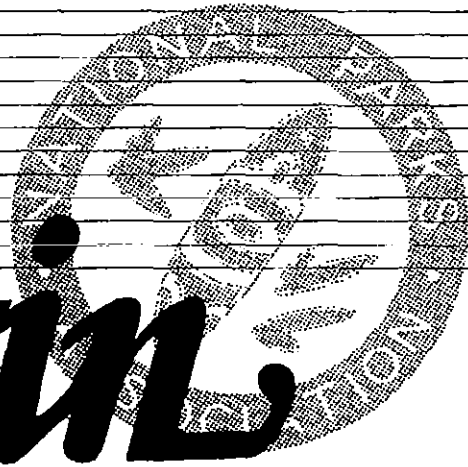


NPA Bulletin



Volume 41 number 1
March 2004

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION (ACT) INCORPORATED



Post-fire work in Namadgi

Tennent homestead, then and now

Native trees field guide to be reprinted

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National Parks Association of the 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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Articles by contributors may not necessarily reflect association opinion or objectives.

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Cover photo: *On his pack walk last November, Max Lawrence examines a burnt blaze marking the ACT NSW border on Bimberi. (More photos Page 14) Photo Syd Comfort.*

From the President

The world order of ancient Greece encompassed just the four elements—earth, fire, water and air—and five senses. Common sense was not one of the five and their sophisticated society withered and died as have many before and since. *Water* as one of their four immutable building blocks has been very much in the news in and around the ACT of late; a welcome change from this time last year when that other element, *fire*, was unfortunately our focus of attention.

Clean *water* and *air* are essential for human survival and from the earth humans have isolated a hundred or more elements (118 at last count) using *fire*, *physics* and *chemistry* to improve our lot. Even as we strive to escape it, the *Earth* with all its diversity is our home and must be looked after. If we don't look after the *Earth*, and if we foul the *water* and *air* then indeed we will cease to exist or at the very least lose our lifestyle as did the ancient Greeks. Commercialising the land and seas has short term benefits but long term costs and limits, and moving to Mars is not an option.

One of the problems with grazing animals is that you can't tell them what to eat and what to leave. So on intensely grazed land, the understorey grasses, shrubs and trees that would otherwise become the forest of the next century are eaten and never mature. The mindless practice in Australia was, and still is, to first clear most of the trees, then introduce imported grasses such as fescues, and clovers, and cut down more trees to build fences and yards to keep the introduced grazing animals in and other animals and humans out. But sustaining this practice for future generations is proving difficult; salination is destroying the land, die-back is killing our forests. We have to cope with devastating floods and bushfires and many of the imported

plants are not fire-resistant so when they are burned they must be replaced unlike most of the native trees that recover in a few years.

We don't need to look far to see the result of overgrazing; many of the leased grazing areas surrounding Canberra are great examples. It hurts to see the suffering animals, especially the black cattle breeds like the Shorthorns and Aberdeen Angus once forest dwellers now forced to endure the beating sun with no shade, many paddocks without a single tree. Sheep suffer skin cancer from sunburn just as we do. We have lost the vanquished native populations: what happened to the gliders and possums, the wallabies and 'roos that once lived here? There is now a different bird population, and few of the original insects and reptiles manage to eke out a survival. So the land is in crisis.

Water too is rapidly becoming an issue, perhaps I should say again, as in this dry continent our perception of the value of water changes with the cycle of droughts and floods. When I was a kid here there was plenty of water, Lake George lapped the Federal Highway and we water-skied between the fence strands and had trouble accepting our father's stories of a dry lakebed when he arrived in the mid 1930s.

To dam or not to dam is surely up to the water users to decide, not the suppliers who only respond to satisfy a supply and demand situation. Cutting water use means changing our water-use patterns and our lifestyle to a certain extent. Large tracts of green lawn will have to be replaced with mulch and shrubs, the cottage garden may have to be admired in magazines or when we visit England or Tasmania. We could have water tanks built under our houses where they could be used to moderate the internal temperature and

could also be used for fighting fires using an LNG powered pump and rooftop sprinklers—it's not rocket science but we aren't doing it.

We cannot just continue to live in the style that we have attained in the last 200 years. Promising new sources of energy are being planned, like 1km high solar towers to drive wind turbines and geothermal heat from 4km underground to drive steam turbines, but these are 10 years or more into the future. Our usage of land and water must change, as must our attitude to fire, or surely the fate of the ancient Greeks will be ours.

Above all it is our current policies on population that are driving these problems and our search for solutions. When will we demand our governments adopt sustainable population targets? Economic growth as we understand the term is not sustainable. With a stable population and minor life-style changes we can continue to grow personally without the need for new dams and putting pressure on our sparse national parks and their precious remnant flora and fauna populations. NPA ACT may have to join other environmental groups trying to bring about such changes to Australians' goals and perceptions.

Your committees at the moment are focused on getting NPA ACT policies tabulated, preparing for the Namadgi Plan of Management, contributing to bushfire suppression plans and a myriad other issues, including the *Bulletin* and *Burning Issues*, outings, republishing the 'tree book', supporting the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group and surrounding national park carers, and increasing membership. But we need to bear in mind the bigger issues and spend time on them too. Perhaps you would like to contribute.

Kevin McCue, President

Association member honoured

Long time association member Phoebe Bischoff was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the Australia Day honours list. The award was made for "service to the community, particularly through organisations addressing issues affecting

women and families". NPA members extend their congratulations to Phoebe.

Also honoured in the Australia Day list was Agnes Shea, who will be known to many members through her membership of the Interim Namadgi Advisory Board. Agnes's OAM was awarded for "service to Ngunnawal

people by contributing to the improvement and development of services for the indigenous people of the ACT and region". We extend our congratulations to Agnes.

Syd Comfort

Weed control increased after bushfires

The January 2003 fires and the continuing drought have provided both testing times and excellent opportunities for weed control in the Namadji National Park and the Murrumbidgee River Corridor.

Some \$350 000 has been provided for weed control in West District allowing some large areas to be treated for a diverse range of weed species. The extra funding was provided to allow the timely control of weeds in previously difficult-to-access areas.

This year, the five-year weed strategy and control program will be advanced very significantly. In fact, it forces the strategy to be reviewed two years earlier than scheduled.

The highlights are:

- blackberry, St Johns Wort and woody weed control along 25km of the Murrumbidgee Corridor;
- completion of the control of woody weeds in the Bimberi Wilderness and commencement of control in the buffer zone;
- significant progression of the weed control program in the Boboyan Pines;

- control of most of the pine wildings in and around the Boboyan Pines; and
- massive reduction of broom populations in the burnt areas. In combination with the extra control effort by ACT Parks and Conservation staff and Canberra Bushwalkers volunteers the broom control program in the Cotter catchment has been advanced significantly.

The massive increase in annual and bi-annual weeds (eg, thistles, Pattersons curse and mustard weed among many others) in the landscape has concerned many. Annual weeds are opportunistic, and this season they have taken advantage of the bare ground and nutrients made available by the drought, fires and associated control efforts. As the native perennial plants re-sprout or grow from seed the opportunists will be crowded out. They will exist only as a few lucky plants and an enormous seed bank waiting in the soil for the next time the ground is bared. The key is to minimise disturbance.

We receive lots of information from the public about weeds in the national park and Murrumbidgee Corridor reserves, and we value it very highly.

Right across West District staff and volunteers have been working very hard on weeds and there is no plan to let up. There are co-operative programs for weed control with Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, ACT Forests, ACT Leaseholders, ACT Roads and NSW NPWS.

Weeds are being increasingly recognised as one of the major threats to biodiversity and sustainable land management. As such, weeds control and community education programs are beginning to attract the funding they deserve.

Extra funding is assured for the next two years and planning is underway to secure ongoing funding.

Darren Rosso
Ranger
Namadji National Park

Government decision soon on cats

The Chief Minister and Minister for the Environment, Jon Stanhope, has announced that the Government will finalise early in the New Year its decision on measures for the protection of fauna in nature reserves from cats.

Mr Stanhope on February 11 released correspondence received from the ACT Flora and Fauna Committee regarding an options paper, *Proposal for the Protection of Sensitive Fauna in Nature Reserves from the Impacts of Domestic Cats*, prepared by a group convened by the Conservation Council of the South-East Region and Canberra.

"The discussion paper focused on options for measures to protect wildlife in nature reserves from possible cat predation, particularly small lizards and declining bird species at Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve near the proposed new

developments at Forde and Bonner in Gungahlin," Mr Stanhope said.

He said the Government had received a number of submissions containing recommendations, including that from the Flora and Fauna Committee.

The committee said the options paper addressed the issue in a fair and balanced manner. It endorsed the paper's conclusion that free-roaming cats in or adjacent to nature conservation areas are not compatible with nature conservation values.

It would support the introduction of mechanisms to restrict cats adjacent to nature conservation areas, but that it was essential that the methods used had community support.

It did not favour the suggestion of fencing to exclude cats from nature

reserves, but considered that cat-free suburbs or confinement, or possibly a combination of these methods, should be investigated. Monitoring and removal of unowned cats in and adjacent to nature conservation areas was required.

These principles should be applied to all new suburbs next to areas with significant nature conservation values, the committee said.

Community education was of vital importance, and monitoring of the level of compliance, and the evaluation of the costs and efficacy of any mechanism introduced was of critical importance, the committee said.

Graeme Wicks

A shady story

In the depths of the Bimberi Wilderness, there are large areas of *Sphagnum* bog covered in shade cloth. What's all this? Is it for rangers to lounge under on these hot days? Well, not quite. Read on and all will be revealed.

The January 2003 bushfires burnt 94 per cent of Namadgi National Park, including areas of *Sphagnum* bog. In April 2003, Environment ACT's Wildlife Research and Monitoring Unit conducted a post-fire audit of flora and fauna. The audit researchers were delighted to find that even in the absence of significant rain, a diverse array of plant species was already regenerating. This continues to be the case (and we continue to wait for significant rain). There are, however, two vegetation communities of concern. One is alpine ash (*Eucalyptus delegatensis*) and the other is the *Sphagnum* bogs.

Alpine ash is killed by fire and takes about 25 years to produce seed. If burnt before it has a chance to produce seed, the species will cease to exist in that location. Some of the alpine ash in Namadgi was burnt in the 1983 fires and it was feared that it would not be mature enough to produce seed. However, that has not been the case. For example, the alpine ash near Rotten Swamp has produced seed and we are eagerly anticipating the eruption of its offspring.

Sphagnum is usually too wet to be burnt by wildfire. However, as a result of five years of drought prior to January 2003, and possibly as a result of draining of the bogs that commenced with high country cattle grazing, the Namadgi bogs were all burnt, to varying degrees.

In Australia, *Sphagnum* bogs have an extremely restricted distribution. They are important from a biodiversity point of view, supporting species not found elsewhere, such as the endangered corroboree frog (*Pseudophryne corroboree*). They are also important from a water catchment perspective. The *Sphagnum* hummocks act like big sponges that soak up, filter and store water, then release it slowly into the catchment, ensuring a continuous supply of water even over summer and in times of drought.

Sphagnum recovers very slowly from disturbance such as fire or trampling by cattle, horses and humans, so a management decision has been made to give it a helping hand in the recovery process. To this end, a program of bog restoration work has commenced.

The objective of the restoration work is to:

- retain and spread water within the bog systems;
- protect live *Sphagnum* from the effects of ultraviolet exposure and dehydration; and
- enhance the recovery of *Sphagnum*.

To achieve this, a variety of relatively simple techniques are being used. To retain and spread water, straw bale dams (99 per cent guaranteed sterile weed free bales of *Demuta fescue*) are built at strategic locations in streams. "Logs" of straw-filled jute, 20cm in diameter, placed along contour lines divert water into areas of surviving *Sphagnum*.

And the large areas of shade cloth? It has been placed over living *Sphagnum* to protect it over the hotter months and will be removed in autumn.

Rotten Swamp, Cotter Source Bog and the Ramsar-listed Ginini Wetlands have been identified as priorities, and work has commenced at these locations. The program of restoration will be expanded into other sites, depending on funding.

The Bog Project is a co-operative program between Environment ACT's Parks and Conservation Service, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and ACTEW/AGL, with significant input and advice from Geoff Hope of the Australian National University, and Jenny Whinnam of the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries. It is a long-term project, where the fruits of our labours will not be apparent for 20 to 30 years.

Amanda Carey
Ranger
Namadgi National Park

Conder woodland for Canberra Nature Park

The Chief Minister and Minister for the Environment, Jon Stanhope, announced on February 16 that he would progress the inclusion of the yellow box-red gum grassy woodland at Conder 4A into the Canberra Nature Park.

"My Government is committed to sustainable development in Canberra, and this includes withdrawing some areas previously identified for development," Mr Stanhope said.

"The area we want protected at Conder contains yellow box-red gum grassy woodlands in good condition which supports a wide variety of flowering plants.

"Protecting this area of woodland builds on the Government's previous decision to establish new woodland nature reserves at Gooroo (East

Gungahlin) and Callum Brae (Jerrabomberra Valley).

The decision follows representations from John Hargreaves MLA.

"I am very grateful for the commitment of Mr Hargreaves to our environment, and I thank him for highlighting this important issue," Mr Stanhope said.

A moratorium on residential development of approximately 8ha of yellow box-red gum grassy woodland at Conder 4A has been in place since 2000.

"The Government is recommending the woodland at Conder will be added to the Tuggeranong Hill nature reserve," Mr Stanhope said. "It will connect the wetlands near Tom Roberts

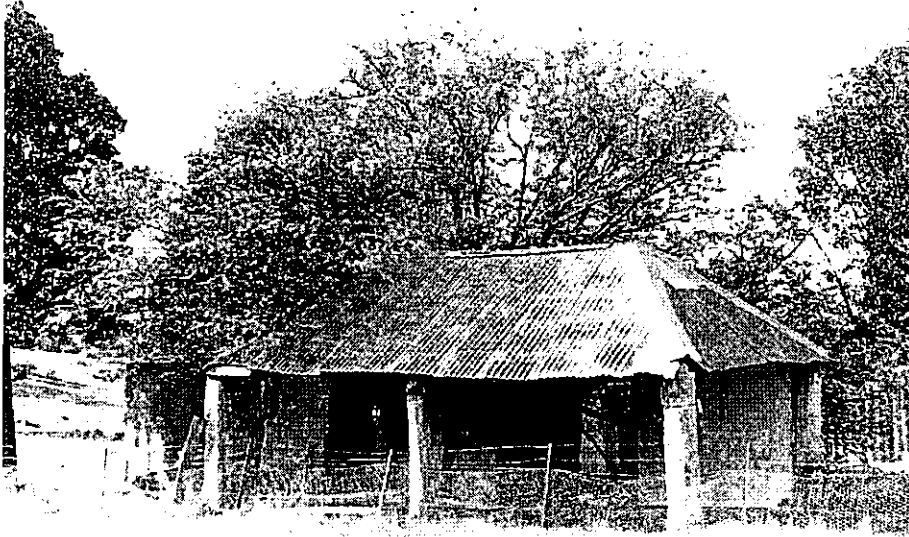
Avenue with Tuggeranong Hill and provide a special place for Tuggeranong residents to enjoy our natural environment."

The Government would soon release the final Lowland Woodland Conservation Strategy, an action plan for conserving one of our endangered ecological communities and the birds and other animals and plants that depend on woodland habitats.

"This plan will guide future planning and management of land that contains important areas for our threatened flora and fauna," Mr Stanhope said.

Graeme Wicks

Tennent Homestead



The first building erected (about 1892), a two-roomed slab hut. Photo taken in 1990 by Dianne Thompson.

Tennent Homestead was developed as a small grazing property during the 1890s and at that time the slab and pisé dwellings were built. However the property provided poor grazing and during the early years was known as Folly Hollow. The property was purchased by the Commonwealth in 1922 and leased until 1986, during most of this time continuing as a rural operation. While leased, a number of improvements were made including extensions to the 1913 shearing shed, trucking in of a pine-clad cottage, improved fencing and construction of dams. Tennent was included in the 1991 "native forest" extension to Namadgi National Park.

At about this time the NPA became aware of the property and in 1994 in conjunction with the National Trust and the Kosciusko Huts Association commissioned Roger Hobbs and Associates to prepare a conservation plan. The report concluded that "The Tennent Homestead complex and landscape setting are significant as an example of a marginally economic pastoral landscape which exhibits both continuity of land use and changes in occupancy over 100 years."

The NPA carried out some repairs to a number of the buildings and plastic sheeting was erected to protect the pisé structure but this did not remain in place for long. Apart from some weed control, little other work was undertaken to conserve the property. In the late 90s the Park Service erected warning signs around the complex placing it out-of-bounds except for guided visits.

As Babette's photos show, last year's bushfires dealt very severely with the property: only the garage and some

pisé walls are still standing.

What is the future of Tennent Homestead? Should it be left to decay? Has it potential that we should recognise and seek to realise? The complex had heritage significance but how much of this remains? Even in its damaged state is it an asset we cannot afford to write off?

Tennent is on the edge of Namadgi so that any action taken to preserve it or encourage public access would have no adverse effect on natural areas of the park. The fire, by destroying the unsafe buildings, has removed the risks that the old buildings presented to visitors. Its position just a kilometre or so from the Visitor Centre makes it readily available to the public and offers an opportunity to provide a site within easy reach. Could a structure built to protect the remaining pisé walls be developed to provide a pictorial and historical record and with signage to other parts of the site offer a window on to this piece of ACT heritage?

I suggest that the NPA take the lead in addressing the future of Tennent Homestead.

Syd Comfort



The front wall of the woolshed showing the gable end of the original small shed. Photo taken in 1994 by Babette Scougall

Ultra Light Walking

At the general meeting of the NPA on November 20, Phil and Leonie Bubb made a fascinating presentation of ultra-lightweight walking equipment they used on their recent walk on the Alpine Track. Although there may have been few among us who would ever undertake such an extended and rigorous walk requiring such equipment, there was much to learn for anyone wishing to reduce the weight of their backpack. Phil's main message for the evening was that "the less you carry, the further you can *comfortably* walk in a day". Phil and Leonie have been able to put this into practice by limiting their loads to eight kilograms each, not including food and water. We could all admire the design and construction that went into the equipment that made this possible, much of which they made and tested themselves.

The lightweight gear used on the Alpine Track was demonstrated at the meeting but only a few examples can be outlined here. For example, each of their

packs weighs only 400–500 grams and consists of a cylinder of 3/4 closed cell foam sleeping mat for structure. This is surrounded by lightweight protective lined material with net pockets and straps. Although these packs were made by the Bubb, a commercial version is available weighing 500 grams using Z-REST closed cell foam mats in a pocket. Packs of this type save 2kg over a normal pack.

A specially designed tarp weighs only 1kg, another saving of 2kg over a conventional two person tent, although a tent is to be preferred in Tasmania and New Zealand. An interesting two-person 1.4kg tent made of parachute cloth was recently purchased from the US and was erected on the floor at the meeting.

Other items on display included a two-person 1kg quilt used in preference to sleeping bags, a saving of 1kg over summer sleeping bags. Phil said he used 600 gram KT-26 sneakers in preference to hiking boots but he admitted to their limitations in certain circumstances.

Leonie has made a 300 gram anorak in Gore-tex; however it seems the ultra-light community is moving away from Gore-tex in favor of very light windproof shells. Lightweight wind and waterproof overpants are recommended along with lightweight commercially available umbrellas.

These brief notes do not nearly exhaust the many interesting items and valuable tips made concerning ultra light walking gear. For further details, Phil has offered to respond to queries and refers to a book by the leading figure for ultra light gear, Ray Jenkins. Jenkins is the author of *Beyond Backpacking, a guide to lightweight hiking*, (1992, Adventure Lore Press and see also www.rayjardine.com). An Australian specialist, Roger Caffin, has information at www.bushwalking.org.au/FAQ/FAQ. In the USA, try www.backpacking.net/

David E Pfanner

Tennent Homestead *continued from previous page*



The charred remains of the woolshed—postfire. The extreme heat has even twisted the metal wool-baling machine out of shape. Photo Babette Scougall.



The unusual metal sheep dip among the remains around the woolshed at the Tennent Homestead site in July 2003. Photo Babette Scougall.

Namadgi National Park—revision of management plan

The existing plan of management for Namadgi was adopted in 1986 and revision of this has been underway for close on two years. Public submissions were sought in 2002 and the association prepared a comprehensive paper, *Caring for Namadgi*, which addressed issues relevant to the plan of management. During 2003 there was considerable public consultation and discussion with organisations concerned with the park. The enquiries and studies that were conducted following the 2003 fires bear directly on many aspects of the plan of management and are being given close attention in the preparation of a draft plan. One of these documents is the draft *Strategic Fire Access Plan* released in January 2004 which is outlined in a separate article in this issue of the *Bulletin* and could have a considerable influence on the fire trail network in Namadgi.

Although Environment ACT has responsibility for the preparation of the management plan a number of other authorities have significant interests. These include the Natural Resource Management Committee, the Flora and Fauna Committee and the Interim Namadgi Advisory Board. The plan should also be consistent with plans relating to the Australian Alps National

Parks and will need to take account of cross-border issues with Kosciuszko. The draft Kosciuszko Plan of Management is planned for release by the end of March 2004 which will allow these cross-border matters to be reflected in the Namadgi plan.

Current thinking in Environment ACT is that further discussion with the bodies identified above and with other organisations involved with Namadgi should be undertaken during March and April, allowing a public release of a draft plan by the end of June. A period of public consultation and review would be required before a final plan is approved.

The NPA Committee is developing a process to enable the association to make a strong response to the draft plan when it is released. One task is to fill out *Caring for Namadgi* in such areas as access tracks and fire trails and their management, huts and related cultural issues, and placing policies on Namadgi in the context of wider ACT policies on environment, population and land use by referring to such documents as the Canberra Plan.

The Committee views the development of association policies on major component areas and issues as important bases from which responses to

the draft plan of management can be quickly and effectively developed. The topics identified for policy statements include the following:

- statement of Namadgi environmental values;
- wilderness;
- commercial activity;
- recreation;
- fire management;
- European culture including huts;
- Aboriginal culture;
- policing role of the national parks staff and researching this role;
- the appropriateness and use of zoning in the park; and
- potential future impacts on the park such as population growth and increased water storage.

The October 2003 general meeting was used as a member forum in which some of these policies were discussed (Christine Goonrey reported on this in the December issue of the *Bulletin*) and further discussion is planned for next April's meeting. The Wilderness Policy as it now stands is set out in the following article and indicates how this policy initiative is proceeding.

Syd Comfort

NPA ACT Wilderness Policy

As indicated in the article above the association is setting out the values we associate with Namadgi National Park so that members can speak authoritatively on issues related to the park. The policies have been developed from the association's publication Caring For Namadgi and from discussion at a recent member forum—a further such forum is planned for April. The Wilderness Policy is set out below.

1. All areas of moderate to high wilderness quality within Namadgi NP and adjoining areas in Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve similar to the areas identified by the National Wilderness Inventory and the Australian Heritage Commission's Commonwealth Delineation Program (including

buffer zones), should be zoned and managed as wilderness under the Nature Conservation Act. It is recognised that some parts of these areas will require rehabilitation works (following disturbance from fire-fighting activity that occurred during January 2003) to restore them to their previous wilderness condition.

2. Areas declared or zoned as wilderness should be managed for the protection and enhancement of their wilderness quality and wilderness values. This should be done in conjunction with the management as wilderness of the other parts of the Bimberi Wilderness Area in adjacent parts of NSW, to ensure the

maintenance and enhancement of the integrity and values of the entire Bimberi Wilderness Area.

3. Vehicle use should be prohibited in these wilderness areas except for management vehicles operated by management agency personnel engaged in essential management activity, or scientists conducting scientific work under permit from the management agency. Specifically, no four-wheel-drive vehicles, trail bikes, bicycles or mountain bikes operated by members of the public, clubs or commercial tourism interests should be permitted in these wilderness areas.

continued next page

Better land management and conservation outcomes in restored pine forests

An article by the ACT Minister for Urban Services Bill Wood in *The Canberra Times* on 22 January 2004 heralded the return of commercial pine-growing to the extensive softwood plantation estate west and south of Canberra burnt in the January 2003 bushfire. In the months since the fire, as well as felling the damaged trees for burning, chipping or salvage, ACT Forests has aerial-seeded grass over 7000ha and planted 800ha of pines to stabilise areas and reduce soil erosion.

When the withdrawal of former plantation areas east of the Murrumbidgee River is taken into account, a commitment to replant 75 per cent of the plantation estate indicates that all of the plantations west of the Murrumbidgee will be re-established with the possible exception of the visually intrusive "Block 60" next to Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve.

In light of the Commission of Audit Report into ACT Forests (Report No 2 ACT Dept. Treas.2002) and the January 2003 bushfire, NPA ACT supported a Conservation Council submission to the Hollway Inquiry (Report *Shaping our Territory*, Nov. 2003), proposing that the burnt plantations should not be replanted to pines, but should be restored to native woodland, forest or

eucalyptus plantation, used for grazing and recreation, and have the bush fire fuel managed.

The proposal was not taken up, possibly being seen as more difficult than returning the pines, despite the poor economics of the softwood industry in the ACT and the problem of managing bushfire fuel in pine plantations.

Positive features of Mr Wood's announcement were the references to focusing on recreating a better landscape with both pine and native planting in the reforestation west of the Murrumbidgee, and a priority project for ACT Forests to restore native vegetation in riparian zones, and to redesign forest roads to minimise sedimentation of streams.

Mr Wood mentioned that "a group of leading scientists" would be involved in planning the project. This echoed an article in *The Canberra Times* of 17 January 2004, "Expert alliance formed to regreen ACT", which mentions a partnership of ACT Forests, ANU's National Institute for Environment, UC's Centre for Water Research, Environment ACT and Greening Australia, a great collaboration between organisations with land management and conservation

responsibilities, and research institutions in the ACT.

NPA ACT welcomes Minister Wood's and ACT Forests commitment to using the process of post-fire plantation restoration to meet important conservation and modern land management objectives. In this regard, NPA's *Report on protecting native remnants in pine forests* (May 2003) made a number of recommendations, including:

- 40m wide native vegetation buffer strips along streams and 40m each side of larger watercourses for stream protection and wildlife habitat and movement;
- buffer strips between pine forests and nature reserves and native vegetation remnants to better manage wildings, weeds and bushfire fuel;
- changes to the road system to reduce erosion and stream sedimentation; and
- conservation plans to recognise values and set management priorities.

So it could be said that some improvement in management was due. NPA members will maintain a keen interest in this restoration project and when some on-ground action has taken place a field trip or general meeting talk will be considered.

Clive Hurlstone

NPA ACT Wilderness Policy *continued from previous page*

4. No horses, horse riding or horse riding related structures or works should be permitted within wilderness areas. The same applies to other domesticated animals such as camels, donkeys, etc.
5. No new structures should be erected, or disturbance of land or native vegetation permitted, within these wilderness areas, except for essential fire prevention works (as described below).
6. Existing structures not essential for management purposes and not of historic cultural significance should be removed and their sites rehabilitated.
7. No new fire trails, 4WD tracks or roads should be constructed or upgraded within these wilderness areas. Existing vehicle tracks not essential for management purposes should be rehabilitated and replanted with local native species.
8. Fire prevention works and activity should be kept to a minimum and the lowest environmental impact options should be selected when planning such works and activity.
9. All weeds, non-native vegetation and feral animals should be entirely eradicated from these wilderness areas.
10. At any given time only small groups and small numbers of people should be permitted access to maintain the essential remoteness and solitude feeling of these wilderness areas.
11. These wilderness areas should be fuel-stove only areas.

Sybil Story

On 9th February the National Parks Association of the ACT lost one of its founding members, Sybil Story, the wife and partner of the late Robert Story.

She was honoured on Friday February 13 at a service where her two daughters, Judy and Muriel, and long-time friend Graham Scully spoke of her life.

Sybil was born in Boshof, Orange Free State, South Africa in 1919. She married Dr Robert Story after World War II and they migrated to Canberra in 1959 bringing with them their daughters and Robert's mother. Sybil and Robert were part of the team which founded the NPA in March 1960 bringing to it their background of environmental concern developed in South Africa.

Later they joined the Canberra Bushwalkers Association, Sybil becoming the first woman president of that association. They took their



daughters bushwalking, including backpacking, and Judy speaks with gratitude about her mother's skills in encouraging them along when the going was tough.

Sybil and Robert loved the huts in the high country and joined the Kosciusko Huts Association. They went

on work parties to restore huts and become caretakers of Schofields Hut. As a trained secretary, Sybil helped Robert with the preparation of letters and submissions when he was President of NPA and KHA, and she became the first secretary of the Australian Conservation Foundation. Sybil and Bob always worked as a team. They were most hospitable when individuals called or meetings were held in the spacious lounge room of their home set on the Deakin edge of Red Hill.

The National Parks Association honours the memory of Sybil and mourns the loss of yet another of its elders.

Fiona MacDonald Brand

A lasting gift from Reg

The late Reg Alder's daughters, Marjorie and Alison, have donated a collection of Reg's maps and framed enlargements of his photographs to the NPA. There are some 35 photos and around 360 maps, most of them topographical.

As they cannot be conveniently stored and accessed or displayed in the NPA office, the Committee is looking at suitable alternatives.

Perhaps they would best be held by individual members as a remembrance of Reg, or there may be other

opportunities to display, store or use them.

The President would be grateful if members could pass their thoughts on this to him or members of the Committee.

Syd Comfort

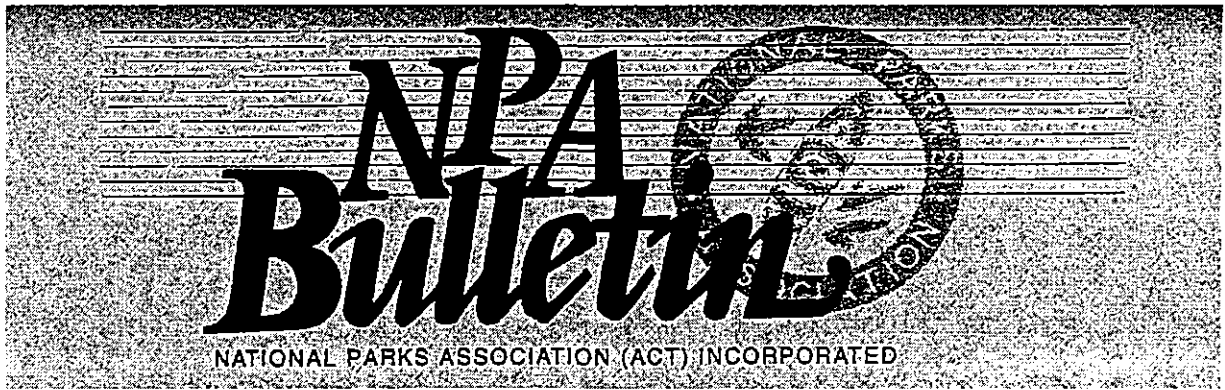
Support for Friends of Mongarlowe River

Many members of the association will have taken part in walks guided by members of the Friends of Mongarlowe River, in what is now the Monga National Park. The waratahs of the area

are legendary but there are many other attributes which led to the recent declaration of this national park.

The Friends are now compiling a book on the region which the group itself is

intending to publish. They are seeking support through funds or sponsorship for this venture and the NPA Committee has committed \$500 as a donation towards this very worthwhile project.



NPA OUTINGS PROGRAM

March–June 2004

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.

6-7 March, weekend packwalk

The Rolling Ground

Leader: Phil Gatenby

Grading: 3A/C/F

Map: Geehi Dam 1:25 000

Contact: 6254 3094

philip.gatenby@dewr.gov.au

An overnight walk from Guthega Power Station to explore the Rolling Ground and to climb Mt Tate and some other nearby peaks. Contact leader by Wednesday for more details. Drive 400kms, \$120 per car.

13 March, Saturday daywalk

Goulburn history walk

Leader: Col McAlister

Grading 2A

Map: Goulburn street map and self guiding walking tour pamphlets

Contact: 6288 4171

A walk taking in some of Goulburn's heritage buildings. We start with a walk up Rocky Hill to the War Memorial for views of the city and then a guided tour of the Old Goulburn Brewery (fee). 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 8:30am at the National Netball Centre carpark just past the Dickson traffic lights on Northbourne Avenue. Drive 200kms, \$60 per car.

13 March, Saturday work party

Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group

Contacts: Syd Comfort 6286 2578

Clive Hurlstone 0407 783 422

clive.hurlstone@csiro.au

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

12-15 March, four day packwalk

Ettrema Gorge

Leaders: Pat and Eric Pickering

Grading: 1C/D/E

Maps: Touga, Yalwal 1:25 000

Contact: 6286 2128

pater@tpg.com.au

Joint walk with FBI. Four days in this interesting, remote and beautiful 400m deep gorge. Rock hopping along the creek, scrambling, swimming in crystal-clear pools and magnificent views. Total climb up to 800m. Rated hard because of steep, trackless descent into gorge. Intend to camp two nights at one site with at least one walk without packs to investigate

waterfalls on side creek. Cars TBA. Please contact leader before 7 March to discuss or register your interest.

20-21 March, weekend packwalk

The Vines

Leader: Steven Forst

Grading 3A/B

Map: CMW Budawangs

Contact: 6251 6857

steven.forst@aca.gov.au

Ring leader before Thursday. A walk to a campsite near the base of Quiltys Mountain. Visit the forests of The Vines area with possible side trips up Styles Pass or to Quiltys Clearing. Drive 340kms, \$100 per car.

24 March, daywalk

Wednesday walk

Leader: Adrienne Nicholson

Contact: 6281 6381

Midweek daywalk in conjunction with FBI and CBC. Final details to be notified by email, or contact leader. Not more than \$12 per car.

27 March, Saturday Namadgi work party

Yerrabi Track Bushfire Recovery

Leader: Philip Gatenby

Contact: 6254 3094

philip.gatenby@dewr.gov.au

Monthly work party. Repairs to steps down to tor.

31 March, daywalk

Wednesday walk

Leader: David Large

Contact: 6291 4830

david.large@bigpond.com

Midweek daywalk in conjunction with FBI and CBC. Final details to be notified by email, or contact leader. Not more than \$12 per car.

3 April, Saturday work party

Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group

Contacts: Syd Comfort 6286 2578

Clive Hurlstone 0407 783 422

clive.hurlstone@csiro.au

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

4 April, Sunday daywalk

Orroral Circuit

Leader: Steven Forst

Grading: 2A

Map: Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000

Contact: 6251 6817

steven.forst@aca.gov.au

A walk from Orroral Campground up the track to Orroral Homestead and

the tracking station site and beyond, returning on the other side of the river. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8:30am. Drive 70kms, \$21 per car.

2-4 April, extended weekend carcamp

Return to Snowy Plain

Leader: Graham Scully

Contact: 6230 3352

scullymob@netspeed.com.au

Joint outing with KHA. A rerun of a very successful KHA carcamp on the Gungahlin River held several years ago. We will visit many of the historical sites on Botherum 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. On registering with leader you will receive details on how to get to the campsite, together with suggestions on what to bring.

6-8 April, midweek packwalk

Mt Clear Campground to Caloola Farm

Leader: David Large

Grading: 2A/B

Maps: Colinton, Michelago 1:25 000

Contact: 6291 4830

david.large@bigpond.com

A three day midweek walk during Heritage Festival from Mt Clear Campground to Caloola Farm along the Naas Valley. An easy walk mainly on 4WD track and some open country. We will visit a number of huts, ruins, a grave, and the site of an early settlement on Reedy Creek. There are seven creek crossings on day 3 so sandals/sneakers are advised in case the water is up (as well as boots!). Meet at Caloola Farm and bus to start of walk. Transport cost TBA.

18 April, Sunday daywalk

Gibraltar Creek Hills

Leader: Max Lawrence

Grading: 2C/E

Map: Tidbinbilla 1:25 000

Contact: 6288 1370

mlawrence@netspeed.com.au

As you drive up Corin Dam Road towards Woods Reserve there is a rugged little range on your left across Gibraltar Creek. Our object is to walk along that range, taking in three of its prominent peaks. The distance is not great, but this is a physically challenging walk with climbs totalling

700m, steep grades and rock scrambling. Good views over Gibraltar Creek, Paddys River farmlands, and Booroomba property. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8:30am, and come prepared with a fit body (your own), good boots and appropriate gear. Drive 60kms, \$18 per car.

19 April (Monday)
Deadline for Joadja bookings
(see 1 May below)

24–26 April, four day packwalk
Bimberi
Leader: Eric Pickering
Grading: 1A/B/C/E
Maps: Rendezvous Creek, Rules
Point 1:25 000
Contact: 6286 2128
pater@tpg.com.au

Joint walk with FBI. From the Tantangara Dam Road beyond Adaminaby we shall walk to Oldfields Hut, Murrays Gap, and over Mt Bimberi to camp near Dead Horse Gap. Second day will be Rolling Ground Ridge and the gorges of Cave Creek. On day three we will return to cars visiting caves on the way. Cars: TBA. Please contact leader by 15 April to discuss or to register your interest.

26 April, public holiday daywalk
Honeysuckle Circuit
Leader: Pat Miethke
Grading: 2C
Map: Corin Dam 1:25 000
Contact: 6241 2798
miethke@rsbs.anu.edu.au

There is a wonderful circuit which leads up past huge granite boulders on the ridge to the west of Honeysuckle Creek carpark and across to Orroral Ridge and then to Emu Flat clearing and back on a northerly loop. I haven't been there since the fires, so the actual route on the day will be determined by the conditions we find, but I can guarantee the massive boulders will still be there. Walk up to 12kms, probably all off track. Meet at Kambah Village at 8:00am. Drive 80kms, \$24 per car.

28 April, daywalk
Wednesday walk
Leader: Rob Forster
Contact: 6249 8546
mrforster@homemail.com.au

Midweek daywalk in conjunction with FBI and CBC. Final details to be

notified by email, or contact leader. Not more than \$12 per car.

1 May, Saturday daywalk
Joadja Creek Heritage Walk
Leader: Col McAlister
Contact: 6288 4171

A commercially guided tour which 'brings alive the stories of the residents, buildings and ruins that now cover the property owned in the 1800s by the Australian Kerosene Oil and Mineral Company'. At its peak the shale mining town housed 1200 Scottish miners and their families. Cost of the tour, including morning tea, is \$22.50 per person (or \$16.50 a person if we get a group of 10 or more). After lunch we will do one or two walks, possibly into one of the mines. Meet at the ACT Netball Centre carpark, Northbourne Avenue Lyneham at 8:00am. **Bookings essential—please do so before Monday 19 April.** Return drive 360kms, \$110 per car.

2 May, Sunday daywalk
Ginini Falls
Leader: Mike Smith
Grading: 2C/D
Map: Tidbinbilla 1:25 000
Contact: 6286 2984
msmith@netspeed.com.au

Meet at 'forest' carpark off Uriarra Road near Cotter Road at 8:00am. Walk from site of Mt Franklin Chalet (destroyed by 2003 bushfires) to the 180m high Ginini Falls and return. Great views across Cotter Valley to Tidbinbilla ranges. A demanding 550m descent/ascent through burnt and regenerating bush with some fallen timber. Drive 120kms, \$36 per car.

8 May, Saturday daywalk
The Bog
Leader: Max Lawrence
2C/D
Maps: Michelago, Colinton 1:25 000
Contact 6288 1370
mlawrence@netspeed.com.au

The walk commences at the end of the bitumen at Gudgenby, crosses Dry Creek and climbs up and over the Booth Range to an interesting frost hollow known as 'The Bog' high on the eastern side. This is the site of an old stock camp, and features hut ruins and fencing, now possibly burnt. The walk is almost entirely off track, and involves a total climb of around 800m. Fit walkers should meet at Kambah

Village shops at 8:30am. Drive 100kms, \$30 per car.

8 May, Saturday work party
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group
Contacts: Syd Comfort 6286 2578
Clive Hurlstone 0407 783 422
clive.hurlstone@csiro.au

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

9 May, Sunday daywalk
Mt Nungar
Leader: Brian Slee
Grading: 1B/C
Map: Tantangara 1:25 000
Contact: 6281 0719
brianslee@iprimus.com.au

Depart Kambah Village at 8:00am and drive to quarry carpark where Tantangara Dam Road crosses Nungar Creek. The 350m climb from the quarry is steep for the first kilometre, then levels before the final climb to an unnamed peak at 1660m. Fine views of Nungar Plain and Bugtown area emerge. After morning tea, proceed north on saddle and climb Nungar (1700m) for all-round views. The location is noted for its photographic opportunities. After lunch, descend north to Dam Road. Car shuffle involved. Afternoon tea at Adaminaby. Drive 250kms, \$75 per car.

15–17 May, three day packwalk
Mt Namadgi
Leader: Martin Chalk
Map: Rendezvous Creek, Yaouk
1:25 000
Grading: 3B/D/E
Contact: 6292 3502
martin.chalk@tpg.com.au

A walk in the 'heart' of Namadgi National Park starting at Boboyan Pines carpark. Mostly off track, and a climb of about 800m on first day. Contact leader by 12 May for details. Drive 140kms, \$42 per car.

22 May, Saturday daywalk
Brandy Flat and Beyond
Leader: Max Lawrence
Grading: 2A
Map: Michelago 1:25 000
Contact: 6288 1370
mlawrence@netspeed.com.au

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8:30am. A pleasant walk on fire trails from Gudgenby back to Glendale with lunch at Brandy Flat Hut. Fine views of both the Booth and Billy Ranges.

An initial descent followed by a steep climb, but thereafter easy walking. Suitable for beginners. Car shuffle involved. Drive 100kms, \$30 per car.

**23 May, Saturday work party
Bushfire Recovery Work Party
Contact: Martin Chalk, 6292 3502
martin.chalk@tpg.com.au**

Our monthly work party. For details of tasks, locations, etc contact Martin nearer the date.

**26 May, midweek daywalk
Wednesday walk**

**Leader: David Large
Contact: 6291 4830
david.large@bigpond.com.au**

Midweek daywalk in conjunction with FBI and CBC. Final details to be notified by email, or contact leader. Not more than \$12 per car.

**29–30 May, weekend packwalk
Sentry Box Mountain and Naas
Creek**

**Leader: Phil Gatenby
Grading: 2C/D/E
Map: Yaouk 1:25 000
Contact: 6254 3094**

philip.gatenby@dewr.gov.au
A walk from the Yaouk Valley, climbing the Boboyan Divide and then on to Sentry Box Mountain. The views from the top are spectacular. We will also visit the headwaters of Naas and Grassy Creeks. A climb with packs of about 600m is involved on the first day. Contact leader for details by Wednesday 26 May. Drive 170kms, \$51 per car.

**30 May, Sunday daywalk
Yankee Hat Paintings, Yerrabi and
Shanahans**

**Leader: Col McAlister
Grading: 2A
Map: Namadgi National Park Map
and Guide
Contact: 6288 4171**

Three short walks to view restoration works on three tracks affected severely by the fires. Lunch at Boboyan Trig (Yerrabi Track), with a final cuppa at Cuppacumbalong. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8:00am. Drive 120kms, \$36 per car.

**6 June, Sunday daywalk
Red Rocks on the Murrumbidgee**

**Leader: Steve Hill
Grading: 1A/C/E
Map: Tuggeranong 1:25 000
Contact: 6231 9186
landshil@webone.com.au**

A relatively easy walk, mainly on track, but involving a little rock scrambling along the Murrumbidgee Corridor from the confluence of Tuggeranong Creek to Red Rocks. We might divert to the 'canyon' on the way (some mild rock scrambling to do this). This was one of the most scenic stretches of the river, but has been badly burned and the recovery process is well underway. Meet at the Urambi Hills carpark near the corner of Athllon and Learmonth Drives at 10:00am for a pleasant day. Drive 0kms, \$0.

**12 June Saturday work party
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group
Contacts: Syd Comfort 6286 2578**

**Clive Hurlstone 0407 783 422
clive.hurlstone@csiro.au**
Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre, Tharwa at 9:15am, or Yankee Hat carpark at 10:00am. Tools will be provided.

**12-14 June, long weekend carcamp
Bournda National Park
Leader: Adrienne Nicholson
Grading: 1A (or less!)
Map: Wolumla 1:25 000, Bournda
National Park pamphlets
Contact: 6281 6381**

A delightful camping ground by Lake Wallagoot in the Bournda National Park with mod cons including a shelter shed and hot showers. Opportunities for coast and forest walks and good bird watching. Can mess about in boats. Do as little or as much as you like to enjoy this interesting and scenic part of the coast. For details contact Adrienne by preceding Wednesday. Leader will be going down on Friday. Drive 400kms, \$120 per car, plus camping fees (currently \$7.50 per adult per night) and NSW Park entry fee (\$6.00 per car) if you have no annual pass.

**20 June, Sunday daywalk
Split Rock (Cotter Rocks)
Leader: Martin Chalk
Grading: 3A/B/C/E**

**Maps: Corin Dam and Rendezvous
Creek 1:25 000
Contact: 6292 3502 (h),
6268 4864 (w) or
mchalk@tpg.com.au**

To make the most of the winter solstice, we will leave Kambah Village shops at 8:00am and drive to the Orroral Gate. The first half of this walk is on tracks through regenerating forest. After this warm-up and a breather at Cotter Gap the final climb to the Rocks will work out the last of those winter chills. The views from Cotter Rocks are worth the effort—a breathtaking place for lunch! We will return via the same route, but with less effort.

**23 June, midweek daywalk
Wednesday walk**

**Leader: Mike Smith
Contact: 6286 2984
msmith@netspeed.com.au**

Midweek daywalk in conjunction with FBI and CBC. Final details to be notified by email, or contact leader. Not more than \$12 per car.

**27 June, Sunday daywalk
Southern ACT Huts**

**Leader: Brian Slee
Grading: 1A/B/C
Maps: Yaouk and Shannons Flat
1:25 000
Contact: 6281 0719**

brianslee@iprimus.com.au
Depart Kambah Village at 8:30am and drive to Brayshaws Hut on Boboyan Road. Walk due west to Grassy Creek and upstream to Waterhole Hut. After morning tea, proceed down Grassy Creek to Westernmans for a lazy lunch at the lace-curtained homestead. Return to Brayshaws. A short walk suitable for one of the shortest days of the year. Bring gear for making tea/coffee. Drive 120kms, \$36 per car.

**30 June, midweek daywalk
Wednesday walk**

**Leader: Rob Forster
Contact: 6249 8546
mrforster@homemail.com.au**

Midweek daywalk in conjunction with FBI and CBC. Final details to be notified by email, or contact leader. Not more than \$12 per car.

2003 Christmas party

A good crowd of members enjoyed the NPA's Christmas party held in the grounds of the Namadgi Visitors Centre last December 14. Adrienne Nicholson and Mieke van den Bergh welcomed each guest with drinks, nibbles and Christmas cake in the traditional NPA way. Groups gathered to exchange news and catch up with the year's events and later brought out their rugs and chairs and settled in the shade of trees to eat their picnic lunches.

Instead of the usual annual auction, a visit to the nearby Tennent Homestead site had been arranged so that we could see what the January 2003 fire had done to the buildings. About 10 intrepid

individuals braved the sun and the half hour walk to get there. Most, however, drove to the site. Special thanks go to Matthew and Sharon Gregory for giving us permission to go through their property and for unlocking gates for easy access.

Members who had worked on restoring the fibro garage were delighted to see that their handiwork had survived, but all wooden structures had been totally destroyed. The fire had been particularly severe on that section of Mt Tennent; the complex is now a blackened disaster area. Two walls of the pisé dwelling still stand, but the unique woolshed with its patch-work-

quilt walls of recycled materials has gone forever. Even in its present burnt-out state the site tells a story of hardship endured by early pioneers who had meagre resources. Hopefully, the ruins will be fenced off to keep animals out and interpretation made available.

Babette Scougall

Some of Babette's collection of photos of Tennent Homestead taken before the 2003 fire is reproduced on page 6, together with some taken after the fire.

ACT Heritage Library seeks help

The ACT Heritage Library, which is located on the first floor of the Woden Library, holds a nearly complete set of NPA Bulletins and would like to fill the gaps.

The missing issues are

Vol 3 No 7,	Vol 4 No 1,
Vol 5 No 3,	Vol 7 No 3,
Vol 8 No 4,	Vol 38 No 2.

If any members are able to help, I would be pleased to hear from them. My phone number is 6286 2578.

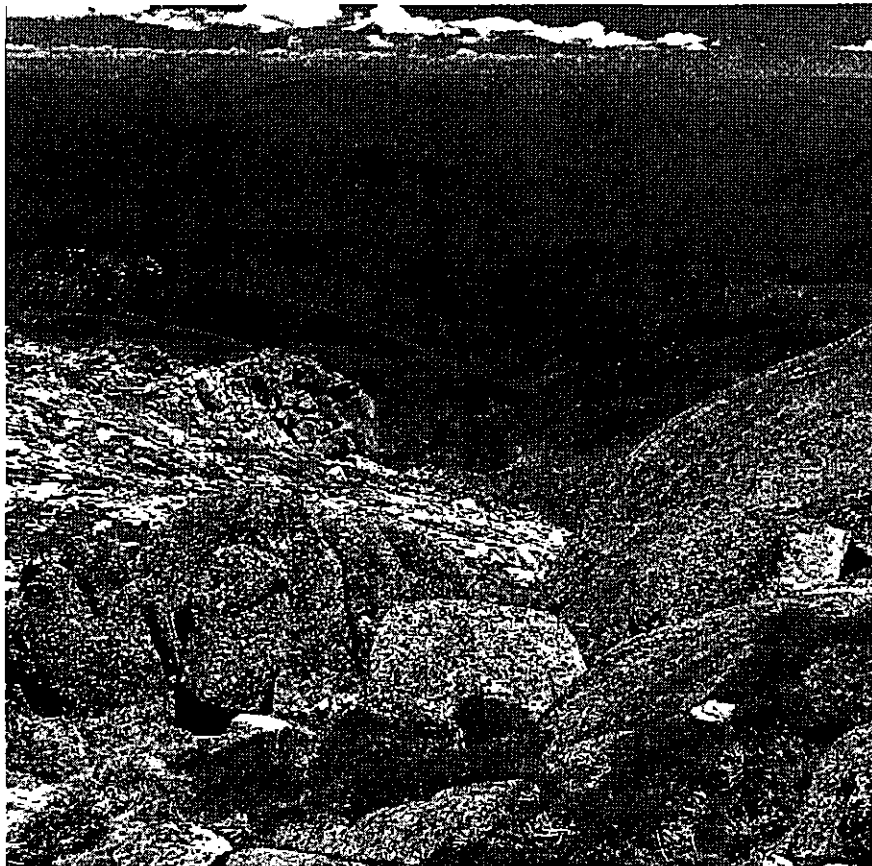
Syd Comfort

*Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group Christmas lunch
(l to r): Frank Clements, Eleanor Stodart, Clive Hurlstone, Syd Comfort, Fiona MacDonald Brand, Felix Andrews, David Hall, Sonya Lenz.*

Photo Kevin McCue



Pearl Harbour remembered



Above. View from the Main Range across the Geehi Valley.

Below. Cootapatamba Hut.

Photos Martin Chalk



Early on Sunday morning, December 7, 1942 the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbour. Early on Sunday morning, December 7, 2003 Steve Hill didn't; but he did mount an assault on North Ramshead and Mt Kosciuszko.

The mission saw Steve and his team negotiate tricky terrain, undertake reconnaissance of buildings and fire-damaged forest and conduct relentless and cruel target practice with snowballs.

The temporary closure of the Eagles Nest lift station required a concerted effort on the part of the group to recover to the lower station by the ETD of the last lift—barely a challenge!

Martin Chalk

Sudden temperature drop before dawn—true or false?

So often, over the years, my companions and I have commented that the temperature seems to drop suddenly just before dawn: it's one of those discussions (along with our bodily functions) that seem to crop up regularly on walks and ski tours.

Anyway, I decided to go to the experts—the meteorologists at the Bureau of Meteorology.

The one I spoke to has studied temperature gradients and made the following points about temperature in south-east Australia, hedging his bets of course, depending on cloud, wind and high and low pressure systems.

It is common for the temperature to begin to fall in the early evening.

The temperature continues to drop all night, usually gradually, and turns around about as the sun begins to rise.

The quickest temperature rise is just after sunrise.

So, it seems that there is not a sudden drop in temperature just before dawn, but we seem to experience it nevertheless. My private wonder is whether over the night our blood sugar levels continue to drop, they are at their lowest just before we get up, and thus we experience feeling cold just before dawn.

What do you think? I'd appreciate your comments, ph 02 6230 3352 or scullymob@netspeed.com.au

Graham Scully

Background to Namadgi

As reported in the November issue of the association's email newsletter, Burning Issues, representatives of the NPA were invited by the Interim Namadgi Advisory Board to present the association's views on Namadgi issues to the board's November meeting and to discuss these with members of the board. Fiona MacDonald Brand's contribution to the presentation was to give some background to the association's involvement with Namadgi. Here is her address.

I'd like to thank the advisory board for inviting the National Parks Association of the ACT to send representatives to inform you about our association. We acknowledge that we are meeting on Ngunnawal land.

Firstly the background to the concept of national parks is interesting. The first two national parks in the world were declared in the 1880s in the USA and NSW Australia. It is significant that these two parks were declared in two countries/continents which had an ancient history of indigenous people

occupying very slow changing environments and then had been invaded and rapidly changed by western culture.

Some of these newcomers, by the late 19th century, were conscious of the rapid way the age-long natural environment was being wiped out and they felt that some examples of the natural environment and landscapes should be set apart from exploitation. Thus the first two parks were declared. After WWII more national parks were declared in Australia so that it is not surprising that a botanist at CSIRO, Nancy Burbidge, felt that the ACT should have a national park to protect the unique alpine and subalpine areas within its boundaries.

To pursue that aim, in March 1960 a public meeting was called and a National Parks Association was formed with the intent to gain a *National Park for the National Capital*.

In Autumn 1962, three NPA committee members, Dr Robert Story, Julie Henry and myself joined an Alpine Club group to walk to Mt Kelly which is east of the Cotter River. We wanted to inspect this area to see if it was suitable

for proposal as a national park. We walked beside the sparkling Sam's Creek and camped at the foot of Mt Kelly. The view from the summit was most beautiful as we looked upon range after range of mountains and could see Long Plain and Mt Jagungal in the distant Kosciuszko National Park. We agreed that this area had to be protected in a national park so in June 1963 a detailed proposal for the Mt Kelly National Park was taken to Mr Gordon Freeth, Minister for the Interior.

This proposal became the core of the present national park as over the years more and more sections were added. In 1979 the Gudgenby Nature Reserve of 51 000 hectares was declared by the Minister Bob Ellicott. But it was not until 3 October 1984 that Tom Uren, Minister for the ACT, caused the gazettal of this nature reserve plus more additions to be Namadgi National Park. It had taken 21 years of proposals and lobbying by NPA ACT to get a National Park for the National Capital.

Fiona MacDonald Brand

Intensive Gudgenby study

Martin Chalk and the Gudgenby bush regenerators have been undertaking an intensive monitoring program in the Gudgenby River's sub-catchments. Seven sites are monitored once a month

in Bogong and Hospital Creeks and the Gudgenby River. Data collected is giving an insight into impacts of land use, droughts and bushfires. Previous monitoring at these sites, undertaken

in 2001, will provide valuable pre-fire data.

(From the Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch Newsletter January 2004)

*NPA post-fire work party October 2003.
Allan Bills and Col McAlister logging
rabbit holes in the Boboyan Valley.
Photo Max Lawrence*



Max's Pack Walk 9–11 November 2003



Last November Max Lawrence led a pack walk to Mt Morgan, Oldfields Hut, Murrays Gap, Mt Bimberi and Yaouk Gap.

Clockwise from top left:

View of a fire-damaged Namadgi from Mt Bimberi to the near-full Corin Dam and beyond to the Brindabellas.

NPA walkers on Mt Bimberi.

Syd Comfort smoking the billy.

Brothers Len and Bob Haskeew at Oldfields Hut.

Saturday morning at Oldfields Hut.

Photos Max Lawrence.



Reprinting the Native Trees Field Guide

A working group of NPA ACT members has begun the task of producing the third edition of our *Field Guide to the Native Trees of the ACT*.

The book was first published in 1983 with the assistance of a Heritage Grant from the then Department of Territories and Local Government, and reprinted with additions and amendments in 1990. We are currently selling about 250 copies per annum and we anticipate a run of perhaps 3000 copies. Working group members are making themselves familiar with new technology in the field of book production which may make the printing of additional copies easier in future.

One extra tree will be included and some text changes have already been identified by member Laurie Adams and a colleague at CSIRO. The "Further Reading" page will be reviewed and updated and an eye-catching photograph of a tree for the cover will be sought.

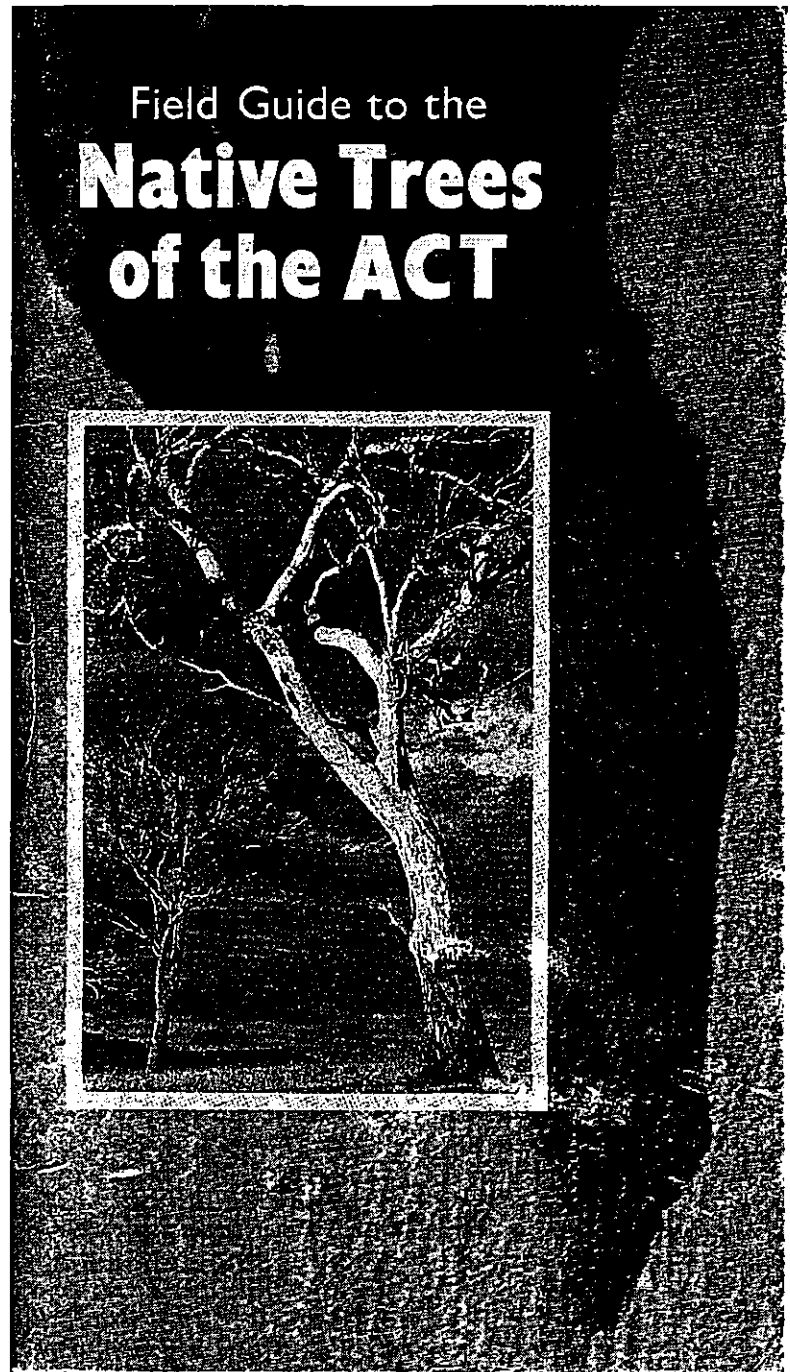
The 2003 bushfires have altered considerably the landscape of Namadgi and the Brindabellas and it will take many years for these areas to return to their former glory. There has been a renewed interest in trees in particular as we watch for regrowth.

The CSIRO website gives the following information:

Some trees regenerate from epicormic growth, with leaves sprouting along branches and stems from dormant buds beneath the bark which protected them from fire. Others, such as *Eucalyptus pauciflora*, snow gum, have regrowth from lignotubers, woody swellings (rootstock) which contain numerous cortical buds, which are usually below the surface of the soil and are rarely damaged by fire. Some trees regenerate in both ways as well as from seed. However a few species, such as *Eucalyptus delegatensis*, an alpine ash, are killed outright and will only regenerate by seed either already in the soil or shed from the canopy after the fire. The severity of fire damage to individual trees, and factors relating to terrain, soil, post-fire water run-off, undergrowth, etc., all contribute to the reestablishment of the trees at different rates and in different ways.

NPA ACT has produced five books and several significant reports. As well as the tree guide, a *Field Guide to Birds of the ACT* (1993) and *Reptiles and Frogs of the Australian Capital Territory* (1997) are currently available at bookshops and at a discount to members from the association.

Beverley Hammond



Front cover of the first edition of the Field Guide to the Native Trees of the ACT.

Publications working group to be formed

The Committee would like to form a publications working group to report on current and future publications policy. This group might investigate and make recommendations on a set of priorities,

on types of publications and possibly on the selection of publishers. Experience in publishing would be useful but is not necessary. Any member who may be

able to join this working group is asked to contact a member of the Committee.

Progress with Gudgenby bush regeneration

Last year, on Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group work parties we spread eucalypt seed over several patches of burnt ground in early winter, and *Acacia melanoxylon* and *Banksia marginata* seed into selected locations in spring, as experience has shown us this gets better results for our time than rearing and planting seedlings. Clive

Hurlstone, Syd Comfort and I, and ranger Darren Rosso inspected the site on January 19 to check results of this seeding and to plan our program for the year.

The eucalypt seedings in May and June had mixed results. Seed placed in areas still bare from the January '03 fire has germinated quite well, with plenty of

E. dives, particularly higher up the slope. Seed placed in cleared patches in grass in May and June and the acacia and banksia seed in the Hospital Creek area do not appear to have germinated. Perhaps it will take a better spring to get good results where ground cover is already established. We think we should try seeding again in winter and spring, but make more effort to clear larger patches.

The areas seeded in February 2003, after the slash from the felled pines was burnt in the January fires, are showing some germination. The rain in February 2003 was enough to cause some seeds to germinate and more have come up since then.

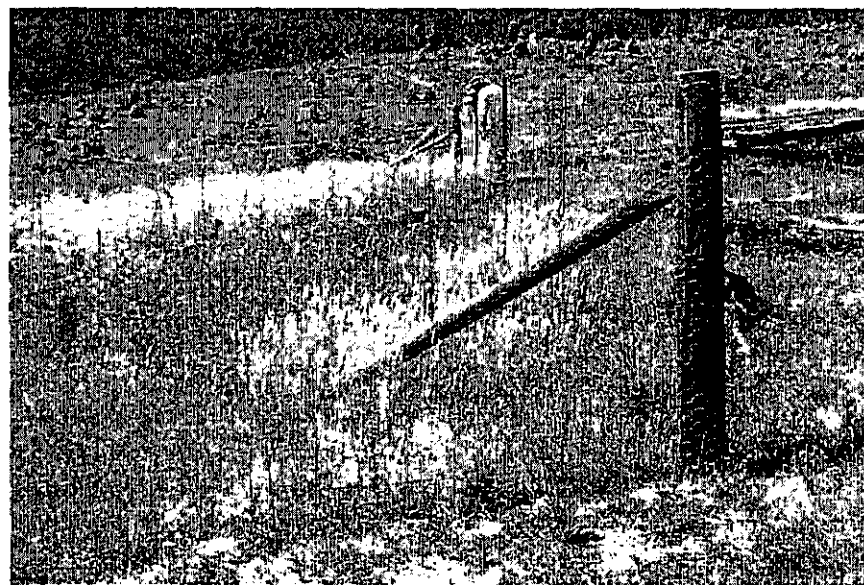
In other areas affected by the fire, seedlings are regrowing from the base, but fortunately most of the regeneration was not burnt at all. So overall the regeneration continues to progress well. Our main complaint is that there are still considerable areas of standing pines and ACT Forests do not appear to have put the felling on their program.

Eleanor Stodart



Above: Our regeneration regenerates. The skeleton of a burnt *Acacia dealbata* (silver wattle) is surrounded by thriving suckers, and the eucalypts (snow gums and candlebarks) are shooting vigorously from the base. Note the collapsed gate from an enclosure where the wooden corner posts were burnt. We plan to replace these posts in winter. Photo Eleanor Stodart

Below: Exclosures not damaged by fire are very successful in protecting grasses and other small plants from grazing in the lower part of the Hospital Creek block. Saplings on the slope beyond the exclosure date from seed spread in 1998. They are not as large as those higher up the hill which were seeded earlier in the winter and where the retarding effect of frost is less Photo Eleanor Stodart



Gudgenby update

Advice has just been received that ACT Forests intend to recommence the removal of the pines from the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Area within Namadgi National Park. The removal of the 380ha of pines which comprised the Boboyan Pine Plantation commenced in 1997 and to date around 230ha have been felled and regeneration undertaken. It is some time since felling was last carried out so the decision to resume this work is very welcome news.

It is understood that the intention is to remove all of the standing pines but how many of these will be suitable for sale is not known. If conditions allow the felling to proceed smoothly and good drying of the pine remnants on the ground takes place, it may be possible for burning of this trash to be undertaken in the late autumn/early winter of 2005 with seeding of the area to native species in the 2005 winter. However, past experience has shown that the unforeseen can intrude on such neat planning!

Draft ACT Strategic Fire Access Plan

The Fire Management Unit of the ACT Department of Urban Services is developing a strategic fire access plan for all Urban Services land in the ACT—this includes Namadgi National Park, Canberra Nature Park and ACT Forests. This process flows from the Inquiry into the Operational Response to the January 2003 Bushfires in the ACT (McLeod Report) which recommended that “Clear policy guidelines should be developed and implemented to support the identification of a strategic network of fire tracks and trails and their establishment and maintenance.”

The fire access network is seen to be required to provide:

- fast initial attack on wildfires;
- control lines for fire suppression operations; and
- control lines for prescribed fire and other hazard reduction operations.

The plan sets out planning and design principles for setting fire access standards and densities for fire roads, tracks and helipads. It also contains guidelines for reporting, documentation, training and budgeting requirements.

The plan recognises that “developing a strategic fire access network presents potential environmental, economic and social risks that must be mitigated.” Amongst these risks are increased threats to threatened flora and fauna, biodiversity and cultural heritage values.

The timeline for preparing the plan proposes that the design of the entire network be completed by July 2004 and that a costing model be available to present to government by September 2004.

An appendix contains proposed standards for road and aerial access: the extract in **Table 1** indicates what is envisaged.

Standards are also set out for road, track and helipad density. These are based on assessments of the fire hazard within identified areas. As an example, in the higher risk areas of non-wilderness within Namadgi National Park, access is to be provided to allow for the containment of fire outbreaks within units of around 20 sq km. The density of access for this situation is specified in **Table 2**.

I view these requirements with some concern. To meet the above standards a network of wide roads at approximately 5km intervals would be required. In some parts of the park a network of this order exists but the practicability of extending and upgrading access to meet this standard must be questioned. More fundamentally, the relevance of this methodology in a national park where the maintenance of natural values is paramount must be challenged. Is this the application to the national park of inappropriate standards perhaps derived from an entirely different situation? Or is this an overreaction to recent events and a failure to view the situation in an objective way?

This report raises issues fundamental to the management of the national park and requires careful scrutiny to ensure that national park values are not submerged under an over zealous and inappropriate fire control regime.

Syd Comfort

Table 1

<u>Class of access</u>	<u>Pavement width</u>	<u>Vegetation clearing</u>
Float road	5 metres	2m each side of track and 6m high
Tanker track	4 metres	2m each side of track and 6m high
Light unit track	3.5 metres	1m each side of track and 6m high
Dormant fire track	A fire track that has been closed but is suitable for reopening with minimal works.	

Table 2

<u>Access type</u>	<u>Specification</u>
Float road	Permit float access to the boundary of all terrain-defined landscape units of around 20 sq km
Tanker tracks	Provide for boundary containment of unplanned fire and hazard reduction within units of around 20 sq km
Light unit tracks	All access should be of tanker track standard except where slopes exceed 15 degrees and extensive side-cutting would be required
Helipads	Permit landing or hover-exit for crew insertion to within 1km of any location.

Forthcoming reports

Water supply options for the ACT. The ACT Government has indicated that should additional water supply sources be considered necessary it favours the options of increasing the capacity of Corin Dam, construction of a new dam (Tennent), or sourcing water from Tantangara, but has as yet released few details. A report is expected to be released within the next few weeks.

ACT Spatial Plan. The draft Spatial Plan was released in November 2003 and the final plan is due for release in March 2004.

The Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management draft is planned for release by the end of March this year.

The Namadgi National Park Plan of Management draft is expected to be available by the end of June this year.

PARKWATCH

The end of a myth!

For years now the mountain cattlemen have claimed that grazing cows in the high country, and elsewhere for that matter, helps to prevent the spread of wildfire.

Their "grazing prevents blazing" catch cry has got good press coverage, and helped maintain their privileged "right" to dirt-cheap agistment in Victoria's Alpine National Park. Indeed it has helped them weather the results of endless scientific inquiries that show grazing is doing great damage to natural systems in the park.

The Victorian Government's inquiry into the 2002-03 bushfires has looked very carefully at their claims and concluded in its report that there is currently no reliable evidence to support them; indeed there are situations where grazing may have encouraged bushfires.

The government's report cites a number of scientific reports and other references, and notes that earlier burning practices by graziers changed the grassy understorey of mountain forests to an understorey of flammable shrubs, forcing more cattle on to the high plains. Here they often reduced the more fire-resistant herbage by grazing succulent Snow Daisies and the like. This allowed the spread of tussock grass plains where, in turn, the cattle often selectively grazed the newest grass shoots, leaving the more flammable, older tussocks.

The report finishes with the recommendation "that, according to available scientific evidence, a decision regarding cattle grazing in the High Country should not be based on the argument that "grazing prevents blazing."

We welcome this result, and appreciate the time and effort the inquiry took to look at all of the available information.

VNPA Update, November, 2003.

The road to recovery—the impact of fire on Aboriginal rock art sites in Namadgi National Park

There is but a handful of Aboriginal rock art sites known throughout the Australian Alps, and the ACT is extremely fortunate in having three of these: Yankee Hat, Nursery Swamp 2 and Rendezvous Creek. As reported previously, the popular Rendezvous Creek art site was substantially affected

by the fires; the wooden viewing platform was destroyed and there was substantial exfoliation (spalling) of the granite surfaces. Extreme winter conditions have caused further exfoliation within the shelter, due to water freezing and thawing in microscopic cracks. Further, the painted motifs are quite difficult to distinguish owing to a build up of dust and other microscopic debris on their surface, some of which appears to be a result of the fires.

Vegetation in the immediate vicinity of the Nursery Swamp 2 art site was totally destroyed, although the shelter itself and associated art were not directly affected. However, following the 1983 bushfire in this area, a severe growth of dust-lichen occurred, which resulted in the motifs becoming almost invisible, as they were covered by a green "fuzz". The problem eventually became so bad that, in 1986 and 1987, park management took steps to remove the lichen by dry brushing. Given that the present circumstances mimic those following the 1983 fires (i.e. loss of surrounding vegetation and increased exposure of the art to light) there is a strong possibility that dust lichen will again recolonise the shelter.

The Yankee Hat site was backburned before the main fire front reached it, which prevented damage to the site and associated infrastructure. Nevertheless, park management is considering options for replacing the wooden platform with a less combustible structure to ensure the site is protected during future fire events.

In May 2003 the Minister for Arts and Heritage, Bill Wood MLA and Dr Alan Watchman of the Australian National University visited the Rendezvous Creek art site with representatives from the Heritage Unit and Parks and Conservation Service (Environment ACT). After inspecting the damage caused by the fires, Mr Wood secured funding from the ACT Government to assess the impact of fire on these cultural heritage sites. The assessment is being undertaken by Dr Alan Watchman and Mr Bruce Ford. Their report, to be provided later in 2003, will greatly assist park management and the Interim Namadgi Advisory Board to make decisions about the future conservation and management of these sites.

In addition to the assessment, the Heritage Unit is funding a re-recording program of the art at Rendezvous Creek

and Nursery Swamp 2. As a precautionary action while the assessments are being undertaken, a temporary fence has been erected around the Rendezvous Creek site. This will protect visitors from falling stones, protect the art from damage caused by visitors, as well as protecting environmental monitoring equipment that has been put in place at the sites while they are assessed.

Heritage in Trust, October, 2003

New approach to natural resource management

The Premier of NSW, Bob Carr, has announced a major reform package to overhaul the management of the State's natural resources. The reforms are based on the recommendations of the Native Vegetation Reform Implementation Group chaired by the Right Honourable Ian Sinclair and have been welcomed by peak environmental and farmer organisations.

"This is an historic agreement between farmers, environmentalists and the Government," Mr Carr said in October. "The cornerstone of the plan involves an end to broad-scale land clearing and the introduction of record cash injections giving farmers the money they need to adopt environmentally-friendly farm practices. This will stimulate replanting of native vegetation and other activities to combat salinity, prevent soil erosion and enhance water quality." Under the plan the State and Federal Governments will provide \$406 million over four years directly to local communities to fund the implementation of good landcare practices including initiatives such as planting trees to restore vegetation and address salinity.

Other key elements of the package include:

- Cutting red tape by setting up 13 Catchment Management Authorities across NSW to replace 72 existing catchment boards and regional vegetation and water management committees
- A new Natural Resources Commission (NRC) to set new environmental standards and targets
- A Natural Resource Advisory Council to provide independent expert advice to the NRC and the government and

continued next page

PARKWATCH *continued from previous page*

allow stake-holders to voice their opinions on natural resource issues.

The Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources, Craig Knowles, described the plan as "ten leaps forward" for long-term natural resource management in NSW.

"This is a plan by farmers and environmentalists that will reap environmental, social and economic benefits for future generations," Mr Knowles said.

*bush telegraph magazine
Summer, 2003*

Tasmania on the watch for ferry's mynah hitch

Passengers and crew on the new Spirit of Tasmania ferry service from Sydney to Devonport have been placed on heightened alert for stowaways. Pesky, feathered stowaways.

Wildlife experts are concerned that the infamous Indian mynah may hitch a ride to the Apple Isle on the ferry. "To the bird it would probably look just like a floating supermarket," said one concerned ornithologist.

Since their introduction in Victoria in the 1860s, originally to control insects in market gardens, the birds have spread, like flying cane toads, to almost all parts of Australia. Except Tasmania, it had appeared.

They were brought to the island in the early 20th century, but failed to establish themselves and, according to Birds Tasmania, had not been recorded in the state since 1950.

Then, last month, two mynahs were discovered nesting in a vent in a brick cavity wall at Mersey Bluff, Devonport.

Fearful of the species establishing a foothold, officials from the state primary industries department shot the birds and destroyed the nest containing five eggs. Dr Eric Woehler, president of Birds Tasmania, welcomed the action. "Experience from the mainland quite clearly shows that this introduced pest is very adaptable. Mynahs would have had as serious an impact on our birds as the European fox could have on our native mammals."

*The Sydney Morning Herald,
January 17-18, 2004*

Topo map revision all stitched up

Early next year you and I can access more than 5 decades of topographic

mapping of the entire Australian continent at 1:250 000 scale from the web for free, and we will be completely unaware that we are looking at 513 maps.

All 513 of the maps have been revised and for the first time the entire Australian continent, an area of 7 660 000 square kilometres, will be mapped to consistent map and data specification. This is a major achievement in Australia's mapping history.

AusGeo News, September, 2003

Over-burning pressures Top End's biodiversity

Overly frequent and widespread burning could be damaging the biodiversity of northern Australia's savanna bushland, according to results from one of the world's largest fire experiments, which involved CSIRO researchers.

The Kapalga fire experiment, covering more than 250 square kilometres, tested four major fire types common in the Top End.

Published in the recently launched book, *Fire in Tropical Savannas: The Kapalga Experiment*, the study showed that while fire is ecologically important to the north's environment—more than 30 million hectares are burnt annually—biodiversity is optimised if substantial areas of savanna are only burnt once every three to five years.

CSIRO ecologist Dr Alan Andersen said that although fire managers in northern Australia have the right approach with the use of prescribed fire, more consideration must be given to fire frequency. He pointed out that the long-term effects on biodiversity have not been well understood, and that conservation managers need this new information to help them to work effectively.

"At Kapalga we were able for the first time to look at the effects of fire on the whole ecosystem. The experiment involved researchers from universities and other organisations as well as CSIRO, covering their topics including fire behaviour, atmospheric chemistry, nutrient cycling, hydrology and stream dynamics, vegetation, insects and spiders, and all vertebrate groups", Dr Andersen said.

While the Kapalga experiment provided much valuable information,

researchers point out that there is still a great deal to understand about the ecological effects of fire in the northern savannas. Management will need to be continually refined by information obtained from effective ongoing monitoring.

Ecos, October–December, 2003

Guardian angel at Gnaraloo Station

For the past 11 years, former teacher and Geraldton resident Peter Mack has fought a one-man battle to save the eggs of hundreds of endangered loggerhead turtles from raids by foxes.

Now, thanks to more than \$3800 in funding from the Australian Government Envirofund, through the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust, Peter will be able to continue and extend his work in a remote area of the Gascoyne in Western Australia.

Peter has been monitoring a remnant population of endangered loggerhead turtles breeding at the remote Gnaraloo Station, north of Carnarvon.

Every year for the past three years he has travelled to the station to record and monitor the nesting sites, and to watch for any signs of foxes that have ravaged nests in other parts of the coast.

Peter uses a four-wheel motorbike to access the area and will use the Trust funding to pay for running costs of the bike, and for accommodation on the station.

Natural Heritage, Spring 2003.

Protection increased for grey nurse shark

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) has welcomed the Australian Government's announcement of a proposal to establish a marine reserve to protect the critically endangered Grey Nurse Shark off the New South Wales coast near Port Macquarie. The area, known as the Cod Grounds, is an aggregation site of the Grey Nurse Shark in Commonwealth waters.

*NCCNSW Water and Fisheries Media
Release 12 December, 2003.*

Compiled by Len Haskew

National Parks Association Calendar

General Meetings

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

	March	April	May	June
<i>Public Holidays</i>	<i>Mon 15</i>	<i>Fri 9, Mon 12 Mon 26</i>		<i>Mon 14</i>
General meetings	Thu 18	Thu 15	Thu 20	Thu 17
Committee meetings	Thu 4	Thu 1	Thu 6	Thu 3
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration ¹	Sat 13	Sat 3	Sat 8	Sat 12
Bulletin Working Group ²	Tue 16			

Further details ¹ Yankee Hat carpark 10:00am, Clive Hurlstone 6288 7592 (h),
040 778 3422 (mob)
² Syd Comfort 6286 2578

Thursday 18 March 2004

*What is happening with the new
Kosciuszko Plan of Management?*

NPA member Dianne Thompson will speak about the soon to be released plan of management. Di, as a member of the of the Southern Kosciuszko NP Advisory Committee and Kosciuszko Community Forum, has been involved in many of the discussions that have given rise to some of the changes in the new draft plan, which is due to be released in mid March.

As a Member of the Interim Namadgi Advisory Board, Di may also have something to say about the new management plan for Namadgi National Park.

Thursday 15 April 2004

*Second members' forum on
NPA ACT polices 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 on these matters both before and during the forum are invited.

Thursday 20 May 2004

Cotter catchment one and a bit years on.

Alan Wade, Principal Water Quality Adviser with ActewAGL and R&D project manager.

Alan will describe the changing landscape of the southern Brindabella catchment over the past three or four years and his experiences over about 100 field trips. The illustrated talk will focus on the impacts of fire on forests, *Sphagnum* bogs (one of his favourites) and on the hydrology of the Cotter catchment.

New members

The association extends a warm welcome to new members **Denis and Alison Robinson** of Lyneham.

All members are invited to participate in the wide range of NPA

activities. See the outings program for regular activities and outings; check the *Bulletin* for working groups and subcommittee opportunities; contact conveners,

email the office or leave a message to volunteer your skills and enthusiasm to assist the association in its aims and objectives.

NPA Bulletin

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