

# NPA Bulletin

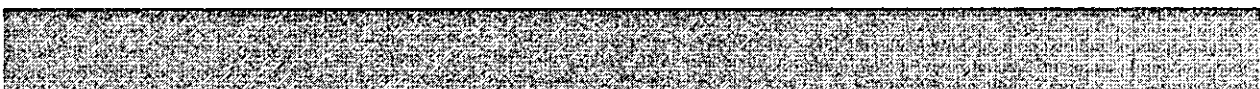


Volume 41 number 2  
June 2004

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION (ACT) INCORPORATED



**Twentieth  
Anniversary of  
Namadgi National Park**



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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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*Vice-President* David Large 6291 4830 (h)  
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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:** *The Minister for Territories and Local Government, Mr Uren, at the top of Mount Bumberi, the highest peak in the ACT, during his tour of Namadgi National Park on the day of its declaration, 5 June 1984. Photo June Reid, courtesy of the Canberra Times.*

# From the President

This Anzac weekend (as I write) is justifiably a period of reflection for us all—lest we forget. For members of the NPA there are several other memorable events to recall and commemorate about now with a similar aim. Coming up in the ACT is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the dedication of Namadgi National Park, though its actual gazettal did not occur until a few months later, on 3 October 1984. To commemorate the event Environment ACT has proposed a celebration and invited NPA ACT's participation in the planning process. Any member with insider or special knowledge of events leading up to the declaration by Territories Minister Tom Uren is urged to contact me or Vice President David Large. A brief summary of an article by our former foundation and life member Bob Story can be found in NPA ACT's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary *Bulletin*, published in March 2000. We will keep you advised of events via the email newsletter *Burning Issues*. If you are not receiving your copy please call Committee members Judy Kelly or Chris Emery.

Monday April 26 was the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the first national park in Australia and proudly one of the first in the world—the Royal National Park on the coast just south of Sydney. I have seen much of this park reduced to ashes at

least twice and marvelled each time at its dramatic and rapid recovery. We hope to reproduce the media release distributed by NPA NSW about the importance of maintaining national parks, in the next *Bulletin*, just in case you missed it. The same process of renewal is occurring now in the Namadgi, Kosciuszko and Alpine National Parks so badly burnt in January last year. In this alpine environment the rate of recovery is an order of magnitude slower than it is on the coast due to their dramatically different climates. Thus many of us may not live to see total restoration. We should not forget that similar fires raged through these areas in 1939 and 1952 before they were declared national parks. In those two fires thousands of stock were burnt in addition to the wildlife and flora, and the lives of many farm workers and volunteers put at risk trying to rescue them.

These three conjoined national parks in the ACT, NSW and Victoria form a very significant conservation zone for flora and fauna, landscape and geography in the southeast of Australia, and their joint management is not only advisable but surely essential. Having the same management aims and goals would be a good start. It is also particularly important that we have a

coordinated response to minimising the impact of natural hazards such as bushfires, droughts and floods and to eradicating feral weeds and animals. This coordination should extend to weather-control projects such as cloud seeding which may have a much wider impact than imagined. Sadly, the coordinated Alpine National Parks scientific advisory body made up of Commonwealth, NSW, Victorian and ACT representatives mentioned in this column previously does not seem to exist in practice.

At the instigation of that enigmatic alps campaigner Philip Ingamells, the Victorian, NSW and ACT NPAs propose publishing a special volume on the Alpine National Parks for presentation to the Ministers concerned. More details soon, but this kind of joint activity is important and very exciting. It bodes well for us jointly applying pressure on government agencies responsible for maintaining the national parks to align their management plans and objectives, and to coordinate their response plans for dealing with pests and hazards, particularly fires—let us not forget!

**Kevin McCue, President**

## Notice of Annual General Meeting

### National Parks Association of the ACT Inc.

All members of the Association are invited to attend the Annual General Meeting to be held at the  
Uniting Church Hall, O'Connor  
At 8:00 pm on Thursday 19 August 2004

#### The business:

Minutes of the 2003 AGM	Appointment of auditor
President's report	Election of office-bearers and committee
Financial report	Any other business

Please note that all office-bearer and committee positions become vacant at the AGM and that nominations for the ensuing year are welcome.

Following the business, Adrienne Nicholson will be our guest speaker, her topic:  
Lemurs, Chameleons and Baobabs

See back cover for nomination form for office-bearer and committee member positions for the coming year.

# The twentieth anniversary of Namadgi National Park

*Denise Robin and Neville Esau, the authors of this article, were tireless campaigners for the creation of a national park in the ACT and 20 years ago, when the establishment of Namadgi National Park was achieved, they were respectively Vice-President and Immediate Past President of the National Parks Association ACT. Who better to recall that singularly significant event!*

On a sparkling winter day in late August 1983 a group of NPA members had the privilege of escorting Tom Uren, the then Minister for Territories and Local Government, on a tour of the Gudgenby Nature Reserve. Our purpose was to present our case for transforming the reserve, and adjacent high value natural areas in the ACT, into an expanded and fully-fledged national park. Here we had the opportunity to present our proposals directly to the Minister in the natural setting where they were most relevant.

Some 20 years later, those of us there on the day still marvel at Tom Uren's enthusiasm for the proposal. Poring together over maps laid out on the bonnet of the official car, we traced the boundaries that would combine the Cotter catchment, Blue Gum Creek, and the grazing leases of Orroral, Naas, and Gudgenby with the existing reserve to ensure that the high conservation values of the whole area were protected in a major national park. We described how this expanded park would link with those across the border in NSW to form a complete protected area for the alpine and sub-alpine flora and fauna of the Alps.

Most ministers would have said they would consider the proposal. Instead, to our complete surprise, Tom Uren turned to his departmental secretary, the late John Enfield, and said "Did you follow that, John? Can you see that this happens?" This was an exciting moment after so many years of frustration in lobbying ministers for

action on a national park for the ACT.

For the rest of the tour, which entailed a fleet of official vehicles snaking through the tracks and paddocks, Tom appeared fascinated with every aspect we presented, from the rugged landforms and vegetation to the Aboriginal and cultural history.

True to his word, Namadgi National Park was declared "within the term of the Parliament". The Gazette notice appeared on the day of the first meeting of the Namadgi National Park Consultative Committee, set up to guide the development of the park's first management plan.

Since the gazettal of the park in 1984, its boundaries have been further extended and today the park covers nearly half of the ACT. Not only is it a "National Park for the National Capital" it now links, through the Australian Alps Memorandum of Understanding, with adjoining reserve areas in New South Wales, which in turn link to parks in Victoria, to protect the scenic and biologically diverse alpine and sub-alpine areas of south eastern Australia. It is a magnificent asset for all Australians to appreciate. The management of this whole area, the Australian Alps National Parks, is now coordinated through the Australian Alps Liaison Committee.

Of course, our presentations on that August day in 1983 did not come out of the blue. The declaration of Namadgi National Park was the culmination of a long-running campaign which began in 1960 when the NPA ACT was formed to lobby for "a national park for the national capital". NPA made its first submission to government in 1963. Over the next twenty years the NPA remained focused on this objective with many more submissions and presentations to generally unresponsive ministers and departments.

One milestone is worth mentioning. In 1978 the then Minister for Territories, Bob Ellicott, proclaimed the establishment of the Gudgenby Nature Reserve, the forerunner of the present park. This followed another submission by the NPA that the reserve be proclaimed to coincide with the centenary of the dedication of the Royal National Park, the first national park dedicated in Australia. The Minister, to use his words, was "attracted" to the idea and the reserve was proclaimed on 26 April 1978. This was only half way,



*The Minister for Territories and Local Government, Mr T Uren (right) in September 1984, with a member of the press party during a tour of the recently approved Namadgi National Park. Photo by courtesy of the ACT Heritage Library.*

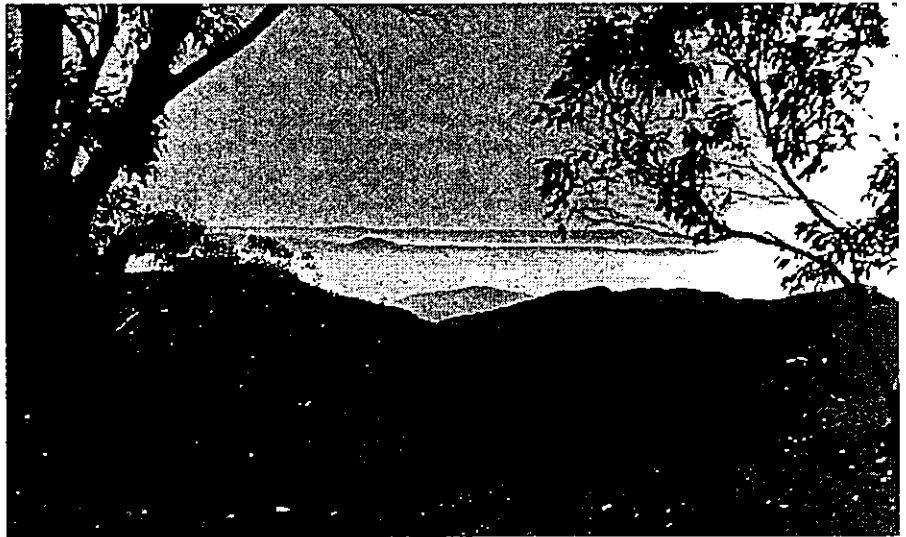
however, to the NPA's vision for a national park.

We were fortunate in 1983 that our dream also captivated Tom Uren, who as a veteran Labor politician had the political will and influence as Minister for Territories in the Hawke Government to turn our dream into reality. Tom Uren had a deep appreciation of the natural world and the presence and foresight to recognise the southern ACT as a magnificent natural area and a national park as an inspiring asset for both Canberra and the nation.

There have been many changes to the park and to park management since 1984, some of which have already been mentioned. The Namadgi Consultative Committee set up to oversee the first plan of management has evolved into The Interim Namadgi Advisory Board with the Aboriginal people of the ACT represented and now playing an active role in the on-going management of the park. Since self-government in the ACT, community participation in management and on-ground activities in the park have also expanded greatly. NPA now has continuous involvement in these activities through representatives and member activities.

### Where to from here?

A new management plan is overdue. The first management plan, while adequate for its day, left planning and implementation of many objectives up in the air. It was not updated soon enough, and, as typical for other Australian national parks, many management priorities were never adequately implemented because of lack of staff,



*The view from Aggie Gap looking through to the Tidbinbilla Range—all part of Namadgi National Park. Photo Jane Reid in the Canberra Times 6 June 1984*

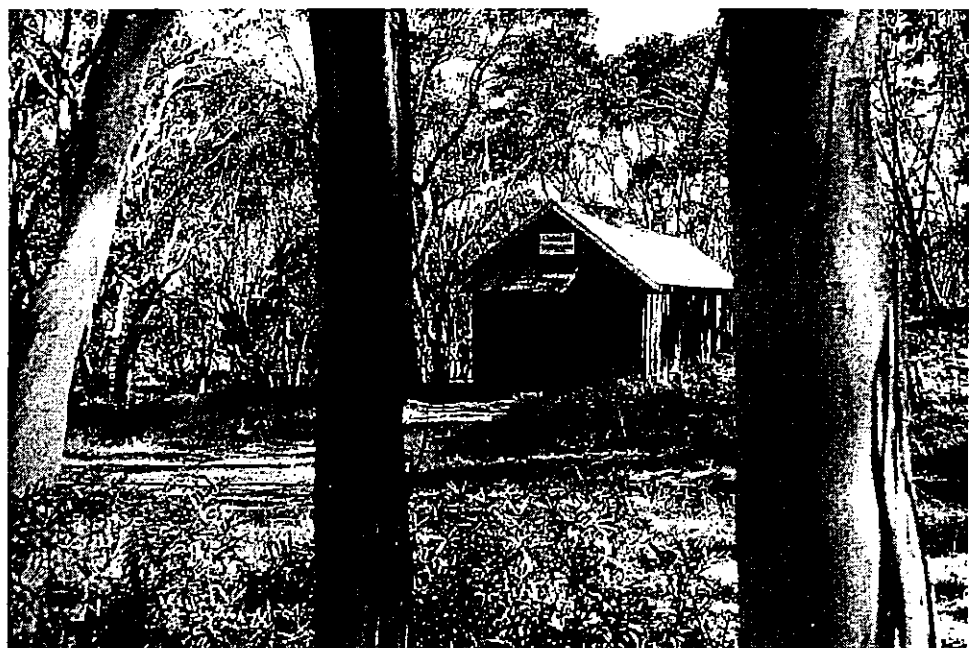
funding, and other resources. Many new or increased pressures have now arisen including the impacts of inappropriate recreation and tourism, as well as ongoing problems such as feral animals and plants, the impact of drought and fire, landscape rehabilitation, and lack of adequate management resources. A new plan must embody a truly sustainable approach to the management of the whole park.

In recent years the impact of land clearing for agriculture and forestry, and consequent loss of native habitat, has dramatically demonstrated the loss of biodiversity in Australia and the continuing risks we face to save species from extinction. The role of adequate and representative protected areas as the ultimate refuge for our native plants and

animals has never been greater. The NPA will need to remain vigilant and focused to ensure that the natural values of Namadgi and our other alpine parks are conserved into the future. We must ensure that the current and future ACT governments show the same dedication and commitment to the conservation of our natural heritage as Tom Uren did, albeit as a federal minister, 20 years ago.

The declaration of Namadgi National Park was a cause for great jubilation. Its twentieth anniversary sees Namadgi embedded in the hearts of the people of the ACT. Our task of protecting it continues indefinitely.

**Den Robin  
Neville Esau**



*Pryor's Hut situated below Mount Gingera. Photo Jane Reid in the Canberra Times 6 June 1984.*

*Fire fighters worked hard on 18 January 2003 to save this hut from destruction by bushfire.*

# Namadgi turns 20

The front page of the *Canberra Times* of Wednesday 6 June 1984 carried the news that the creation of a national park in the ACT had been approved, and introduced readers to the term, *Namadgi National Park*. The declaration of the park, however, did not take place until later in the year, October 3. The announcement had been made on World Environment Day and now, on the weekend of World

Environment Day 2004, the 20th anniversary of Namadgi will be marked by events being arranged by Environment ACT. The program is not yet available but it is understood that the event will be held in the Namadgi Visitor Centre on Sunday June 6 and will provide an opportunity to consider the past, present and future of our national park. This is very timely in view of the many aspects of the park

which are now under scrutiny both as a consequence of the 2003 fires and as part of the revision of the plan of management now in progress.

If details of the program become available before this *Bulletin* is distributed a notice about the event will be slipped into each copy. Otherwise the program will be available in *Burning Issues*, the NPA email newsletter.

Minister for Territories and Local Government, Mr Uren, at the top of Mount Bimberi, the highest peak in the ACT, during his tour of the new national park yesterday.

## New national park for southern ACT

By FRANK LONGHURST, City Reporter

Forty per cent of the area of the ACT is soon to be declared a national park, and Canberrans have a new word to learn.

The word is Namadgi, the Aboriginal name for the mountainous region of what is now the ACT, and it has been chosen as the name of Namadgi National Park.

The Minister for Territories and Local Government, Mr Uren, used the occasion of World Environment Day yesterday to announce that he intended to declare the existing Gudgenby Nature Reserve and the adjoining Cotter River catchment area as a national park.

The name Namadgi was recorded by explorer John Lhotsky in 1834, and refers to the mountain ranges now known individually as the Bimberi, Brindabella, Tidbinbilla, Scabby and Booth ranges, in the west and south of the ACT.

The park will occupy 94,000 hectares, and will incorporate most of the higher land in the ACT, including the only extensive areas with sub-alpine climate and significant winter snow cover.

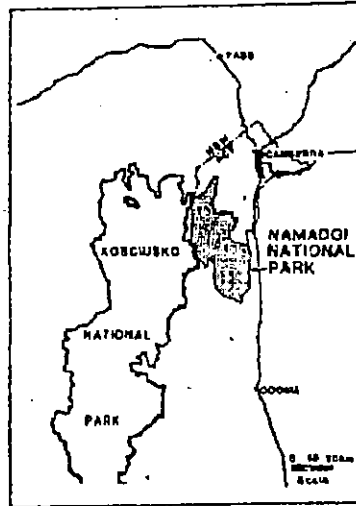
It is expected to be declared within a few weeks. Then a complex management scheme and zoning system need will be worked out.

Access to most of the Cotter catchment area is currently prohibited because it is environmentally sensitive, and the water it produces requires minimal treatment because there is no human interference in the area, which results in the water being provided much more economically than that from Canberra's other source, the Googong Reservoir.

Mr Uren said after touring the area by RAAF helicopter yesterday that at this stage he did not intend changing the existing access or management arrangements for the Cotter catchment area, but that a policy plan would be prepared by his department, the NCDC, the Department of Housing and Construction and the Capital Territory Health Commission, which would be issued for public comment before final decisions were made.

"I envisage that the management plan will be based on a series of zones, each of which would be managed according to specific objectives," he said. "While the upper Cotter Valley will have an overriding role in the protection of water quality, access to the various zones within it, and those in Gudgenby Nature Reserve, will be managed on the basis of the objectives and controlled accordingly.

"The zones between Bendora Dam



and Corin Dams, for example, are likely to remain as a particularly sensitive catchment area to which access will be strictly controlled in order to safeguard the purity of the water."

The park is to be managed by the Parks and Conservation Division of the Department of Territories and Local Government.

The policy and management plans for the park zones will determine where vehicles will be allowed, and where camping, bushwalking, fishing, and picnicking will be allowed, but will also lay down strict rules for which areas will remain permanently out of bounds to the public.

Another report, the park in pictures. — Page 26.

The will to comp be a Feder. lation. No n. experim. a working. the Governm. recommendations. The Government's au. on affirmative-action launched yesterday by th ister, Mr Hawke, and Education and Youth Ryan, who is also V the Prime Minister. Women.

The paper, whic' emment's con women greater" was welcomed business and applause fro

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Page 1 of the Canberra Times of 6 June 1984 reproduced by kind permission of the Canberra Times.

# What is happening in our catchments?

Dr Roger Goode, Senior Projects Manager, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service had been asked to address our February general meeting on the topic *After the fires*. However, because of the ongoing coronial inquiry Roger decided to alter the topic to a consideration of the regeneration and rehabilitation work required and being undertaken in the catchment areas of both NSW and the ACT.

The January 2003 fires were a huge fire event not only in the ACT but in NSW and Victoria as well. Roger emphasised this point by showing a map of the extent of the fires and pointed out that although they covered an extremely large area they were by no means unique. He superimposed a map of the 1939 fires on the 2003 map and the areas affected were remarkably similar. Roger believes that this is an indication that such major fires are highly likely to occur again.

Fortunately, despite the tremendous impact, Roger feels that 90 per cent of the area is recoverable in its own right provided that fires are kept out of the parks for some years to come. This is an enormous challenge for park management.

The rate and success of regeneration of the native species will depend on a combination of climatic and other factors and not as a response to the burning as such. If the prevailing drought conditions end soon and milder, more favourable conditions prevail, natural regeneration will be enhanced and a return to near-natural condition will occur in a short timeframe.

The fires will have exacerbated the tendency for snowgums to adopt a many-stemmed "mallee" like appearance as they have previously been subjected to too frequent burning both in the grazing era and control burning by the Hume Snowy Bushfire Council. Post fire regeneration will result in the enhanced growth of a flammable leguminous understorey. Positive management action will be needed to keep fires out of the area for at least 50 years to allow the shrubs to senesce and thin out naturally. Resisting the call for "control burning" will be a challenge for management. Roger believes that the situation in this area is "*the more you*

*burn the more fire promoting shrubs you get!*" It is feared that much of the alpine ash forest that has been severely burnt is likely to be lost and replaced by manna gum and mountain gum.

The status of the soils and catchment conditions at the time of the 2003 fires reflected past fire regimes and management. Several large catchments have experienced severe erosion as a result of high intensity rainfall events following the fires. Wallace's Creek catchment for example has experienced frequent fire events over the past 35-40 years with suppressed and poor native vegetation cover. The soils have been exposed for long periods due to lack of vegetation and litter cover and were in a hydrophobic state (shed rainfall without any soil penetration). Little understorey vegetation groundcover had regenerated since the previous wildfires (1965, 1972, 1983) as soil-borne seed reserves had been lost, or they had lost viability due to desiccation. The fires further exaggerated the hydrophobic soil condition prevailing against any germination and establishment of shrub soil groundcover.

Where these and similar soil and vegetation conditions existed before the fires it can be predicted that native vegetation will be extremely slow and poor and, in some cases, native species regeneration will be overrun by exotic weed species which are better able to colonise such disturbance areas.

It is important that in the debate over prescribed burning and the presumed need for increased hazardous fuel reduction, cognisance be taken of the fact that in many high country catchments fuel loads well in excess of those aimed at in fuel reduction burning are required to maintain catchment soil and native vegetation stability. Without such stability the capacity of the native vegetation to recover after fires is very much reduced or may even be lost. This is very much the case in the Wallace's Creek example.

A number of vegetation communities of limited distribution but of significance in terms of catchment hydrology, particularly groundwater communities (fens and bogs) were burnt in the fires. In many of these *Sphagnum* spp had just reached a state of rapid

recovery following the removal of grazing some 40 to 50 years ago. Much of the *Sphagnum* was desiccated by the drought conditions prior to the fires and it was the *Sphagnum* that fuelled the fires and resulted in burning of the underlying peat and organic soil. Fire penetrated up to 1.5 metres into the peatbeds in many sites destroying their water-holding capacities.

These communities will recover where the fires did not burn to this depth, but many sites where the peats burnt to this depth will have to be manually rehabilitated. Based on the experience of work done on fens and bogs on the Main Range in the 1960s and 1970s, it will take at least 35-40 years for these groundwater communities to regain their catchment water retention capacity.

Roger screened a series of slides showing the '60s and '70s rehabilitation projects. Through the use of rock and hay bale dams to control water flow through the destroyed bogs, the slumping and trenching is slowly being alleviated and it was quite amazing to see what appeared to be a miraculous recovery. Fens, swamps and bogs were severely affected by the 2003 fires and major efforts must be made to ensure their rehabilitation. They are in Roger's words, "*the lungs of our catchment areas*" and they will not recover without help. The ACT and NSW Governments have about \$1 million to spend on the rehabilitation of these significant communities. Roger believes that this is less than a tenth of the amount required. While some money can be raised at present because the fires are so recent in everyone's minds it will become more and more difficult to appeal to public opinion over the minimum of a 30-year time frame to restore the functionality of these areas.

Roger concluded his address by wondering if NPA ACT could have an involvement in promoting community awareness of the imperative necessity to provide continuing funds to this essential regeneration and rehabilitation.

Len Haskew

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## Vale John Banks

It is with regret that we report that Dr John Banks died unexpectedly on March 22. John was very active in the

NPA during the '70s, serving on the committee and becoming President in 1979. Our sympathy is extended to his

wife, Margaret, and members of the family.

# ACT biodiversity has faced “four-pronged attack”

The ACT's biodiversity faced the “four-pronged attack of fire, drought, clearing for suburbs, and weed and pest invasion” during the years 2000 to 2003, the most recent reporting period for the Commissioner for the Environment.

In his *State of the Environment Report 2003*, the Commissioner, Dr Joe Baker, said most of the ecological communities in national parks burnt in the 2003 bushfires were expected to re-establish.

Other positives were land management agreements in rural areas that had the potential to protect important remnants of ecological communities, and an increase in the area in nature reserves and national parks by 688ha with the addition of Lower Molonglo, bringing the total conservation area in the ACT to 125 203ha (53 per cent of the ACT).

However, the future for biodiversity in areas marked for urban development was less certain, Dr Baker said. Some remnants of valuable ecological communities could be destroyed, unless the ACT Government continued to add to the nature conservation system.

The ecological communities at greatest risk in the ACT were grasslands and lowland woodlands, particularly the endangered yellow box–red gum grassy woodland. Despite the regional and national importance of these communities, the threat of clearing for urban development in the ACT continued to be real.

At the end of the reporting period there were 10 870ha of this woodland in the ACT, of which 2345ha were in nature reserves. This was a significant and high quality component of the 25 200ha—only 8.5 per cent of the original regional extent of yellow box–red gum grassy woodland—that remain in the ACT and surrounding region.

“The ACT Government needs to carefully evaluate when it is time to forgo the time-limited benefits from further property development, land sales and rates in favour of a broader economic base and upholding its regional and national environmental responsibilities,” Dr Baker said.

## Fuel hazard reduction

Advice on biodiversity conservation needed to be an integral part of the planning for fuel hazard reduction activities.

“In the wake of the bushfires, there is pressure (supported by recommendations from inquiries) to undertake more fire fuel hazard reduction, to expand the fire-trail network, create fire protection zones and to change the landuse in previously vegetated areas,” he said.

“An extensive program commenced in autumn 2003. Such activities have implications for biodiversity conservation through habitat destruction and modification. A holistic management strategy is needed to guide hazard reduction activities and respond appropriately as the burnt areas regenerate.”

## Recommendations

The report recommended that in consultation with the Commissioner for the Environment, the ACT Government should:

- develop long-term research and monitoring programs of at least 30 years duration into post-fire recovery of terrestrial and aquatic components of natural and modified ecosystems;
- seek funding for the long-term research in the above recommendation from the Commonwealth Government on the basis of the National Research Priority “an environmentally sustainable Australia”, announced in December 2002;
- ensure that biodiversity conservation is always integral to ACT Government planning and management of landuse changes, post-fire recovery programs, and fire prevention programs such as fuel hazard reduction programs, expansion and management of the fire-trail network, creation of fire protection zones;
- assess the contributions of existing ACT Government pest plant control programs to achieving pest plant control, biodiversity conservation, and catchment management objectives, and, if appropriate, trial alternative programs;
- implement a post-fire works and management program to protect water supply catchment, aquatic habitat and nature conservation values of the upper Cotter River, Murrumbidgee and Molonglo River valleys, and their tributaries; and
- provide resources and support for improving the system of protected

lowland woodland and grasslands in the ACT, and for ongoing management of these ecosystems.

The *State of the Environment Report 2003* was released in March. It comprised a number of papers dealing with landuse, air quality, water catchment quality, climate and greenhouse effects, community wellbeing, resource use, and progress towards sustainability. State of the environment reporting started in 1994, and this was the fifth such report for the ACT.

## Response to extreme events

Unlike previous state of the environment reports, this report had the opportunity to illustrate the short-term responses of the ACT to extreme events such as drought, heavy rains, dust storms, and bushfires.

During the period, drought and bushfires combined to place the greatest threat ever to the domestic water supply of Canberra and Queanbeyan. The fires almost completely burnt out the vegetation of the main water supply catchment for the ACT. For the first time in decades, Canberrans had to curb their water use to comply with water restrictions.

Combined with the Christmas 2001 fire, the January 2003 bushfires destroyed three quarters of the ACT's pine plantations. They also caused the greatest damage to property and infrastructure, most of which was developed since the last major ACT bushfires in 1951–52.

Despite the drought of 2002–03 being considered to be one of the worst on record Australia-wide, February 2002 was one of the wettest on record for the ACT. Then in February 2003, one rain-storm washed the equivalent of 17 years of soil and 27 years of ash and charcoal from the fire-damaged catchment into Canberra's water supply dams, making them unusable for drinking water.

## Comment

The Chief Minister and Minister for the Environment, Mr Jon Stanhope, said he was disappointed that the focus given to many social issues in the report diminished the prominence that had been given in the past to traditional environmental issues.

*Continued next page*



# Interim Namadgi Advisory Board

Board member Di Thompson reports that the board is currently concentrating on the **Namadgi plan of management**, considering issues such as the timing and scope of the next round of public consultation, and pressure from the horse riders to reroute the Bicentennial Trail down Grassy Gully. Di has highlighted other items that have been on the board's agenda recently.

**ACT Roads Tree Removal Program.** This could involve the removal of 50 000 dead and dangerous trees on rural roads. All the main roads—Brindabellas, Corin, Apollo, Ororal, Boboyan, Paddys River—are affected. ACT Roads are progressing their consultation phase with representatives from key groups. The

board has raised some objections, made some suggestions and asked for a report from the ACT Wildlife Monitoring Unit.

**Other fire trail issues.** The Draft ACT Strategic Fire Access Plan was released without board input, and the board is raising such matters as fire trails in Namadgi, possible turn-around points, re-alignments and float access.

**The future use of Gudgenby Homestead.** Although nothing is final, thinking is in the direction of restoration of the ready cut cottage, a caretaker at the homestead and use by such groups as artists or researchers and limited rental. The board supports this approach.

**Tidbinbilla Master Business Plan.** Whilst Tidbinbilla is not in the board's

territory, the plan was sighted and members expressed some concerns. Look out for this plan.

**Parks Victoria visit.** During this visit, park management, networking and Indigenous issues were amongst issues considered. Parks Vic have about 40 Indigenous employees and have offered places to our workers on their yearly Indigenous field workers workshop.

**Recreation Strategy.** There is pressure to release this document but the board is keen to ensure that the Namadgi plan of management has primacy over the recreation strategy.

Syd Comfort

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## Options for the next ACT water source

Actew Corporation has just released a report which studies three options for the provision of increased water capacity for the ACT. The three options are:

- an increase in the capacity of the Cotter Dam;
- building the Tennent Dam in the Naas Valley; and

- obtaining water from the Tantangara Dam.

The corporation hopes to make final recommendations to the Government by March 2005.

The report demands close study by our association as the decisions in this matter could have serious effects on the Namadgi National Park. Although the

option of constructing the Tennent Dam has been open for many years, the time has now come when the implications for Namadgi will need re-examination to enable the NPA to contribute to the consultations on this long-term water plan.

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## ACT biodiversity has faced “four-pronged attack”

High standards of living did not necessarily mean neglect of the natural environment as the report suggested, and it was spurious to assume without supporting data that Canberrans' affluence led to behaviour that threatened the ACT's longer term sustainability.

“Canberrans are generally more aware of environmental issues than people elsewhere in Australia,” Mr Stanhope said, noting that the Government had recognised many of the social issues raised in the report and had developed a social plan that set out “a clear direction for the ACT's Social development over the next decade or so, with immediate actions, goals and priorities—and importantly, a series of indicators and targets.”

Mr Stanhope said that, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra had the highest proportion of people concerned about environmental problems of any state or territory. The

ACT also had the highest proportion of households in the country recycling or reusing waste. Waste per capita had fallen over the past decade from 1.3 tonnes to 0.6 tonnes.

He noted that the wood heater subsidy scheme had been introduced in January, and newly purchased air monitoring equipment would be used in an expanded program commencing in July to measure particulate air matter.

A comprehensive approach to the conservation requirements of woodland communities and the plants and animals that depend on this habitat would be released shortly, Mr Stanhope said. The Lowland Woodland Conservation Strategy was released as a draft for public comment in 2003.

The decision to include an additional 1000ha of yellow box-red gum grassy woodland at Gooroo and Callum Brae into Canberra Nature Park had had an enormous financial opportunity cost for the Government. “In fact, by even the

*continued from previous page*

most conservative of estimates we calculate that we have foregone some \$300 million in revenue from land sales. That is, by any measure, a strong commitment to the environment,” Mr Stanhope added.

He commended Dr Baker, who had announced his decision to retire as Commissioner for the Environment, for his contribution in the position over the past 10 years.

Graeme Wicks

### Orphan chair

Sonja Lenz (6251 1291) is still looking after a foldaway chair which was abandoned after the association's Christmas Party at the Namadgi Visitor Centre. She would welcome a call from the owner.

# Kosciuszko National Park endangered

No one hearing Dianne Thompson's talk to the General Meeting of the NPA on March 18 could doubt that the natural values of Kosciuszko National Park are being badly threatened. No one is in a better position to know the nature of the threat than NPA's Di Thompson. She is a member of the Snowy Mountains Region Advisory Committee and also a member of Kosciuszko's Plan of Management Community Forum.

Her address comes at a critical time since consultations on the Plan of Management for the park are expected to culminate with the release of the draft plan in about a month's time.

The Community Forum of 21 people drawn from principal interest groups has been able to find common ground on a number of principles such as protection of the natural values of the park, respect for Aboriginal culture, recognition of cultural heritage values, and education, research and monitoring. The problem that emerged from Di's talk was that there is sometimes conflict in the implementation of some of these agreed principles. Unfortunately, the three conservationists on the Community Forum have to influence other stakeholders such as resorts, Snowy Hydro Limited, tourism, shire councils and horse riders.

The bulk of the talk on Kosciuszko NP was devoted to an outline of serious issues surrounding the natural values of

the park. Sustainable recreation is a case in point, a thorny issue that is shared with Namadgi National Park. There is no holistic approach to the alpine regions, and quite apart from problems associated with alpine resorts, Kosciuszko NP is now subjected to year-round impact from tourists who flock into the area for an increasing number of special events, especially at Christmas and Easter.

The mind-set of many on the Community Forum is to accommodate more and more people. Removing accommodation from the park is now a lost cause, apparently, and the problems in providing toileting for the growing number of visitors can only be imagined.

On the other hand, some of the highest negative impacts on the park's environment come from a relatively small number of special interest groups, particularly the horse riders' groups, mountain bikers, and the growing number of those demanding the opportunity for extreme sporting events. Planners are faced with some difficult choices regarding what facilities should be provided to park users.

Other serious threats come from feral animals and introduced plants and weeds. Despite claims to the contrary, feral horses do not occur in only small groups but in much larger ones as well. The damage they do is obvious to those familiar with the park but it is important

that this be carefully monitored and assessed. The karst country in particular needs protection from horses. Pigs are another source of environmental damage to the park from feral animals.

Di Thompson said that unfortunately the self-interests of big business, commercial enterprise and individuals have at times dominated discussions. In addition to the political pressure these groups can apply, they have the ear of the media. There is no doubt that the employment and recreational aspects of park stakeholders must be recognised, but there is a very real danger that the natural values of the park that attract visitors to this area are being irreparably undermined.

These problems will be of great concern in the preparation of the Namadgi National Park Plan of Management which is expected to be released in the near future. Fortunately Di Thompson will be in a good position to apply the lessons of Kosciuszko National Park since she is a member of the Interim Board of Management of Namadgi NP. The speaker concluded with the need to keep talking and to strengthen community participation. Her colour photographs accompanying the talk were outstanding.

**David Pfanner**

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## Bulletin Working Group news

In reviewing the March issue the group considered that the reproduction of the photos was uniformly good. With images being received in different forms, often in colour, achieving satisfactory black and white prints in the *Bulletin* remains a problem despite the use of modern scanners. The issue was posted out by Robert Abell, Jenny Morrison and Timothy Walsh. Adrienne Nicholson told the meeting that although

she now has a new computer with additional software she laid this issue out using Word but may be able to use Publisher for the next issue.

Most of the meeting was given over to planning the June issue so as to give prominence to the twentieth anniversary of Namadgi National Park. An early deadline was agreed so that the *Bulletin* could be distributed by the end of May.

David Pfanner offered to write up general meetings with Len Haskew to cover when David is unavailable. Graeme Wicks offered to monitor official press releases.

The group would welcome to its ranks any member interested in assisting with the *Bulletin* in any way.

**Syd Comfort**  
Convenor

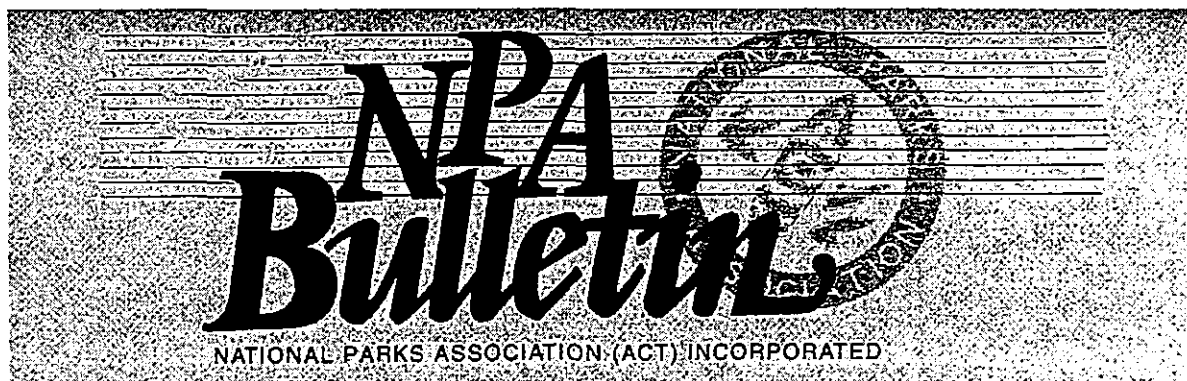
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## Plan of management

At the time of writing (early May) the end of June remains a target for the release of the Namadgi plan of management. However, it appears more likely that it will not be available until July.

### Bulletins for Heritage Library

As reported in the March *Bulletin* the ACT Heritage Library is seeking some back copies to complete its holding of the NPA *Bulletin*. The missing issues are Vol3 No7, Vol4 No1, Vol5 No3, Vol7 No3, Vol8 No4, Vol13 No2. Members able to help could ring Syd Comfort on 6286 2578.



# NPA OUTINGS PROGRAM

June–September 2004

<b>Outings Guide</b>	
<p><b>Walk grading</b> Distance grading (per day)</p> <p>1 — up to 10 km 2 — 10 km to 15 km 3 — 15 km to 20 km 4 — above 20 km</p>	<p><b>Terrain grading</b></p> <p>A — Road, firetrail track B — Open forest C — Light scrub D — Patches of thick scrub, regrowth E — Rock scrambling F — Exploratory</p>
Day walks	Carry lunch, drinks and protective clothing.
Pack walks	Two or more days. Carry all food and camping requirements. <b>CONTACT LEADER BY PRIOR WEDNESDAY OR AS INDICATED IN THE PROGRAM.</b>
Car camps	Facilities often limited or non-existent. Vehicles taken to site can be used for camping. <b>BOOK EARLY WITH LEADER.</b>
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.

Passenger transport. The committee suggests a donation, to the nearest dollar, of THIRTY cents per kilometre. This is based on four occupants in the car including the driver. When odd numbers arise, the total contribution is divided by the number of cars. The amount may be varied at the discretion of the leader.

Drive and walk distances quoted in the program are approximate distances for return journeys.

**26 May, Environment Day walk  
Wednesday walk**

**Leader: David Large**

**Grading: 3A**

**Contact: 6291 4830**

**david.large@bigpond.com.au**

Mid-week daywalk to celebrate Environment Day 2004. A walk from Coleman Ridge to Isaacs Shops via Mts Arawang and Taylor, Farrer Ridge, Mt Wanniasa and Isaacs Ridge. Meet at end of Kathner Street, Chapman at 9.00 am.

**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, Environment Day 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 (\$8.00 per adult per night) and NSW Park entry fee (\$7.00 per car per day) if you have no NSW 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 Westermans 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.

**4 July, Sunday daywalk**

**Gooroo Nature Reserve**

**Leader: Syd Comfort**

**Grading: 2A**

**Map: Hall 1:25 000**

**Contact: 6286 2578**

**scomfort@netspeed.com.au**

Gooroo adjoins Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve and is the latest woodland reserve in the ACT. A walk to Old Joe Hill for commanding views of Canberra and its nature reserves. See very large Yellow Box, Blakely's Red Gum and Scribbly Gum trees. Meet at ACT Netball Centre carpark, Northbourne Avenue, Lyneham at 9:00am. Gold coin donation to drivers.

**10 July Saturday work party**

**Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group**

**Contacts: Syd Comfort 6286 2578**

**scomfort@netspeed.com.au**

**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.

**18 July Sunday daywalk**

**Demanding Hut**

**Leader: David Large**

**Grading: 2A**

**Map: Colinton 1:25 000**

**Contact: 6291 4830**

**david.large@bigpond.com**

NPA has accepted responsibility to caretake Demanding Hut in the Naas Valley. An opportunity to have an easy walk from Mt Clear campground to look at this hut and make an assessment of whether any maintenance work is required. Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre at 9:00 am. Drive 80 kms \$24 per car.

**24 July Saturday work party**

**Bushfire Recovery Work Party**

**Contact: Martin Chalk, 6292 3502**

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

Our bi-monthly work party. Yerrabi Track, repairing steps down to the tor and removal of thistles from the Mura Swamp. Under the direction of Phil Gatenby 6254 3094

**25 July Sunday daywalk**

**Enchanted Hill**

**Leader: David Large**

**Grading: 2A**

**Map: Tuggeranong 1:25 000**

**Contact: 6291 4830**

**david.large@bigpond.com**

A moderate walk from Monaro Crescent to top of last Tralee Hill (Comms Tower), then through some pleasant woodland with a stand of Black Cyprus Pines to railway which we follow past McAlister Cutting then up Enchanted Hill for lunch and back to cars following the power line (undulating). Meet at 9:00am at rear of Chisholm Shops for short car shuffle.

**28 July, midweek daywalk**

**Wednesday walk**

**Leader: Col McAlister**

**Contact: 6288 4171**

Meet at 9:00am at North Curtin District Playing fields (off Dunston St.) Walk through parkland to Oakey Hill and then onto Mt Taylor. Return through "green areas" of Chifley, Lyons and Curtin to complete a pleasant walk through Canberra's suburbs and hills: plenty of kangaroos and possibly a wedge-tail eagle of two. Coffee at Curtin shops a strong possibility. Walk in conjunction with FBI and CBC.

**1 August, Sunday daywalk**

**Mt Rob Roy**

**Leader: David Large**

**Grading: 2/3A**

**Map: Tuggeranong and**

**Williamsdale**

**1:25 000**

**Contact: 6291 4830**

**david.large@bigpond.com**

Meet at rear of Chisholm shops in car park at 9:00am. A walk from Theodore to Mt Rob Roy and then on to Guises Creek. All on fire trail or open woodlands. A car shuffle or perhaps do this as a circuit walk.

**7 August, Saturday daywalk**

**Mt Tennent and lunch at**

**Cuppacumbalong**

**Leaders: Pat and Eric Pickering**

**Grading: 1A**

**Map: Williamsdale 1:25 000**

**Contact: 6286 2128**

**pater@tpg.com.au**

Joint walk with FBI. We walk from the Namadgi National Park headquarters up the Alpine Walking Track to the fire tower on Mt Tennent and return. Distance 10kms; climb of 750 metres, all on track. We allow 4 hours for the trip, returning in time for a lunch of soup and crusty bread at Cuppacumbalong at 1:00 pm. It does not matter if you don't make it to the top. Everyone walks at their own pace for the four hours. If the weather is wet, we can change into dry clothes at the Visitor Centre or have the lunch and no walk! Contact Pat or Eric by Wednesday 4 August so that a booking can be made a Cuppacumbalong. Drive 60 km. (\$6).

**8 August, Sunday daywalk**

**Cathedral Rocks**

**Leader: Col McAlister**

**Grading: 2A/C**

**Map: Rendezvous Creek 1:25000**

**Contact: 6288 4171**

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8:30 am. A climb from the Orroral campground of some 400 metres to hill 1316, then down to the massive formation of Cathedral Rocks for lunch. Return via Orroral track to campground. 70 kms, \$21 a car.

**14 August Saturday work party  
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration  
Group**

**Contacts: Syd Comfort 6286 2578  
scomfort@netspeed.com.au  
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.

**15 August Sunday daywalk  
Orroral Valley circuit**

**Leader: Mike Smith**

**Grading: 2/A/C**

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

**Contact: 6286 2984**

**msmith@netspeed.com.au**

Meet at Kambah Shops at 8:30 am. A walk from the Orroral Gate along Cotter Hut Road until saddle at weather station. Climb to unnamed rocky peak 1339 metres for lunch and exploration. Continue on to Sawpit Creek and return along valley track via site of Rowley's Hut. Total 400 metre climb, 100km drive (\$30 per car).

**22 August Sunday Walk  
Mt Tennent area.**

**Leader: Martin Chalk**

**Grading: 2A/B/D/F**

**Map: Williamsdale 1:25 000**

**Contact 6292 3502**

**mchalk@tpg.com.au**

Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre at 9:00 am for a walk along Bushfold Flat then up the northern ridge of Mt Tennent to the 1008 metre spot height. Return via Tennant Homestead and a short car shuffle. This walk will offer commanding views across Canberra and a chance to see how Mt Tennent is recovering plus a look at the cultural "remnants" at Bushfold Flat and Tennant Homestead. \$7 per "shuffle car".

**28–29 August Weekend Pack Walk  
Fosters Mountain**

**Leader: Phil Gatenby**

**Grading: 2A/D/E**

**Map: Endrick 1:25 000**

**Contact: 6254 3094**

**Philip.Gatenby@dewr.gov.au**

Fosters Mountain is on the western edge of the Budawangs. The walk starts at the Nerriga entrance to Morton National Park and is partly on tracks. Some rock scrambling across creek gullies and through cliff lines will also be involved, as will a climb of about 300 metres. Contact leader by the Wednesday before the walk. Drive 320 kms. \$96 per car.

**11 September Saturday work party  
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group**

**Contacts: Syd Comfort 6286 2578**

**scomfort@netspeed.com.au**

**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.

# Public action and political will

Fiona has sent this article from Adelaide where she is staying with her daughter. Fiona has been very interested in the Angove Conservation Reserve which is close to her daughter's home, and sees some parallels between the processes which led to the establishment of the reserve and public action in Canberra to protect Black Mountain bushland from road development.

Angove Conservation Reserve is in Tea Tree Gully and was established on land held by the Angove family since the 1880s. In 1889 Dr Angove built a home and planted a vineyard on his farm. He often walked on to Butterfly Ridge to look towards Adelaide and to observe and sketch birds and insects.

In 1993 the Angove family decided to sell the property and a developer was soon found to purchase it for the construction of housing estates. One section of the former farm had never been cleared and proved to be one of the few remaining patches of Adelaide Plains scrubland.

Conservationists in Tea Tree Gully enlisted support from the Environment



Looking into the Angove Conservation Reserve, Tea Tree Gully, Adelaide. Photo Fiona MacDonald Brand

and Housing Department and lobbied to have the scrubland area acquired and set aside as a conservation reserve. Fortunately in 1994 the South Australian Government purchased the 5.4ha site in order to conserve this valuable natural environment. In September of that year the Angove Conservation Park was declared and the Friends of Angove Scrub undertook to help maintain it and to educate school groups, and others, in the area's values.

At present there are 172 native plant species in the reserve with spider orchids and donkey orchids flowering in the spring. There are also 83 feral plant species! Sadly 13 native species have disappeared since a 1980 botanic survey. There are 19 species of native birds, including the beautiful rainbow and musk lorikeets which feed on blossom, and New Holland and white plumed honeyeaters.

The Friends hold bimonthly meetings and monthly work parties. They are constantly weeding out feral plants—the work party I attended was grubbing out olive trees. The environment ranger, Eva, was in attendance and worked hard alongside the Friends. Over the past 10 years the Friends have worked with school groups planting trees in a

section which had much earlier been cleared for the establishment of a vineyard. The trees planted are native to the area: blue gums (*Eucalyptus leucoxylon*); drooping she oak (*Allocasuarina verticillata*); and native pine (*Callitris preissii*). The lizards of the area are bearded dragons and skinks but they are preyed upon by local cats and boys! One of the Friends monitors the frog population in the creek which flows through the reserve after the winter rains.

On occasions the Department of Corrective Services allows prisoners to work under direction in the dozens of reserves along the fringe of Adelaide. In the 200ha Ansteys Hill Reserve prisoners are eradicating feral plants and in past years prisoners have worked in Angove Conservation Park.

It was a pleasure to meet up with the small group of Friends at their April meeting. They were most welcoming to a stranger, there was interesting discussion, and reports were presented including one from Ranger Eva.

As you have read, this is a story of "public action and political will" which successfully saved a unique area from destruction. As we watch the public action group in North Canberra struggle to save bushland on Black Mountain and adjacent ridge reserves we hope that political will and legal processes will match the aspirations of the "Save the Ridge" group.

Fiona MacDonald Brand



Grubbing out the stump of a feral olive tree in the Angove Conservation Reserve. Photo Fiona MacDonald Brand

# Progress with the Gudgenby bush regeneration

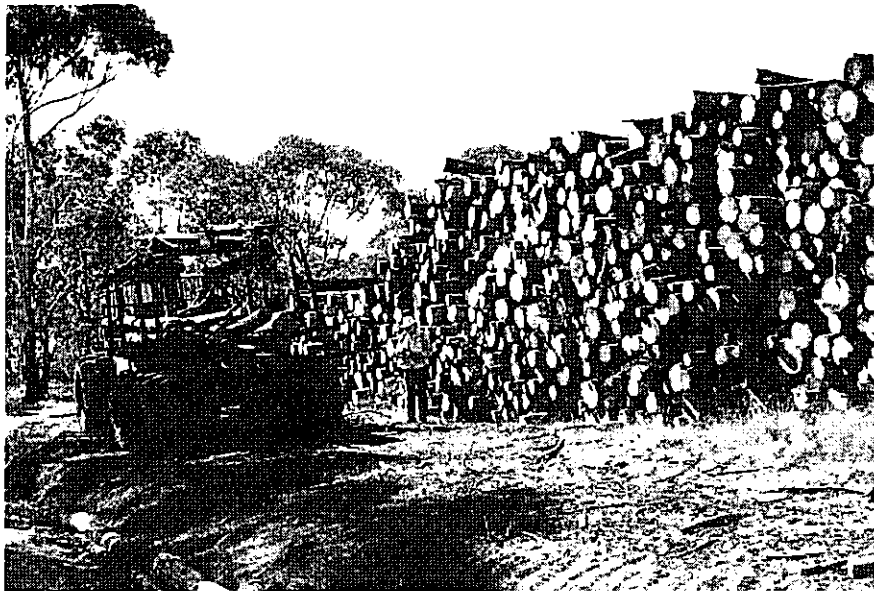


*It won't be long before Mt Gudgenby will be fully visible from the Old Boboyan Road; pines still to be felled, logs awaiting transport out, with a cleared and burnt (albeit rather weedy) area for seeding/planting in the foreground.*

*Photo Martin Chalk*

The best news about the regeneration project is that felling of the pines is in its last stage; we have been told so, and we dare hope that it's right because ACT Forests actually needs the timber now. Felling on the slopes of Yankee Hat has begun in the middle of the block and is working

outwards, with about half the area felled (as of 18 April). The large block left adjacent to the Old Boboyan Road was tackled briefly in the north eastern corner before operations moved to the south eastern corner, where a view to Frank and Jacks Hut has been opened up, and a large pile of logs stacked. At



*Clive beside one of the logging machines, indicating the size of the log stack beside the Old Boboyan Road. Photo Eleanor Stodart*

this rate, felling will need to continue through August or longer before the last pine will be felled.

Regeneration in the area seeded after the Jan '03 fires (between the Old Boboyan Road and Bogong Swamp) is doing remarkably well considering the year we have had. Seedlings of all five eucalypt species have germinated, with the rounded blue juvenile leaves of the candlebarks being most conspicuous. Some wattles and a few banksias also are present. Seedlings vary in size from a few centimetres to almost a metre tall depending on which shower of rain triggered their germination.

Blackberries and briar roses are a problem everywhere but are so bad in this area that they threaten to take over parts of it. Unfortunately none of the post fire weed money was spent in the Boboyan pines area—briars to the north were sprayed instead. Clive Hurlstone and I spent a day mapping the blackberries and briars and we think we have now convinced the park management to take some action. Unfortunately also, the willows in Bogong Swamp have clearly made a comeback and now form a solid mass of stems about two metres high. They were supposed to have been tackled in early 2003, but unfortunately again, the understandable postponement then was not followed by action this year.

*Eleanor Stodart*

## Update May 7

I have just been given an update on the progress of the current felling of the pines in the Gudgenby regeneration area by ranger, Darren Roso. He estimates that the felling is approximately 70 per cent complete with nearly all of the pines west of Bogong Creek (below Yankee Hat) cut out. Apparently the machines being used cannot handle the largest trees and these are still standing ready to be hand felled. There is a large area behind Frank and Jack's Hut as yet untouched. Both the felling and the extraction of logs are very weather dependent so the dry conditions have facilitated operations since work began. If the weather remains favourable the task could be completed by the end of June

SFC



# NPA and Waterwatch

The bushfire recovery work party scheduled for February 28 was planned as a weeding activity at Coree Falls. However, arrangements were changed at the request of the Brindabella National Park management, so an alternative activity was undertaken on Hospital Creek.

As a part of the ACT Waterwatch program, I have been monitoring the water quality in this and two other creeks in the Gudgenby area on a monthly basis since May last year. Eight qualities are measured and over time there has been some variability particularly in air and water temperature, but such variability has been cyclical or explainable. But in November the phosphate level at Hospital Creek showed a slight increase. This increase doubled each month throughout the summer. Such was this trend that it was of interest to the Waterwatch coordinator, so I suggested that the February work party would be an opportunity to investigate the source of the increase.

The offer was seized and three NPA members were joined by 10 Waterwatch volunteers to walk from the northern swamp near the Gudgenby bush regeneration area to the southern swamp near Frank's Hospital Creek Hut. I should note that the swamps now resemble grassy, weedy flats—maybe they will take on their former character after some rain.



*At the end of a day sampling from pools along Hospital Creek in February, the combined NPA/Waterwatch group reached the dry "swamp" below Frank's Hospital Creek Hut. Photo Nigel Philpot*

The group sampled water for phosphate levels at each pool, the creek having ceased to flow. At each location the levels were either at the limit of measurement or beyond it. The water in the pools fell broadly into two types: biological pools of black water with extremely high levels of phosphates; and phytoplankton pools of green water with high levels of oxygen.

One of the Waterwatch members is a PhD student and had demonstrated the biological pool phenomenon under laboratory conditions but had never heard of it occurring naturally—Hospital Creek gave her much gratification.

Some on-site theorising suggested that these elevated levels were caused by the degeneration of organic matter in these pools (the science was rather more complex than this!). However, this does not explain the elevated levels that I observed from November to January, when the creek was flowing well and had been since the fires.

Nevertheless, the day proved an interesting joint exercise between the NPA and Waterwatch and showed a part of the ACT to some who had never ventured south of the Orroral Valley.

Yet again, the fires seem to have highlighted a natural process that hitherto has been taken for granted and now presents a challenge in its understanding.

**Martin Chalk**



*Nigel Philpot sampling from one of the pools representing Hospital Creek which had ceased to flow. Photo Adrienne Nicholson*

# Australian Alps Walking Track

Have you ever wondered how many people do this walk each year? I certainly have, but how on earth can one get an accurate idea of the numbers of walkers each year?

In October 2003 at Oldfields Hut I had time to browse the logbook and realised that it is the last opportunity for AAWT walkers to note their progress in

a logbook and comment on a challenging walk almost completed. I collected what statistics I could, and they are summarised in the table following (see foot of page 15).

In 2003, there were four groups recorded before the January fires, none between then and October and at least one later in December. This was the

group I have been doing the track with over the past six years, a total of 50 walking days: Tim Walsh, Judith Webster, Phillip Crampton, Brian Slee and Norman Morrison.

In the previous years others who walked with us were Phil James, Den and Geoff Robin, Mick Kelly and Eric and Pat Pickering.

## Walkers' comments

26 3 00 *Over the past 8 weeks we've been through wilderness areas.*

*National Parks, State forests and Reserves, and we've been in areas with huts around every corner, and in areas without a hut, track or marker for days.*

*The whole way we've debated whether each type of human impact is appropriate and that debate is far from resolved.*

*I want to comment that it is uncommon and extremely interesting to find the documentation kept in this hut regarding "notes for caretakers" and "extracts from NPWS management brief"*

*Thanks for that and also for this endearing and well kept hut...*

*Victoria is the tough part, 1000 vertical metres per day for the first two weeks, slow trackless hush, battling down a timber graveyard with a fading torch till 2am, leeches by the thousands (one temporarily blinded me), one hour plus night searching for water down dry creeks, and having to settle for drinking out of wheel ruts*

16 1 01 *Group of 4 from Walhalla, left 31 days ago, had it all, dealt with it all. Money being raised for St Vincents Hospital Melbourne.*

2 2 01 *Franz Koller, Germany, Walking the Alpine Track from Murrays Gap to Blue Waterholes.*

23 4 01 *Australia is a great country. Cardona (Argentina)*

1 6 01 *Leonie and Phil Bubb on 32<sup>nd</sup> day of walking from Walhalla on AAWT*

30 10 01 *Ron Crane and Blue Phillips, day 39 AAWT*

10 11 01 *Coogee Rover Crew, Canberra-Walhalla, great hut, shame about the elections*

27 11 01 *Andy Collins, Berowra, I'm walking from Sydney to Mt Kosciuszko, 700k*

6 12 01 *Rob Horsfield, day 34 AAWT, long day from Witses hut*

26 2 02 *Jason Williams, day 26, tracknotes on geocities.com jugglebottom*

21 4 02 *The amazing life-changing experience of spending 2 months with my most beautiful mate in the world, the lovely unself-consciousness of flame robins in the trees and an echidna burrowing a new home.*

29 4 02 *Iz Leyshan, It has been a great challenge mentally, the discovery of one's abilities.*

24 5 02 *Tom Bell, Brisbane.*

10 9 02 *Jason Beecheroff, this journey has been very good to me, the experience of traversing solo in winter has been amazing.*

3 12 02 *Jill Leytar, day 39, Highs, just managing it on my own, lows, bad weather from McDonald to Magdala and White's to Jagungal making views non-existent*

8 12 02 *Ben Perrett, day 43, Congratulations Jill, although if you are going to claim to have walked the entire trail, then your husband should not have driven you from McAllister Springs to Mt Hotham, you missed the Crosscut Saw, Mt Buggery, Mt Speculation, Mt Despair, the Razor and Viking, and Barry Saddle.*

5 1 03 *Hannah Hueneke and Katy Penner, 8 weeks*

9 1 03 *Kathryn McCallum, I tried to catch Hannah and Katy, I was too slow.*

2 1 03 *Bec Robinson, thanks for no-one telling me how hard the Mitta to Bulley Creek section was, otherwise I'd never have started the walk.*

*I have shared a love-hate relationship with John Seisman, with his "lightly timbered pleasant campsites" (tread swamp), "well defined NE spur" (tread five NE spurs, none well defined), "clear brumby trails" (tread paths that vanish into prickly bush), "slightly overgrown firetrails" (tread impenetrable 6 ft scrub). However, without him I would have gone thirsty in the Barries, and would never have heard of the AAWT, so thanks JS*



I would be most interested to get ideas on how to more accurately estimate the number of walkers. In the latter part of 2003 there was an ABC documentary on Kosciuszko National Park which in passing estimated that around 12 walkers completed the track each year. As many walkers

appear not to call in to the Namadgi Visitor Centre I have written to the centre suggesting that an A4 laminated notice be fixed at the stile at the end of the walk informing walkers that there is a log book in the Visitor Centre. A Certificate of Completion is also available at the centre. I have also contacted the Australian Alps Liaison Committee, with no response.

**Graham Scully**

*Note: see table on page opposite*

*Revenge of the forest: a track marker succumbs.*

*Photo Graham Scully*

# A whoop from the West

Who would have thought that a notice in the Outings Program about a local ACT walk would have brought a response from nearly 4000 kilometres away? It did. And this is how.

Max Lawrence set out his proposed walk:

**18 April, Sunday daywalk  
Gibraltar Creek Hills  
Leader: Max Lawrence  
Grading: 2C/E ...**

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 ...

NPA member, Stephen Johnston, now a Perth resident sent Max the following message:

*I was amused to read that you will be leading a walk to the Gibraltar Hills on 18/4. Your description reflects my past curiosity with those hills which prompted me to do the walk one weekend. The climb from Gibraltar Creek up to the ridge was not too demanding – the usual grunt – and the ridge to start with was reasonably open forest. But, oh dear, once I got into the bumps I encountered some of the thickest Cassinia scrub I'd ever seen. As I remember it, the saddles between the bumps were relatively open little patches where you could admire the view down onto the Booroomba*



*Max's group looking into the valley of Blue Gum Creek from the Gibraltar Hills. Photo Max Lawrence*

*homestead and garden and south down the property to the rock slabs on the hill I nicknamed Falcon Hill after being dive bombed by falcons when I visited (another scrubby climb). I think I gave up on the easternmost bump and retreated down to the creek and back up to the car again.*

*Of course that was at least four years ago and the fires would presumably have incinerated all that scrub so it would be interesting to see it now. I hope you have a good walk...*

Max replied:

You know, I thought that walk of mine was original. I've looked at that range for years and marvelled at the growth thereupon, and I thought after the fires, here's my chance ... But then I wondered what to call it, and had a look

through some of the old programs for inspiration. And there, on one of the programs a few years back was this walk by Stephen Johnston ...

Stephen tied the loose ends:

*I had forgotten that I had put that walk on the program because it never came off! Can't remember why but maybe people had more sense than I ... My walk was just a recce. So assuming you get a few takers, yours will be the first actual NPA walk along the Gibraltar Hills ...*

On April 18 Max had 12 takers and thus takes the honour of leading the first NPA walk along the almost *Cassinia* free Gibraltar Hills.

**Syd Comfort (with rather a lot of help from Max and Stephen)**

## Australian Alps Walking Track *continued from previous page*

### Summary of groups walking the AAWT 2001 to 2003

(South to north unless indicated otherwise)

Group No	2001		2002		2003	
	No in group*	Days to Oldfields	No in group	Days to Oldfields	No in group	Days to Oldfields
1	4	31	1 m		2 f	54
2	2		1 m	26	1 f	45
3	2		2 m,f	60	1 f	53
4	2	32	1 m	**	2 m	48
5	2	39	1 m		6 (5m,1f)	50
6	4		6 f	39		
7	1	34**	1 m	43		
8			2 m,f	2 months		

\* gender not recorded; f female; m male; \*\* north to south

# PARKWATCH

## Amazon rainforest drunk on carbon dioxide

Strange things are happening in lush Amazonian rainforests and rising levels of carbon dioxide could be the cause, scientists announced today.

Even in pristine rainforests unaffected by human activities such as logging or burning, researchers have noticed dramatic differences in the growth patterns of trees over the past 20 years.

That could distort the forest's fragile balance, affecting rare plant and animal species, researchers from Panama and Brazil reported in today's issue of the journal *Nature*.

The big winners in the fight were spindly canopy trees and shrubs, such as the manbarklak, sclerobium and parkia, which are fast growing and whose wood is of light density.

The losers were slow-growing, dense tropical hardwoods, such as the croton and oenocarpus, that live in the dark forest interior.

Their decline is significant, because these slow growers are by far the biggest absorbers of carbon. They are the species that give the Amazon its reputation as a vital 'sink' that can suck up CO<sub>2</sub>.

Levels of CO<sub>2</sub> have risen by 30% in the past 200 years because of emissions from vehicles and industry, and rapid forest burning, particularly in the tropics.

Much of the increase in CO<sub>2</sub>, which plants use from the air as a carbon source for photosynthesis, has occurred since 1960.

The scientists suspect the rising CO<sub>2</sub> levels are fertilising the rainforests and increasing competition for light, water and nutrients in the soil. So the big fast-growing trees have an advantage and are outpacing the smaller ones.

The researchers believe the odd change in growth patterns could also be a signal for an overall change in rainforest ecology.

*News in Science: Environment and Nature Thursday, 11 March 2004.*

## Conservationists alarmed over Kosciuszko Cloud Seeding and Road Excisions Proposals

Conservationists say the Carr Government's actions this week have sounded alarm bells that recreational skiing and developer interests are out of control in Kosciuszko. Today

Government announced that it will proceed with cloud-seeding in the alpine area of Kosciuszko National Park and new legislation is due to be passed this week excising ski resort roads.

The National Parks Association of NSW (NPA) and Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) are alarmed over a plan announced today by the Minister for Agriculture that will see five years of cloud seeding within Kosciuszko National Park. Cannons stationed in the park will fire silver halide crystals into clouds, seeking to induce rain over the alpine areas of Kosciuszko.

Cloud seeding is currently illegal, and the Government would need special legislation to see the seeding proceed. The Commonwealth Government rejected a similar proposal in 1994 following negative National Parks and Wildlife Service advice.

'The cloud seeding plan is an engineering fix to give more snow and rain for interests that already cause environmental damage such as ski resorts, Murray River irrigators and Snowy Hydro,' said Andrew Cox, NPA Executive Officer.

'Communities east of Kosciuszko, such as Bombala and Cooma are also likely to suffer from more severe droughts.'

'At the same time, the NSW Government is pushing through legislation, dubbed the Road Kill Bill, that will excise 130km of roads leading to the ski resorts of Perisher, Charlotte Pass and Thredbo and hand it to the RTA. Parliament is expected to pass the bill this week.'

'Once the RTA get control, we predict vehicle speed limits will increase, not decrease. This will increase the already unacceptably high numbers of dead wombats and wallabies and other animals.'

The NPA and NCC say the 'Road Kill Bill' will bring the ski resorts one step closer to their goal of minimal environmental control.

'Yet these rushed proposals fly in the face of a new Plan of Management for Kosciuszko National Park, due to be released in the next month,' said Rob Pallin, NCC Chairperson.

*AdventurePro February, 2004.*

## Cleaner and greener parks

New and emerging sustainable-use technologies are being adopted by the State Government as part of an initiative

to ensure cleaner and greener National Parks and State Forests throughout Queensland. Environment Minister Dean Wells said the Sustainable Parks initiative, outlined in the EPA Annual Report, had seen a variety of innovative solutions adopted into Park infrastructure and management.

'Each year more than 13 million people enjoy the wonders of Queensland's protected areas and the initiative aims to minimise the impact they have on the natural environment. The program includes the introduction over time of a range of sustainable waste, energy and water systems and technologies to provide services and manage these areas. It also includes infrastructure for rangers that live and work in Queensland's National Parks,' Mr Wells said.

Mr Wells said five Parks throughout the State — Carnarvon, Fitzroy Island, Girraween, Glen Rock and Moreton Island, had recently been audited to determine how efficiently power, water and waste was managed. Other initiatives planned for elsewhere in the State included the adoption of more efficient waste management strategies in the remote Cape York region and on Fraser Island. QPWS is also working towards a renewable energy program to progressively convert all remote, off-grid National Parks to cost effective renewable energy power systems.

*NPA News February 2004*

## Kangaroos turn up noses at gum leaves

Kangaroos are fussy eaters. They won't eat gum leaves or anything that grows near them because they don't like the smell, Australian research has found.

So conservationists could plant gum trees near rare plants to give them a better chance of surviving, the researchers say.

The Curtin University of Technology researchers from Western Australia publish their results in the *Journal of Chemical Ecology*.

Other studies have shown red kangaroos avoid plants that contain quinine. But this is the first study to show how kangaroos respond to essential oils in Australian trees.

The researchers looked at western grey kangaroos in Whiteman Park, northeast of Perth, and how they fed on plants from the Myrtaceae family, which

*Continued next page*

# Continuation of Namadgi National Park Forum

The April general meeting of the NPA was devoted to the second forum on policies concerning Namadgi National Park. It is expected that a revised plan of management for the park will be released for comment in July and the NPA is preparing itself for a response to issues that will undoubtedly arise.

The two areas of concern discussed at the April forum were:

1. the preservation and protection of Aboriginal cultural values; and
2. roads and vehicles.

President Kevin McCue led the discussion on preserving Aboriginal cultural values. A lively discussion of the draft policies followed and despite differences of opinion on various issues and wording, there was general agreement on several principles in the draft.

Members recognised the Aboriginal occupation of Namadgi for thousands of years and the many sites of special cultural significance that made a spiritual linkage to the land. There is a need for special protection of these sites. For example, fuel and fire management practice must preserve the integrity of indigenous cultural sites.

There was general agreement also that to strengthen the cultural life of Aboriginal people associated with the park, the NPA ACT supports training and employment of indigenous staff in Namadgi, and looks forward to improved communication with Aboriginal people, their councils and traditional groups to promote better understanding.

Former President Clive Hurlstone presented the draft policies on roads and

vehicles in NNP. Attempts to clarify and edit the draft policies proved difficult and time consuming even though members were generally agreed on the principles involved. For example, there was agreement that wilderness areas should not have any roads at all and vehicles should not be allowed to travel off road. Needed clarification of policies centered on:

What vehicles, of what type, should be permitted on which roads, in which areas, and under what circumstances?

Which roads should be closed, rehabilitated and revegetated?

Since the meeting the Committee has followed through the policies discussed and settled on a policy on the preservation of Aboriginal culture which is set out below.

David Pfanner

## NPA policy on preserving Aboriginal cultural values

1. NPA ACT recognises that Aborigines have occupied the ACT region for thousands of years. There are many sites of special significance for Aborigines both known and yet to be uncovered. Namadgi National Park and the other ACT nature reserves and recreation areas are especially important, having been least disturbed over the last 200 years. We should protect and enhance Aboriginal cultural and spiritual links to the land, especially within the context of protecting and preserving the natural and cultural values of Namadgi National Park.
2. NPA ACT recognises the interest of Aboriginal communities associated with the ACT to pursue traditional cultural activities within the Park.
3. NPA ACT will foster better communication with Aboriginal people, their councils and traditional groups to promote mutual understanding and greater collaboration between us.
4. NPA ACT insists that fire and litter management policies and practices should preserve the integrity of indigenous sites and ensure their protection.
5. NPA ACT supports cross-cultural training, special programs, employment of indigenous staff in the Park and associated activities to
  - (i) strengthen the cultural life of Aboriginal people of the area, and
  - (ii) increase knowledge, understanding and empathy with the indigenous values of the Park.

## PARKWATCH *continued from previous page*

includes eucalypts (gum trees), paperbarks and bottlebrushes.

The essential oils this family produces, such as eucalyptus oils from gum trees, are toxic to bacteria in the kangaroos' guts. These are the bacteria that help the animals digest their food, said one of the researchers, Professor Byron Lamont.

'Anything with essential oils in it seems to deter the kangaroos feeding on them,' Lamont told ABC Science Online.

'If these kangaroos eat these essential oils they lose their appetite and get sick. If they eat a lot of the essential oils they eventually starve,' Lamont said.

The toxicity doesn't extend to other marsupials, such as koalas and possums, which eat gum leaves. Lamont added that their findings could help in the regeneration after serious events like bushfires.

Lamont said that eucalyptus, bottlebrush or paperbark seedlings planted beside more delicate species would give these species a better chance of surviving by protecting the plants from predators.

News in Science: Environment and Nature Thursday, 25 February 2004.

Compiled by Len Haskew

### Member's advertisements

Association members are welcome to advertise in the *Bulletin* personal items such as bushwalking gear, free of charge. Please send ads to me.

Syd Comfort

# Environmental announcements

## Water strategy released

The Chief Minister and Minister for the Environment, Mr Jon Stanhope, has launched "Think water. act water", the strategy for sustainable water resource management in the ACT.

"Water is our most precious resource, so it is vital we address the water issues facing the ACT both now and into the future," Mr Stanhope said. "The strategy outlines a number of key targets for the ACT to achieve, including:

- reducing per capita mains water usage by 12 per cent by 2013, and 25 per cent by 2023. This will be achieved through water efficiency, sustainable water recycling and use of stormwater and rainwater;
- increasing the use of treated wastewater from 5 per cent to 20 per cent, by 2013;
- ensuring that the level of nutrients and sediments entering ACT waterways is no greater than from a well-managed rural landscape; and
- reducing the size of urban stormwater flows so that frequent flows are no larger than those prior to development.

"The strategy addresses a range of issues, including variables affecting the future of the ACT's water resources (population growth, climate change, bushfire impact); water supply options; water use efficiency; water quality; water sensitive urban design; catchment management; riparian zone management; and education and community partnerships.

"It also considers how what happens in the ACT affects water management across the region and downstream. We will review the environmental flow guidelines this year and will also participate in the cap of water diversions as a commitment to our role in looking after the Murray-Darling Basin.

"The strategy identifies that an Integrated Water Supply Strategy will be developed to guide provision of ACT water to neighbouring parts of NSW.

"The Government will offer a range of incentives to households to encourage improvements in water efficiency in the house and garden.

"Regulations will also be introduced to ensure new buildings are constructed to minimise water use and make reuse of wastewater practical.

"The strategy takes into account that these water efficiency measures may be unable to save enough water to avoid the need to construct further water supply

infrastructure in the future. ACTEW has already undertaken an initial assessment into possible infrastructure options to augment supply and will soon release its report on "Options for the next ACT water source".

A copy of "Think water. act water" is available on the thinkwater website at [www.thinkwater.act.gov.au](http://www.thinkwater.act.gov.au) or from Environment ACT on 6207 9777.

## Nature reserve named

The Government has announced that the ACT's newest nature reserve, located in East Gungahlin, is to be Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve. This was once the name of an extensive area west of Lake George that included Old Gundaroo, One Tree Hill (Hall) and other land north of Ginninderra Creek and stretching to behind Mount Ainslie.

## Cats to be contained

Cats in the new suburbs of Bonner and Forde will have to be contained within house properties at all times to protect native wildlife in the nature reserves at Mulligans Flat and Gooroo.

A comprehensive study of domestic cat behaviour was undertaken in the Canberra area in 1998 which showed about 75 per cent of domestic cats hunted. It showed that cats were opportunistic when hunting, and concluded that the proportion of native species taken would be higher in natural environments.

Estimates were that cats preyed about 480 000 animals in the Canberra urban environment each year, including up to 27 per cent of the standing crop of native birds.

The reserve at Mulligans Flat is home to four bird species listed as vulnerable under ACT threatened species legislation—the hooded robin, brown treecreeper, varied sittella and the white-winged triller.

"In addition to some of the vulnerable bird species in these areas, there are also populations of the rare black form of the shingleback, echidna, eight different frog species, 11 other mammal species and 14 other reptile species," Mr Stanhope said.

## Conservation strategy released

The final draft of the ACT Lowland Woodland Conservation Strategy was released on April 29. It details actions for integrated management, protection and enhancement of lowland woodlands

in the ACT, and is the ACT's first action plan that addresses the conservation needs of an endangered ecological community and the threatened plants and animals dependent upon it.

This is the first of three conservation strategies to protect threatened species. The second focuses on native grasslands and threatened grassland animals and plants, and is being prepared for release for public comment later this year. A third strategy covering fish, aquatic and riverine communities will be prepared in 2004–05.

The Lowland Woodland Conservation Strategy can be accessed at [www.environment.act.gov.au](http://www.environment.act.gov.au) on the web, or copies can be obtained by calling at the Environment ACT Helpdesk at Macarthur House, 12 Wattle St, Lyneham, ACT 2602.

## Myna trapping program

Public support has been sought for a pilot program aimed at removing common Indian myna birds from some Canberra suburbs during the autumn.

The Acting Minister for the Environment, Mr Bill Wood, said the program, which would be carried out in two suburbs, was being run by Environment ACT, the ANU and the Canberra Ornithologists Group. It might be expanded across the ACT if successful.

"The myna is regarded as the rat of the bird world and, like rats, they're highly adapted to the urban environment and can reduce or eliminate native species, particularly in woodlands," Mr Wood said.

The trap system developed by the ANU researchers has been extensively evaluated to ensure no adverse impacts will be suffered by native wildlife, and the birds trapped would be destroyed humanely according to strict animal ethics guidelines.

"One of the keys to the pilot's success will be strong community support and I urge Canberrans to support this important volunteer program and help eradicate the myna," Mr Wood said.

To register, contact the Environment Help Line on (02) 6207 9777 or visit the Environment ACT website at [www.environment.act.gov.au](http://www.environment.act.gov.au).

Compiled by Graeme Wicks

# Book Review

## Wet & Wild

By Mark Lintermans and William Osborne, Environment ACT, Canberra, 262pp, \$34.95.

This is a very useful addition to the books and guides that help you know what you are looking at in the bush.

Subtitled "A Field Guide to the Freshwater Animals of the Southern Tablelands and High Country of the ACT and NSW", it is exactly that—an invaluable guide to have with you in the field. But it is a weighty little tome, more suited for the pack than the pocket. It is a pleasure to handle and read, and because of its design and content, a great book to be studied and enjoyed at home.

It deals concisely and comprehensively with the fish, frogs, reptiles, birds, mammals, and a few of the invertebrates found in and associated with freshwater habitats. Early on, the authors clearly state the range and limitations of their work, and are quite comfortable with their inclusions, omissions and inconsistencies. Common sense prevails.

They write: "The guide focuses on vertebrate species—animals with backbones—but some of the larger and more striking invertebrates are also covered, such as yabbies and freshwater crayfish. Both native and alien species are included. ... Terrestrial animals which you may occasionally see in freshwater situations are excluded. Sometimes the distinction between terrestrial and freshwater species is blurred. Wombats and goannas, which are obviously not truly freshwater but are often seen near rivers. Both wombats and goannas are covered in this guide."

Leaving out insects and spiders was a considered decision, but their omission is unfortunate, nevertheless. They are important in the ecology of streams, ponds, bogs, swamps, and wherever else there's water, and they're often very visible and beautiful, and some are quite unusual and localised.

My 1966 edition of *Snowy Mountains Walks*, published by the Geechi Club, says, "In some respects, the insects are the most interesting feature of the Kosciusko (sic) fauna," and notes, in a paragraph that downplays the dangers of copperheads and white-lipped snakes (make up your own mind), that the large funnel web spider of the High Country, whose burrows are frequently seen near streams and elsewhere, is "very aggressive and should be kept at arm's length."

My experience in the mountains is that you see more insects in a day than all the rest of the animals put together, and a book that deals with them as well as *Wet & Wild* deals with its chosen subjects would be a little treasure.

What *Wet & Wild* covers, it covers very well. The layout of each section makes it easy for reading and quick reference. The pages are colour-coded—brown for birds, green for fish, and so on. The general introductions to the sections covering the different groups of animals are concise and informative.

Each creature is given a separate section in which the common and scientific names are given, where found, identification, biology and habitat, distribution and abundance, potential threats (where applicable), and references for further reading. The colour photographs of each of the specimens listed are excellent.

There is an informative section on the nine different types of freshwater habitats of the Southern Tablelands and the High Country, and a worrying list of the threatened freshwater animals. As well as a comprehensive table of contents, the book has an index of common names, an index of scientific names, a glossary, and about 30 pages of references for further reading.

The Foreword is by Professor Peter Cullen, Chief Executive of the Cooperative Centre for Freshwater Ecology. "The wealth of detail in this guide makes its subjects intriguing to the reader," he writes. "Delving into the book and learning about each animal—

how a blackfish lays and fans its eggs, or why lizards shuffle from foot to foot—enriches the reader's understanding of the complex freshwater environment. One of the beauties of the book is that as the reader gains more knowledge, more questions spring forth: How does that frog change colour? Why do some snakes lay eggs while others give birth to live young? How can turtles become dormant?"

Turtles indeed! One of the maxims I have carried with me since I was a boy is: *Turtles have flippers; tortoises have feet. There are no freshwater turtles in Australia.* So for many years I have been mildly distressed to hear people—including scientists who I thought should have known better—refer to freshwater turtles. I wish I had been able to read a guide like this a long time ago.

The authors give the solution to the problem comprehensively and concisely: "The family Chelidae includes aquatic or semi-aquatic turtles. These turtles are usually called tortoises in Australia to distinguish them from the large marine turtles, but they are not true tortoises. True tortoises are not found in Australia. Chelid turtles are found only in Australia, New Guinea and south America and are characterised by being able to bend their head and neck sideways between their upper and lower shell. Their limbs have the appearance of normal legs and are not paddle-shaped. Three species occur in the region covered by this guide; however, only one species, the Eastern Snake-necked Turtle, is widespread."

Informative as *Wet & Wild* is, I found as I was going through it that I was prompted to refer to the NPA's *Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT* and its *Reptiles & Frogs of the Australian Capital Territory* to compare and supplement the information. I found that the three publications complement each other very well. But we could do with two more guides—one on mammals that don't go near the water and another on insects and spiders.

Graeme Wicks

## New members

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

Kate Maurer & David Heap ... Gundaroo  
Brian Bishop & Deb McWherter ... Cook  
Gerald Bennett .....Queanbeyan  
Phil & Jeni Pritchard ..... Gilmore  
Caroline Perkins ..... Nicholls.

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.

**National Parks Association Calendar**

**General Meetings**

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

	June	July	August	September
<i>Public Holidays</i>	<i>Mon 14</i>			
General meetings	Thu 17	Thu 15	Thu 19 <sup>1</sup>	Thu 16
Committee meetings	Thu 3	Thu 1	Thu 5	Thu 2
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration <sup>2</sup>	Sat 12	Sat 10	Sat 14	Sat 11
Bulletin Working Group <sup>3</sup>	Tues 8			
Namadgi NP 20 <sup>th</sup> anniversary	Sun 6			

**Further details** <sup>1</sup> Annual General Meeting; <sup>2</sup> Yankee Hat carpark 10:00am. Clive Hurlstone 6288 7592 (h). 040 778 3422 (mob); <sup>3</sup> Syd Comfort 6286 2578

**Thursday 17 June 2004**

*Think water, act water—sustainable water management for the ACT.*

Karen Civil, Water Resources Strategy Implementation Team, Environment ACT.

The government recently released its strategy for sustainable water resource management—Think water, act water. This presentation will provide an overview of the measures in the strategy to address the provision of reliable, quality water for the ACT for the long term—out to 2050—including a range of rebates and incentives to be offered to assist with water conservation in the home and garden.

**Thursday 15 July 2004**

*Managing grassy woodlands in the Bush Capital.*

Steve Taylor, Canberra Nature Park Ranger, Parks and Conservation Service, Environment ACT.

On April 29, Jon Stanhope MLA, Minister for the Environment, announced the name of the latest addition to Canberra Nature Park—Goorooyarroo. Goorooyarroo–Mulligans Flat contains some of the best examples of yellow box-red gum grassy woodland. It is one of the largest reserves of this habitat type and is home to a number of threatened species. Steve Taylor will have photos taken in the area last spring to accompany his talk.

**Thursday 19 August 2004**

*Annual General Meeting*

The AGM agenda is set out on page 3 of this *Bulletin*.

The guest speaker will be NPA member and inquisitive traveller, Adrienne Nicholson whose subject is

*Lemurs, chameleons and baobabs.*

Madagascar has been described as one of the most ecologically rich countries in the world. Sadly, it is also one of the most economically poor, placing a major burden on its natural heritage and biodiversity. Lemurs and chameleons are two reasons to go to Madagascar, but the visitor will find much, much more of interest in this amazing red land.

**Nominations for NPA office bearers and committee 2004/5**

Nominations are sought for office bearers and committee members to be elected at the AGM on August 19. This form can be photocopied and used for nominations

**We nominate..... for the position of..... in the NPA ACT for 2004/5**

Proposed by..... (signature)

Seconded by..... (signature) I accept the nomination..... (signature)

Date.....

**NPA Bulletin**

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