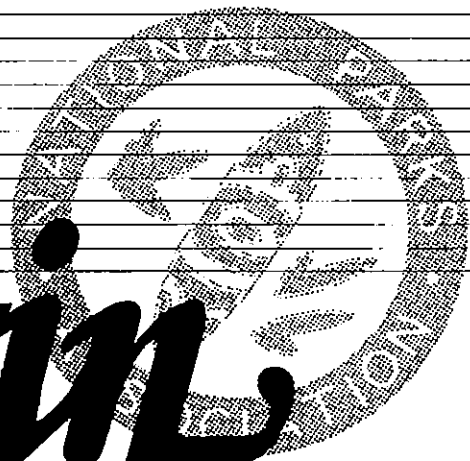


NPA Bulletin



Volume 40 number 4
December 2003

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION (ACT) INCORPORATED



Moments of Wilderness

***Ring of Fire* launched**

Vale Reg Alder

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National Parks Association (ACT) Incorporated Inaugurated 1960

Aims and objectives of the Association

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

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NPA Bulletin

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President's report

One of the joys of living in the national capital today is the wide range of intellectually stimulating public talks available. I attended one recently at the ANU that addressed the possible impacts on landscape and climate of changes in CO₂ based on the geological record, particularly of the past few million years. The two eminent geologists addressing us pointed out that the increase of CO₂ in the last 200 years equalled that of the last 100 000 years and that the effects of such a dramatic change could occur quickly, not in thousands or even hundreds of years but in decades. Amazingly, developed nations have done nothing to halt, let alone reverse, the rise in CO₂ levels, despite the agreements at Kyoto, and population increase is driving the change ever faster.

The US population has risen 100 million since 1970, a rate exceeded by few countries. This is placing huge demands on the environment and has resulted in US CO₂ emissions that are one quarter of the world's man-made emissions. The ultimate effects of this rapid rate of increase of CO₂ on the World's climate are as yet unknown, but some predictions are dire indeed.

Here in Canberra, the ACT Government's draft *Canberra Spatial Plan* anticipates a population of half a million by 2050, a similar rate of

population increase to that in the US. The environmental consequences for the ACT, such as increased water demand and loss of recreational space, have yet to be formulated. To stay level, let alone keep to the Kyoto agreement on CO₂ emissions, would require us in the ACT to plant a large acreage of trees—where are these plans?

Recently I attended a primary school concert in Sydney—what a contrast to my own annual school concerts here in the nation's capital back in the 1960s that started with *God Save the Queen!* In Marrickville the kids recited, with great gusto and genuine enthusiasm, their school pledge paying tribute to the former custodians of the land. They then went on to pledge to look after the natural environment. Sadly there were no Aboriginal kids in the Canberra classroom of my new school and our local environment that was so rich in insects, frogs, lizards and birds was soon paved or converted into football fields and cricket pitches, the creek diverted through concrete pipes and covered over. What a change there has been for the young in the last 50 years.

It does seem that environmental education has progressed dramatically for primary school kids in the last 50 years, but how will they be able to honour their pledge on the environment in the next 50 years? With the infill of

Canberra's once-green older suburbs and suburbanisation of Stromlo and Kowen forests promised in the draft spatial plan, we will face great pressures to diminish our precious nature parks and national park and to halt any environmental impacts of past CO₂ emissions.

Our young need to keep listening to people like Bob Brown, but history shows we don't heed such prophets in time. So far politicians in developed nations are not heeding the warnings on global CO₂ levels. Our ACT politicians need to start looking at the long-term effects of their current short-term decisions on population growth.

Ensuring the long-term health of Namadgi National Park and Canberra nature parks will require NPA ACT getting more involved in lobbying governments and the media than we are at present. We will also need to change the demographics of our membership by taking our concerns and interests to schools and universities to attract those young people as they age.

We, the committee and I, hope to see you all at the Christmas party and wish you all the joys of Christmas and the New Year, and a safe and bushfire-free summer.

Kevin McCue, President
6 November 2003

Committee member—Christine Goonrey

Christine is an ex-teacher and a recently retired public servant. She has joined the NPA ACT Committee because of her interest in conserving our natural heritage and in particular Namadgi National Park. She loves walking through the bush undisturbed by motor

vehicles of any sort, skiing away from the madding crowds and instructing her husband on the best way to take a good photograph when he is up to his armpits in a swamp.

She has a particular love of native ground orchids and a special thrill,

before the fires, was finding them in so many different environments in national parks in the southern region. She is enthusiastic about protecting this unique part of Australia in the challenging months and years ahead as the park regenerates.

NPA ACT CHRISTMAS PARTY 2003

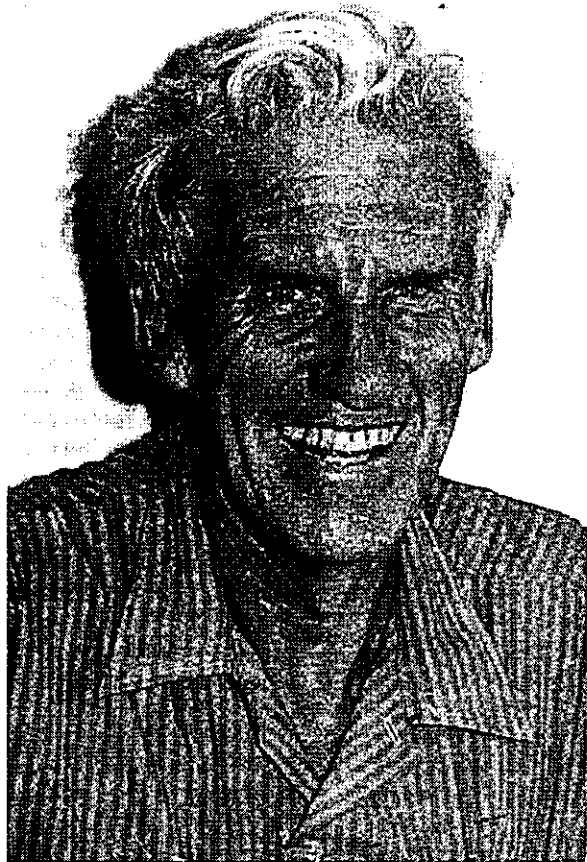
Sunday, 14 December

11.30 am, Namadgi Visitor Centre, Tharwa

Bring a picnic lunch and enjoy the spirit of the season with nibbles, drinks, Christmas cake and the company of fellow members.

After lunch there will be an opportunity to stroll to the Tennent Homestead site to see what the bushfires have left and what may be done to preserve the remaining ruins of this part of the ACT's pastoral heritage.

Reg Alder: 1917–2003



NPA ACT lost one of its icons when life member Reg Alder succumbed to cancer on 6 October 2003. When presenting his eulogy for Reg at the Namadgi Visitor Centre, Matthew Higgins described Reg as a “man of the mountains.” I am sure that all who knew Reg and his tireless and constant interest in both bushwalking and the environment would agree with this description of him.

Reg began bushwalking with the Sydney Bushwalkers in 1938 and he quickly developed a consuming interest not only in the activity itself but also in the natural and cultural environment which he had begun to explore. These interests lasted all his life and he was never happier than when he was out among the gum trees or sitting enjoying a cup of coffee on the verandah of one of the mountain huts.

He came to Canberra in the early '70s and immediately became a member of NPA. He soon made his mark on the Outings Program. Reg's influence saw longer, more challenging day walks being undertaken as well as overnight and extended trips. In the '70s Namadgi was largely an “unexplored” area for bushwalkers. Reg had an ability to read

maps as easily as others read novels and he opened up new destinations and routes for NPA members. Many of these routes have become well-trodden footpaths today.

As well as pathfinding and leading walks, Reg introduced many members to the pleasures of packwalking. He encouraged so many to undertake a new activity and he was extremely generous in imparting both his skills and knowledge. At the memorial service Neville Esau told the gathering that he regarded Reg as a “mentor” and I believe he was seen in this light by so many NPA members. Several of today's skilled navigators and map readers readily acknowledge Reg's contribution in developing their skills.

Reg had an uncanny ability to remember with great detail so many of the

areas he had visited. It may have been 30-odd years since he last walked a particular route but he could remember the terrain with great clarity and could caution about those spots where the map would tend to lead a walker astray.

By the mid '70s Reg was actively involved in the administration of NPA and he was a long time Committee member. He was Editor of the *NPA Bulletin* for six years and during this time it grew to the fine publication it is today. Characteristically, Reg paid meticulous attention to every detail and changed printers frequently to ensure that it was ready on the first day of the appropriate month at the very latest. Throughout all his membership he was active on sub-committees (particularly for Namadgi and the *Bulletin*) and he maintained this interest even when his health began to fail. For many years he was NPA's representative on the Australian National Parks Council and he

Reg with tools and ready for work
Photo Fiona MacDonald Brand

was, for a time, its National Co-ordinator. Reg was made a life member of NPA in 1984—an honour of which he was extremely proud.

Reg was always actively involved in the many issues that were important to NPA. He was largely responsible for cultural heritage becoming part of the association's aims and objectives. He contributed ideas to many submissions and was instrumental in the relocation of the Yankee Hat carpark and then the rehabilitation of the inappropriately sited and constructed alternative.

He was a keen and willing participant in most NPA work parties. Work party coordinators could rely on Reg to bring along the appropriate tools and he was always able to advise on the best way to undertake and complete a task. Thanks to his vision and perseverance Orrol Homestead has been restored and the Yerrabi Track constructed. These two projects on their own will be lasting and much appreciated memorials to Reg.

As a keen photographer and skilled darkroom worker Reg contributed many superb photographs to the *Bulletin*. For many years it was the very odd edition

continued next page



Recreational directions for Namadgi and the Alps

David Scott (Planning Coordinator—Namadgi NP Management Plan, Environment ACT) provided a challenging set of issues for those assembled for the August meeting of the NPA. Intense interest in his presentation was revealed in questions and lively discussion following his address. Space does not permit a full review of the topics covered which included Aboriginal joint management, catchment management, bushfire management, cycling, groups, recreation fundamentals and developing the park for environment protection. What follows is a selection of topics that received emphasis and had particular interest for the audience.

Environment ACT is considering a broad range of options related to the recreational use of Namadgi NP. David Scott anticipates that the plan of management will probably be available to the public by mid to late 2004. Progress on the plan has been delayed due to the recent bushfires, the release of the McLeod Inquiry report, the non-urban study and the forthcoming Coroner's report. It was made clear that Environment ACT and the Interim Board of Management have not resolved all issues including the interpretation of the term "wilderness".

In addressing recreation fundamentals, the speaker said that Environment ACT regarded Namadgi NP as an essentially low-key and semi-remote park with important links to other parks, especially the Australian

Alps National Parks. The importance of recording and monitoring recreational usage is essential, as is the need for zoning and fire control. Two strategic options to manage visitor impact were presented: to concentrate visitors in restricted areas on prepared tracks, or to allow dispersal as a means of reducing impact. This issue raised a question from the floor as to whether Namadgi was to be managed as a "conservation area or as a playground". This theme occurred throughout the evening in a number of ways.

Balancing conservation and recreation required taking the long view said David Scott. There is an underlying assumption that with increased population pressure there will be an increased demand for park access and facilities with resulting environmental impact that must be carefully managed. For this reason, Environment ACT is considering how best to manage hikers, vehicles, horse riders and cyclists etc. for environmental protection. Among the decisions being considered are policies regarding hardened tracks, hut replacement, signage and what was referred to as "hardened nodes" such as campgrounds.

Those worried about horses in Namadgi will be pleased to learn that Environment ACT maintains a hard line against feral horses in the catchment and would retain existing low altitude riding areas outside the catchment. Those with fears that there would be pressure for commercial horse riding

opportunities in the Park were told that it was very unlikely such pressure would develop. Furthermore, off-trail use and riding competitions would be prohibited.

Following the presentation, NPA members raised a number of questions. With reference to whether decisions on park management could be postponed or delayed, both David Scott and Geoff Butler (Co-chair of the Interim Namadgi Board of Management) replied that planning must go ahead at once because of anticipated increased visitor pressure for park access and facilities. When one member asked to what extent decisions on management options would be made on the basis of relative cost, Geoff Butler vigorously assured the group that decisions would only be made on the basis of what was best for the park and not due to a low resource base.

Concern was expressed by President, Kevin McCue that there was no scientific underpinning for decisions being made concerning fire management in the park. Geoff Butler disagreed, but admitted that because there was at present no real fuel management plan for Namadgi it was crucial to call on responsible experts to investigate.

A final question brought up the non-urban report and the implications of suggested settlements which could affect the natural values of the park by influencing its biodiversity.

David E Pfanner

Reg Alder: 1917–2003 *from previous page*

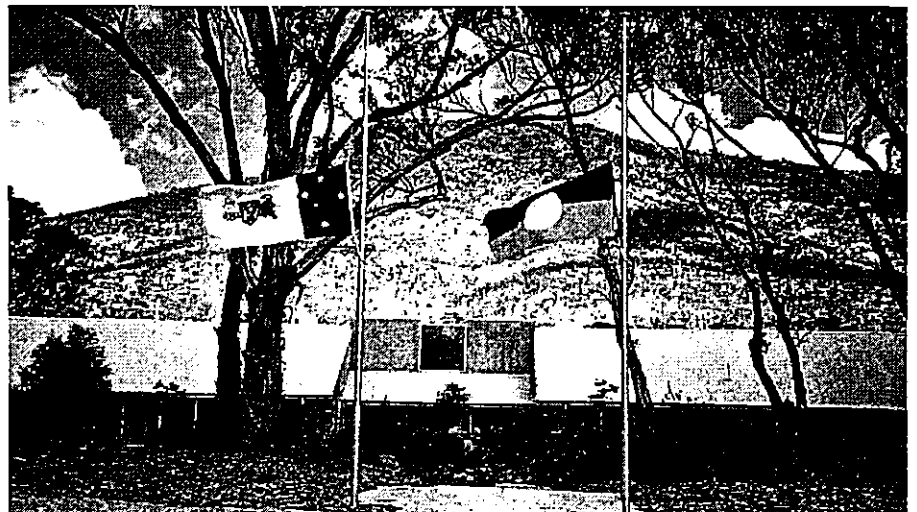
when one of Reg's photographs was not on the front cover. He was still contributing photographs and perceptive (sometimes provocative) articles until ill-health prevented him.

It is because of people of the calibre of Reg that NPA is a well-respected and forceful voice in the ACT's environmental community. As Matilda House said,

He was a well respected Elder.

Len Haskew

Flags at half mast for Reg at the Namadgi Visitor Centre. Photo Sophie Guy



After the fires: impacts on ecosystems

The January bushfires burned 70 per cent of the ACT, but they were not a single event. They burned different places in different ways, and affected different plant, animal, bird and fish species in different ways. Early observations showed that different locations and different species—and the same species in different locations—were recovering at different rates.

Environment ACT's first report on the event states that although the survey was conducted only three to four months after the fire, and before any rainfall to break the drought, a significant number of plant species showed signs of regeneration. Bird and animals species showed some surprising but variable survival rates, but fish stocks were under threat mainly from stream sedimentation.

Wildfires in the ACT 2003: Report on Initial Impacts on Natural Ecosystems—begins with the stark statement: "The 2003 wildfires burnt 70% (164 914 hectares) of the ACT including 90% of Namadgi National Park and Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve The geographic extent and severity of the fires was unprecedented in the ACT and is likely to have significant short- and long-term consequences for the natural ecosystems of the Territory."

In looking to the future, it emphasises the need for more monitoring and more study, and for targeted remedial action.

The survey revealed that the many plant species that had begun to regenerate quickly were usually the more fire-tolerant species, with mature plants regenerating from lignotuber, rootstock or epicormic shoots. Even in areas of very high fire intensity there were signs of regeneration after only three months, although big variations were apparent: for example, the kurrajong had almost completely restored canopies while the snow gum showed only the first signs of shoots. River she oak with scorched canopies showed significant epicormic growth, but those that had lost their canopies showed no response.

The report noted that in high severity burn areas where a higher proportion of trees had been killed, much of the canopy cover may not be restored until seedlings mature, which will take many years. Steeper slopes with northern or western aspects were the most severely burnt. On the moister eastern and southern slopes the fires burned downhill and slower and less severely.

Wet fern gully vegetation had been expected to regenerate slowly, but a severely impacted fern gully was found to be regenerating rapidly, with herb and shrub species sprouting from rootstock and tree ferns sprouting from crowns. Bracken fern was regenerating so quickly it was "becoming the dominant ground cover and performing a useful role in helping stabilise soils".

Woodland and grassland areas generally experienced lower fire severity than the forest ecosystems. Yellow box, red gum and other eucalypts in grassland areas were regenerating well, but the only known specimen of white box in the ACT (on Huntly Estate) was showing no response.

The fire gave weeds their big chance, and they will need to be managed—as will grazing by feral animals and wandering stock to protect reshooting native vegetation and seedlings.

"The results of the fauna surveys and opportunistic observations suggest that, with few exceptions, populations of most species have been substantially reduced in fire-affected areas," the report says. "Very few animals were observed in areas of high or very high severity burn, where almost all green vegetation (understorey and canopy) and ground cover has been removed."

Eastern grey kangaroos were commonly observed, and swamp wallabies and red-necked wallabies were seen over a wide area. Small ground-dwelling mammals such as *Antechinus* species and bush rats were caught in traps in unexpectedly high numbers.

"Numerous small lizards were an obvious feature of most areas following the fire," the report says. "However, the abundance of reptiles and lyrebirds apparently crashed within three months following fires. It is possible that a combination of lack of food and lack of shelter (leading to increased susceptibility to predation) may have been responsible."

Wombats seemed to be coping well—they shelter in deep burrows, can use poor quality foods and, in the absence of grass, probably feed on subterranean fungi and roots.

Corroboree frog habitat was severely affected, and even though the fires coincided with the breeding season, the frogs bred and eggs were collected for a captive husbandry program. No information exists on the impact on smoky mouse populations. However, scats of broadtoothed rats and spotted-

tailed quolls were found in a range of sites. The probably severe impact of the fires on populations of the uncommon yellow-bellied glider, because of widespread canopy scorch, was of concern.

Rabbits, wild dogs and foxes were commonly seen in fire-affected areas. Because of lack of cover, many native animals (particularly lizards, small ground-dwelling mammals, brush-tailed possums and some birds) will be more susceptible to predation. Pigs, goats and horses have the potential to damage regenerating habitats or concentrate damage on unburnt habitats.

The major implications of the fires for ACT fish species were seen as the threats posed by increased sedimentation of streams. Streams of particular concern are those in the Cotter catchment where populations of four threatened species (Macquarie perch, trout cod, two-spined blackfish, and the Murray River crayfish) are known to be present.

"Wetland communities are often assumed to be 'immune' to fire though the impact of the 2003 fires clearly demonstrates this is not so. In particular, the fires burnt most of the *Sphagnum* moss bogs, and at many sites it was apparent that the *Sphagnum* hummocks were dead. Little information exists of the long term effects of fire on these bogs."

In the report's 17 recommendations were continued monitoring and surveying of various areas and species, providing advice to land managers to assist recovery of flora and manage weeds, training Environment ACT staff to recognise signs of threatened fauna species of conservation concern, such as the smoky mouse and the broad-toothed rat, and encouraging the involvement of community groups in the monitoring of fire-affected areas. The report recommends that environmental flows be maintained in the Cotter River below Bendora Dam to minimise sedimentation and other measures to protect fish species. It also recommends that the impacts of feral animals—pigs, horses, goats, rabbits, foxes and wild dogs—on critical habitat and selected species be identified and be managed accordingly.

The report's final recommendation is for research findings to be communicated to interested community groups and land managers, and to encourage community-based monitoring where appropriate.

Graeme Wicks

Policy forum at general meeting on October 16

A major part of the general meeting of 16 October 2003 was a policy forum which reviewed the key planks of the NPA's policy statement "Caring for Namadgi Together". The issues were grouped around five key areas:

- wilderness
- access and recreation
- commercial use
- fires
- huts and heritage.

In the discussion on wilderness, suggestions were made to modify the definition to delete "quality of" from the definition so that it reads "Wilderness is a large area in an essentially natural state..." and to add "industrial" to the definition so that it reads "... where modern *industrial* human interference has been limited." A series of dot points outlining the values of wilderness will be added.

In the discussion on recreation and access it was agreed to strengthen the statement that "recreation and access is a secondary consideration ..." and to look at developing additional points on 4WD clubs gaining additional access as a reward/trade-off for work parties, on use by mountain bikes and horses and

on limits on use of firewood below 1500m.

The discussion on commercial use focused on making any such use more open and accountable by notifying proposals for licences for commercial activities in the *Canberra Times* before being granted, with opportunity to lodge an objection; and to ensure fees don't penalise organisations such as the NPA, Scouts, etc by stating "All commercial and non-profit organisations that charge fees for *commercial* services" Proposed additions to the existing policy would seek to prohibit any sponsorship arrangements in exchange for signage within the park; and to oppose any construction of commercial huts, roofed or semi permanent accommodation and networks of camping/walking facilities (such as in Croajingalong, Cradle Mountain, etc.)

The meeting agreed that bushfire fuel management policy should include a statement about supporting proscribed burning in surrounding farmland and would expect farmers to take action to prevent fires burning *into* parks, including leasehold and "land managers" (in order to include

plantation and recreational forest managers). The phrase "degrade park values" should be replaced with "maintains biodiversity and other natural values."

Finally the meeting discussed huts and (non-indigenous) heritage. It was agreed the whole document should be checked for references to the 1986 Burra Charter as it should now read "1999 Burra Charter". There was considerable discussion about the standing proposal for a review of Cotter Hut—such a review should have a specific purpose; if not, the point shouldn't be there. Also, a point should be added about huts **not** to be used by horse groups—both commercial and non-commercial.

Overall, the policy forum was a fruitful and lively debate which has tightened up our policy document. The Committee has been taking additional comments from anyone who has something to add and hopes to get the final policy document circulated to members as soon as it is finalised.

Christine Goonrey

Second policy forum

Following the success of our October policy forum, the committee is planning to have a second policy forum at the March 2004* general meeting.

The three remaining policy issues on Namadgi NP concern

- Aboriginal culture
- weeds and feral animals
- tracks.

Members wishing to contribute to the draft recommendations should contact any of the committee members or send submissions to the NPA ACT office by mail or email.

* Should the Namadgi Plan of Management be ready for publication about then, Environment ACT have offered to brief us on the contents, in which case the policy forum would be postponed.

Kevin McCue
President NPA ACT

Reg's last article

Readers of the *NPA Bulletin* may be interested in knowing that a long article by the late Reg Alder will appear in the March 2004 issue of the *Canberra Historical Journal*, published twice a year by the Canberra and District Historical Society.

It was my intention to run the article in the September 2003 issue, but other matters intervened and I found it impossible to do so. That was a pity

because it was likely that Reg would have seen the piece before he passed away.

The article is a fascinating account of bushwalkers in the south-east region of NSW and the ACT and includes extracts from their writings in books and journals. Many of those who travelled around this part of Australia were members of the Sydney Bush

Walkers and their accounts appeared in the publication, *Sydney Bushwalker*.

Reg himself was a member of the Sydney Bush Walkers from 1938. I guess the article to appear next March was his last, unless other writings of his are with other publishers.

Graeme Barrow, Editor
Canberra Historical Journal

Moments of wilderness

Those who came to our July general meeting were rewarded with an excellent and thought-provoking photographic presentation by Andrew Lyne, a botanist on long service leave from the Australian National Botanic Gardens. Andrew presented his personal experiences of many elements of the Canberra Nature Park, mostly close-up and detailed, occasionally expansive, or examined from unexpected angles. His wonderful images were evidence of a well-developed sense of how to close out the surrounding suburbia so as to become acutely aware of the natural processes continuing in their own little environments — very localised wildernesses. And it is possible that, for the robber fly, that moment captured by Andrew really was being spent in its own little wilderness. *Adrienne Nicholson*

Here are Andrew's very interesting introductory remarks.

Tonight I'll be showing a series of some 60 or so slides of photographs made in the various nature reserves dotted about Canberra that comprise Canberra Nature Park (CNP). CNP of course is what puts the "Bush" into "The Bush Capital".

But before the slides ... some background on the photographs and my lines of thought.

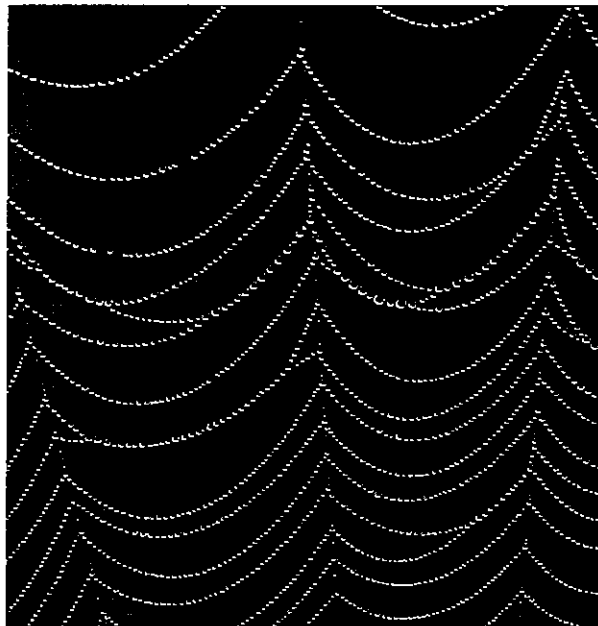
I began photographing in CNP in 2000. I had just started a course of study in the Photomedia Workshop of the School of Art at the Australian National University. I was keen to become a "better photographer". I wasn't sure

what that meant but I thought this would be a good beginning. My photographic love at this time was landscape and, perhaps unsurprisingly, my photographer hero was Peter Dombrovskis, undoubtedly familiar to many of you for his exquisite photographs of Tasmanian wilderness. Well I wanted to do that as well! So off I went to the School of Art with this in mind. The School of Art, if I may enthuse for a moment, is a most wonderful place. I became immersed in an environment of new learning, new ideas and new challenges. I had a great time.

During this time I kept mulling over the wilderness idea. There was little chance of me ducking down to Tasmania to go photographing the wilderness so I needed to think of somewhere closer to home. Namadgi? Deua? The Budawangs, I thought. Well yes, but I'd need to visit regularly, so it would have to be close.

It took a while, but what about CNP, I thought. It's close—I can duck out before and after work. Hardly the stuff of wilderness though, I also thought. But maybe, that's the challenge. Give it a go.

So off I went and began photographing in CNP in a "wilderness



Dewy spiderweb, Mount Taylor. Photo Andrew Lyne

style". This proved very difficult at first—CNP is not a wilderness in the generally accepted sense. It exists largely as islands isolated by grazing land and suburbs and awash in traffic noise. The wide-angle lens approach to capture the grand vista just wasn't really possible. Everywhere you look in CNP you see barbed-wire fences, roads and tracks, powerlines, water reservoirs, telecommunications paraphernalia, condensation trails, grazing land and suburbia. And of course, the weeds!

But it wasn't just a matter of wide-angle lenses. I found myself rethinking my accepted notion of what wilderness is and what wilderness might be. I began thinking about what CNP is and what CNP might be. Does or can wilderness and CNP intersect? What might this mean?

So the whole exercise soon became one not purely of photography, but rather one of ideas. I began to spend much more time thinking about it than actually taking photographs. On numerous occasions I have ventured forth into a reserve, spent half a day traipsing about and not even taken my camera out of its bag. I just didn't see a photograph that fitted in with what I was trying to express.

When you see the slides you will see that I believe wilderness does exist in CNP. I'll grant that it is a somewhat

continued next page



Sunrise, Cooleman Ridge. Photo Andrew Lyne

Ring of Fire launched

Many members of the association were present when fellow member Di Thompson's first book, *Ring of Fire*, was launched by Bill Wood, the Minister for the Arts. A large and lively crowd gave the book an enthusiastic welcome at the Botanic Garden's Crosbie Morrison Centre. The book is a collection of landscape photos recording the change and regeneration brought about by the recent fires in natural areas in the ACT and Kosciuszko.

The Minister recognised that although the photographs had their origins in tragedy they portrayed a more buoyant outlook as they focused on the regeneration and recovery from the fires rather than on the unrelenting disaster. He saw this in a broader way reflecting the approach adopted by the community affected by the fires to rise above the problems and concentrate on overcoming them and rebuilding for the future. He also drew attention to the artistic merit of the photographs and his attraction to the almost surreal quality of many of them.

Di outlined how the concept of the book had developed as she saw the areas she knew well, devastated by the fires. She paid tribute to the many people who had encouraged her to push ahead with publication and to family and friends who had contributed a great deal to seeing the concept realised.

It is difficult to do the images justice by reproducing them in black and white but maybe there is enough in what is shown on our front cover to encourage those who have not yet looked at the book, to do so.

Syd Comfort



Di Thompson and Minister for the Arts, Bill Wood at the book launch. Photo Nick Weare

Moments of wilderness *continued from previous page*

toned down, narrow and impure concept of wilderness, one that is unashamedly human in its perspective. Every so often you are able to find yourself in a situation where you can no longer hear the traffic, the barking dogs, the lawnmowers (and, should you live in Chapman at the moment, the chainsaws). All you can hear is quiet. No overt evidence of humanity intrudes—just the quiet, the warmth of the sun, the bush, a soaring eagle, the scent of Acacia and your own thoughts. A fleeting moment. A moment of wilderness.

I'm a great believer in wild places but at this point in my CNP exercise I can't help but feel that the "wilderness" idea is all a bit unobtainable for many people. To experience a traditional

"wilderness" often requires a fair bit of effort and heavy rucksacks, lots of walking, big hills, rain, cold, discomfort. It's not that I don't like doing this, because I do. It's just that I now feel many of the qualities people seek in wilderness—space, opportunity for pause and reflection, physical exertion, fresh air, solitude, a place where one can experience some of the majesty of nature—can be found in a place like CNP.

Of course all of this leads me to think that CNP has kind of fallen through the cracks—a nowhere place lost between the shopping mall and the "true wilderness". As such I feel that it is under-appreciated and much abused. We graze sheep and cattle in it, we want to build big roads through it and we

propose to build new housing on it. Yet the sign at the gate says "Nature Reserve".

As a community I don't think we really believe that CNP can offer us many of the things that we as humans need—space, opportunity for pause and reflection, physical exertion, fresh air, solitude, a place where one can experience some of the majesty of nature—those moments of wilderness.

CNP is a most wonderful place. It is well worthy of preservation and deserving of greater nurture. With more care and attention and a really solid concept of what CNP could be, there is no reason to think that it couldn't rival some of Australia's other landscapes as a place of great significance. I'm sure it could be done.

Nil Desperandum restoration announced

The Chief Minister has announced that Nil Desperandum homestead in Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve is to be restored to its original state after being significantly damaged by the January bushfires.

The homestead was built between 1896 and 1899 for Henry Gilman, a champion of small-holder selectors against the fencing policy of squatters, particularly A J Cunningham of Congwarra and Lanyon. It is the best

example of a vernacular pise cottage built at the close of the nineteenth century.

Shaping Our Territory—Final Report: Opportunities for Non-urban ACT

The Non-urban Study was 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. A preliminary report was released for public comment in August and the NPA made a lengthy response to this. In this article I have attempted to summarise the NPA submission and to relate each part of it to the relevant section of the final report of the Non-urban Study released in early November. In the following paragraphs the summarised NPA position is printed in normal type followed by the Non-urban Study response in italics.

It should be noted that the Non-urban Study report is just that: the Government has yet to decide what action is to be taken in respect of its recommendations. This will, no doubt, be closely related to further development of the Canberra Spatial Plan.

General comments

The study emphasises development and commercial opportunities ignoring the ecological impact of development. There is scant recognition of the values of national parks and nature reserves in assisting values such as biodiversity. There is a lack of recognition of the nature of non-urban areas and a seeming assumption that they are solely for utilisation by people.

No general statements, additional to those in the draft, are made to recognise ecological values of non-urban areas but there are a number of recommendations to enhance environmental values in specific ways, for example, endorsement of the ACT Lowland Woodland Strategy and proposals to enhance it. There is in a number of places within the final report less emphasis on commercial possibilities.

Water resource planning

The NPA opposes a pipeline from Tantangara unless it can be shown not to degrade the nature conservation values of Namadgi National Park (NNP) and to be free of the risk of introducing non-indigenous or pest organisms.

The final report states that key decisions about future water

requirements are outside the remit of this report. Discussion of the Tantangara pipeline option does not include any reference to the issues raised by NPA.

Ecological resource conservation

The study should have provided descriptions of the environmental values in non-urban areas and the impacts of the fires on biodiversity, and dealt with issues around the recovery of the natural values after the fires. The study fails to provide a benchmark against which the impacts of development proposals could be measured. The NPA opposes the use of weed cover for revegetation of burnt areas.

The section of the final report reviewing the ecological resources of the ACT is virtually unchanged from the draft report. The discussion on the use of weeds for soil stabilisation is unchanged but adoption of this process is not recommended.

Recreation and community well-being

The NPA concurs with the study in proposing that the pine forests cater for the greatest diversity of recreational use.

The study recommends that the breadth and quality of recreational amenity should be as great as, and desirably greater than, before the fires and that ACT forests should continue to be available for recreation.

ACT Forests and plantation forests

NPA considers that the softwood plantation industry is not viable and recommends alternative uses for these areas which include catchment protection, conservation and recreation. Specific recommendations were made for some areas.

The chapter on plantation land and areas managed by ACT Forests has been largely rewritten. The Steering Committee has concluded that the future use of the plantation lands should be determined primarily by considerations of water quality, fire protection, ecology, recreation and landscape. Forestry should be viewed principally

as a land management regime rather than as a commercial enterprise.

Tourism (including nature-based tourism)

The NPA opposes the establishment of quality accommodation within Namadgi National Park possibly to replace destroyed huts. It also opposes the use of Gudgenby Homestead as a hospitality centre.

The final report maintains that the potential for nature-based tourism should be pursued and recognises the provision of accommodation as part of this but there are no specific recommendations for accommodation in remote areas or in Gudgenby Homestead.

Rural villages

The NPA opposes village settlements close to Namadgi and Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve due to the bushfire risk. It also opposes village settlements because they will stimulate population growth in non-urban areas and impact on water conservation. The question is also raised as to how these villages could be financed from land sales if they are to be occupied by former residents noting that they were largely in public housing and unlikely to afford current land prices.

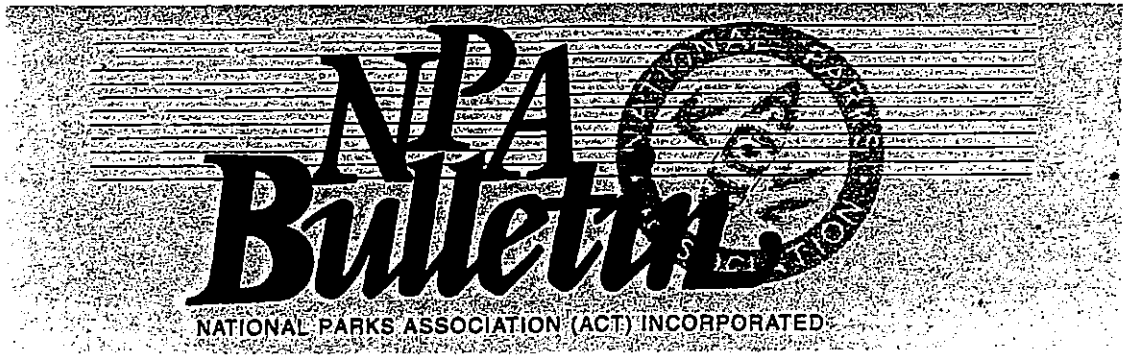
The study no longer supports villages at Tidbinbilla and Williamsdale. The study supports a village in Uriarra of 85–100 houses, and 60 houses in Pierces Creek, the latter subject to assessment of bushfire risk. It is proposed that these villages house former residents and new residents with the proceeds of land sales (presumably from the latter group) financing the villages.

Rural residential

The NPA opposes the establishment of rural residential developments.

The report does not generally support rural residential as a form of land use within the ACT, with the possible exception of the Ingledene forest area, subject to detailed investigation.

continued on page 11



NPA OUTINGS PROGRAM

December 2003 - March 2004
~~June - September 2003~~

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.

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.

13 December,
Gudgenby Bush
Regeneration Group
Christmas Party
Contact: Syd Comfort
6286 2578, Clive Hurlstone
0407 783422
clive.hurlstone@csiro.au
Meet at Namadgi Visitor
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
david.large@bigpond.com
Meet at Namadgi Visitor
Centre, Tharwa at 11:30am.
An opportunity to join
members of the NPA for
convivial lunch and drinks. We
will stroll or drive around to
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, day walk
Muellers Peak
Leader: Brian Slee
6281 0719
brianslee@iprimus.com.au
Grading: 2A/C
Map: Perisher Valley
1:25000
Depart Kambah Village
6:30am for Charlotte Pass.
Descend to Snowy River and
climb Mt Clarke, south of Mt
Northcote and climb Muellers
Peak. After break, descend to
Lake Albina for lunch. Return
via Northcote Pass and Club
Lake Creek. Several steep
climbs. Afternoon tea
Jindabyne. Book with leader
as weather check essential.
420kms, \$120 per car plus
\$15 park entry fee (if
necessary).

11 January, day walk
South Rams Head
Leader: Brian Slee
6281 0719
brianslee@iprimus.com.au
Grading: 1A/B/C
Map: Chimneys Ridge,
Perisher Valley, and Tom
Groggin 1:25000
Depart Kambah Village
7:00am. Proceed past
Thredbo to Dead Horse Gap.
Climb to unnamed 2040 peak
for morning break. Descend
south to South Rams Head
(1951 metres). View into
Victoria and Mt Kosciuszko..
Return north to promontory
overlooking Leather Barrel
Creek gorge, stopping at
saddle to see alpine sunrays
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. Book with
leader as weather check
essential. 420kms, \$120 car
plus \$15 for park entry (if
necessary).

18 January day walk
Mt Gingera and Brumby
Flat
Leader: Max Lawrence
6288 1370,
mlawrence@netspeed.com.au
Grading: 3AB
Map: Corin Dam 1:25000
Meet at Deeks Park carpark
on the Uriarra Road near the
Cotter Road intersection at
8:30am. From Ginini carpark
we will walk along the
established road and track to
Priors Hut and Ginini summit
and then on to Brumby Flat.
A chance to check out the
regeneration process in the
high Brindabellas, and we

will also see the Franklin
Chalet ruins on the way in.
150kms, \$45 per car.

24 – 26 January, Three day
pack walk, joint with FBI
Woila/Tuross
Leader: Eric Pickering
6286 2128,
pater@tpg.com.au
Grading: 1C/D/E
Maps: Snowball, Badja
1:25000
Medium pack walk, off track
on the first and third days,
possibly camping in one
location for two nights. Those
who want to stay in camp on
the second day are welcome.
It is a beautiful area to lounge
about, drink tea, read, swim
etc! The intention, however,
is to do a walk with day
packs. I have two adjacent
walk areas in mind, but we
will only do one: Woila
Creek and Scout Hat
Mountain, or, Tuross River
and the mighty Jillicambra
Mountain. The weather will
to some extent dictate how
strenuous the day walking
will be! Cars TBA. Closing
date 15 January 2004.

24 -26 January car camp
Thredbo Diggings
Leader: Adrienne
Nicholson 6281 6381
Grading 00/1A/2A/B/C
choices
Map Mt Kosciuszko
1:25000
Options to be as active or
inactive as participants
desire. Can take the chairlift
from Thredbo and walk to
Kosciuszko and return;
follow the Thredbo River
from the village up to dead
Horse Gap and return; take
the Skitube up to Perisher and
Blue Cow for a day walking
in that area. Half or full-day
walks, or simply relax by (or

in) the river around the campsite. Please contact leader by Wednesday 21st. Drive 430 kms, \$130 per car plus \$15 per car for cars without a parks permit

**28 January day walk
Googong Foreshores**
Leader: Max Lawrence
6288 1370,
mlawrence@netspeed.com.au
Grading: 3A
Map: Googong Foreshores brochure

Wednesday walk with FBI and CBE. Meet at Canberra Railway Station, Kingston at 8:30am, or somewhat later at the Foreshores car park (boat launching area) near Googong Dam. A walk along the western foreshores firetrail to Tin Hut and London Bridge and return. A chance to check out our city's dwindling water reserves and perhaps visit some of the islands. If weather is hot we will walk one way only with a car shuffle. 50kms, \$15 per car.

**31 January day walk
Bungonia Gorge**
Leader: Mike Smith 6286 2984
msmith@netspeed.com.au
Grading: 2/A/E
Map: Caoura 1:25000
Meet at Southwell Park Netball Court parking area at 8:00am. A steep walk on track down to the junction of the Shoalhaven River and Bungonia Creek. Follow creek upstream through the spectacular Bungonia Gorge which involves rock scrambling. Climb (400m) out via the steep "Efflux" route. 220km drive, \$66 per car.

**1 February day walk
Snowy Mountains – Alice Rawson Peaks**
Leader: Steve Hill
6231 9186
landshil@webone.com.au
Grading: 4 A/C/E
Map: Perisher Valley 1:25000
A day of fabulous views when the wildflowers should be out. This will proceed only if the weather conditions are likely to be safe. We drive to Thredbo (2.5 hours) and take the chair to Crackenback. Walk towards Mt Kosciuszko and then the Main Range track to Muellers Pass. Turn off on the Mt Townsend footpad then north along the spur to Alice Rawson Peaks. We drop down towards Lake Albina then climb to the northern end of Muellers Peak to return. The walk be partly off track and involve some climbing. An early start and late return to Canberra, but the sights are worth it. Contact Steve Hill by Friday 30 January to register and for details of meeting place. 400 kms, \$120 per car.

**7 – 8 February pack walk
Long Point**
Leader: Steven Forst
6251 6817 (h)
steven.forst@aca.gov.au
Grading: 2B
Map: Caoura 1:25000
Ring leader before Thursday. A walk down from the Long Point lookout near Tallong into the Shoalhaven Gorge to a shady campsite by the river. A walk to the bottom of Bungonia Gorge as a side trip. A long haul (600m climb) back up to the Long Point lookout on Sunday. 280 kms, \$70 per car.

**14 – 28 February pack walk
The Great South West Walk**
Leaders: Mike and Annette Smith 6286 2984
msmith@netspeed.com.au
Grading: 2/3 A/B
Map: Walk Map and Notes
A 10 day walk in south-west Victoria plus 2 days of travel each way to get there. Will start at Moleside Camp and walk along the Glenelg River to Nelson then coastal walking to Portland with possible inland trip over Mt Richmond. Generally on track with no major climbs but some hard walking along the beach. Numbers are limited, contact leader by end January for further details. Options to stay in Cape Nelson lighthouse, if available, and other places along the track. Travel expenses to be arranged between drivers. Camping fees apply.

**14 February work party
Gudgenby Bush
Regeneration Group**
Contact: Syd Comfort
6286 2578, Clive Hurlstone
0407 783422
clive.hurlstone@csiro.au
Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre, Tharwa at 9:15am, or Yankee Hat carpark at 10:00am.
Tools will be provided.

**15 February day walk
Square Rock**
Leader: Steven Forst 6251 6817 (h)
steven.forst@aca.gov.au
Grading: 2A
Map: ACT 1:100000
A walk to Square Rock from the Smokers Fire Trail car park off the Corin Dam road. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8:00 am. The walk

takes us through the once tall eucalypt forest to the prominent granite boulders of Square Rock which provide a good resting place with views back to Canberra. Walk dependant on park access due to fire season restrictions etc. 75 kms, \$22 per car.

22 February day walk
Snowy Mountains – The Sentinel – Mt Twynam – Headley Tarn
Leader: Steve Hill
6231 9186

landshil@webone.com.au
Grading: 3 A/C/E
Map: Mt Kosciuszko
1:50000

Drive to Charlotte Pass carpark (2.5 hrs) and follow the Main Range Track to the Blue Lake look out. Climb over the Main Range and down to the Sentinel. On to Mt Twynam (2196 m) for more views and lunch. Descend via Little Twynam down the Crummer Spur past the Headley Tarn back to the cars. The walk will require good fitness mainly off track and will involve regular climbs including a small rock scramble. It brings with it an early start and late return to Canberra, but the sights are supremely rewarding (a two film walk). Contact Steve Hill by Friday to register and for details of the meeting place. 400 kms, \$120 per car.

25 February day walk
Leader: David Large
6291 4830
david.large@bigpond.com
Grading: 2 A/B

Map: Various
Mid week day walk in conjunction with FBI and CBC. Final details notified by email. Not more than \$12 per car.

28 February work party,
Namadgi National Park – Recovery
Contact: Martin Chalk,
6292 3502,
martin.chalk@tpg.com.au
Monthly work party.
Probably weed removal (blackberries) at Coree Falls/Creek

6 – 7 March pack walk
The Rolling Ground
Leader: Philip Gatenby
6354 3094
philip.gatenby@dewr.gov.au

Grading: 3 A/C/F
Map: Geehi Dam 1:25000
An overnight walk from Guthega Power Station to explore the Rolling Ground and to climb Mt Tate and some of the nearby peaks. Contact leader by Wednesday for more details. 400 kms \$120 per car.

13 March day walk
Goulburn History Walk
Leader: Col McAlister 6288 4171

Grading: 2A
Map: Goulburn street map and self guiding walking tour pamphlets
A walk taking in some of Goulburns heritage buildings. We start with a guided tour of the Old Goulburn Brewery (fee) then walk up Rocky Hill to the War Memorial for views of the city. We will visit some of the heritage buildings including the two cathedrals, having lunch on the way. In the afternoon visits to the Water Works Museum and/or Kenmore Hospital. (fees/donations). Meet at 8:30 am at the ACT Netball Centre carpark just past the Dickson traffic lights on Northbourne Ave. 200 kms, \$60 a car.

12 – 15 March four day pack walk, joint with FBI
Ettrema Gorge
Leaders: Pat and Eric Pickering 6286 2128
pater@tpg.com.au
Grading: 1 C/D/E
Maps: Touga, Yalwal 1:25000

Four days in this interesting, remote and beautiful 400 metre deep gorge. Rock hopping along the creek, scrambling, swimming in crystal-clear pools and magnificent views. Total climb up to 800 metres. Rated hard because of steep, trackless descent into the gorge. Intend to camp two nights at one site with at least one walk without packs to investigate waterfalls on a side creek. Cars TBA. Please contact leader by 3 March to discuss or register your interest.

20 – 21 March pack walk
The Vines
Leader: Steven Forst
6251 6857

steven.forst@aca.gov.au
Grading: 3 A/B
Map: CMW Budawangs
Ring leader before Thursday. A walk to a campsite near the base of Quilties Mountain. Visit the forests of the Vines area with possible side trips up Styles Pass or to Quilties clearing. 340 kms, \$100 per car.

24 March Wednesday day walk
Leader: Adrienne Nicholson 6281 6381
Mid week day walk in conjunction with FBI and CBC. Final details notified by email or contact leader. Not more than \$12 per car.

**27 March work party
Namadgi National Park –
Recovery - Yerrabi
Contact: Philip Gatenby
6254 3094
philip.gatenby@dewr.gov.a**

u
Monthly work party. Repairs
to steps down to tor.

**31 March day walk
Leader: Syd Comfort 6286
2578**

Mid week day walk in
conjunction with FBI and
CBC. Final details notified by
email or contact leader. Not
more than \$12 per car.

**2 – 4 April car camp joint
with KHA
Return to Snowy Plain
Leader; Graham Scully
6230 3352
scullymob@netspeed.com.a**

u
A re-run of a very successful
KHA car camp on the
Gungarlin River held several
years ago. We will visit many
of the historical sites on
Botheram Plain and walk
through Kalkite Gap to the
site of Broadhead's 1875
water powered sawmill. The
races are still visible, as are
the chimney stones and the
graves of two children. A 20
page historical summary is
available at \$3.00 per copy.
These must be ordered and
prepaid on registration.

Register with Graham Scully.
On registering you will
receive details on how to get
to the campsite, together with
suggestions on what to bring.

**3 – 5 April pack walk
Mt Namadgi
Leader: Martin Chalk,
6292 3502,
martin.chalk@tpg.com.au
Grading: 3 B/D/E**

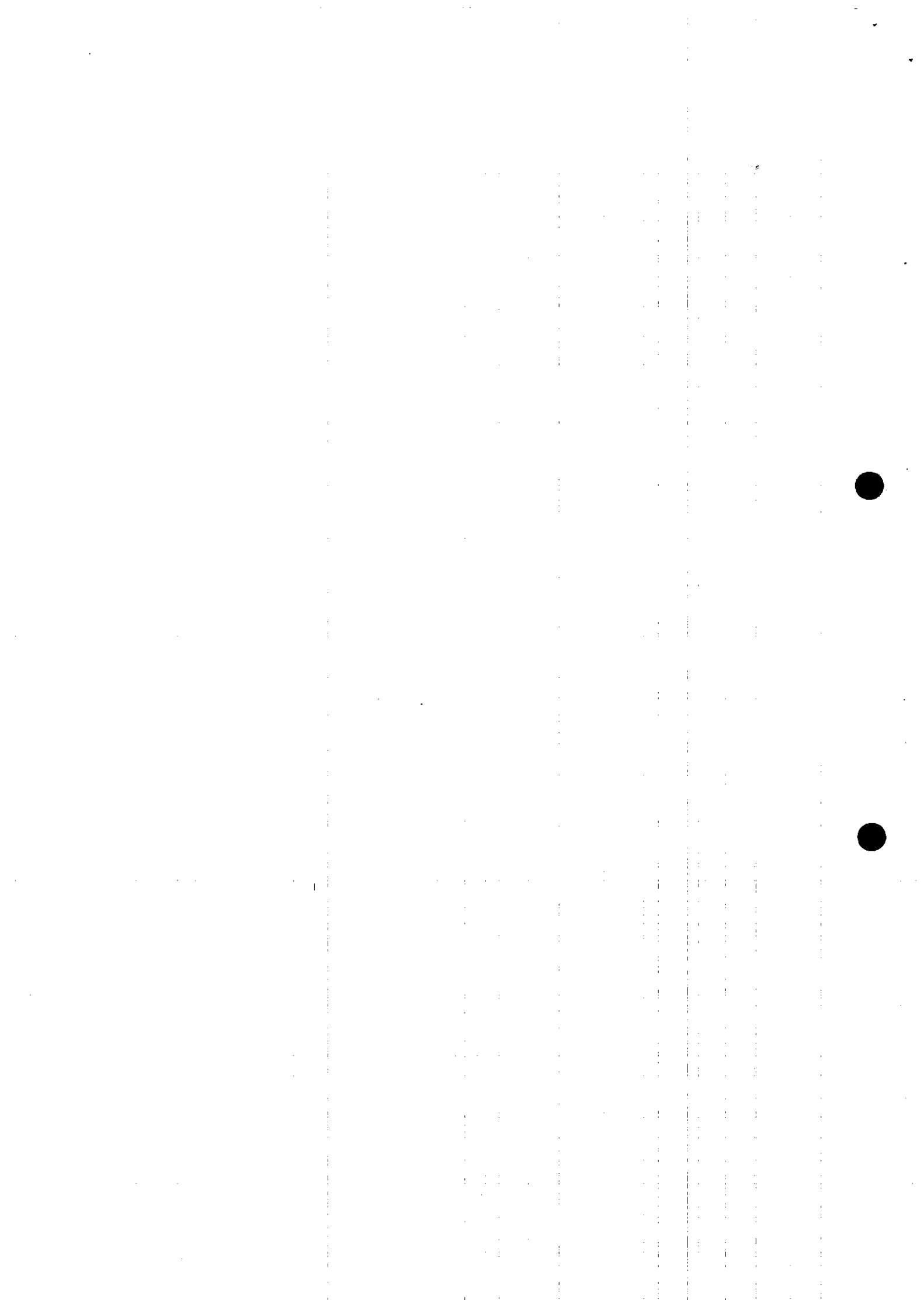
**Map: Rendezvous Creek,
Yaouk 1:25000**
A walk in the "heart" of
Namadgi National Park
starting at Boboyan Pines car
park. Mostly off tracks and a
climb of about 800 metres on
first day. Contact leader by
31 March for details. 140
kms, \$42 per car.

Kimberley in May 2004

Walkers interested in joining a fourteen day expedition aimed at exploring the fascinating, remote and beautiful region surrounding King George Sound are invited to call Pete Tedder on 6282 1711 (phone and fax) for an information sheet giving the itinerary and costs. The walk, which is provisionally scheduled on 15 – 29 May 2004 will be of moderate grade. Willis Walkabouts will be chartered to guide and arrange the logistics. A food drop is being organised so that we will not have to carry more than seven days rations.

It is to the advantage of those people who are interested to contact Pete as soon as possible as the cost is tied to when you pay.

Russell Willis of Willis Walkabouts is visiting Canberra on the 26 January 2004 and will show slides of the region and other areas where he operates. The location of the presentation is the St James Uniting Church Hall, Curtin at 7:30pm.



Slim but significant—the Draft Canberra Spatial Plan

In early November the Minister for Planning, Simon Corbell, released the *Draft Canberra Spatial Plan* saying that sustainability was a key feature in developing this strategic plan which will provide guidance over the next 30 years and beyond. As an element of the Canberra Plan this draft will encourage and facilitate population growth, up to half a million in the Canberra–Queanbeyan metropolitan area.

The plan has been well publicised but the following features may be noted:

- growth is to be within the boundaries of the ACT rather spread into New South Wales as envisaged in the earlier “Y” Plan;
- Canberra will be a city with growth initially contained within a radius of 7.5km, later of 15km;
- residential needs will be met by intensification of existing urban areas particularly the town centres, by continued growth of Gungahlin and later in the Molonglo Valley and on the Kowen Plateau;
- Civic will be the centre of culture, business and creativity and existing centres including Civic will be the focus of employment growth;

- future industrial and transport related employment growth will be accommodated within existing industrial areas and by opening up a corridor comprising the Majura and Symonston valleys;
- major transport connections, including public transport, will link the town centres with Civic and link future urban settlement in Majura and Kowen into major employment corridors; and
- a Fire Abatement Zone will be established around the city.

Whilst recognising the value of the containment of the city that the draft plan proposes there are some environmental questions that concern me. These include:

- If sustainability is a key feature, should the plan “encourage and facilitate” growth?
- noting that during the life of the plan oil could become less available and more expensive, has sufficient provision been made for the development of a city that is less dependent on the use of cars?
- observing the fundamental significance of transport links in the operation of a city, does the plan

sufficiently emphasise their fundamental role?

- what will be the effects of residential development on the natural values of the Molonglo corridor?
- what effect will the encroachment of settlement in Gungahlin have on its grassy woodlands?
- what will be the effects of building major transport links to Molonglo and Kowen on the nature reserves and open spaces between these locations and the city centre?
- will the Fire Abatement Zone be established in a way that minimises damage to natural areas?

There are many steps to be taken before the draft plan, or an amended version of it, can be implemented. In addition to public consultation and consideration of the Non-urban and other studies, negotiations with the National Capital Authority, the NSW Government and local councils will be required. Changes to legislation and to statutory plans will also be necessary. But for the moment the matter to note is that responses to the draft are required by 17 December 2003.

Syd Comfort

Shaping Our Territory—Final Report *continued from page 10*

Science and education

The NPA opposes the development of rural villages as biotechnical, environmental or space industry hubs.

The recommendations in the draft for these uses have been dropped from the final report.

Stromlo and lower Molonglo River area

The NPA is concerned that increased access on walking tracks along the river corridor could impact on the natural values in sensitive areas. In siting water quality control ponds for Weston Creek in the Molonglo corridor, there is a need to consider the impacts they may have on the conservation values of the area.

The recommendation in the draft to provide improved access for walkers in the lower Molonglo Corridor have been retained in the final report, as are

options for water quality control ponds on the Molonglo.

Cotter and Uriarra

The NPA expressed concern that development of walking and recreation tracks could impact on conservation values through increased visitation.

Walking and recreation tracks have been retained in the final report without reference to impacts on conservation values.

Namadgi

The study failed to address the significance of the wilderness qualities of Namadgi much of which is attributable to its remoteness, and which qualities are easily affected by human intervention. The NPA opposes further developments within Namadgi National Park because such development would be exposed to bushfire damage and

would impact adversely of the park’s conservation values.

The final report considers that the natural value of Namadgi National Park can add to the tourism potential of the ACT. However the final report does not discuss nor recommend the establishment of accommodation or tourist complexes in the park. Upgrading of Boboyan and Brindabella roads are retained as options.

Syd Comfort

Bird book is 10 years old

The NPA’s *Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT* with text by McComas Taylor and illustrations by Nicolas Day was launched in 1993. The book, made possible by a generous donation from Alastair Morrison, was reprinted in 1999 and continues to meet the need for a convenient and authoritative reference to our local birds.

Did you ever want to ... ?



Sign proudly displayed at the front gate of "Burrawang". Photo Den Robin

Did you ever want to pack up living in the suburbs and establish yourself in a natural setting and see that the environment around you was protected? Perhaps you did, but ... didn't. However Den and Geoff Robin did, and ... did. They moved on to 41 hectares at Dignams Creek on the south-western slopes of Gulaga (Mount Dromedary) some six years ago, built a house that is largely self-sustaining and then moved on to protect the area around them. Den explained to the association's September meeting what they have done to achieve this.

Gulaga is the remnant of a volcanic eruption which lifted the mountain some two kilometres above the surrounding

countryside and is still 800m at the summit. Numerous creeks flow in a radial pattern from the high spur. The mountain is the subject of an Aboriginal creation story and the area continues to be very significant to the local Aboriginal people. The slopes contain rainforest with a wide array of plants, birds and other animals and is of world heritage significance. It was not, however, included in the World Heritage temperate rainforest area when that was declared, but in 1968 was declared a flora reserve. In 2000 Gulaga National Park was created and title handed to the Aboriginal people.

Alluvial gold was discovered at Dignams Creek in 1852 and reef gold

near the summit in 1877. More than 50 miners lived and worked on the mountain between 1880 and the turn of the century, by which time 335kg of gold had been won from the reefs. There was some further mining in the 1950s.

Recognising that many areas of land in private ownership have heritage values and warrant protection, the NSW Government has established a range of schemes through which landholders have the opportunity to participate in a cooperative strategy to conserve areas of value. These arrangements include Wildlife Refuges, Management Contracts and Voluntary Conservation Agreements. The various types of agreement have varying conditions, periods of operation and legal commitments, and attract different levels of assistance and support.

Den and Geoff opted for the Voluntary Conservation Agreement (VCA) which is the most long term and comprehensive of the range of conservation agreements. The agreement is between the Landholder and the NSW Minister for the Environment. It is permanent and registered on the title of the property. The agreement includes a detailed site description of the conservation values of the property and a comprehensive flora survey. A plan of management is developed with the owners which can be modified over time to reflect changing circumstances.

Den said that she found the surveys of the property carried out by scientists from the Parks and Wildlife Service fascinating and a source of detailed information about the property that went beyond her previous knowledge. The development of the agreement and the plan of management were carried out in a cooperative way and ensured that the outcome was the one that suited their situation rather than having a fixed set of conditions imposed. Specialist advice was available on such matters as the fencing needed to protect the land. The NSW Government also provides funding assistance for on-ground conservation work and there is provision for permanent council rate exemptions over the conservation area.

Whereas a number of VCAs had been established in the neighbouring Bega Valley Shire, the Robin VCA was

continued next page



The tall forest includes silver top ash, monkey gum, woollybutt, yellow stringybark, ferns and remnant rainforest species along the watercourses. Photo Den Robin

Honorary life membership



Syd and Eleanor broadcasting seed at the Gudgenby regeneration area after the January fires burned the felled pines.

Honorary life membership awards have been rare in the NPA with only 12 members honoured in the 43 years of the association's existence. Perhaps we should be more generous in this matter. However, it is pleasing that the Committee and membership granted honorary life membership to two of its hard-working members at the August meeting. I'm sure that they will need no introduction, but please congratulate Eleanor Stodart and Syd Comfort.

Eleanor joined the NPA in 1994 because, as she has said, her family had been enriched by holidays walking, skiing, and being in contact with nature in national parks, and she wanted to do something for the parks in return. She fulfilled this desire by immediately joining the Committee and soon after, accepting the position of President, a post she held for three years until 1996. Eleanor continued on the Committee until 2001 to complete eight years of attentive involvement with the affairs of

the association. She has been a driving force behind many reports and submissions made by the association, including the recently completed report on protecting native remnants in pine forests and the major document, "Caring For Namadgi Together". Eleanor has also brought her scientific background and writing skills together in many articles published in the *Bulletin*.

When the removal of the pines in Gudgenby Valley became a reality Eleanor joined the regeneration group and soon became the President and showed herself as an excellent organiser and leader. She has now stepped into the position of Secretary but it was her enthusiasm that kept the group active over the past four years. The three metre high trees on the slope above Hospital Creek reflect her dedication to this task.

Syd Comfort joined the NPA in 1980, was elected to the committee in 1984 and became Treasurer the

following year. In 1989 he became President, at a time when the Committee was dealing with such issues as the logging of the south-east forests, and nearer to home, Canberra Nature Park and the push for the removal of the Boboyan pine plantation. This last issue is one which he continues to pursue through the Gudgenby regeneration project.

Syd has been involved in a number of facets of the association's work including the Namadgi sub committee, organising work parties, leading walks and more recently, editing the *NPA Bulletin*. Through his tact and experience, Syd has contributed to the association over many years.

It is because the NPA attracts and holds people of the quality of Eleanor and Syd that this association has been able to continue to influence the environmental management of the ACT.

Fiona MacDonald Brand

Did you ever want to ... ? *continued from previous page*

the first in the Eurobodalla Shire. Den explained that she and Geoff had worked through the process of developing the VCA with their family so that the commitment was shared with all family members. She went on to explain that the VCA was a legal contract that was bound in perpetuity to the title of the land. Thus one had to

consider what effect this may have on the value of the land and its market prospects should one wish to sell. They had thought through all these issues before committing to the agreement.

And now for the really good news: Den has invited the NPA to arrange for members to visit to the property. David

Large has this in hand so keep an eye on the Outings Program.

Syd Comfort

PARKWATCH

The Waterfall Way walking track, New England

The possibility of a long distance walking track in the New England area is being investigated by members of the New England Ecotourism Society (NEES) based in Armidale. The walk may eventually start from Walcha and reach the coast, passing through or near to such places as Armidale, Ebor, Dorrigo, Bellingen and Coffs Harbour. These communities and others along the way would benefit from the tourism potential of the track.

The track will pass through spectacular gorge country with many great views, some splendid waterfalls and other special features of the Tablelands and escarpment rim. As it nears its destination on the coast, the scenery will change to include rich rainforest and beautiful beaches.

The track is being investigated in six zones. These are:

1. Walcha to Dangars Falls near Armidale,
2. Dangars Falls to Wollomombi Falls,
3. Wollomombi Falls to Point Lookout,
4. Point Lookout to Dorrigo,
5. Dorrigo to Coffs Harbour.

Anyone interested in learning more about this exciting project can contact NEES at PO Box 929, Armidale, NSW 2350 or visit the website at www.ecotourism.com.au.

The Bushwalker, August 2003

Lake Cowal mining lease granted

Lake Cowal in New South Wales' central west is the seasonal home to thousands of migratory birds from across the globe, including 12 migratory bird species listed in international protection agreements. It is also the state's largest inland lake. The cyanide-leaching mine is planned to be built on its shores. "It's a high risk project in the heart of sacred Wiradjuri country and in wetlands worthy of RAMSAR listing," says conservationist Ruth Rosenhek.

"The New South Wales government did not approve the project in 1996. It was simply incompatible with the high conservation values of Lake Cowal. A few changes were made to the design but some of these changes have actually increased the project's risks.

"Reducing the number of tailings ponds from four to two, but doubling their sizes has increased the dangers to birds and other small animals. Birds will find the ponds an attractive habitat thus

raising the risks of cyanide accidents and massive birdkill.

"The proposed methods for measurement for WAD cyanide discharged in the mining process and to neutralise the cyanide are inadequate. The extent of arsenic—a dangerous poison that can enter the food chain, affecting fish, wildlife and humans—that will occur in mine waste rock has not been properly assessed.

"Alternatives to the mine that could deliver ecologically sustainable jobs and save these wetlands have not been properly addressed," Ms Rosenhek said.

habitat, August 2003

Quoll rescue effort

Given the seriousness of the threat and the need for urgent intervention, Parks and Wildlife scientists and Northern Land Council Caring for Country Unit staff have been working alongside traditional owners, Parks Australia North (Kakadu) and the Territory Wildlife Park to source quolls from sites on the mainland around Humpty Doo, Darwin River Dam and Kakadu National Park before cane toads arrive. These animals are being translocated to two islands in north east Arnhem Land which have suitable habitat and are likely to remain cane toad free. Robert Brown, a Larrakia and Wulna elder who speaks for country near Darwin where some of the quolls were collected, said it was vital the animals were protected "the best way we can". Traditional owners of the islands from the Warrimiri, Galpu and Djambarrpuyngu Clans, agreed to accept the quolls onto their islands and to work with Parks and Wildlife scientists in releasing and monitoring.

The Web, Winter 2003

Germ warfare—next step in cane toad fight

Scientists are ready to wage germ warfare on cane toads. The CSIRO is developing a virus that would stop tadpoles maturing. The Territory's Daly River region is a key research base for the project. CSIRO senior scientist Tony Robinson said two years of preliminary research had shown the virus could be developed. He said a key part of the research, carried out in conjunction with the Australian Animal Health Laboratory in Victoria, was to ensure the virus would not affect native frogs. The Federal Government agency Environment Australia has funded the

initial two-year research phase to the tune of about \$1 million.

Field Natter, August, 2003

Tasmania destroying its most valuable asset

Tasmania's rural land and manufacturing potential is limited, but it does have one magnificent natural asset—its old growth forests. As temperate region old growth forests elsewhere are logged, this will become an ever more attractive tourist attraction. This fact is not recognised by the Tasmanian Government or Forestry Tasmania, though it has gained international recognition. *The Independent* (UK) writes:

For tourists the visual impact of logging can be shocking. On country roads, huge trucks laden with logs rattle noisily past. As you drive through enchantingly beautiful scenery you are suddenly confronted by a desolate charred landscape that is utterly devoid of life—every tree cut down and the location firebombed and then laced with poison to kill the wildlife that might eat the fast growing plantation seedlings that are subsequently sown. Here lies the paradox of Tasmania, which markets itself as the clean, green land but appears hellbent on destroying its most precious natural resources.

*The Colong Bulletin
September 2003*

Coongie Lakes to become a national park

The State Government has moved to protect valuable wetland habitat in the State's far north east. The State Government, joint-venture oil companies headed by Santos and conservation groups have arrived at an agreement for the establishment of a 279km² National Park.

Coongie Lakes, located within Innamincka Regional Reserve (also used for pastoral purposes), approximately 1000 kilometres north-east of Adelaide provide important habitat for a vast array of biodiversity. The area is part of one of the most arid landscapes in the world, and encompasses wetlands surrounded by dunes, interdune flats, swamps and stony plains.

Xanthopus, August 2003

continued next page

Black Mountain Nature Reserve walk

George Chippendale led his 35th orchid walk in Black Mountain Nature Reserve on Saturday morning October 11.

An interested group of people, some new to the walk and some who walk the mountain each year, listened to George's explanations of the various plants. It was a sunny morning with a cool wind blowing and we were rewarded for two and a half hours by vistas of blue *Caladenia* orchids and donkey orchids on each side of the track. We walked up the mountain to the edge of a very recent "burn-off" then descended into a gully with water in the creek and more and more blue *Caladenia* orchids.

Changes are afoot in the reserve nearest Caswell Drive with trees "spotted" and waiting for removal for the new road. Acres of beautiful orchids will also be swept away. What a high price to pay so that we can get from A to B in less time!

Fiona MacDonald Brand



Above right. George Chippendale leading his 35th Black Mountain spring walk.

Right. Laurie Adams (left) and Graeme Wicks on the Black Mountain walk.

Photos Fiona MacDonald Brand

PARKWATCH *continued from previous page*

Barmah-Millewa National Park

The Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA) launched its campaign for the establishment of a Barmah-Millewa National Park and for River Red Gum conservation on the Murray River at Echuca on March 27, 2003.

The President of the Australian Conservation Foundation, Peter Garrett, joined Yorta Yorta elders and VNPA President Ian Harris to release the "River Red Gum Forests" brochure and to officially launch the campaign. Joining them for a cruise on an historic paddle steamer were representatives from Goulburn-Broken Catchment

Management Authority, the Mayor and Councillors from Campaspe and Murray Shires Mayor and representatives from the wider community. The VNPA will be working with locals and other environment groups including via a groundbreaking collaboration with the National Parks Association of NSW (NPA), who are working on similar issues. A new body, the Cross-border Conservation Council has been formed under the auspices of NPA to coordinate the different elements involved in both states.

Inland Rivers Network, Winter 2003

Compiled by Len Haskew

Tourist lookout to be developed

The ACT Government is to redevelop the tourist lookout at Hospital Hill in Namadgi National Park. This will take advantage of views of an area not as badly affected by the fires as were many other areas in the park. It looks out across Yankee Hat Aboriginal rock art site, and to the Gudgenby bush regeneration area.

Pine plantations—not sustainable

The September 2003 issue of the *NPA Bulletin* contained a two-page article entitled “Stretching radiata pines into drier areas” by David Spencer of CSIRO Forestry and Forest Products in Canberra.

Firstly, I am most concerned that the inclusion of such an article could well be seen as giving our imprimatur to the very concept of *Pinus radiata* plantations (let alone their expansion), which now cover huge swathes of south-eastern Australia. This species was introduced from California.

NPA’s objectives

These objectives, in part, read “promotion ... of measures for the protection of flora and fauna ...”. I take this to mean that we will ever be mindful to protect—and also regenerate—our native biological heritage *anywhere*, and not just in proclaimed national parks, which can only ever cover a relatively small part of the Australian landmass.

Soon after coming to Canberra in 1970, I grieved at the razing—for pines—of so much of the biologically diverse, high rainfall eucalypt forests in the ranges above Tumut. With the guidance of Hedda and Alistair Morrison, I also witnessed the clear-felling at Tallaganda. At the time, too, I was privileged to have contact with that wonderful pair of local campaigners, Richard and Val Routley, who wrote the seminal, 400-page book *The Fight for the Forests: The takeover of Australian forests for pines, woodchips and intensive forestry* (1974, 2nd ed).

It was thanks to the Routleys, and many other conservationists who took up this issue, that David Spencer could report that “by the mid 1980s, it was no longer possible to clear native forest to establish pines”.

Current policies

However, that did not stop the tentacles of the State Forest bureaucracies still bent on increasing the area of plantation: they “looked to pasture land already cleared” or so-called “marginal sites”. These alternatives may sound quite benign, but in many instances, *remnants of native grasslands* were planted over. In fact, “natural temperate grassland” is now listed as an endangered ecological community. Perhaps most of us still underestimate the innate biodiversity of grassy ecosystems—despite their lack of

trees and understated appearance, they can contain a very rich array of plants and animals; and of course the myriads of insects and microorganisms, which are invariably “out of sight and out of mind”.

Further expansion

One is now alerted to the fact—unpalatable to me—that CSIRO Forestry is selecting hardier strains of *P. radiata* in order to have plantings that can be put in areas receiving less than 650mm of rain. And, their efforts don’t stop there! Crossbreeding is in place to allow commercial plantations down to 500mm. So, potentially, unless the brakes are applied, very large tracts of country are likely to be covered in the decades to come with *P. radiata* or its hybrids.

Plantations unsustainable

First and foremost, a plantation (of any one species) is a *monoculture* and, as such, very prone—sooner or later—to be affected by a whole host of pests and diseases. Reports of loss of pine plantation yields due to fungal blights and insect attacks have come from various locations throughout south-eastern Australia. As the overall area of this particular species is so large, the potential for disaster is dire—parallels, indeed, the spread and impact of Dutch elm disease in the northern hemisphere.

(One could well point out that virtually all of our current agriculture—be it for introduced cereals or domestic grazing stock—is also very prone to disease; it needs to be propped up by biocides as well as breeding programs in an attempt to keep one jump ahead of the latest predator.)

The introduced European-style agricultural and forestry methods have not only decimated the indigenous biota, but invariably degraded the soil in a multitude of ways, the very exposure of soil after clearing allows erosion by wind and rain, let alone large losses of soil organic matter. With pine there is also the ongoing periodic exposure between rotations, and after fire an erodable moonscape with no ensuing regeneration (of which Canberrans are only too well aware).

It is not generally realised that plantation forestry in Australia—just like agricultural practice—requires periodic applications of imported fertiliser. Removal of wood, as with any produce, depletes the soil’s nutrient

supply and has to be properly replenished for production to be maintained. It is salutary to realise that most of the commercially applied fertilisers only partially restore the soil, which must therefore deteriorate sooner or later.

Now to the use of increasingly costly fossil fuels. The manufacture, transport and application of fertiliser (and biocides) needs fuel, as does a highly mechanised timber harvesting operation; in other words, each linear metre of wood at the mill is equivalent to “*so many litres of oil*”.

Native vegetation needed

It is unfortunate that the use of pine hybrids for treating degraded land on farms is being advocated. Surely the key principle, here, is to commence restoration with the very species which have been so ruthlessly erased over the last 100 to 200 years. Of course, finding local seed is often not easy—eg, in highly cleared cropping country—nor may a good strike with some species be obtained on clapped-out land. However, persistence is the key in bringing back the whole suite of indigenous grasses, ground covers, shrubs and trees, all of which have evolved—on particular soils and climes—over millennia.

Contrast the sterility of simplistic stands of introduced pines, which will not foster the local insects and birds, let alone the host of soil organisms. Ecologists, for some time, have been urging more sustainable and resilient systems of land use, where some 30 per cent of all land should be covered with native species.

Time to cut pine area

We are all well aware that the fires of both 2002 and 2003 have killed some 11 000ha of pines (out of 16 000ha). Now let us take our cue from Toby Jones, who heads Greening Australia in the ACT. He has this vision: “Over the next 10 years we can transform this landscape. We can replace the burned out plantations with yellow box/grassy woodlands.” (See “Water” supplement, *Canberra Times*, 22 October 2003, p4.)

NPA has experience aplenty—with its Gudgenby regeneration—to bring to this task. Hopefully the most erodable steep slopes can be restored first; also, those very visible plantation areas alongside the Tidbinbilla Range.

continued next page

Bushfire recovery report

Since the last *Bulletin*, most activity has been spent on the Yerrabi Track. We have had two work parties and have finalised the replacement of the rotting "cheeses" on the approach to Mura Swamp with hard wood chords. Additionally, some rabbit warren survey work has been conducted in the Boboyan Valley to finalise work in that area.

In the next period we have another work party at Yerrabi to conduct some repair work on the cement steps laid by the NPA in 1987 and an anti-blackberry trip to Coree Creek in the Brindabella National Park. (The area below Coree Falls was burnt and the blackberries, thistles and nettles are doing very nicely!)

See the Outings Program for dates.

Martin Chalk



Above. Laying the corduroy track (l to r) Frank Clements, Phil Gatenby, Allen Bills.

Below. The (almost) finished section of track.

Below left. Carrying in the split logs (l to r) Allan Bills, Brian Slee, Syd Comfort. Photos Fiona MacDonald Brand



Pine plantations—not sustainable *continued from previous page*

We need to be aware, of course, of the many vested interests, who continue to advocate pine replanting. The ACT Forestry Section themselves, have been quick off the mark with some areas already done! Unfortunately, there seems to be little environmental direction coming from the Government, or from most of our elected Assembly Members. However, the Government-sponsored "Non-Urban" study, chaired by Sandy Hollway, did canvas various options in its recent report (August

2003). The Canberra-based National Association of Forest Industries, with Kate Carnell as Executive Officer, is also a force to be reckoned with: they want wholesale replanting both in the ACT and across the border (*Canberra Times*, 1 November 2003, p8).

Concluding remarks

Plantation forestry—particularly with the use of introduced species such as *Pinus radiata* (more vulnerable to pests and killed by fire)—is

unsustainable, for the reasons outlined above. The whole operation is, in fact, an exploitative or "mining" one, similar to the typical Australian cropping and grazing regime.

Let us ponder those refreshing remarks made earlier this year by the Wentworth Group of eminent scientists: "We need to learn to live with the landscape, not fight against it."

Chris Watson

July weekend in Bundanoon



Above. One table at the Christmas-in-July dinner. To the left Margaret and Rob Forster, Lyndall Young and Robert Abel; to the right Neville Esau, Gail Burns, Di and Gary Thompson.

Right. The supervisory and cooperative efforts involved in passing a barrier designed to stop rabbits. Was this the morning after the party?

Chris Emery provided these photos of the weekend at Bundanoon YHA arranged in mid July by David Large. A full day's walk on Saturday, a Christmas-in-July dinner in the YHA hostel, a shorter walk on Sunday morning and a visit to the Buddhist monastery were the highlights of a very successful weekend.



The Great Australian Bushwalk

Recently the NPA of New South Wales conducted a highly successful Great Australian Bushwalk. The event was created as a way of exposing large numbers of the public to the association's bushwalking program. It

gathered a great deal of momentum and was taken up eagerly by the press.

Now the NPA of NSW plans to extend the event to the other states and territories. This has already met with positive responses from some state

NPAs and our President has been prompt in agreeing to the NPA ACT being involved in the 2004 Great Australian Bushwalk.

Our outings program next year will carry details, so keep an eye out for it.

Recent publications and reports

Towards the Canberra Social Plan – ACT Government. Sets out the draft social priorities and goals for the Canberra community. The Canberra Social Plan is expected to be released in December 2003.

Joint paper addressing the need for socially equitable water strategies for the ACT – Conservation Council and the ACT Council for Social Services. Advances a strategy for making reductions in water usage by methods already available that would also reach low cost basic households.

Action plan number 25, Ginninderra peppercress and number 26, silver perch – ACT Government. Both are endangered species for which action plans are required by legislation.

The status of fish in the ACT—a review of current knowledge and management

requirements – Mark Lintermans Environment ACT Technical Report No 15.

Managing the Australian Alps: a history of cooperative management of the Australian Alps national parks – Peter Crabb joint publication of the Australian Alps Liaison Committee and the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies, ANU.

Molonglo Catchment Project Planning Framework and Information Resource – Molonglo Catchment Steering Committee and the Conservation Council supported by Environment ACT.

ACT Natural Resource Management Plan—draft for public comment – ACT Natural Resource Management Board.

A Nation Charred: Inquiry into the Recent Australian Bushfires – House of Representatives Select Committee.

Len and Gerry on top again

Congratulations to Len Haskew and Gerry Jacobson who have "bagged" their first peaks since recovering from major surgery. Gerry was quite elated to be sitting on the rocks atop Orroral Peak when he took part in Doug Finlayson's Family Bushwalkers mid-week walk in October, and Len surveyed the world from Mount Morgan on Max Lawrence's pack walk through Murrays Gap in early November.

Book review

Huts in the Victorian Alps and the people who built and cared for them.

By Klaus Hueneke, Tabletop Press, Palmerston ACT, 2913. \$45.00, plus postage \$5.00.

The 2003 winner for the best self-published book, non-fictional section, NSW Writers Centre, this is the complex story of 120 of the best known and accessible huts in the Victorian Alps. Written in an engaging style, it is based on interviews, journal articles, books, visits and time spent, and, above all, Klaus's own highly personal reactions to the huts, their histories and their place in the Victorian High Country environment.

Cattlemen, skiers, bushwalkers, scouts, miners, loggers, hydro-workers, film makers, and dingo trappers built the huts. The book is illustrated with 170 black and white photos, some 20 drawings, and seven maps. It can be used as a guidebook, a work of history, an encyclopedia or as a photographic essay. Just as his first book, *Huts of the High Country* (1982), has an appendix listing maps and map references and other details of all huts described, so does this one. It will be a useful tool for hut lovers, and a good companion to Fiona Magnussen's *Victoria's Alpine Heritage, The Huts of the High Plains* (2003), which gives brief histories and clear directions to locating 56 huts and sites in the Bogong, Dargo and Hotham regions.

For me, the most important chapter is the first, "Huts, much more than meets the eye". This is the product of a lifetime's contemplation on the human need for shelter, and its physical, social, psychological and spiritual meanings. Klaus touches the deepest recesses of our psyche as he writes about the variety of shelter huts and the words describing them and their attributes: "cave, shelter, dwellings, huts, homes, homesteads, warmth, safety, nest, cubby house, tree house, shed and bolthole (*schlupfloch*)". Much of this chapter calls to mind Jung's concept of the collective unconscious, a variety of deep and primitive human needs and attributes inherited and passed down over aeons.

Huts are featured in human mythology and fairy tales; they are associated with warmth, shelter, safety,

companionship, and are where people can develop their creative writing and spirituality. Huts are often built in places that are special, the places *feel* good to us.

Huts become special to those who use and care for them, a focus for the associations and memories. When families reconnect with a hut it becomes special indeed.

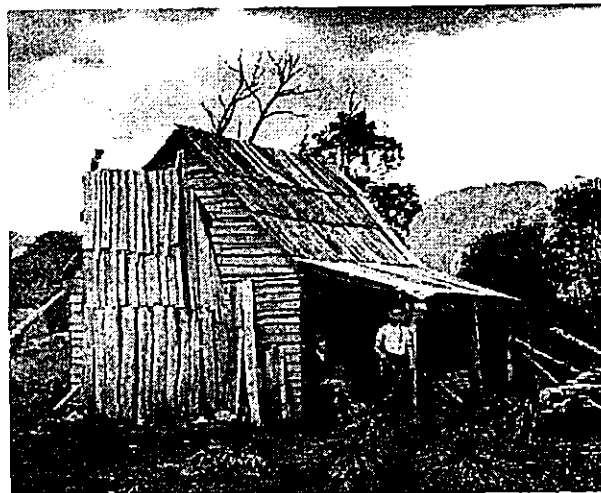
Klaus is not only mystical, he is also practical and political, and makes the point that huts are good for the environment and wilderness. By enabling a large number of walkers to be accommodated in one area, the impact of literally hundreds of campsites is eliminated.

The book is not simply a guidebook, it is for those of us who hunger to experience ourselves in wild places. Its appeal lies not only in the historical and technical details of the huts, but also in the skills by which Klaus opens for the reader glimpses of the people who built and used the huts, as well as his own unique personality. He creates word pictures of his deepest feelings: "We stared into the fire and were content to let that be the sum of our universe" or "I like to squat in silence, especially in powerful places in the Alps".

The book was launched in his home (hut) in Canberra in September this year, and his daughter Anna was one of the speakers. What she said was simply so good that some of her gems need to be repeated in this review.

I have known Klaus Hueneke for over 33 years. Over that time, together and apart, we have traversed many mountains and valleys. As a daughter, one knows one's father both from the outside through experiences we share, as well as from a spirit that lives inside, and is passed from generation to generation.

My father makes the wilderness known through photos, maps and stories. He has a strong sense of the imaginal, his photos capture potent moments, his compositions are



Westons Hut, Bogong High Plains, in 1956 with Hilke and Shirley Stielow. Peter Dunbar's photograph reproduced in Huts in the Victorian Alps.

strong. I too take records, gather notes, stories, maps and images.

We both have a legacy from the German Romantics, one small human presence witnessing the enormous spirit and beauty of the landscape, we merge with the identity of the land and come to know ourselves.

In Klaus, tempering the grand vista, is a methodical attention to detail. In his writing endless small details are gathered together, years of notes, many trips, step by step, click of the camera, photo by photo, word by word, sentence by sentence. Step by step carefully he goes knowing there will be a hut at the end. His books are his babies, and he sends them to good homes.

Finally his humanity, his capacity through his writing to bring his inner self out there for all to see, his strengths and terrors, his stories of poos and farts and human processes abound. The hut, the human, the rough, the raw. The hut is the human presence in the landscape. The hut holds us together in our earthy humanity.

A book that will be treasured by those who hold it, a book that will be returned to often over the years. Highly recommended.

Write to Klaus Hueneke, 2 Lambell Close, Palmerston, ACT, 2913 and send a cheque or money order. Alternatively phone on 6242 0995 for details of EFT.

Graham Scully

National Parks Association Calendar

New members

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

R and G Bateman Lyneham
 Gillian Bratt Campbell
 John and Anthea Bundock Wanniasa
 Hugh and Mary-Lou Chalmers . Canberra
 Trevor Lewis Downer
 Jillian Clark Chifley
 Val Oliver Spence

	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
<i>Public holidays</i>	<i>Thur 25 Fri 26</i>	<i>Thur 1 Mon 26</i>		
General meetings	—	—	Thur 19	Thur 18
Committee meetings	Thur 4	—	Thur 5	Thur 4
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration ¹	Sat 13	—	Sat 14	Sat 13
<i>Spatial Plan responses close</i>	Wed 17			
NPA ACT Christmas Party	Sun 14			

Further details. ¹ Yankee Hat carpark 10:00am, Clive Hurlstone 6288 7592 (h), 040 778 3422 (mob)

General Meetings

***NB: No general meetings in
December or January***

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

Thursday 19 February 2004

After the fires
 Dr Roger Good
 Senior Projects Manager, NSW
 National Parks and Wildlife Service.

On 8 January 2003 lightning strikes from dry thunderstorms started bush fires in the Australian Alps across NSW, Victoria and the ACT. By the end of February 950 000 ha of national parks had been burnt. Roger will talk about the fires in Kosciuszko and Brindabella National Parks in New South Wales, the regeneration process and the rehabilitation projects being undertaken where nature needs a helping hand.

Thursday 18 March 2004

*Second members forum on
 NPA ACT policies concerning
 Namadgi National Park*

A follow-up to the successful October policy forum, this forum will discuss three remaining issues—Aboriginal culture, weeds and feral animals, and tracks. Contributions to recommendations are invited.

NB: The forum will be postponed in favour of a briefing by Environment ACT on the Namadgi Plan of Management should the plan be ready for publication about this time. See notice on page 5.

NPA Bulletin

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