contact leader by preceding Wednesday.

**8 November, Saturday work party**

**Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Goup**

**Contact: Syd Comfort 6286 2578 or**

**Clive Hurlstone 0407 783422 (m)**

**or clive.hurlstone@csiro.au**

Meet at Namadgi Visitors’ Centre, Tharwa at 9:15am, or Yankee Hat carpark at 10:00am. Weeding. Tools will be provided.

**15 November, Saturday day walk**

**Yanununbeyan National Park**

**Leader: Rob Forster**

**Grading: 2 A**

**Map: Captains Flat 1:25 000**

**Contact: 6249 8646**

Meet at Canberra Railway Station, Kingston at 8.30am. A walk in this new national park to Mt Foxlow for some fine views. May vary the return route. Drive 110km, \$30 per car

**16 November, Sunday day walk**

**Hells Hole and Bradleys Creek**

**Leader: Max Lawrence**

**Grading: 2 A/C/E**

**Map: Hoskinstown 1:25000**

**Contact: 6288 1370 or**

**mlawrence@netspeed.com.au**

Depending on the water levels, the plan is to walk from Googong picnic area around the steep and rocky shoreline to Bradleys Creek, which we will then rock-hop up to the fire trail. Return is along the fire trail which climbs over Gorman’s Trig on the Queanbeyan escarpment along the way. In the unlikely event that Googong Dam is near full, we will need to go via the fire trail both ways (twice the climb). Meet at Canberra Railway Station, Kingston at 8:30am. Return drive 60kms, \$18 per car.

**22 November, Saturday work party**

**Namadgi National Park—Recovery**

**Monthly work party**

**Contact: Martin Chalk, 6292 3502(h),**

**or martin.chalk@tpg.com.au**

Details to be determined

**23 November, Sunday day walk**

**North Budawangs**

**Leader: Steven Forst**

**Grading: 4A**

**Map: Endrick 1:25 000; CMW**

**Budawang Range 1:50 000**

**Contact: 6251 6817(h) or**

**steven.forst@aca.gov.au**

A long day walk of about 28kms. Starting from the Nerriga entrance, a round loop crossing the Endrick River to check out a new entrance to the park, resulting from new fire track. Meet at Canberra Railway Station, Kingston at 8:30am. Return drive 300kms, \$90 per car.

**26 November, Wednesday day walk**

**Leader: Rob Forster**

**Grading: Moderate.**

**Contact: 6249 8646**

NPA November mid-week walk. Details to be determined, will be emailed to Wednesday Walkers list.

**29-30 November, Weekend pack walk**

**Sentry Box Mountain and Naas**

**Leader: Philip Gatenby**

**Grading: 2 C/D/E**

**Map: Yaouk 1:25 000**

**Contact: 6254 3094 or**

**philip.gatenby@dewr.gov.au**

A walk from the Yaouk Valley, climbing the Boboyan divide then Sentry Box Mountain. The views from the top are spectacular. We will also visit the headwaters of Naas and Grassy Creeks. A climb of about 600 metres is involved on the first day. Contact leader for details. Drive 170km, \$51 per car.

**30 November, Sunday day walk  
Mt Morgan**

**Leader: Steve Hill**

**Grading: 3A/E**

**Map: Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000**

**Contact: 6231 9186**

A chance to see fabulous views from one of the most spectacular mountain tops in the region, including over much of the KNP and Namadgi National Park. We climb up the Lone Pine trail before turning left, towards the summit at some high alpine frosty hollows. We tour the many view spots on the summit for a view of the things that matter to us. There is a lot of bushfire damage around this region. The climb of nearly 700 metres is steepish in parts, but is mainly on track and no serious bush bashing is involved. Meet at Kambah Village Shops car park at 7.30am for a fabulous day. Drive 210km: \$70 per car

**1-4 December, Midweek pack walk  
Morton National Park**

**Leader: Mike Smith**

**Grading: 2 A/C/D**

**Map: Sassafras 1:25 000**

**Contact: 6286 2984**

A 4-day, 3-night midweek pack-walk for those not gainfully employed (retirees, between jobs, beachcombers, etc) and others (escaping from work) probably in the Boolijah, Danjera, Bundundah creeks area of Morton NP. Pack walking in mornings, camp by lunch and afternoons for exploring, swimming or relaxing. Scrub bashing, scrambling and climbs of 300m could be involved. Contact the leader at least a week ahead for more details and/or to book in. Numbers limited. Access by 4wd vehicles probably required. Around 400kms, \$120 per car

**6-7 December, Weekend pack walk  
Budawangs Circuit**

**Leader: Steven Forst**

**Grading: 2A**

**Map: Endrick 1:25 000**

**Contact: 6251 6817(h) or**

**steven.forst@aca.gov.au**

A walk from the Nerriga entrance. Camping near Quiltys Clearing in a delightful location discovered during an earlier walk in June. Options are to walk around or across Quiltys Mountain, visit Bora Ground and other features in the area. Drive 300kms, \$90 per car.

**7 December, Sunday day walk  
Snowy Mountains – North Ramshead,**

**Cootapatamba, Kosciuszko**

**Leader: Steve Hill**

**Grading 4 A/C/E**

**Map: Perisher Valley,**

**Youngal 1:25000**

**Contact: 6231 9186**

A day of fabulous views, tempered a bit by fire damage. This will proceed only if the weather is likely to be good. We drive to Thredbo ( 2 1/2 hours) and catch the chair to the top of "Crackenback". Trek to North Ramshead (2170m) for superb views, then descend to Cootapatamba Hut, cross the Swampy Plain River below and head to some view points on the western side of the "plateau". We climb Mt Kosciuszko from the south west to join the madding crowds on top. Then we return to the chairlift. The walk will require good fitness, will be largely off track and will involve some short steep climbs and the odd rock scramble. It brings with it an early start and late return to Canberra, but the sights are absolutely worth it. Ring Steve Hill by Thursday evening to register and for details of the meeting place. 420kms, \$120 per car plus Park entry fee.

**13 December, Gudgenby Bush**

**Regeneration Goup Christmas Party**

**Contact: Syd Comfort 6286 2578 or**

**Clive Hurlstone 0407 783422 (m)**

**or clive.hurlstone@csiro.au**

Meet at Namadgi Visitors' Centre, Tharwa at 9:15am, or Yankee Hat carpark at 10:00am. "Tools will be provided."

**14 December, NPA Christmas Party**

**Contact David Large 6291 4830 or**

**david.large@bigpond.com**

Gather at Namadgi Visitor Centre, Tharwa at 11.30am. An opportunity for members of NPA to get together for convivial lunch and drinks. We will stroll around to the Tennent Homestead site in the afternoon to see what has been left since the January bushfires and what has to be done to preserve remaining ruins.

**21 December, Sunday day walk  
Muellers Peak**

**Leader: Brian Slee**

**Grading: 2A/C**

**Map: Perisher Valley 1:25 000**

**Contact: 6281 0719 or**

**brianslee@iprimus.com.au**

Depart Kambah Village 6:30am. Park at Charlotte Pass. Descend to Snowy River and after crossing climb Mt Clarke, contour south of Mt Northcote and climb Muellers Peak. After a break, descend to Lake Albina for lunch. Return via Northcote Pass and Club Lake Creek. Great views. Potentially good season for wildflowers. Several steep climbs. Afternoon tea Jindabyne. Book with leader as a weather check is essential. Return drive 420kms, \$120 per car plus \$15 park entry fee (if necessary).

**11 January, Sunday day walk  
South Rams Head**

**Leader: Brian Slee 6281 0719**

**Grading: 1A/B/C**

**Map: Chimneys Ridge, Perisher**

**Valley, and Tom Groggin 1:25 000**

**Contact: 6281 0719 or**

**brianslee@iprimus.com.au**

Depart Kambah Village 7:00am. Proceed past Thredbo to Dead Horse Gap. Climb 400 metres on brumby track to unnamed 2040 peak for morning break. Descend south to South Rams Head (1951 metres). Views into Victoria and best view of Mt Kosciuszko. Also check on bushfire recovery. Return north to promontory overlooking Leather Barrel Creek gorge, stopping at saddle to see alpine sunrises and other wildflowers. Return to Rams Head Range for lunch and perhaps climb Rams Head (2190 metres) before joining walking track east of Bogong Creek and return to vehicles. Afternoon tea Jindabyne. Short walk with a couple of steep climbs. Book with leader as weather check essential. Return drive 420kms, \$120 car plus \$15 for park entry (if necessary).



# Bushfire Regeneration Walk—5 July '03

In early June, Peter Hendriks of the Bushfire Recovery Centre (BRC) phoned me to ask if NPA would organize a Bushfire Regeneration Walk similar to one taken by Rob Forster for the Environment Week celebrations. Peter explained that the BRC was organizing a number of events to engage the victims, carers and volunteers who had experienced the January bushfires.

Naturally, I agreed to arrange such a walk. I suggested we modify the previous walk (which started from Lyons) to take in Cooleman Ridge in Chapman, then across Mts Arawang, Taylor and Wanniasa, then Isaacs Ridge to O'Malley.

So on 14 June, I set off with Peter and four of his colleagues to have a trial walk. It was just as well we did this as we learnt a lot and made significant modifications to the walk. In discussion, Peter thought we might have over 50 walkers. This was based on previous events the BRC had organized.

Our first concern was to make arrangements for toilet stops, as it was unlikely that the participants would be used to "tree stops". We decided, therefore, to break the walk into three stages and bring people to the Fire Station on Namatjira Drive and the Parks and Conservation Headquarters at Athllon Drive. These would serve also as the morning tea and lunch time stops. We also felt that the walk would be too long to go through to O'Malley and concluded that Isaacs Shops would be a good finish point. We decided to provide the alternative of walking around, rather than up and over the mountains.

Following that 14 June "trial" walk, Peter arranged to have the Salvation Army assist with morning tea and they offered to provide a sausage sizzle lunch and to contribute a mini-bus to take walkers back to their cars from the various start points. I contacted walks leaders to try and have them assist in managing the anticipated 50 plus walkers. Several agreed to help out in the marshalling effort. We also contacted the Cooleman Ridge, Mt Taylor and Farrer Ridge Park Care groups suggesting they might like to attend and present their work in the various areas.

The walk was widely advertised in "The Canberra Times", "The Chronicle" and the BRC's "Community Update". People were asked to RSVP to assist in catering and to give us an idea of how

many would attend. The night before the walk Peter called me to say that over 90 people had responded.

The 5 July dawned bright and fair and I arrived at Kathner Street at 9:00am to brief the "Management Team" of Park Carers, NPA leaders and BRC staff who were to assist.

The number attending the walk exceeded our expectations. We started at 9:30 and Max Lawrence counted 156 through the gate!. Another two joined within a hundred metres and more tagged along after we began. Walkers soon found their own pace and before long were strung out over a kilometre of track. It was just as well there were several NPA leaders able to assist in managing the group.

We walked up the management trail and along towards Mt Arawang. Gusta Lynga took a group up to Cooleman trig (cover picture) and we were met by one of the Park Carers who was able to describe how the fire had progressed over the Ridge. Several of the victims of the fires in Chapman were present and able to describe vividly the events of 18 January. We dropped down to the Fire Station and had our morning tea stop. About 70 people left us there but another 50 joined the group.

From the Fire Station we split into two groups. I took one group over Mt Taylor and Peter led the other around the base of the mountain. This was a good arrangement as it meant the lunch arrangements were staggered; the second group arrived some 15 to 30 minutes earlier than my group at the Athllon Drive P&CS HQ. Here another group of walkers left and more joined. About 80 walkers left the HQ and headed across Farrer Ridge. Just after we left, Wendy Rainbird of the Farrer Ridge Park Care Group gave an interesting talk on what they were doing and, of course, what they had lost in the fires.

From Farrer Ridge we went through the underpass and up to the top of Mt Wanniasa.

Here we paused for breath then went down to Long Gully Road and across to Isaacs Ridge. Again walkers were given the option of walking up the ridge or around the base. I took the "uppers" and Mike Smith the "downers". We all finished at Isaacs Shops about 4:00pm.

Well over 200 people in all took part. I estimated that at least 50 did the whole walk. I was particularly impressed by a number of children who made the whole distance. It was a very satisfying event, which gave many people the chance to see at close hand the damage caused by the fires and to see also nature's healing process.

My thanks to those from the NPA who turned out to assist. They included Max Lawrence, Steve Hill, Brian Slee, Di Thompson, Allan Bills, Mike and Annette Smith.

I would also like to thank Peter Hendriks who thought of the idea. Peter did a magnificent job in organizing so many details of the arrangements. I enjoyed walking with him. Peter has now left the BRC for a new career or, perhaps I should say, vocation. I wish him well.

David Large



*Briefing the walkers: David Large (leader, left), Peter Hendriks (BRC organiser, centre) and Steve Hill (one of the whippers-in, right).*

*Photo provided by the Bushfire Recovery Team*

# Protecting native remnants in pine forests: an NPA report

The NPA report, *Conservation management on land under the control of ACT Forests: protecting native remnants in pine forests*, was finally completed and submitted at the end of May. It was the last of the suite of projects undertaken by NPA with support from an Environment Grant provided by the ACT Government in July 1999. Also at the end of May a business plan for ACT Forests was being presented to the Government for consideration, so completion of the submission was timely. It was prepared primarily by Clive Hurlstone and me, with comments from a number of others.

The January 2003 bushfire has changed many things for ACT Forests. As the report was begun well before the fire, it deals with the state of the remnants prior to the fire, with some comments on how the fire might affect outcomes. We feel it was very important to draw attention to the value of the remnants in conserving biodiversity, as their importance will continue whatever decisions are made about future use of land presently administered by ACT Forests.

ACT Forests land contains remnants with special values. These include the Molonglo Gorge which is classed as nature reserve and the Kowen escarpment, and the only ACT occurrences of a few species such as *Eucalyptus camphora* near Condor

Creek and the bent wing bat and its roosting site, the Cotter Caves.

Various studies have suggested that to protect biodiversity 30 per cent of the landscape should contain remnant or restored native vegetation. ACT Forests is in a good position to be able to comply with this recommendation having 16 200ha of pine forest in the 26 900ha of land that it manages.

Studies by David Lindenmayer near Tumut have shown that remnants even as small as 0.5ha within a matrix of pine forest support important levels of biodiversity. Intact areas of riparian vegetation appear to be important dispersal routes for small mammals.

The report outlines recommended stages in a conservation strategy for the remnants. Conservation plans that are effective and accountable need to be developed for each plantation. As well, a number of actions to apply over the whole estate are identified, such as the need for buffer strips along drainage lines and at

boundaries, and the control of illegal activities, weeds and feral animals.

We suggest an administrative framework using the process put forward in the Integrated Catchment Management Framework for the ACT, and we note the advantages of setting priorities.

A final section, Post January 2003, draws attention to the uncertain position of ACT Forests following last year's audit report and the firestorm, the need to conserve the remnants whatever changes of use come into being, their ability to regenerate themselves unlike the surrounding pine forest, but also the need to monitor and act on any weed problems. It also draws attention to the particular problems caused by the Gibraltar Forest boundaries with both Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve and Namadgi National Park.

This report honours a longstanding commitment by NPA, but NPA will still need to make specific submissions to the recreation strategy and current enquiries into future uses of burnt and unburnt lands.

**Eleanor Stodart**



*Lees Creek Road showing spoil pushed into creek line, Uriarra Forest. Photo supplied by Eleanor Stodart*



*Pines spreading into bush remnants adjacent to Namadgi National Park, Uriarra Forest upstream from Vanity Crossing. Photo supplied by Eleanor Stodart*

# The impact of horses

Dr Sara Beavis, a research fellow at the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies, ANU, addressed the general meeting of the NPA on June 19 with a talk entitled *Impacts of horse riding in multi-use forests and environs*. It was clear from Dr Beavis's talk that the current studies of this subject form a very inadequate knowledge base from which to draw any conclusions regarding Australian conditions, or upon which to base either policy or recommendations. The problem is that existing scientific knowledge about the impact of horses is based on small-scale studies that are either experimental or undertaken in the northern hemisphere. In addition, the limited research is site- and scale-dependent. This being the case, the conclusions of these studies could not be extrapolated to Australian situations.

Dr Beavis wanted it understood that her talk did not reflect any personal conclusions on her part, but rather took an objective and scientific approach to the subject. One of the major values of her address was in the review of existing studies which revealed the complexity of the many variables involved, and their interrelationships. For example, Dr Beavis said the magnitude of the impacts of horses is a function of vegetation characteristics, soil properties, topography, climate and user type and frequency of use.

Other topics explored with the use of overhead graphics were policy and legislative frameworks, the responsibility of government, trail proliferation and weed dispersal.

Some members raised questions that revealed that Dr Beavis was mainly concerned with a scientific approach to what was known about the impact of

horses, particularly horse riding on trails. On the other hand, several members were concerned with what they perceived as the problem of environmental damage caused by horses, particularly in un-tracked areas as illustrated by the problem of feral horses in Namadgi National Park.

Anecdotal evidence based on personal observation by some members shows that there is such a problem here and now, and there is concern for potential damage to such areas as Ginini Flats Wetlands. Interpreting Dr Beavis' remarks, it would seem that anecdotal evidence is insufficient and that research that could lend itself to exploring this issue has either not been done or would take a very long time to undertake. All can agree that more Australian studies are required.

David Pfanner

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## Coordinated approach taken on feral horses

*At the association's July general meeting, the President, Kevin McCue, outlined recent discussions between the NPA and representatives of the Colong Committee for Wilderness at which a number of issues of common interest were considered. One was endorsement of the stand taken by the ACT Chief Minister on the removal of feral horses from Namadgi National Park.*

*Subsequently, the NPA and the Colong Committee joined with the NPA of NSW, the Nature Conservation Council of NSW, the Total Environment Centre and the Conservation Council of the South East Region and Canberra to write to the Chief Minister about this matter. This joint letter is copied below.*

Dear Chief Minister

The undersigned environment groups are extremely supportive of your recent statements regarding the removal of feral horses entering Namadgi National Park from Kosciuszko National Park.

We are greatly concerned by the NSW Government's weak stance on feral horses in Kosciuszko National Park.

The trial program to remove feral horses from park areas above 1850 metres, set up under the Kosciuszko Horse Management Plan, is inadequate to protect the ecological values of the park, including ACT's water supplies. The number of horses removed to date is well below the natural rate of increase.

What is required is a programme to promptly remove feral horses across the entire range of Kosciuszko National Park, therefore controlling the problem in Kosciuszko and making it easier to keep horses out of Namadgi.

A key component of such a plan would be a humane and effective killing method. Shooting is the best available method for killing horses. Application of the RSPCA endorsed Feral Animal Aerial Shooter Training (FAAST) protocols will deliver best practice. The Australian Veterinary Association,

Environment Australia and the 1991 Senate Select Committee on Animal Welfare have endorsed aerial shooting.

To ensure prompt control of feral horses, we request that you approach your NSW counterpart, the Hon Bob Carr, Premier of NSW, with a proposal for a joint plan that will effectively and humanely remove feral horses from Kosciuszko and Namadgi National Parks.

Prompt removal of horses is particularly crucial in the aftermath of last summer's bushfires. An exploding horse population in our alpine national parks would add an unacceptable additional insult to these already stressed ecosystems and impede fire recovery.

Please contact Fiona McCrossin on (02) 9299 7341 if you wish to discuss this issue, or you require further information.

Yours sincerely

NPA of NSW, Colong, NCC, TEC,  
NPA of the ACT, CASERAC

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### 2003-04 SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE OVERDUE

Members' subscriptions for the 2003-04 year became due on June 30. A marker has been placed on your *Bulletin* address label if the association's records show that your 2003-04 subscription has not been received. Please check.

# Stretching radiata pine into the drier areas

Everybody knows that the first few weeks of September is when many flowers of garden species bloom and are admired by many. In the "Sherwood" logging compartment of the ACT Forests in the foothills of the Brindabellas outside Canberra, there is an old homestead site. All that now exists is a grove of oaks, walnuts and elms and, in spring, a magnificent display of daffodils which are visited by many people.

Radiata pine (*Pinus radiata*) also flowers at this time though its female flowers are almost inconspicuous. The male flowers (catkins) are far more evident and abundant, often releasing clouds of yellow pollen on the warm breezes.

In the first week of September 2002, a colleague and I were collecting pollen from radiata pine trees that CSIRO had

introduced from the native populations in California in 1978 and planted at "Sherwood" the year after. We were shooting down branches from selected individuals to collect the pollen for controlled breeding.

Curious about the rifle fire, two members of the National Parks Association who were heading towards the daffodils, stopped and asked why we were collecting pollen. I explained how we were going to stretch the capability of radiata pine to grow in lower rainfall areas. This was to be achieved by selective hybridising with radiata populations from the natural range which grew under drier conditions, as well as other conifer species tolerant of dry conditions. The walkers thought it an interesting story and asked if I would write a brief article for the association newsletter.

## Establishing plantations

The first Australian plantations of radiata pine were planted in 1876 at Wirrabara in SA, which has a rainfall similar to Canberra (600mm/annum). Subsequent plantations, which were established in most states with a winter rainfall pattern, were grown from seed collected in plantations until the mid-50s when genetic improvement was initiated. Until around 1990, emphasis in breeding was on volume, straightness and branch habit, with most plantations being established on sites receiving well above 650mm rainfall/annum. With the changes in environmental legislation by the mid 1980s, it was no longer possible to clear native forest to establish pines, so growers looked to pasture land already cleared. The availability and amount of such land was somewhat limited and soon planted. Naturally enough the adjacent lower rainfall zones were targeted; however, the new breed of radiata pine did not grow as well in these areas and fared even worse in years with lower than average rainfall.

## Developing a new breed

Broad-based genetic material collected from the natural populations in California and the Mexican islands in 1978 was widely planted in the winter rainfall areas of Australia. From growth information across a wide range of trial sites, it was evident that the trees from the southern mainland population of Cambria and the trees from the island populations of Guadalupe and Cedros were more tolerant of growing in dry conditions. Most pine planted in Australia is derived from the two northern populations of Monterey and Año Nuevo just south of San Francisco.

By selecting outstanding individuals from the southern populations and mating them with the best in the current breeding population, the commercial characteristics of good growth, stem straightness and fine branching will be incorporated with a tolerance of drier conditions. This will enable the plantations to be extended into the already marginal sites adjacent to most existing plantation resources.

When drier areas are mentioned regarding radiata plantations, it usually refers to those areas receiving an annual average rainfall of less than 650mm which can be loosely translated to an effective rainfall of around 600mm. As the selective breeding intensifies and



*In Uriarra Forest, David Spencer of CSIRO plucks needles surrounding the male buds of Pinus radiata trees. Photo Reg Alder*

*continued next page*

radiata is hybridised with some of the known drought tolerant species such as *Pinus brutia*, *Pinus eldarica* and *Pinus pinaster*, it is hoped that commercial plantings will be a proposition in areas with an annual average rainfall as low as 500mm such as around Wagga Wagga in NSW and Naracoorte in SA.

### Why develop a new breed?

The demand for softwood (conifer) products in Australia has been continuously increasing over the last 20 years as softwoods take over from hardwoods for many uses. To create new softwood plantations in the drier areas, species other than radiata pine will have to be considered, or radiata pine will need to be modified through breeding to be able to grow effectively below the 650mm rainfall isohyet. Also, availability of new land in suitable areas is limited. As part of the national strategy to afforest large areas of rural Australia to ameliorate land degradation, expanding softwood plantations into the drier areas is an attractive prospect.

It is recognised that many of these plantings will be on private land and in the lower rainfall bands where farmers are being encouraged to develop part of their property to tree plantations integrating farm forestry as a common land-use practice.

### Benefits

Potential benefits from growing trees on farms will accrue not only in the usual commercial/economic way of processing trees for wood, but will help increase farm productivity and longer term sustainability. Equally important is the benefit of lowering water tables and ameliorating possible salinity problems.

Many farms in the drier areas need tree species for niche plantings such as degraded landscapes, recharge sites, plantation areas, windbreaks to mitigate soil erosion and protect pastures as well as amenity plantings. The land area in temperate Australia between the 400–

650mm isohyets that could become available for both conifer and hardwood plantations is substantial.

### Tree breeding

Most tree breeding in Australia involves mating selected individuals by controlled pollinations. This involves isolating the female flower from all pollen except that which you wish to use. This is done by using cellophane bags which allow the foliage to breathe but do not allow pollen grains into the bag. Carrying out controlled pollinations in the field on large trees is difficult and time consuming, so scions (pieces of vegetative material) from selected trees are collected (by shooting) and grafted onto rootstocks in a single location where the growth can be managed and pollinations easily effected. Using the grafted selections as females, it is easier to collect the male pollen from distant large trees.

The shooting activity in the plantation near the daffodils was part of the way we collect pollen. Climbing is dangerous and slow but using a rifle we can shoot out selected branches bearing the male flowers (catkins). Flowers are stripped off into a cellophane or paper bag then hung up to dry. The pollen releases into the bag without contamination. The dry pollen is stored frozen at -18°C until ready for use.

After pollination it takes nearly two years before the seed is ready for collecting. Seedlings take around nine months to reach plantable size.



*Male catkins of Pinus radiata to be prepared for storage. Photo Reg Alder*

### Future

Tree breeding is a slow business and it will be at least 15 years before we will know which of the crosses we made will be useful and have the potential for future breeding. People wanting to plant trees do not have to wait until results are known as they can choose other species, which may grow more slowly, but will have similar wood properties and will help accrue the other benefits associated with having trees on farms.

### Postscript

Those selected trees at "Sherwood" from which we had collected pollen, were destroyed in the severe bushfires in the Canberra region on 18 January 2003. The pollen has become very valuable as those selections represented some of the best specimens in Australia.

**David Spencer**  
CSIRO Forestry and Forest Products  
Canberra

## New members

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

Chris Baker & Ingrid  
Schryver .....Cook  
Phil Anderson & Ruth  
Ragless .....Downer

Mark Cleghorn ..... Canberra  
Bruce Ainsworth &  
Marlene Eggert ....Queanbeyan  
Sarah Porganyi ..... Braddon  
Michael Evans..... Garran  
Robert Haskew ..... NSW  
Ross & Sandra Caddy ...Wanniassa

Kerri Bradford ..... Ngunnawal  
Rene Lays.....Kaleen  
Monika Short ..... Red Hill  
Bill Leslie & Pat  
McGinn .....Holder  
Henry Hatch..... Farrer  
Ann Heard .....Curtin

# PARKWATCH

## Losing strands in the web of life

The Australian Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment is the biggest stocktake of the country's wildlife and natural areas ever conducted. Undertaken by the National Land and Water Resources Audit, it includes the first ever list of Australia's threatened bushland ecosystems and the most detailed audit ever published of Australia's system of conservation parks and reserves. What it reveals is surely enough to touch the hardest of hearts.

The report confirms that Australia is in the grip of an extinction crisis of global significance and that we must act now to halt the rapid loss of thousands of native plant and wildlife species unique to Australia.

This is further evidence that urgent action is required to control the land clearing which continues to destroy Australia's bushlands and wildlife habitats. As well, the report shows that Australia's system of national parks and nature conservation reserves must be completed to include all of Australia's species and ecosystems, and that we must act now to protect the near-natural ecosystems of northern Australia.

*"... 2891 threatened ecosystems and other ecological communities are identified across Australia ... with the greatest numbers in the highly cleared regions of southern and eastern Australia" (p.v)*

*"... One third of the world's extinct mammals since 1600 AD are Australian. Such a record is unparalleled in any other component of Australia's biodiversity, or anywhere else in the world" (p. 84).*

*"... The most urgent actions identified by this and other studies are to end the clearing of native vegetation". (p. 79)*

*"... Comparatively modest conservation initiatives and investment levels will lead to significant biodiversity conservation gains in much of northern Australia such as the Northern Kimberley and Cape York Peninsula and across central Australia? (p. 130)*

*"... Australia's national parks and protected areas are its premier investment in biodiversity conservation". (p. 125)*

*habitat, June, 2003*

## Australia's largest protected area declared in WA

An area comprising 98,000 square kilometres in Western Australia's

Western Desert region is to be declared as Australia's largest terrestrial protected area, following a decision by the Yarnangu people in late 2002 to declare it as an Indigenous Protected Area.

This represents the culmination of five years' consultation and planning by the Ngaanyatjarra Land Management Unit and Environment Australia, during which time the Ngaanyatjarra Council has received \$230 000 funding from the Federal Government's Natural Heritage Trust to assist in the Indigenous Protected Area's establishment.

Incorporating sections of the Gibson Desert, Great Sandy Desert, Great Victoria Desert bioregions and all of the Central Ranges bioregion within Western Australia, the area is to be managed for the protection and conservation of its natural and cultural values.

The Ngaanyatjarra lands are unique. Their remote location precludes many land use activities introduced in other parts of Australia, particularly pastoralism, and the traditional owners have maintained continuous management. This has afforded local flora and fauna a high level of protection.

*Bush, April 2003*

## Protecting Kosciuszko's ecology

Kosciuszko's ecology is subject to both human and feral damage. People should not be denied the pleasure of skiing and walking but they could do so without staying in a snow city.

In addition the sheer number of visitors has created a waste disposal problem. Each year more than 70,000 people walk in the Alpine area, and some 30,000 walk to the summit. The NPWS describes the situation at Seaman's Hut as follows "Overnight and day users leave a halo of human waste around the Hut. Faeces and toilet paper buried in snow around the Hut during winter are left on the ground after snow melt. Toilet blocks are therefore a necessity, placed where they will have the least scenic impact. Composting doesn't work, therefore the alternative is pump out".

Heading the list of feral animals are wild dogs (which of course include dingoes). Baiting is the only method of control. Some 75% of foxes are believed to have been eliminated (probably an equal proportion of dingoes also). In

December 2001, 135 goats were shot and in winter and in autumn 90 pigs were shot. Only thirteen of the 3000 horses in the park were trapped and removed. The acreage of weeds "treated" was 1065 hectares.

A reference group of 20 made up of "key stakeholder" groups was established. Conservationists are a small minority of the group and the list of seven primary issues is headed by "access". The protection of natural values is only one of the primary issues of the group. There is adequate access to the park by many roads and ski tube and so the term "access" no doubt means off road access for 4WD drivers and horse riders.

*The Colong Bulletin, January 2003*

## Do sediments sully the reef?

About one-quarter of the Queensland land surface drains into the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. Run-off of sediment, nutrients and other pollutants has increased several-fold since before European settlement, but the issue of impact on the reef has been contentious. Most of the sediment and nutrients come from the cattle grazing lands in the drier catchments of the Burdekin and Fitzroy rivers due to their vast size. Sugarcane production involves much less land, but makes a disproportionate contribution to sediment, nitrogen and phosphorus discharge. Flood plumes tend to hug the coast and the greatest pressure due to run-off seems to be on some 200 near-shore reefs. Evidence for deleterious impacts on coral reefs is growing while overseas experience indicates that the first sign may be inability of reefs to recover from natural disturbance. Reef scientists urge a precautionary approach and sustainable land use practices to improve water quality.

*ecos, April-June, 2003*

## Icon forests protected in north-east NSW

The greatest news for forests to come out of the recent NSW election was a promise by Premier Bob Carr to protect 15 "icon" forests in north-east NSW. This amounted to 65 000 hectares and almost everything the conservation movement had been asking for in that region of NSW. What is more it was done without the loss of one job!

Old growth forests like Chaelundi, scene of a legendary 1991 forest

blockade in the mountains west of Coffs Harbour, and containing some of the highest densities of tree-dwelling mammals in the world, will finally be able to exist for their own sake without the onslaught of industrial logging.

The decision means that old growth logging in the public forests of north-east NSW has finally been laid to rest. The term "old growth forest" has grown to resonate throughout the community as being something of particular value. Repeated polling and social surveys over the years has revealed that 70 percent of the community believe that the protection of these forests and the species that live within them are more important than the timber derived from them.

The decision was also made without the loss of jobs in the timber industry. Other sources of timber were made available to the industry by the Government, meaning the overall quotas of timber remain the same.

*Wilderness News, Winter 2003*

### Hot rocks shed layers

Granite boulders in Canberra's burnt-out forests have been cracking and shedding layers of rock. This sort of "onion-skin" weathering normally takes hundreds of years. But it seems that extreme heat during January's bushfires has sped up the natural process.

The peeling boulders are on hilltops, on well-drained slopes and in valleys. Canberra was in drought, so water did not cause this rapid breakdown.

Combustion in the eucalypt and pine forests would have generated temperatures greater than 1000 degrees Celsius. Burning trees and leaf litter heated the rock surfaces to at least 500 degrees.

The outsides of these coarse-grained granite boulders became hotter than their interiors, and the various minerals that comprise the rocks, such as feldspars and quartz, expanded at different rates.

With sustained heating, the boulders' interior temperatures would also have risen. But as the fires died, the surface cooled quickly and at a much faster rate than the inside.

These different rates of expansion and contraction cracked and peeled the boulders.

The insides of the fallen rock fragments and the newly exposed boulder surfaces are fresh or only slightly blackened, suggesting that the boulders probably disintegrated in the late stages of the fire.

These types of granite boulders are found in paddocks and on hills all over

Australia. Because Australia is bushfire-prone, maybe this process has been more important than previously thought for shaping the landscape over the past several million years.

*AusGeo News, June 2003*

### The grass may be greener, but now natives are fighting back

From a distance, bald, three-humped Montague Island looks as though it is growing a beard.

The new fuzz of vegetation is the first sign of an ambitious plan to restore one of the state's most precious ecosystems.

In just two years, more than 30,000 natives have been planted and a further 100,000 shrubs and trees are scheduled to go in before the end of the decade.

Montague, home to 12,000 penguins, is nine kilometres off Narooma, in the state's south. The National Parks and Wildlife Service's area manager, Preston Cope, says within 20 years the island will look completely different to the denuded feral grassland of today.

In the past decade, the ecology of the 80-hectare nature reserve has been ravaged by the exponential growth of kikuyu.

The South African grass was introduced to stabilise sandy areas around the island's 120-year-old lighthouse. But it escaped the historical precinct on the outcrop's summit and left two-fifths of Montague a tangled mat of metre-deep kikuyu. Penguins and other seabirds lost swathes of nesting sites and chicks died after becoming entangled in kikuyu runners. Scientists predicted that four-fifths of the island would be devastated in another decade.

For more than two years, scientists from Charles Sturt University and parks service staff have been working on how best to eradicate the grass. In 2001, however, a trial burn blew out of control, turning eight hectares of the island to ash.

In an attempt to turn the disaster to their advantage, scientists and rangers decided to begin a program of native planting in the burnt area.

Today in spite of the drought, tens of thousands of shrubs are thriving and some are already more than two metres tall.

Kikuyu cannot handle shade and is now dead underneath the new native growth. The scientists have also determined the best way to control the weed, with a combination of burning and herbicide spraying.

Most of the first 30,000 native plants were two species known to grow

prolifically on Montague—*Lomandra* and *Acacia longifolia*.

For the next 100,000 plants the team is looking at the nearby mainland for seeds from a greater range of species.

Nick Klomp, associate professor at Charles Sturt University, says many island and headlands around the NSW coast are infested with kikuyu and the experience gained on Montague will be applied throughout the state.

"The No. 1 priority is to return the seabird habitat to the island," he said. "Montague will start to look like what it looked like 50 or 100 years ago."

*The Sydney Morning Herald, July 26-27, 2003*

### Historic agreement saves last wild river

The peak NSW environment group today welcomed an historic Queensland-NSW cross-border agreement aimed at ensuring that the last wild river in the Murray-Darling Basin—the Paroo—remained free.

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) said the Paroo River Agreement was the important first step in preserving the river system. The Paroo catchment extends 640km through southwest Queensland and northwest NSW and covers an area of 76,200sq km.

NCC Water Policy Officer, Rachael Young, said the most significant achievement of the agreement was a new cooperative framework for ecological management of the river system.

"The Paroo River Agreement is welcome recognition that the value of river systems is not limited to extractive use.

"The Agreement underscores the need to recognise geographical, not political boundaries in the management of water resources. All decisions affecting the Paroo River will now require the agreement of the NSW and Queensland Governments.

"This is the first step in recognising rivers as the aquatic equivalent of national parks, and the community will appreciate the need for this recognition.

"The announcement of the Paroo River Agreement shows foresight and responsibility on the part of both the NSW and Queensland governments, and we welcome it as an important step in ensuring the sustainability of the region. We would like to see this approach extended to all rivers that share borders", Ms Young said.

*NCC NSW Water and Fisheries Media Release 18 July 2003*

*More PARKWATCH on page 21*

# Western Australia's Bibbulmun Track

*Bibbulmun (or Nyoongar): the name of the indigenous people of the South West of WA.*

Many members have heard of this long distance track in Western Australia, and some have walked parts of it. Nine hundred and seventy kilometres in length, it extends from one of Perth's eastern suburbs, Kalamunda, to Albany. In the belief that I am the first Canberran to have "done" the lot—E2E or K2A; 400km Oct 2002, 570km Apr/May 2003—some personal observations may be of use to others.

There could be little doubt that it is at present Australia's best planned and maintained long distance walking track,

traversing a wide diversity of landscapes, affording ready access to several country towns or villages and being supported by an impressive infrastructure of signage and huts with tanks, toilets, tables and fireplaces. It enjoys wholehearted support from CALM, the Friends of the Bibbulmun Track, and several business enterprises and local communities who also stand to gain from tourism. Indeed, to mention that you are walking the Bibb Track brings an immediate reaction of respect and friendly helpfulness from the locals.

Four decidedly different regions are encountered:

1. In the north, down to about Collie, the country is hilly and jarrah forest

predominates with an open understorey of shrubbery including *Xanthorrhoea preissii* and *Macrozamia reidlei*. Of course springtime anywhere in WA introduces the uniquely riotous colour of thousands of wildflowers (although some are still to be seen even in autumn). The hills are frequent but none are greater than about 300m, and there are some delightful sections through forest along the banks of the Murray River.

2. The central section is through the huge karri forests around Donnelly River and Pemberton. No longer so open, the understorey is denser and damper and perhaps more oppressive. Several large reservoirs are passed and use is made of old, long abandoned timber tram tracks, affording generally gentle walking gradients although there are still a couple of quite demanding hilly bits.

3. South of Northcliffe the country is gently undulating and the track passes through many swampy areas which can be *very* wet in winter. Many jarrah covered knolls dot this landscape which gradually merges into scrub-covered sand dune terrain as the coast is approached.

4. From Mandalay Beach near Walpole, the track turns east and sticks close to, or on, the coast for the next 250km to Albany. It passes through the unique tingle forests (the tree-top walk is a must), and the coastal scenery is spectacular although the low coastal shrubbery which follows provides little protection from the sun.

The huts, which accommodate up to 12-15 persons, have one side open and are faced generally away from the wind. At each hut site, small areas have been levelled for tents. At some huts, particularly in the south, fires are forbidden and stoves are mandatory for cooking. There are two "long" stretches of track requiring about seven days to walk (although many fitter persons seem to stop at alternate sites, covering up to 30-40km in a day). Otherwise the track passes through a settlement or town every 3-5 days, in which case it is possible to stock up with food, wash clothing and, if it is wished, put up at a backpackers', YHA, pub or B&B.

Bus transport is available for access to all except two of the towns, and the guide book shows places near to, or on the track, accessible to cars. Two invaluable small guide books are sold (not cheap), and there are also Bibb

*continued next page*



*Above. Ted Fleming at Yarragil Formation, northern section of the Bibbulmun Track. Photo supplied by Ted Fleming*

*Below. White Horse Hills Hut (northern section of track). Photo Ted Fleming*





# PARKWATCH *continued from page 19*

## Advance on tree clearing

NPAQ welcomed news of a joint Federal-State proposal to reduce tree clearing in Queensland. The proposal announced jointly by Federal Environment and Heritage Minister, Dr David Kemp, and Premier Peter Beattie is underpinned by \$150 million package for landholders. Each Government will contribute \$75million.

Key elements under discussion include:

- immediate protection given to "of concern" vegetation on freehold land;
- a phased reduction in broadacre clearing of remnant vegetation to zero by 2006;
- continuation of regrowth clearing;
- continuation of the Regional Vegetation Management Planning process;

- some exemptions, including woody weed control, infrastructure development, fire breaks, legitimate forest practices, and fodder harvesting under permit; and
- a joint Commonwealth and Queensland adjustment assistance package of up to \$150m covering:
  - \$130m in financial incentives to assist with transition or exit if necessary;
  - \$12m in incentives to improve management of more valuable remnant vegetation; and
  - \$8m in incentives to develop best practice farm management plans.

Years of negotiation have been necessary to reach this point and the package is not yet sealed and delivered.

Considerable political will has been necessary to bring the discussions thus far and NPAQ has commended the

Premier and Prime Minister on their demonstration of that will. The declaration of a moratorium on new tree clearing applications certainly took political fortitude. This package, while being a great step forward, is not the end of the story.

NPAQ members must agree with Mr Beattie when he said that this package will further protect Queensland from the threats of salinity, erosion and other land degradation, declining water quality, the extinction of species and other threats to biodiversity and degradation of the Great Barrier Reef.

The package is an essential part of achieving rational and balanced management of our natural resources but much remains to be done.

*NPA News, July, 2003*

**Compiled by Len Haskew**

## Transcriptions of oral histories

A number of oral histories from NPA members have been recorded and Mike Smith is currently co-ordinating the transcription of those not previously copied. He would be pleased to hear from any member who may be able to assist. Mike will be away for part of September but a message could be left by phone on 6286 2984 or by email at [msmith@netspeed.org.au](mailto:msmith@netspeed.org.au)

An important date for the diary

**Sunday 14 December**

**NPA'S CHRISTMAS PARTY**

Details are in the Outings Program

## Western Australia's Bibbulmun Track *continued from previous page*

Track folding maps. For track signage, the logo is a reflective yellow metal triangle bearing the image of a waugul (rainbow serpent), and snakes are a feature of this track—in summer and spring one might see up to 10 a day. Two waterways have to be crossed: at Irwin Inlet you must paddle yourself across in one of the CALM canoes (about 300m); at Wilson Inlet it is necessary to cross in a "ferry" from the Denmark Caravan Park (about 3km). There is one long beach walk along Mazzeletti's Beach (about 7.5km) and the best times to walk the track are, arguably, spring and autumn.

While Canberra was having its fires, the media made little reference to at

least two devastating fires involving the Bibb Track. The worst of these was at Mount Cooke, where two of the huts were totally destroyed.

This is a really, really great walk. Roads which are frequently used and highly maintained are assiduously avoided and much of it is simply a dedicated foot pad or follows old tram tracks or forestry tracks. It is probably not entirely the macho, tiger walker bushbasher's cup of tea, but for anyone who simply loves the outdoors and the uniqueness and variety of the Australian bush and coast it is well worth the time and expense of getting over to the west—and the use of all the wonderful facilities of the track is free.

### Useful contacts

Friends of the Bibbulmun Track (FOBT)  
PO Box 7605  
Cloisters Sq., WA 6850  
(08 9481 0551)  
[friends@Bibbulmuntrack.org.au](mailto:friends@Bibbulmuntrack.org.au)  
[www.Bibbulmuntrack.org.au](http://www.Bibbulmuntrack.org.au)

CALM  
Locked Bag 104  
Bentley Delivery Centre, WA 6983  
(08 9334 0265)  
[bibtrack@calm.wa.gov.au](mailto:bibtrack@calm.wa.gov.au)  
[www.calm.wa.gov.au/tourism/bibbulmun\\_splash](http://www.calm.wa.gov.au/tourism/bibbulmun_splash)

**Ted Fleming**

# Bush monument for heroic constable

It comes as something of a surprise to drive down the deserted streets of the old gold-mining town of Nerrigundah in mountains west of Bodalla on the NSW south coast and come across an imposing sandstone memorial to a murdered police constable. These days Nerrigundah, about 20km west of Bodalla, is a hamlet with a handful of houses. But once upon a time it was a town of some 500 people with the obligatory hotels (four), various shops, a police barracks, a courthouse and two churches. There were two cemeteries in the vicinity of the town.

Nerrigundah's growth was the direct result of a gold strike at nearby Gulph Creek in 1860. This led to a gold rush and then the surveying of the town in 1867. Inevitably the gold began to run out, the population went elsewhere and while sawmilling brought hope in the 1950s, this was a false revival.

The murdered constable was Miles O'Grady, killed by the Clarke Gang of bushrangers in a raid on Nerrigundah on 9 April 1866. O'Grady was seriously ill in bed with "colonial fever", possibly a form of cholera, at the time of the attack and his sergeant was absent at a court hearing in Braidwood, leaving the only other constable available, an officer called Patrick Smyth, or Smith, in charge of the police barracks.

The gang robbed passers-by, tried to rob a shop and were irritated by a butcher "throwing his wad of forty pound notes over their heads into the crowd". Word of their activities reached O'Grady and Smyth with O'Grady getting up from his sickbed to combat them. The two constables armed themselves, although according to an eyewitness, Ellen Jones, O'Grady was staggering from weakness as a result of the fever. When she begged him not to go, he replied, "I will do my duty".

Each of the constables fired a shot as they approached one of the pubs, Wallis' Hotel, where they could see the bushrangers inside. Smyth's bullet lodged in a door jamb but O'Grady's hit a young member of the gang, William Fletcher, who died about an hour later. The police retreated, but one of the bushrangers, said to be the gang leader, Tom Clarke, "took deliberate aim with his rifle and shot O'Grady ...". The bushrangers rode off while the wounded

constable managed to get himself to another pub where he collapsed in the arms of Ellen Jones, exclaiming, "I am shot dead."

Poor O'Grady survived for three or four hours before dying in agony. A later pursuit failed to capture the bandits, although a year later Tom Clarke and his brother John were arrested after a gunfight and "subsequently sentenced to death and hanged". Oddly enough, no one was convicted of O'Grady's murder. A gang member, Tom Connell, was charged with the killing but this charge was dropped. Tom Clarke, believed by some to have fired the shot, did meet his end on the gallows, so in a sense justice might have been served. The jury at the inquest found "That Thomas Clark (*sic*), Patrick Connell, and some other persons unknown to the jurors, did ... unlawfully kill and slay Miles O'Grady by shooting him in the body with a rifle bullet ...". The jury found that the killing of Fletcher was justifiable homicide.

O'Grady's memorial, opposite where he was shot, consists of a tall, pillar-like monument, fawn brown in colour (but needing a clean) and bearing this inscription:

*Erected by the Government of New South Wales in honour of Constable Miles O'Grady who on the 9<sup>th</sup> April, 1866 while suffering from severe illness single handed attacked armed bushrangers and lost his life in the encounter thus setting a noble example of bravery in the discharge of public duty.*

Writer Barry Leaney has pointed out that the inscription is wrong in stating that O'Grady tackled the bushrangers single handed because he had Smyth with him. Oddly enough, another error occurs on O'Grady's tombstone in the Moruya cemetery. This states that O'Grady was killed on 7 April whereas he died on the ninth.

At first, O'Grady was buried at the Nerrigundah cemetery, but his remains were exhumed and re-interred at Moruya. A reporter wrote in 1866: "A melancholy scene it was when the long file of mourners wended their way with the coffin tenanted with O'Grady's corpse to the usual burying place at Nerrigundah". But for William Fletcher,

his last resting place was "an unmarked grave in unconsecrated ground". The reporter noted that "A great crowd attended, and the body was consigned to its narrow home without ceremony".

Fletcher's career as a bushranger must have been the shortest on record—just one day. He joined the Clarke gang the day before he was shot after having been dismissed "from the farm on which he worked for having caused the farmer's daughter to become pregnant".

O'Grady, an Irishman who arrived in New South Wales about 1863, was only 25 when he died. He had served in the police force for almost three years.

There is another historic memorial in the general vicinity of Nerrigundah although this one celebrates a gentler occupation—poetry—in the form of an early versifier in Australia, Charles Harpur. As you travel towards Nerrigundah you must cross the Tuross River on the Nerrigundah Mountain Road. Directly opposite the river bridge, on the Eurobodalla Road, is a large boulder on which are set two plaques about the poet.

An inscription on the first plaque reads, "Charles Harpur 1813–1868 Australia's first native born poet" and quotes a line or two from one of his poems. The second plaque says, "Charles Harpur grave restoration. A project funded by the Local Government Bicentennial Initiative Grants Program". This puzzled me for a few days because there is no indication of where the grave is located.

Later, through the Moruya & District Historical Society, I discovered that Harpur is buried on a hillside farm property known as Euroma, directly above the boulder. I contacted the landholder and was kindly given permission to visit and photograph Harpur's headstone in an overgrown plot enclosed by a wooden fence. According to the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 1 1788–1850 A–H, Harpur "died of 'induration of the lungs' early in the wintry morning of 10 June 1868". Lyrical, political and satirical verse figured in his poetry and he also wrote political and literary criticism.

There is a second headstone in the plot, but I am unsure whether it marks the grave of Harpur's wife, Mary Ann

*continued next page*

# Letters to the Editor

## Post-fire work party

I am deeply concerned about work carried out on two cultural heritage sites in Bushfold Flats on Sunday, July 6, by members of an NPA work party.

A slightly burnt farm shed was pulled down and fence lines removed *before* any heritage assessment had been made in the area.

It was all done in the name of general post-fire clean-up, but what was done on that day went far beyond just

cleaning away burnt debris. Little on either site has been left for future archaeological interpretation.

After seeing what was done in the Bushfolds that day, I genuinely believe that no future NPA work party should be allowed near a cultural heritage site unless under the full-time supervision of someone from Heritage ACT.

The constitution of the NPA ACT states that our interests cover both

natural heritage and cultural heritage, yet members take it upon themselves to vandalise sites like this.

I think it is time for "cultural heritage" to go back on the agenda of a general meeting, and soon, so that a full discussion can take place. If concern for cultural heritage is in our constitution, then we all have to act as though it is.

**Babette Scougall**

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## Response by the work party leader

The work party at Bushfold Flats was a duly constituted NPA activity. It was conceived by the Parks and Conservation Service as a volunteer activity and subjected to an earlier reconnaissance by park staff and NPA members to determine the nature of the work. Only then was it included in the NPA walks program.

The activity itself was conducted under the direction and supervision of a ranger who is professionally qualified and trained in cultural heritage management. Three separate activities were conducted.

George Read's Hut (the farm shed) was recorded and subsequently assessed as unsafe for an area subject to public access, as only one structural post was not burned through and the majority of the structure's weight was being taken by the iron wall sheets. Accordingly, the

decision was made by the Parks and Conservation Service to disassemble the shed.

The process of disassembly was conducted carefully to facilitate the recovery of all undamaged material for further interpretation or re-use. Only material that was rendered functionally unsound by the fires was set aside for destruction. All these materials were stacked and secured on site to prevent disbursement by wind or wildlife.

Approximately 1km of the estimated 6km of wire and mesh fencing was rolled up and stacked on the roadside for later removal. The NPA's brief was not to remove any fence posts, as these would be further assessed and removed by park staff.

Lastly, the site of Russell Reid's Hut was cleaned to remove hazardous materials. The fence posts were left *in*

*situ*, as was the fuel stove and the remains of the refrigerator. With the exception of a burnt toilet seat taken back to the Visitors Centre for possible incorporation in a bushfire display, absolutely no material was removed from the vicinity of the site by the work party.

In summary, this activity was far from a cavalier act of vandalism. It was the result of consultation and planning and the considered actions of a small group of Parks and Conservation Service staff and NPA volunteers. At the start of the day's activity the plan was outlined and opportunity was provided for comment. Neither at this nor at any other time did any of the group indicate that the activity should cease. Only one expression of concern was recorded and the activity leader understood this to have been addressed.

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## Response to "On the road to nowhere"

Readers may recall that in his article in the June *Bulletin* Reg Alder argued the case for the upgrading of the Nowra to Braidwood road. Reg was responding to the publication of an article in the Colong Committee's journal criticising

the proposal. The Colong Committee has written to the *Bulletin* explaining its position, but due to the editor's zealous filing the letter is not available for publication. In summary, the Colong Committee's position is that the opening

up of the road would have deleterious effects on the natural values of the area through which it passes, much of which is national park, and lead to undesirable pressures on what is a valuable but vulnerable environment.

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## Bush monument for heroic constable *continued from previous page*

Doyle, or of their son, Charles Chidley Harpur, who, according to the Moruya society, are also buried there. Lettering on the poet's grave is becoming indistinct while there is none on the second headstone.

Maybe more restoration funds should be applied to this tiny cemetery.

Originally I had driven to Nerrigundah for a short bushwalk at the old Coman's gold mine. Finding these historical memorials from the 19th century was an exhilarating, if unexpected, bonus.

The writer extends his thanks to former Chief Superintendent Barry K.

Leaney, of the New South Wales Police, the Moruya & District Historical Society and Greg Murphy for their assistance during his research.

**Graeme Barrow**

*Source references for this article can be obtained from the NPA office - Ed.*

## General Meetings

Third Thursday of the month  
8:00pm  
Uniting Church hall  
56 Scrivener Street  
O'Connor

### Thursday 18 September 2003

*In the shadow of Gulaga*

Den Robin

NPA ACT member, conservation  
activist and South Coast resident.

Voluntary Conservation Agreements are a useful way of conserving endangered ecological communities and cultural heritage on private land. NPA member Den Robin will give an illustrated talk about the covenant she and Geoff have put over their bush block, on the slopes of Gulaga (Mount Dromedary), to protect habitat and to recognise Aboriginal occupation.

### Thursday 16 October 2003

*Members forum on NPA ACT  
policies concerning Namadgi  
National Park.*

The draft of the new Namadgi National Park Plan of Management will soon be released for comment and the NPA ACT Committee believes that it is important to have input from members on what NPA's response should be. To facilitate this the Committee will hold a short forum (1 hour) to discuss issues that will lead to policies for NPA ACT.

## National Parks Association Calendar

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Public holidays		Mon 6		Thu 25 Fri 26
General meetings	Thur 18	Thur 16	Thur 20	—
Committee meetings	Thur 4	Thur 2	Thur 6	Thur 4
Bulletin Working Group meeting <sup>1</sup>	Tues 23			
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration <sup>2</sup>	Sat 13	Sat 11	Sat 14	Sat 13
Non-urban study comments	Tues 23			
NPA ACT Christmas Party				Sun 14

**Further details.** <sup>1</sup> Syd Comfort 6286 2578

<sup>2</sup> Yankee Hat carpark 10:00am, Clive Hurlstone 6288 7592 (h), 040 778 3422 (mob)

At this meeting we will restrict ourselves to 5 topics: Access/walking tracks and their use; fire and bushfire fuel management; recreation in Namadgi; heritage huts; and commercial development.

Discussion on each topic will be preceded by a short presentation on the present situation regarding Namadgi, NPA's previously expressed views and what form our policy could take.

This is only the beginning of NPA ACT's policy development process and the Committee is committed to consulting the membership and keeping you informed through meetings, the *NPA Bulletin* and *Burning Issues*.

### Thursday 20 November 2003

*How light can you go?.*

Phil Bubb

Member, NPA ACT.

A presentation on and demonstration of ultra-light walking equipment.

Our speaker will talk on the advantages of carrying a very lightweight pack for overnight and longer walks and the feasibility of packing light.

Phil will show the gear he and Leonie Bubb used to walk the 650 kms of the Alpine Track (home-made fly, quilt, packs and clothing) and discuss the practicality, appropriateness to conditions and what they have learnt from experience in the use of some items. Phil will also provide details on sources of information, materials and equipment.

### December

There is no NPA ACT general meeting in either December or January.

### NPA Bulletin

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