

# NIPA Bulletin



Volume 41 number 3  
September 2004

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**Namadgi's birthday celebrations**

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**Woodlands conserved**

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**Water matters**

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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.

### Office-bearers

<i>President</i>	Kevin McCue	6251 1291 (h)
<i>Vice-President</i>	Vacant	
<i>Secretary</i>	Christine Goonrey	6231 8395 (h)
<i>Treasurer</i>	Rod Griffiths	6288 6988 (h)

### Committee members

Chris Emery	6249 7604 (h)
Judy Kelly	6253 1859 (h. after 7.30pm)
Steven Forst	6251 6817(h), 6219 5236(w)

### Immediate Past President

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

<i>Outings Sub-committee</i>	Steven Forst	6251 6817(h), 6219 5236(w)
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The NPA ACT office is in MacLaurin Crescent, Chifley, next to the preschool. It is staffed by volunteers but, at present, not on a regular basis. Callers may leave phone or email messages at any time and they will be attended to. The post office mail box is cleared daily.

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### Advertising

The Bulletin accepts advertisements and inserts. The standard cost of an A4 insert is \$310 but some concessional rates may be arranged.

### NPA Bulletin

Contributions of articles, line drawings and photographs, including colour prints, are welcome and should be lodged with the office or Syd Comfort (02) 6286 2578.

### Deadline for December 2004 issue: 1 November 2004

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

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**Cover photo:** The Hon Tom Uren OA and Fiona MacDonald Brand OAM at celebrations of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Namadgi National Park. Photo Kevin McCue

# From the President

The draft plan of management for Namadgi National Park is now expected to be released in January 2005. The extra time will hopefully allow us to evaluate feedback from the recently released draft plan of management for the adjoining Kosciuszko National Park. At least we can use the NPA ACT submission on the KNP POM to hone our own response to the Namadgi draft plan.

As members of the Australian Alps National Parks we would hope for significant similarities in the plans of management. We each share a common vision: that the parks are there to preserve the natural and cultural values for future generations. Each park has as its core significant wilderness areas that are recognised internationally under various conventions. Each of the parks surround large man-made reservoirs with multi use functions, the provision of potable water, irrigation, power (mini-hydro plants in the ACT), and recreation.

There are differences too, some of which we hope to remove such as the KNP POM allowing bike riding in wilderness areas, an activity that is banned in ACT and Victorian national parks. The issue of Alpine Resorts is one we don't suffer and we will

strenuously oppose any such development proposals for Namadgi.

The recent experience of routing the Gungahlin Drive extension through the Canberra Nature Park on Black Mountain gives us cause to wonder just how secure are the declarations or disallowable instruments guaranteeing our system of nature parks. The ACT Government excised the GDE route from the park and the Conservator of ACT Wildlife signed the death warrants of many native plants, animals and birds, simply by making a declaration that the land ceased to be reserved land, a process made without recourse to public consultation. The destruction of the bush on O'Connor Ridge and Black Mountain—I can hear the mechanical clashing of machinery as I write—has been unexpectedly brutal and cruelly effective.

The situation in the US is worse. Vice-President Cheney and his colleagues have issued a report calling for the opening of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and wilderness areas of the West to fossil fuel development. The first point of their 25-point Wise Use Agenda also calls for oil drilling in the Refuge. In addition, they propose to log the Tongass National Forest of Alaska (which the Bush administration approved in late 2003), and all other

old-growth trees on public lands. Their agenda calls for gutting the Endangered Species Act, opening wilderness to commercial development and motorised recreation, and outsourcing management of national parks to private firms. Could it happen here?

The 2004 defense authorisation bill of \$401.3 billion that President Bush signed into law in November 2003 exempts the military from abiding by the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act. The Commonwealth Government has recently agreed to establish several joint military training grounds in Australia with the US, two of them near sensitive marine parks. Will similar exemptions be granted to the military here? Who in government has a mandate to protect our wildlife species when the conservator is also their executioner? These roles ought to be separated, just as the national parks are not under the protection of the head forester.

Obviously there is much ahead for the new Committee. Wish them luck and better still join the committee or offer some help. Thanks to all of you and we hope you will be there again through the coming year.

Kevin McCue, President

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## NPA annual general meeting

There was a good attendance at the AGM held at O'Connor on August 19. The minutes of the 2003 meeting were accepted and the President, Kevin McCue, presented his annual report which is printed in full on page 4. Treasurer Steven Forst presented the financial report which showed an operating profit of \$3310 for the year. Both reports were accepted by the meeting. Judy Kelly reported on the publication of *Burning Issues*, David Large on the Outings Committee and Eleanor Stodart on the Gudgenby Bush

Regeneration Group. Members passed a vote of thanks to the office bearers and Committee members in appreciation of their work during a busy year.

Office bearers for the ensuing year were elected, the new committee being set out on page 2, opposite. The President asked members to consider offering to fill the vacant positions of Vice President and committee members.

At the conclusion of the formal part of the meeting, association member Adrienne Nicholson gave a fascinating presentation, "Lemurs, chameleons and

baobabs", based on a recent trip to Madagascar, Mauritius and Réunion. The talk was complemented by some wonderful slides including some gems of a chameleon the size of a fingernail. The evening concluded with the traditional *gluhwien* supper.

Syd Comfort

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### **"Red" Spot — 2004–2005 Subscriptions are overdue**

Members' subscriptions for the 2004–2005 year became due on June 30. A marker has been put on your *Bulletin* address label if the association's records show that your 2004–05 subscription has not been received. Please check.

# President's Report August AGM 2004 — the year we have had

The 2003–2004 year was no less challenging for NPA ACT than the previous 12 months though certainly not as traumatic. Over time a structure of sorts has re-emerged consisting of the management committee and working groups:

#### Management Committee

- Policy
- Bulletin
- Environmental Submissions
- Outings
- Newsletter
- Office
- Tree Book
- Web site.

We have interacted regularly with Environment ACT, mainly through the Parks and Wildlife Service, and with environmental groups including the Conservation Council of the Southeast Region and Canberra, the Victorian and NSW NPAs and the Colong Foundation, and have promised support to the Friends of the Mongarlowe River in their interest in the Monga National Park.

The Committee recognised early on that to respond to the various bushfire enquiries and provide input into draft plans of management for Namadgi and Kosciuszko National Parks, members would need to speak with one voice on behalf of the organisation. The organisation of NPA in turn must represent members' values. Our values date back to our beginnings in 1960 which culminated in the declaration of a national park for the national capital and by continuing activities such as: preparation of submissions on environmental issues, participating in work parties in the national park and nature reserves, and bushwalking in the region. We aim to ensure that Namadgi National Park exists for future generations as part of a broader Alpine National Park with a lasting and diverse series of nature parks throughout the ACT. Canberra is after all the Bush Capital.

We needed to formulate and write down our policies. Members had been bloodied by a searching series of public forums on the new draft plan of management for Namadgi National Park

and realised that written policies were necessary to underpin our future submissions for protecting park values. So a lot of energy has focused on drafting policies on: wilderness; Aboriginal culture and heritage; roads and vehicles; commercial use; recreation and access; and fire management in Namadgi NP, and then taking them to two general meetings for discussion, modification and approval. This democratic process, consensus not majority, is not yet complete. We are working on policies relating to nature and purpose of national parks; land use in close proximity to national parks and reserves; flora and fauna; walking tracks; settler and post-settler cultural heritage. The process has certainly strengthened and focused our understanding of the issues.

When release of the draft Namadgi plan of management was deferred for a year, the Environmental Submissions Working Group responded to the draft plan of management for Kosciuszko National Park, and a separate draft plan on proposed developments of the alpine resorts.

Since the bushfires of January 2003, NPA members have participated in a series of work parties in Namadgi, several on the Yerrabi Track, others concerned with feral plants and animals, yet others on water quality and hut safety. Great progress has been made in ridding the park of the Gudgenby pine plantation following a five-year lobbying effort by NPA members and others in the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group. This group has made great progress re-vegetating part of the former plantation.

It hasn't all been work. We celebrated with many others including the then Minister Tom Uren, the 20th anniversary of the declaration of Namadgi National Park out at the Namadgi Visitor Centre. We organised bushwalks, always an integral part of NPA activities, from pack walks to more social strolls through the bush. Many members use these walks for social and health reasons, others for educational purposes to learn about the birds, trees, and reptiles that inhabit our

parks using the three NPA field guides. Preliminary planning has ensured NPA ACT will jointly host the Great Australian Bushwalk with the Canberra Bushwalking Club this coming spring.

Another work party is progressing well with revising and republishing a coloured edition of the out-of-print book on the trees of the ACT that is bound to be a popular seller.

The task of publicising NPA and member activities, and informing and educating members and public falls to the *Bulletin* and newsletter groups and exhibiting our colourful display. We are reactivating the association's web site; a design brief and style have been agreed upon from which a mockup has been built and the content is being assembled so that we can go to tender.

The NPA office is run by another group of volunteers: some take phone messages, open mail, file material, and deal with membership issues while others organise the upgrade of computer software and hardware, essential activities that save the committee a lot of time.

I would like to sincerely thank the outgoing Committee for their enthusiasm and good humour, it has been a pleasure working with them. And on their behalf I would like to thank those many dedicated members who quietly get on with producing the *Bulletin* and *Burning Issues*, the Outings program, volunteer work programs and a new ACT tree book. Other members support the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group, the NPA ACT office, our meetings speaker-program, take minutes or prepare suppers, even write submissions and policy documents and letters to newspapers and members of parliament.

All of these activities will continue into and through next year. The committee hope that the many volunteers who selflessly gave of their time and energy will continue to do so and be joined by new members, making this a better natural world than the one we now live in.

**Kevin McCue**

# Namadgi Plan of Management

The July issue of the association email newsletter, *Burning Issues*, outlined the matters discussed at the community workshop conducted by Environment ACT on June 30. The main concern of the meeting was the Namadgi National Park Plan of Management, the draft of which is now expected to be available in January 2005. The following paragraphs summarise some of the main issues concerning the plan, most of which were considered during the forum.

The revised plan will contain a lot more detail than does the existing plan and is likely to follow the pattern set out in the recently released Kosciuszko draft plan. The amount of detail will, however, be constrained by the need for the plan to have sufficient flexibility to meet circumstances which may arise during the life of the plan.

The establishment of the Interim Namadgi Advisory Board, and the announcement in 2001 of the intention to establish a special Aboriginal lease over the park, represent significant changes in the machinery for the administration of Namadgi. The full introduction of these proposals can be expected to take some time and the development of the Namadgi plan of management will continue in the meantime. The plan will be affected to the extent that eventual changes flowing from the proposals can be anticipated.

The introduction of the Interim Namadgi Advisory Board has enabled the views of the indigenous community in the operation of Namadgi to be expressed and some specific suggestions to be made, for example, the establishment of Aboriginal cultural camps within the park. This process introduces a dimension in the operation of the park not specifically recognised in the existing plan but which now needs to be addressed.

The current working draft of the plan includes a system of zones covering the whole park and which would be fundamental to defining allowable practices and permissible establishment of facilities and structures in the park. In this process the use of the term "wilderness" as a zone name would be discontinued. As the construct of zones would be a key element of the plan, agreement on the details for each zone is a major focus for all parties with an interest in the park. For example, in the forum, concern was expressed that the draft zoning provisions permitted the use of wilderness areas by commercial groups, something that is not permitted in the draft Kosciuszko plan.

Fire management provisions in the plan present a major issue in which the results of broader studies such as the McLeod Inquiry, the Coronial Inquiry and the ACT Strategic Fire Access Plan will have significant impact. The options include the establishment of a new complex of fire trails in the Booth Range to accommodate tankers, which in addition to consideration of damage flowing from the construction, would raise questions about the policing of the use of the trails by unauthorised vehicles. In answer to questions at the forum, the Director of Environment ACT, Dr Maxine Cooper, stated that although the Namadgi Fire Management Plan will not be entirely complete it is hoped that the draft plan will include a fire trail network rather than options or scenarios. Dr Cooper also indicated that she will be responsible for making the decision and will put a recommendation to the Minister.

The provisions for horse riding in the park continue to raise concerns. Although it is proposed that horse riding access be maintained at current levels, that is, on trails east of Old

Boboyan Road, the working draft proposes that the Mount Clear Pound be upgraded to provide shelter for horse riding groups. This was questioned as perhaps being at the expense of other park users. NPA representatives at the forum proposed that horse riding be limited to management trails.

A wide range of issues associated with the operation of commercial interests within the park was raised at the forum. These included the zones available to commercial operators, the operation of a licensing system and allowable group sizes. Concerns were also raised about large non-commercial groups using the park.

The future of huts in the park has been addressed in the plan and although there is no proposal to permit the construction of new huts, provision is made for the replacement of existing huts.

Noting that the park includes extensive water catchments, questions were raised about the power any new catchment management authority would have to issue directions to land—that is, park—managers. The forum was told that the Catchment Management Board will have a coordinating role for the key stakeholders who have management and other responsibilities in the catchment and for the implementation of the Cotter Catchment Plan.

During the forum, many issues were raised concerning the use of the park for various forms of recreation ranging from mountain bikes to non-powered flight, each of which involves its own specific questions. The NPA continues to press that the conservation values of the park must take precedence in all these considerations.

Syd Comfort

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## Feral horses in Namadgi

*The NPA President sent the following message to the ACT Chief Minister Mr Jon Stanhope on 16 June following the Government's decision to remove feral horses from Namadgi National Park.*

Dear Minister

NPA ACT applauds your Government's action in removing feral animals from Namadgi National Park and we support your Government shooting horses as the most effective and humane method of effecting their removal.

Your Government's response accords with NPA ACT policies on the removal of feral animals from the national park and nature reserves of the ACT.

Kevin McCue

# A ranger's view of Canberra Nature Park



In his talk to the July meeting of the association, Ranger Steve Taylor outlined the breadth of responsibilities involved in the management of the 27 reserves which make up Canberra Nature Park (CNP) and the particular values of the most recent addition to the park, Gorooyaroo. Steve, currently working in the northernmost reserves, brings to the position an extensive background in bush regeneration and botanical gardens management.

The reserves of Canberra Nature Park are adjacent to the suburban areas of the city and, as might be expected, this interface leads to some particular problems that may not be a worry in more remote reserves. The nature reserves are biologically important but the parks' neighbours do not always recognise the significance of the endangered species in the reserves nor for that matter some of the cultural values protected by the park. For example, Black Mountain reserve contains over 50 species of orchid, about half of the native orchids. Again,

Gorooyaroo and Mulligans Flat provide the best locations for shinglebacks, but dog owners often fail to realise the importance of keeping dogs on leashes and that unleashed dogs in their exuberance can seriously injure these animals.

Another problem which is particularly significant in these suburban located reserves is the damage done to fences and other assets by walkers, trail bike riders and the dumping of stolen cars, all of which place a heavy drain on the time of staff. Steve discussed the options available to reduce problems of this type which in summary come down to compliance and education. Effective patrolling for compliance demands staff levels which are not available, so although these compliance measures are used, greater emphasis is placed on programs directed towards gaining public cooperation and understanding of the importance of the values of the reserves and respecting management practices. Ranger-guided walks are becoming increasingly



important in this regard. Other interpretative work being undertaken includes wildflower walks, spotlighting, school talks, press releases and radio and TV interviews.

Steve drew attention to the wide responsibility range

for Canberra Nature Park staff. These include:

- weed and feral animal control
- fire management—the most active brigade in the ACT is the park brigade
- dealing with urban wildlife and straying stock—for example, relocating snakes
- grazing management where it is used as a control measure within the park
- management of some 40 parcels of land—for example, leases—not part of CNP
- conduct of surveys of flora and fauna in conjunction with wildlife research agencies.

In all these areas the emphasis is on the long-term management of the reserves.

With a combined area of some 16 000 hectares, Gorooyaroo and Mulligans Flat constitute the largest remaining area of yellow box-red gum woodland. It also represents a transition from grassland through woodland to forest. Most of the reserve area has been grazed for many years but within this there has been considerable variation in the grazing practice with the result that the northern section has benefited from a more conservative regime and now contains a greater cover of native plants. Gorooyaroo is home to many rare birds including the brown tree creeper and the hooded robin and a number of threatened species such as the shingleback and the striped legless lizard. Weeds such as serrated tussock and phalaris present problems and require the development of specific control programs. A fox baiting program has already achieved some good results although the problem of reintroduction from the suburbs remains. Domestic animals from nearby suburbs pose threats and despite controls on cats which apply to neighbouring suburbs, park staff are aware that as suburban development comes closer these problems can be expected to increase.

Two conclusions remained with me from Steve's talk—firstly that in Gorooyaroo we have an outstanding addition the ACT's system of reserves and secondly that the management of this reserve is being developed from a sound data base with the emphasis on the long term.

Syd Comfort

*Photos of Gorooyaroo taken during Len Haskew's walk on 4 July.*

# Goorooyaroo—a tale and a heartfelt thank you

The 4th of July was a beautiful Canberra winter's day with clear skies and a slight breeze—quite ideal for an attempt on the Guinness Book of Records. So off went 14 walkers, ably led by Len Haskew, to explore Goorooyaroo, the then latest local nature reserve. Along the track we went, past the empty dams, and up and down a couple of hills until we reached a scenic spot for our morning nibbles. We talked of the splendid views of Canberra and surrounds, the dryness of the countryside, the paucity of bird life and how good it felt to be out and active with such a congenial group.

Yet barely a half hour later she tripped on a small rock and fell to the concrete-like ground. It almost required block and tackle to get her upright. But she surely had earned a place in that famous book—the first person to break a limb in Goorooyaroo and the first female to break two shoulders just 14 months apart!!

What followed is what we have come to expect and admire when NPA members are faced with an emergency—a truly textbook response

and decisive action. While my muddled mind was nutting out a few wobbly ideas, Leader Len announced a sound evacuation plan within no time. Max Lawrence knew the owner of the boundary property (is there any local property owner Max does not know?) and kindly offered to walk back to the carpark to bring my car to the property homestead. This meant I only had to walk half a kilometre. Len asked Steve Hill to assume leadership of the remaining group and Steve, I heard, fearlessly edged his troop back to the cars before nightfall.

Meantime, I was rugged in a plastic cape and Judy Webster's elegant woollen cap (the latter to keep that fogged brain under control) while Adrienne Nicholson volunteered to accompany me and Len to the homestead to await Max's arrival. Everyone else offered comfort, and sweets, and drinks, etc, and although I had let the team down, no one showed the slightest displeasure that a chunk had been taken out of their day in the bush.

So as Steve and his group disappeared into the unknown of Goorooyaroo, Len and Adrienne walked me to the homestead, Len thoughtfully scouting ahead to find the quickest route and Adrienne guiding me around anything that looked like a "trippable object"!! They even rustled up several lovely horses for me to talk to, to help forget the painful arm, and capped their distractions with a flock of some 50 wood ducks on a large ornamental lake.

It was Max who drove me home and parked my car and Adrienne who took me to Canberra Hospital and waited with me until relieved by Beverley Hammond. And Col McAlister, not on the walk, cheerfully drove Max back to collect his car at Lyneham.

I sincerely thank those named above and all the others on the NPA walk for their kindness in assisting me after my accident. Your caring concern and practical aid were indeed appreciated and helped lessen the trauma of an unwelcome incident. Thank you, thank you.

Margaret Aston

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## Field Guide to the Native Trees of the ACT

Colour is the way to go!

The Tree Book committee has decided that the way to inform the general public and to encourage them to buy NPA ACT's book to learn more about the local trees, is to offer a well-bound, easily carried, water-resistant, colourful book.

We plan to have a coloured photo to accompany each tree, picking out a

main identifying feature, such as a juvenile leaf, flower, seed pod, or the whole tree shape. The pen drawings will still be there.

*Eucalyptus calandulensis* has been added and corrections and additional information have been incorporated into the text. Some extra, accessible places to view specific trees have been included as, since the 2003 fires, several

specimens and locations have been badly damaged.

Now is the time to talk to a member of our group—Sonja Lenz, Roger Farrow, Roger Green, Clive Hurlstone, and Beverley Hammond—if you have any suggestions.

Beverley Hammond

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## Award for Joan Goodrum

Long-time association member Joan Goodrum has been awarded the NRMA Insurance ACT Volunteer Award in the environmental category. Joan was one of the winners in the ACT Volunteer of the Year Awards announced in May.

Volunteering is no new thing for Joan who joined the Women's Voluntary Service in India aged 15. Since coming to Canberra in 1968, Joan has been involved in many community

organisations concerned with natural conservation, indigenous culture and archaeology. Her recent work with Water Watch and the rehabilitation of the Gudgenby area, and her respect for and understanding of Aboriginal culture are well known to NPA members.

Association members congratulate Joan on her well deserved award.

### ***Burning Issues***

Judy Kelly, the editor of the NPA email newsletter, *Burning Issues*, would like members to notify her of any change of email address. Her phone number is 6253 1859 (h) and her email address is shown in *Burning Issues*.

# Namadgi National Park 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration

Environment ACT hosted a lunch and afternoon program in the Visitor Centre on Sunday June 6 to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of Namadgi National Park. This was also an opportunity to mark World Environment Day and the establishment of Gudgenby Nature Reserve, the precursor of Namadgi National Park. The principal guest was the Hon Tom Uren OA who as Minister for Territories and Local Government approved the establishment of Namadgi National Park on World Environment day 1984.

Guests were welcomed by Dr Maxine Cooper, the Executive Director of Environment ACT, and to Ngunnawal country by Agnes Shea. In addition to an address by Mr Uren, there was a series of presentations by a number of speakers each with a strong involvement with Namadgi. Peter Hann spoke of his working life in the park spanning the period from being the first ranger to park manager. Daphne Curtis lived for many years on the Mount Clear property and spoke feelingly of her life there before Mount Clear was incorporated into Namadgi when the park was formed. Namadgi ranger Amanda Carey gave a very frank but inspiring account of a ranger's life today. Matthew Higgins drew on his extensive knowledge of the area to give a concise but comprehensive picture of the cultural values of Namadgi. Dianne Thompson, representing the Interim Namadgi Advisory Board, gave an interesting presentation on park values built around a painting "Drought Spirits" by Yorta Yorta artist Treaahna Hamm. Other speakers were the Manager of Namadgi, Brett McNamara, and NPA members Fiona MacDonald Brand and Eleanor Stodart. Dr Cooper brought the proceedings to a close by presenting her vision of the future of Namadgi. Summaries of some of the presentations are set out below.

Syd Comfort



*Cutting the cake. Dr Maxine Cooper, Executive Director of Environment ACT and Agnes Shea, member of the Interim Namadgi Advisory Board, with Mr Tom Uren. Photo Syd Comfort*

## The natural values— Eleanor Stodart

As part of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration for Namadgi National Park I was asked to speak about the park's natural values. With only 12 minutes allotted I had to make it a quick overview. I chose to start from the broad picture, the landscape values, and move to the detail of variation in soil types.

I talked to Martin Chalk and he offered to provide photographs. I gave him an approximate list of what I wanted and he delivered a selection on a CD, and then put together the final choice in PowerPoint format for showing on the Visitor Centre's brand new projector (installed on the Wednesday before the presentation). The photographs were commended and I think they were well worth the effort. I was the only speaker to

illustrate my talk, and some of the photographs also related to other talks.

I began by saying that in Namadgi cultural and natural values are intertwined as people were part of the ecosystem as it changed and the tree line moved higher after the last Ice Age. Photographs supported the intertwining, with Brayslaws Hut blanketed in snow illustrating the uniqueness of having snow near a capital city and the Aboriginal rock formation on a granite slab on Mt Namadgi being one of the illustrations of the importance of boulders in the landscape.

I spoke about the importance of water collection and filtering both for the ACT and as part of the Murray-Darling Basin, of the landscape viewed from the city and from the hills and valleys in the park, of the boulders, and the wilderness experience. I touched quickly on the different vegetation types, the tall wetter forests, tree ferns, alpine trees, forests on drier slopes, wetlands, and grassy valley floors, and the importance of the variation in soil types, before concluding with thanks for those who had the foresight to ensure the values are protected for future generations.



*Len Huskew and Eleanor Stodart among the audience. Photo Kevin McCue*



## The political scene— The Hon Tom Uren OA

Tom Uren lost no time in declaring his empathy with Namadgi by saying that during the 2003 fires, "When Namadgi was burning I was burning with it". He recalled being the Labor Party's first environmental spokesman and when included in the first Whitlam ministry would have welcomed being given the environment portfolio. Instead he was given other responsibilities and particularly enjoyed those for the National Estate which included the establishment of the Heritage Commission and the Register of the National Estate. For eight of his 31 years in Parliament he had ministerial responsibilities and the time he spent in the capital developed into a love affair with Canberra.

When he was appointed Minister for Territories and Local Government in the Hawke government he did not approach his responsibilities for the ACT as a "generalissimo" but sought to work with members of the community. He developed a great respect for the National Capital Development Commission during his five years as minister but did not always agree with the commission's views. He took the bold step of ruling out all development to the west of the Murrumbidgee River and approved the declaration of Namadgi National Park despite the commission's opposition. Whilst not claiming authorship of the concept, he supported the vision of one great national park embracing the alpine areas. He considered that the issues not the politics must come first.

At 83, he admits to feeling like 21 and that being in Namadgi gives him a feeling of great warmth.

Syd Comfort

## The community perspective—Fiona MacDonald Brand OAM

As a member of the Canberra community I acknowledge we are meeting on Ngunnawal land.

I've been asked to tell you briefly the history of the formation of Namadgi National Park as seen by a founding member of the National Parks Association of the ACT.

The history of the formation of national parks worldwide shows that there are three necessary elements. Firstly, someone has to recognise that a certain area is so environmentally valuable that it must be kept for future

generations; secondly, a group who shares the vision forms around this person and idea and demonstrates the staying power to lobby governments for as many years as it takes; thirdly, there has to be political will to eventually legislate to declare the national park.

These three elements are in the story of the foundation of Namadgi National Park.

Dr Nancy Burbidge, a botanist at CSIRO and a member of the Royal Society, in 1959 arranged an exhibition of the nature photography of Edric Slater of CSIRO. Nancy wanted to "test the waters" to see if the people of Canberra were interested in the natural environment and the idea of forming a National Parks Association which could lobby for a national park in the ACT.

A large number of people viewed the exhibition and expressed interest, so Nancy with several CSIRO colleagues and Prof. Pryor of the Forestry School, called a meeting at the Institute of Anatomy in early March 1960. The meeting was well attended and a committee was appointed to found a National Parks Association of the ACT with the aim to gain "A National Park for the National Capital".

The NPA Committee in 1962 authorised Dr Robert Story, Julie Henry and myself to investigate the bushland around Mt Kelly to see if that area was suitable as a national park. The Alpine Club had a bushwalk to Mt Kelly on their autumn program so we joined this party led by Allan Bagnall. We walked over the paddocks of the Boboyan Valley, climbed into the forested hills between Mt Gudgenby and Mt Scabby and followed sparkling Sams Creek to the foot of Mount Kelly where we camped overnight. On the following day



Two past president of NPA ACT, Neville Esau and Kevin Frawley. Photo Kevin McCue

we climbed the 6000ft high Mount Kelly. The views all round, over mountain ranges and valleys and to the Long Plain and mountains of Kosciusko National Park convinced us that this piece of beautiful alpine country must be a national park for all future generations.

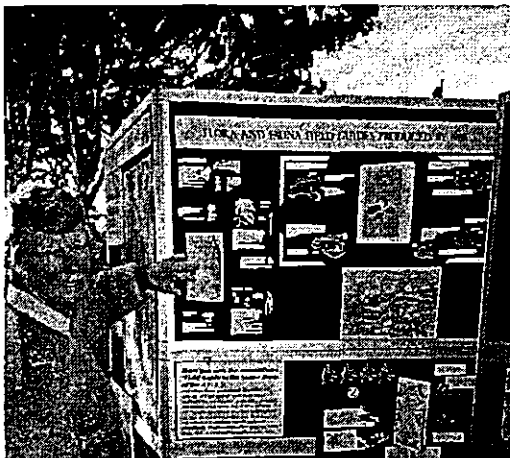
Julie and Robert wrote the proposal for a modest sized national park, calling upon CSIRO and ANU experts to add their information. The proposal, with maps and photographs was presented to the Minister for the Interior, Mr Gordon Freeth, in 1963 and the association awaited the result.

It proved to be a long wait, but the committees patiently presented the proposal to each succeeding Minister for the Interior. None of them said the proposal was nonsense, but they said money was not available for such a proposal. Fortunately, there was goodwill within the Minister's department and over the years sympathetic public servants added pieces of land to the original proposal, and the Gudgenby Nature Reserve of 51 000ha was declared in 1979 by the Minister Bob Ellicott.

In the year 1983 Mr Tom Uren was appointed Minister for Territories and Local Government, and he agreed to accompany the NPA Committee, led by Vice President Den Robin and Past President Neville Esau, into the proposed national park area. Mr Uren was and is a great environmentalist and when he saw the beautiful mountains and valleys he said of course the area has to be a national park. The Namadgi National Park was gazetted in 1984.

Political will had given the community what it had been seeking for 21 years.

Adrienne Nicholson with the NPA display at the Visitor Centre. Photo Syd Comfort.



# Contemporary park management – Brett McNamara

Today's park manager carries a vast array of skills and abilities in his or her tool kit. He or she needs to be adaptive, flexible, somewhat opportunistic and very responsive. It's one of those jobs where on any given day you can be called to a fire as the Incident Controller, respond to ministerial requests or coordinate a search and rescue operation for a lost bushwalker.

When I first started my career as a land manager some 22 years ago in the Northern Territory, I recall that park management revolved around the protection of plants and animals. You learnt the scientific names and studied the habitats of those plants and animals, and you got to know your patch by wandering around the place. What a job—you got paid to go wandering around in the bush!

But over the years, like all sciences, park management has evolved. While the general philosophy may still be the same, the underlying principles and values have further evolved. Today we see park management more holistically, we see it more in terms of catchment management and from a bioregional perspective. Perhaps the best example of this approach to land management is the Australian Alps national parks cooperative management program. The Alps program is all about breaking down state and territory barriers and viewing the Alps parks as a bioregion, not just individual parks and reserves—to my mind a significant development in the "science" of park management.

Today, I see park management as being based on four key 'foundation principles': the management and enhancement of the natural and cultural values of the estate, recreational access, and community engagement and involvement in our parks and reserves.

As you can appreciate sometimes these values come into conflict with one another, but as a park manager you need to be able to strike a balance in resolving such issues while delivering a positive outcome for the overriding conservation values of the estate being the park.

Reflecting on the presentation provided by Peter Hann, I am struck by the advances made in such areas as information technology. Who would have thought 20 years ago that one day rangers would be wandering around the



*Agnes Shea, Brett McNamara and Fiona MacDonald Brand at the Namadgi birthday party. Photo Kevin McCue.*

bush with digital mobile phones strapped to their belts, drive around in 4wd vehicles fitted with Global Positioning Systems, then stop and download traffic information data on to a laptop only to return to the office to access their electronic mail. Truly amazing advances!

To give you a quick example of how things have changed from Peter's experience of 20 years ago, allow me to paint you the following picture. It's a Monday morning, and like 20 years ago the manager starts his day with a quick glance over the in-tray, the only difference being that my in-tray is my email inbox. The emails can range from material which needs to be urgently reviewed for an ongoing coronial inquiry, through to providing comments on a detailed ministerial briefing on vertebrate pests in the park, followed by an email requesting the latest expenditure figures as well as a forecast timeline regarding a complex capital works project. This is then closely followed up by an email from our recruitment area highlighting the need to extend a number of temporary staff contracts. All of these need to be responded to and dealt with before 9am!

The other striking feature of today's contemporary park management is the language we now use ... phrases such as strategic planning, integrated nature conservation planning, operational implementation plans, core business, key result areas, outcomes versus outputs, are all part of everyday park

management language! It all sounds very important, so one day I should get someone to explain to me what it all really means.

One thing that has not changed over the years is the passion and enthusiasm rangers and field officers bring to their jobs. I am yet to come across a group of people more committed to their jobs than those employed by park conservation agencies.

My family and I have been very fortunate in that not only have we had a close association with the mountains of Namadgi for over 12 years, but we have also spent some time living on and in the estate. While the devastating fires of 2003 have changed the fabric of the park, and affected us directly, I believe that the fires in turn will enrich the landscape as nature continues to recover, with the fires also forming part of the history of the mountains.

What park management is all about is leaving and enriching the lasting legacy for those who will follow. I would like to acknowledge those who have preceded me and thank them for their efforts in leaving us their legacy. In turn, I can only but hope that at the end of my shift as manager of Namadgi National Park the legacy that you have given us will flourish and prosper well into the future.

We are merely caretakers of a rich and unique community asset.

# Concern over impact of rural villages

Community and conservation groups as well as the National Capital Authority (NCA) have reservations about the ACT Government's plan to rebuild the former 13-home Pierces Creek settlement as a rural village with 50 homes built to "world class" standards and establish new villages at Stromlo and Uriarra.

The January 2003 bushfires destroyed 83 per cent of the houses at Uriarra, Stromlo and Pierces Creek. Twelve of the 13 Pierces Creek houses were destroyed.

The NCA in August told the Federal Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories that the National Capital Open Space System was at stake and it would not agree to change the classification of the Pierces Creek area from "mountains and bushlands" to "rural" to allow the 50-house plan to go ahead. However, the NCA did not object to the 12 Pierces Creek homes being rebuilt.

The President of the ACT Rural Lessees Association, Harold Adams, says that the ACT development lobby has convinced the ACT Government that rehousing the former residents of forestry settlements destroyed in the bushfire is "best done by expanding the former forestry settlements into upmarket rural villages—in other words, suburbs in the country."

"While the case for revitalising the Stromlo settlement, which adjoins the suburb of Duffy, has considerable merit, the re-establishment and expansion of Pierces Creek settlement to a village of 50 houses is questionable, given its fire-prone setting," Mr Adams said in *The Canberra Times* on July 21.

"In the case of Uriarra, which lies outside the Spatial Plan's 15km consolidation zone, the 21-dwelling settlement is to be expanded to an upmarket village of 120."

The "social, economic and environmental issues which flow from these proposals are tendentious and questionable, the rural village concept has little support from concerned community groups".

"In the case of the Conservation Council, which represents the interest of some 35 community and conservation organisations, it has consistently advocated a more compact city for economic, social and environmental reasons," he says.

"It has pointed out that rural villages and rural residential developments, such as hobby farms, are a prime example of urban sprawl which impacts adversely on greenhouse and biodiversity outcomes."

Mr Adams says the ACT Government envisages development costs of \$98 000 per block, with each

house costing \$300 000, plus added costs for fire, ambulance, police and other services.

The Chief Minister, Jon Stanhope, said on June 3 the Government's plan was to create two new rural villages and a settlement connected to the urban area "built to the highest standards of sustainability". The plan would enable the residents to return, joined by small numbers of people who chose to live a rural lifestyle.

The Government had had to decide to leave the villages as they were, replace only the homes that were destroyed, or to "create something quite new and advanced—socially strong communities which incorporate the latest technology for managing water, energy and waste sustainability".

"Cost was also an issue—the Government could not justify spending substantial amounts to re-build public housing without the prospect of any real returns on the investment," Mr Stanhope said.

He said the revenue from the sale of the restricted number of housing blocks would offset the necessary infrastructure costs the Government would face in replacing lost assets and improving road access and other amenities.

Graeme Wicks

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## Letter on Namadgi anniversary

To Kevin McCue  
NPA ACT President

Dear Kevin

I noticed your presidential appeal for information about the events leading up to the 1984 park declaration and am taking up the challenge.

These events are covered in pages 72 to 74 of my book *Battle for the Bush* (1999) and will be further dealt with in a book I am now working on which is concerned with the wilderness part of the park.

In a nutshell I think it is important to see the 1984 event from the perspective of the earlier events (ie as one step in an organic evolution), including all the groundwork put in by the NPA (especially Nancy Burbidge) and the CBC.

The groundwork on boundaries etc was done in the period 1960 to 1979. The breakthrough came with Darryl Hawke's effort which persuaded Ellicott to create the Gudgenby Nature Reserve and announce it on 26/4/1979 as part of the celebrations of the centenary of the world's first "national Park" (gazetted 26/4/1879). I hope Darryl (NPA President in 1979) will be invited to the 2004 celebration.

The CBC pressed for the wider boundaries, eventually accepted in 1984, whereas the NPA was initially worried that such a large area would result in a Kosciusko State Park style multiple use set up. As things improved at Kosciusko (eg banning of grazing throughout the park and national park status) NPA's vision widened and it was NPA which took Uren to the Upper Cotter in 1983.

I think Neville Esau and Den Robin are wrong about their 1978 date for Gudgenby. It was gazetted in 1979 following its announcement by Ellicott (see page 4 of Namadgi POM).

Also please note that the "National Park" at Port Hacking (now Royal) was the first park in the world to be so named (several years before Yellowstone) not just the first in Australia and I have long argued that at least NPAs in Australia should try to get this right. If you want more information on this please let me know.

Regards  
Geoff Mosley  
31 May 2004

# Submission on Draft Plan of Management— Kosciuszko National Park

*This overview of the NPA's submission on the draft Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management (POM) has been prepared by Christine Goonrey.*

The draft plan is obviously a distillation of a huge input of information following a long process of planning and consultation and we congratulate those responsible for an excellent job in difficult circumstances.

Members of the NPA ACT have a long and valued history with Kosciuszko National Park. Some of us are scientists who have worked over the years on assessing and preserving its natural values and those of its neighbours. Most of us have driven, walked, skied and photographed the park on a regular basis and our children follow in our footsteps. The park has a very special place in our lives and we value this opportunity to contribute to its further protection and preservation.

The NPA ACT believes that the primary purpose of national parks is for conservation purposes. Therefore we strongly support two of the plan's guiding principles: firstly to maintain and improve the natural and cultural values of the park and secondly that each generation should ensure that the condition of the environment is maintained or enhanced for future generations.

Our greatest concern is that, by trying to balance the conflicting needs of a wide range of users, park values will have been diminished rather than maintained or enhanced by the time the next POM is due. We would have expected Natural Values and Cultural Values to be given the highest priority but that does not appear to be the case in the body of the plan. For example, there is no clear statement that the Plan of Management is the overarching document and overrides the Alpine Resorts Plan.

The effect of climate change on the Park gives an added urgency to management of the park. We consider that the impact of development and recreational use will be compounded over the coming years by climate change and that this is not given due weight in the body of the plan. We strongly object to the meek acceptance in the plan of tourism, recreation and accommodation continuing their current

haphazard focus on property development and service provision within the park as the main economic driver of development in the region.

The National Parks Association (ACT) opposes resort development within Kosciuszko National Park. Competitive pressure from other resorts either interstate or overseas should not be accepted as a reason to diminish the natural and cultural values of the park. The KNP resorts are unique in that they are within a national park which gives them a huge advantage over other resorts, an unfair advantage it might well be argued. We do not support any line of argument that trades off natural values for future generations for economic gain to a few today.

The emphasis on sustainability throughout the plan is worthy but may prove ultimately useless without specific definitions and enforcements. Recreational opportunities in KNP should not lead to environmental degradation. We strongly support the plan's emphasis on the monitoring of recreational impacts and the recognition of the need to amend access where environmental degradation is occurring.

We support the ban on grazing in the Park but note the inconsistency in the acceptance of feral horse populations in the park and believe they should be removed professionally. We oppose the use of community volunteers in the removal or culling of avian or mammalian pests. This is a job for professionals. There should be no bird shooting, pig hunting or brumby trapping by people with a sporting or recreational interest.

We strongly support the ban on horse riding in Wilderness areas and the Main Range area. The NPA ACT is particularly concerned about pressure from a small lobby group to increase horse access to sensitive areas of the park. There is considerable confusion in this group between personal interest and the long term interests of KNP. Their emotive approach to planning and management of KNP should not be allowed to distract us from proper preservation of the park's natural values. The environmental impacts of horses are well documented and even maintaining current levels of access puts significant pressures on KNP's environment.

We support the proposal that no new huts will be built in the park and that reconstruction of destroyed huts will not usually occur as a matter of course but considered on a case-by-case basis. Again, we note the claims of horse riding groups to special access to these places despite evidence of such access destroying the cultural and natural values of the huts. We take this as further evidence of these groups' inability to separate personal interest from long term preservation of the park's historical sites.

Other threats to soil stability, such as the continued acceptance of bike riding in wilderness areas, concern us. We encourage the KNP POM to align its policy on cycling in wilderness areas with those of fellow Alpine Parks members across the borders of the ACT and Victoria where it is banned for good reasons. Adequate personnel should be provided to police this and other policies designed to prevent degradation of park values and conflict with other park users.

This raises the important point of consistency across the Alpine National Parks and associated reserves, which should be encouraged by the POM. The provision of recreation opportunities in KNP should consider any restrictions in place in adjacent reserves and be managed so as to not compromise these restrictions.

There are some notable bits missing in the Plan, namely a lack of definition of limits on the upper and lower limits of the Park to anticipate future demands for activities such as mineral or groundwater mining or overflights. Such activities will impact on the important natural and cultural values of the park and must be covered. There is no mention of requirements for authorised users to undertake, let alone make available, risk analyses for existing infrastructure in the park such as electricity switching stations and power lines. If they are available in the emergency management system they should be made available for public comment.

Thank you for the opportunity to make our views known. The following pages give specific detailed comments on the plan.

**11 September Saturday work party  
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group**  
**Contacts: Syd Comfort 6286 2578,**  
**scomfort@netspeed.com.au or**  
**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 September, Sunday daywalk**

**Pierce's Trig**  
**Leader: Steve Hill**  
**Grading: 3A/C/E**  
**Map: Tidbinbilla 1:25 000**  
**Contact: 6231 9186 or**  
**landshil@webone.com**

The first chance to re-visit the northern end of the Tidbinbilla Range after the severe fire damage of January 2003. Pierce's trig offers some of the best views of Canberra and environs. We follow the steady climb of the Mountain Creek firetrail to the trig. We return to the carpark largely the same way but, depending on conditions, may divert to climb up the northern side of the Camel's Hump for further spectacular views. The walk is on track, except for some mild bush bashing if we divert over the Camel's Hump, and a rock scramble down the southern side to return to the firetrail. Meet at Kambah Village Shops car park at 8.30 for a beaut day. Cost is \$15 per car.

**17-19 September, Weekend car  
camp and work party**

**Leader: Richard Stanley**  
**Contact: 6288 1212 or**  
**richard.stanley@anu.edu.au**

Joint activity with Kosciuszko Huts Association. This weekend will combine work on the Gudgenby Managers cottage with walks to sites of historical interest in the Gudgenby Valley. Tony Corp's definitive history will be used as the basis for talks and walks. An additional bonus will be the attendance of the Gourmet Bushwalkers who will share their knowledge and skills for car camping, overnight walks and extended treks. Contact leader for further directions and information.

**22 September, Wednesday midweek  
daywalk**

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

Midweek walk in conjunction with CBC and FBI. Meeting details to be

advised by email or contact leader. Not more than \$12 a car.

**25 September, Saturday work party  
Yerrabi Track**

**Contact: Martin Chalk 6292 3502 or**  
**Philip Gatenby, 6254 3094**

The Yerrabi Track maintenance tasks are not complete. Still to be undertaken are continued step repair above the tor viewing platform, track stabilisation on the approach to Mura Swamp and removal of a healthy family of thistles on the western side of Mura Swamp. Meet at the Namadgi Visitor Centre at 8:30am. 75km, \$24 per car.

**26 September, Sunday daywalk  
Lower Orroral Valley Loop**

**Leader: Steven Forst**  
**Grading: 2A**  
**Map: ACT 1:100 000**  
**Contact: 6219 5236 (w), or**  
**6251 6817 (h) or**  
**steven.forst@aca.gov.au**

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8:30am. A gentle walk along the track from the camping ground to the Orroral homestead, the site of many NPA work parties of the past. The walk continues on to the remains of the NASA tracking station then crossing back over the Orroral river and returning to the camping ground. 85 km drive \$25 per car.

**29 September, Wednesday midweek  
daywalk**

**Leader: Syd Comfort**  
**Contact: 6286 2578 or**  
**scomfort@netspeed.com.au**

Mid week walk in conjunction with CBC and FBI. Details to be advised by email or contact leader. Not more than \$12 a car.

**2-3 October, Weekend Pack Walk  
Mt Kelly**

**Commemorating the Declaration of  
Namadgi National Park**

**Leaders: Rob Horsfield and**  
**Steven Forst**

**Contacts: 6231 4535 (RH),**  
**horsfield@ozemail.com.au and**  
**6251 6817 (SF),**  
**steven.forst@aca.gov.au**

Joint walk with Canberra Bushwalking Club. In May 1976 members of the CBC invited Senator John Knight and John Haslem MP to walk to Mt Kelly and return; they accepted the invitation (challenge?). This was part of the CBC's lobbying effort to have a National Park declared in the southern part of the ACT. The

party walked from the turn-off to Cotter Gap and went via Pond Creek, Little Creamy Flat, over Mt Namadgi and down to camp at Rotten Swamp. The next morning they climbed Mt Kelly and then returned to the cars at Nursery Swamp via Middle Creek, Big Creamy Flat, Mavis Ridge, Rendezvous and Nursery Creeks. To commemorate the declaration of Namadgi National Park, CBC has decided to recreate this walk—but over three days! The intention is to walk in to an appropriate camp site on Saturday, a day walk to Mt Kelly (and Burbidge?) on Sunday then walk out to Nursery Swamp car park on Monday. Contact leaders for details.

**9 October 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.

**9 October, Saturday Morning Walk  
Black Mountain spring wildflower  
celebration**

**Leader: Gwyn Clarke**  
**Contact: Jean Geue 6251 1601,**  
**jean.geue@alianet.alia.org.au**

Meet at 9.15am Belconnen Way stile before Caswell Drive corner (use earlier carpark for overflow). Gwyn Clarke will continue the 33 year Burbidge/Chippendale tradition of a social ramble to enjoy the spring flowering and show us more about the incredible diversity of our Black Mountain plants. George Chippendale hopes to be there for the handover and others with plant ID skills will help. It's an opportunity for a big gathering to show we value our Bush Capital heritage and are devastated at the bulldozing of the lower and more fertile slopes. Bring your friends, your enthusiasm, morning tea, water, hat, sunblock and stout shoes.

**10 October, Sunday Snowshoe Walk  
Kerry View Hill**

**Leader: Brian Slee**  
**Grading: 1B**  
**Map: Geehi Dam 1:25 000**  
**Contact: 6281 0719**

**brianslee@iprimus.com.au**  
Snowshoeing for beginners. Participants need to be fit. Bring good walking boots, snowshoes and poles. Instruction provided. Any hiring (eg

from Jurkiewicz or Paddy Pallin) to be completed prior to departure. Depart Kambah Village at 6:30am. Park at Dainers Gap and walk north to Mt Sunrise, climbing 100 metres. After a break, cross Plains of Heaven to Kerry View ridge and walk length of ridge for fine views of snow covered mountains. After lunch, a leisurely return to Dainers Gap via southern route, taking in a side tour, depending on conditions and inclination of group. Afternoon tea at Jindabyne. Book with leader as weather check essential. Numbers limited by availability of snow worthy vehicles. Drive 420kms, \$120 per car + \$15 without park entry permit.

#### **16-17 October, Weekend Pack Walk**

**Fosters Mountain**  
**Leader: Phil Gatenby**  
**Grading: 2A/D/E**  
**Map: Endrick 1:25 000**  
**Contact: 6254 3094**

**Phillip.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.

#### **17 October, Sunday daywalk**

**Boboyan Trig**  
**Leader: Syd Comfort**  
**Grading: 3B/D**  
**Map: Yaouk 1:25 000**  
**Contact: 6286 2578**

**scomfort@netspeed.com.au**  
Walk from Gudgenby car park along creek to Hospital Hut then to Boboyan Ridge returning to carpark on Old Boboyan Road. Meet at Kambah shops at 0830. 70km, \$21 per car.

#### **23 October, Saturday work party**

**Yerrabi Track**  
**Contact: Martin Chalk, 6292 3502**  
**Phillip Gatenby, 6254 3094**  
This work party will be a continuation of the September activity. Meet at the Namadgi Visitor Centre at 8.30. 75km, \$24 per car.

**24 October, Sunday.**  
**Great Australian Bushwalk**  
**Mt Ainslie to Mulligan's Flat**  
**Leader: ACT Chief Minister,**  
**Jon Stanhope**  
**Grading: 3A**  
**Contact: NPA Committee or**  
**Environment ACT**

The Great Australian Bushwalk is an initiative of the NSW NPA and, following the success of their 2003 event under the patronage of the NSW Premier, it is being promoted as a national activity. Jon Stanhope has agreed not only to be patron of the ACT event, but also to lead a walk from Mt Ainslie through Gorooyaroo Nature Reserve to end at the trackhead at Mulligan's Flat. This is expected to be a major exercise and is being conducted jointly by Environment ACT and the NPA ACT. Further details will be published in *The Canberra Times* and through *Burning Issues*.

#### **27 October, Wednesday midweek daywalk**

**Leader: Adrienne Nicholson**  
**Contact: 6281 6381**  
Mid week walk in conjunction with CBC and FBI. Details to be advised by email or contact leader.

#### **6 November, Saturday daywalk**

**Mt Gudgenby**  
**Leader: Martin Chalk**  
**Grading: 4A/C/D/E**  
**Map: Rendezvous Creek and Yaouk**  
**1:25 000**  
**Contact: 6292 3502 or**  
**mchalk@tpg.com.au**

This will be the NPA's first programmed walk to Mt Gudgenby since the fires. From casual observation, much of the standing dead timber towards the top has now gone, so the route might be a little easier. Rise to the challenge: see the now 'gone' Boboyan Pines from above, witness the result of the fires and 22 month's of regeneration, return to Canberra's iconic day walk mountain. Fit walkers only please. Meet at Kambah Village at 7.30am for a long but rewarding day. 140km, \$42 per car.

**7 November, Sunday daywalk**  
**Demanding and Horse Gully Huts**  
**Leader: Steven Forst**  
**Grading: 3A/B**  
**Map: ACT 1:100 000**  
**Contact: 6219 5236(w) or**  
**6251 6817(h) or**  
**steven.forst@aca.gov.au**

Meet at the Kambah Village Shops at 8.00 am. A walk from the Mt Clear Camping ground along the Naas river to Horse Gully Hut. Returning via Demanding Hut to survey the site. 150 km drive \$35 per car.

#### **12-14 November Weekend Pack Walk**

**Queens Pound River**  
**Leader: Pat and Eric Pickering**  
**Grading: 2F**  
**Map: Yowie 1:25 000**  
**Contact: 6286 2128 or**  
**pater@tpg.com.au**

Joint with FBI, an exploratory walk (3 days) in Wadbilliga National Park east of Cooma, with wading, some rock scrambling, and a steep 300m climb to a ridge above the river. Contact Eric or Pat by 7 November for details. Transport TBA (\$40+)

#### **13 November, Saturday work party**

**Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group**  
**Contacts: Syd Comfort 6286 2578,**  
**scomfort@netspeed.com.au or**  
**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.

#### **14 November, Sunday daywalk**

**Mt Morgan**  
**Leader: Steve Hill**  
**Grading: 3A/E**  
**Map: Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000**  
**Contact: 6231 9186 or**  
**landshil@webone.com.au**

Back by popular demand. A chance to see fabulous views from one of the most spectacular mountain tops in the region, including over much of the KNP and Namadgi National Park. We climb up the Lone Pine trail before turning left, towards the summit at some high alpine frosty hollows. We tour the summit for a view of the things that matter to us. The bushfire damage around this region is still obvious, but the regeneration is heartening. The climb of nearly 700 metres is steepish in parts, but is mainly on track and no serious bush bashing is involved. Meet at Kambah Village Shops car park at 7.30am for a

fabulous day. Distance 210km: \$70 per car.

### **21 November, Sunday daywalk**

#### **Nursery Hill Circuit**

**Leader: Max Lawrence**

**Grading: 3B/C/E**

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

**Contact: 6288 1370 or**

**mlawrence@netspeed.com.au**

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. From where Boboyan Road crosses Nursery Creek, climb ridge to Nursery Hill summit (500m), then descend to Nursery Swamp. Return to cars via ridge on northern side of Nursery Creek. Good views over Glendale to Billy and Booth Ranges. Walk is entirely off track through burnt country—steep grades, loose rocks, some scrub remnants. Drive 70kms, \$21 per car.

### **21–27 November Car Camp**

#### **Newnes and the Wolgan Valley**

**Leader: Mike Smith**

**Maps: Ben Bullen and Mount**

**Morgan 1:25 000**

**Contact: 6286 2984 or**

**msmith@netspeed.com.au**

A 7-day car camp including optional 2-day pack walk at the old shale oil mining area of Newnes in the Wollemi National Park, generally north of Lithgow. Three possible day walks would be exploring Newnes, the Glowworm tunnel and along the Wolgan River. The optional overnight pack walk is along the pipeline track from Newnes to Glen Davis (another shale oil mining area). This is essentially a 'mid-week' event; arrival would be on Sunday and departure on the following Saturday but participants could arrive and depart earlier or later. Camping would be at the Little Capertee Creek campground; grassy sites, pit toilet and sometimes wood but no water other than the river. Email for more details. Please provide own transport, although it may be possible to arrange some lifts.

### **24 November, Wednesday midweek daywalk**

#### **Bullen Range Circuit**

**Leader: Max Lawrence**

**Grading: 2B/C/E**

**Map: Tuggeranong, Tidbinbilla 1:25 000**

**Contact: 6288 1370 or**

**mlawrence@netspeed.com.au**

Mid week walk in conjunction with CBC and FBI. Meet at Kambah

Village shops at 8.30am. This walk crosses and recrosses the steep Bullen Range between the Murrumbidgee at Kambah Pool and the Tidbinbilla Tracking Station, where no doubt we'll stop for a cuppa. If the river remains low we'll start from Kambah Pool with a rock hop across the river, otherwise we'll start from the Tracking Station. Entirely off track, steep grades over loose rocks, and excellent views of familiar territory from a different perspective. Drive 70kms, \$21 per car (for a Tidbinbilla start), or peanuts (for a Kambah Pool start).

### **27–28 November Weekend Pack**

#### **Walk**

#### **The Rolling Ground**

**Leader: Philip Gatenby**

**Grading: 3A/C/F**

**Map: Geehi Dam 1:25 000**

**Contact: 6254 3094 or**

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

An overnight walk from Guthega Power Station to explore the Rolling Ground and to climb Mt Tate and some other nearby peaks. A climb of about 700 metres. Contact leader by the Wednesday before the walk for more details. Drive 400 kms, \$120 per car.

### **28 November, Sunday daywalk**

#### **Camels Hump from Bendora**

**Leader: Max Lawrence**

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

**Map: Tidbinbilla 1:25 000**

**Contact: 6288 1370 or**

**mlawrence@netspeed.com.au**

Meet at the Deeks Forest Park carpark off the Uriarra Road at 8.00am. An exploratory walk from the Cotter River below Bendora Dam. It involves climbing up a ridge to the Camels Hump on Tidbinbilla Range. Entirely off track through severely burnt country. Steep grades, loose rocks, probably some scrambling to do. 120kms, \$36 per car.

### **5 December, Sunday daywalk**

#### **Mt Stilwell**

**Leader: Brian Slee**

**Grading: 2B/C**

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

**Contact: 6281 0719 or**

**brianslee@iprimus.com.au**

Depart Kambah Village at 7:15am. Park next to Kosciuszko Road at Spencers Creek and after crossing Johnnies Plain, climb Trapyard Creek and inspect ruins, still substantial, of ill fated Alpine Way—Stilwell chairlift.

Continue west, above 2000 metres, on circuit around headwaters of Wrights Creek to Mt Stilwell. Views to all parts of Main Range. Snow drifts in area. Return to Spencers Creek via scrubby descent near Wrights Creek, mostly off track. Afternoon tea at Jindabyne. Distance 420 kms, \$120 per car + \$15 without park entry permit.

### **11 December, Saturday Christmas party**

#### **Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group**

**Contacts: Syd Comfort 6286 2578,**

**scomfort@netspeed.com.au or**

**Clive Hurlstone 0407 783 422**

**clive.hurlstone@csiro.au**

Details to be advised.

### **12 December, NPA Christmas party**

#### **Honeysuckle Campground and Picnic Area**

**Contacts: NPA committee**

This year we plan to hold our Christmas Party at the Honeysuckle Campground. All the usual features. We will hold a short walk to see the regeneration between Honeysuckle and Booroomba Rocks. Details will be in the next *Bulletin* and *Burning Issues*.

### **19 December, Sunday daywalk**

#### **Mt Tate**

**Leader: Brian Slee**

**Grading: 3B/C**

**Map: Geehi Dam and Perisher Valley 1:25 000**

**Contact: 6281 0719 or**

**brianslee@iprimus.com.au**

Depart Kambah Village at 7:00am. Park at Guthega and climb Guthega Ridge. Should be good for wildflowers on way. After morning tea, cross Consett Stephen Pass and climb to Mt Tate for great views. Return via Gills Knobs and Tate East Ridge. Participants need to be fit. Afternoon tea at Jindabyne. Drive 420kms, \$120 per car + \$15 without park entry permit.

### **22 December, Wednesday midweek daywalk**

**Leader: David Large**

**Contact: 6291 4830 or**

**david.large@bigpond.com**

Final Wednesday walk for the year. Opportunity to prepare for Christmas. Leader is unsure where to go but will have festive season in mind.

# Draft alpine resorts plan

*The NSW Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources has developed a draft Alpine Resorts Plan which is complementary to the Kosciuszko Plan of Management in that it applies to matters which are the responsibility of that department such as the type of development and the regulations applying to buildings and structures in the alpine area. The National Parks Association ACT has made a submission on this draft, committee member Christine Goonrey taking the lead in its preparation. Extracts from this submission are reproduced in the following paragraphs.*

## **Economic viability of the alpine resorts**

There is no satisfactory economic analysis of the viability of alpine resorts over the next 20 years despite predictions that climate change will lock the resorts into dependence on expansion of ecologically damaging ski lifts and associated structures. The draft makes clear that, with the predictions of reduced snow cover and increased snow-making costs, economic viability for the resorts will increasingly rest on greater access to park resources including river flows, more severe slope grooming and higher areas for ski lifts and ski runs. Yet this expansion would be taking place at the same time as flora and fauna would be at greater risk from changed climatic conditions. According to the park's scientific advisors, rare and endangered species are likely to be subjected to even greater competition from lower altitude plants and animals

migrating to these areas, thus doubling the impact from increased resort activity on the ecological balance of the park.

The final Plan of Management for the Alpine Resorts must make clear that further expansion of accommodation within the park, and of ski lift based activities is not an option because of ecological damage and high public costs incurred in reducing the ecological damage of this expansion.

## **Sale of public assets for private profit**

Following patterns established elsewhere in resort developments, development and sale of private accommodation is an accepted option for profit taking by resort management companies. This issue is not addressed in the current draft. This must not continue in the alpine area where high maintenance ecological and infrastructure costs are met from the public purse. Selling leases in national parks for privately owned accommodation locks scarce resources away from public use and ties up expensive infrastructure while allowing private individuals to profit through capital appreciation from "ownership" of national parks.

## **Lack of specific standards for ecological sustainability**

Ecological sustainability is a key point of protection for the park in Part 2, Overarching Ecological Aims and Principles, of the draft plan. Such terms, sprinkled liberally through the draft, are so open-ended as to be practically meaningless. The rule is simple: if they

cannot be defined they cannot be applied. The plan should, even at this stage of planning, define the limits of development in terms of ecological sustainability, for example, "development must not increase the existing impact on water, air, fauna or vegetation in areas surrounding the resorts."

Further, there is no reference to including in the development costs any provision for "put-it back" costs, that is, costs associated with rehabilitation of a developed site once it is no longer viable, e.g. a ski run. So we could have development applications for a new ski run as the climate changes and then the obsolescent run is abandoned as further warming proves it unviable. Such considerations must be part of the original development process.

## **Adequacy of controls**

Are the performance and prescriptive controls advocated in the draft adequate? No. They are vague, subjectively expressed and unrelated to the purpose or nature of the national park. They lack any scientific relevance to the potential environmental impact of development within the resorts. In addition they offer little protection for the natural values of the park and seem to confirm that the resorts operate in isolation from their surroundings. When applied to a specific purpose, e.g. application for development of a new ski run, they fall short of the sort of controls which would actually protect the park, its flora and fauna.

Syd Comfort

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## PARKWATCH

### **Development threat in South West Tasmania**

Heather Kirkpatrick of the Tasmanian NPA has asked us to alert members to a development proposal in the state's South West National Park.

Imagine a new 800 metre road carved in to an approved David Marriner development in South West National Park. Plans include a lodge, 80 cabins, boat sheds and a 50m jetty at Cockle Creek East (near the South Coast walk). This area's natural and

cultural values are so significant that it is managed under the World Heritage Area Management Plan (WHA MP). Eighteen Aboriginal sites are identified in the proposed construction area.

The WHA MP was altered to allow the development. The proposal faced submissions opposing it and a challenge at the Planning Tribunal, and there is now a wait for reconstruction of the nearby Catamaran Bridge before the bulldozers move in.

Opposition is building in Tasmania as the TNPA, the Tasmanian Aboriginal

community, local shack owners, Cockle Creek campers and others join forces. This would be the first major new development inside a national park in Tasmania. The TNPA has successfully stopped three out of three development proposals in national parks since 2000; let's go for four out of four! We encourage your support! More information on [www.tnnpa.asn.au](http://www.tnnpa.asn.au)

VNPA Update, July, 2004

More PARKWATCH on page 20



# Think Water, Act Water

There is no more important environmental and social issue facing the ACT community than the provision of a sustainable supply of water. The ACT Government has seriously considered both the short- and long-term issues involved in the demand and supply for water and these were capably outlined by Karen Civil at the NPA General Meeting on 17 June 2004. Ms Civil is Communications Officer of the Water Resources Taskforce of Environment ACT. Her colleague Peter Liston assisted her in her presentation.

The ACT's long-term water resource strategy embraces directions for water resource management to 2050 when the ACT population is expected to reach 460 000 persons. There are three parts to the strategy which have been incorporated into three separate documents. Volume 1 begins with "Strategy for Sustainable Resource Management in the ACT". Volume 2 is an explanatory document, while Volume 3 is entitled "State of the ACT's Water Resources and Catchments".

Ms Civil briefly reviewed the development of the strategy that called for significant public participation in the form of meetings with focus and reference groups, a community water summit and formal public consultation. The outcome of the strategy set a number of water resource targets and objectives. Of particular interest to NPA members are the three long-term water

supply options: 1) a new dam near Mt Tennent; 2) enlarging Cotter Dam; and 3) transfer of water from Tantangara Dam to Cotter River. Investigation of the three major options is expected to be completed by March 2005.

The water strategy elaborates means of increasing domestic water efficiency in a number of respects, some of which are already available and can be implemented by domestic users now or in the near future. An initial water efficiency incentive program including a showerhead rebate, an indoor and garden water tune-up program, dual flush toilets, rainwater storage systems and pricing incentives will provide rebates and cost subsidies to householders. Attention is also being paid to government and commercial institutions to implement water efficiency in 2004–2005. Reclaimed water use, pricing, construction regulations and mandatory labelling and minimum performance standards also form part of the strategy. It is expected that the National Capital Authority will also work with the Government on mutual concerns.

The issue that dominated discussion following Ms Civil's presentation was that of the three options for long-term supply. There was general agreement on the importance of careful environmental impact studies for all options, particularly those that impacted in Namadgi National Park. Mr Liston said there was a 25-member team together

with consultants who were examining this issue. Variables such as bushfires and climate change were difficult to factor in to the strategy. Input by NPA was particularly welcomed.

Other questions arising in the discussion period included the relationship of ACT water supply to New South Wales. Resolution of this issue is awaiting a comprehensive regional development strategy. Environmental flows, bore water and cloud seeding also came up for discussion.

More information on *Think Water, Act Water* is available on the web site [www.thinkwater.act.gov.au](http://www.thinkwater.act.gov.au) or by calling Environment ACT on 6207 9777. The three volumes cited above are available to NPA members at no cost. They substantially expand on the overview by Karen Civil and these brief notes.

David E. Pfanner

*Note: It was announced in mid August that the new water recycling facility at Fyshwick had been commissioned and would deliver recycled water for irrigation of parks and ovals in North Canberra. The facility treats effluent from the Fyshwick Sewerage Treatment Plant using membrane technology. With this scheme's added output, recycled water use will reach about 9 per cent (from 5.2 per cent in 2001–02). The Think Water, Act Water strategy aims to increase reclaimed water use to 20 per cent by 2013.*

## Impact of the next ACT water source on Namadgi National Park

In April 2004, ActewAGL Water Division published an interesting report: *Options for the next water source for the ACT*. The report addresses future supply problems given projected population growth of the ACT to 440 000 or even 460 000 people by 2032. The report authors modelled supply variations due to weather variability and climate change as well as demand variability due to uncertain population growth, supplying additional NSW consumers, and continuing water restrictions.

Engineers in the Water Division costed eleven options and finally recommended three options for detailed evaluation:

- building a new dam near Mt Tennent,
- enlarging Cotter Dam,
- transferring water from Tantangara Dam in NSW.

Each of these proposals impacts on Namadgi National Park although the report does not consider this in the short environmental impact statement.

### Mt Tennent Dam

The National Capital Plan, prepared and administered by the National Capital Authority, set aside Tennent and Corree as possible future Canberra water supplies. The proposed earth and rockfill embankment on the Naas River would be about 4 km south of Tharwa not far upstream from the Visitor

Centre. Flooding the Naas River valley would cut the Boboyan Road in several places. Recreational uses proposed for the dam would include fishing and low-powered boats.

### Enlarging Cotter Dam

A higher, roller-compacted concrete gravity dam built on top of the existing dam is being considered. The new dam would hold back a larger reservoir which would impinge on a small area of Namadgi National Park. The report mentions that the headwaters of the existing Cotter Dam contain significant populations of native fish including

*Continued next page*

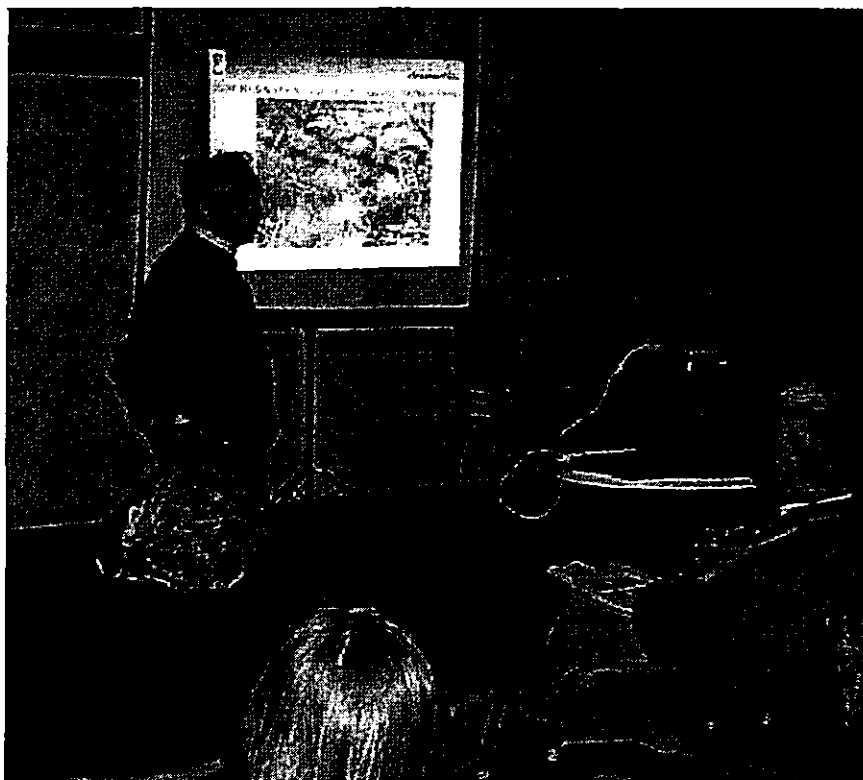
# Cotter catchment a year and a bit on

Alan Wade had a salutary message for his listeners at the association's May general meeting: *there is no doubt that the 2003 fires in Namadgi were catastrophic but they were by no means unique.*

Alan is the Principal Water Quality Adviser with ActewAGL and the R & D Project Manager. His wonderfully illustrated talk revealed not only his enthusiasm for his work but also his comprehensive knowledge of the areas contained in the Cotter catchment. Not surprisingly, I suppose, many of his favourite areas were ones highly valued by many NPA members.

He presented many before and after slides showing areas before the fire and the subsequent recovery of the same areas. One of the most striking impressions was the extensive damage to the riparian environment. The catchment was so severely drought affected that the fires burnt not only down to the water's edge, but also jumped across what were once strongly flowing streams. *Sphagnum* bogs were also extremely dry and suffered the same fate. Immediately after the fires there was little if any riparian filtering vegetation remaining, many channels and banks had collapsed and under-canopy groundcover had gone. As a result, severe sheet erosion occurred during the February storms (it is estimated that this resulted in the deposition of about 8000 tonnes of sediment in the Corin Dam alone) and river channels widened and meandered.

Alan and some students from ANU have been looking at the archaeological record of siltation from previous fires in Namadgi. It would seem that there have been many more fires like the 2003 one over the last 12 000 years. Digging has shown many sand layers and many silt layers indicating fires of comparable severity. These fires all occurred in years of severe drought and all indications are that extremes in weather are becoming more likely. Alan quoted



Alan Wade addressing the May general meeting. Photo Chris Emery

researchers who estimate that: *"The joint probability of severe fire followed by erosive rainfall is somewhere in the vicinity of 4% per annum."* This translates into a major fire event about every 25 years.

So, asked Alan, what can be done? As he said, this fire was by no means "special". Alan does not think "controlled" burning or other simplistic reactions are the answer. He believes that fire is largely controlled by the weather and that "landscape altering" fires such as the 2003 fire will become more frequent. Because vegetation can change dramatically with climate shift and is part of fire regime evolution we should be thinking more about the long term rather than immediate human intervention.

And what about water quality following the most recent fires? Alan believes that:

- The catchment flats will have regenerated extensively in one or two years;
- Most vegetation will provide catchment protection in 3–5 years;
- Maximum water quality will be gained in 10–15 years; but
- Swamps and some slopes may never recover—certainly a time frame of 40-plus years must be considered.

Alan probably left his listeners with more questions than answers but all left with the impression that he is committed to nurturing and protecting the Cotter catchment.

Len Haskew

## Impact of the next ACT water source ... *continued from previous page*

Macquarie Perch and Blackfish which would require protection during deeper flooding of their habitat.

### Tantangara Dam

Four different routes have been identified to siphon water from the

existing Tantangara Dam to the Cotter River in the ACT via a tunnel and/or pipelines. All of the proposed routes would require construction of a tunnel or pipeline through the Bimberi Wilderness Area.

Hopefully the impacts of each of the proposals will be covered in some detail

in a future ActewAGL report detailing analysis of the recommended options so that they can be debated by the ACT public.

# National parks in Thailand

Travelling through another country presents an opportunity to see other national parks, and compare them with our own. We recently had such an opportunity in Thailand, brief though it was, travelling through national parks in the north near Chiang Mai and then the south near Krabi on the Andaman Sea coast.

In Thailand, a national park is defined as *an area of at least ten square kilometres that contains natural resources of ecological importance or unique beauty, or flora and fauna of special importance*. Currently there are 102 national parks dating back to the mid 1980s, most of them in the north and northeast, with a further 21 marine national parks in the south, covering in

total some 25 000 sq km. They vary considerably in size, some as large as 1200 sq km (cf Namadgi NP 1060 sq km). The parks are administered by the Marine National Park Division and the National Park Division. A further 33 national parks and three marine parks are in the planning stage.

## Northern National Parks

Nearly 70 per cent of Chiang Mai province is covered by mountains and forests including the Doi Inthanon National Park with the country's highest peak, Mt Inthanon at 2565m, (cf Mt Kosciuszko 2228m). Two hill tribes, the Karen and Hmong, live there. The fertile forests in rugged mountain ranges with

many rivers are home to a myriad species of plants and animals including rare orchids, trees, birds and spectacular butterflies. Some of the rivers have been dammed and these have become popular places for recreation, with growing potential for environmental degradation of the parks.

## Koh Phi Phi National Park

The Koh Phi Phi Islands are located south-east of Phuket and west of Krabi. The islands are remnant steep-sided limestone blocks in Phang Nga Bay with low shrub thriving in the cracks and fissures. The limestone has poorly developed soil cover, if any, and the soils are not very fertile, supporting limited mangrove forest, coconut groves and bamboo. The weather is hot and humid, the south-west monsoon in May to October is accompanied by cyclonic storms and heavy rain.

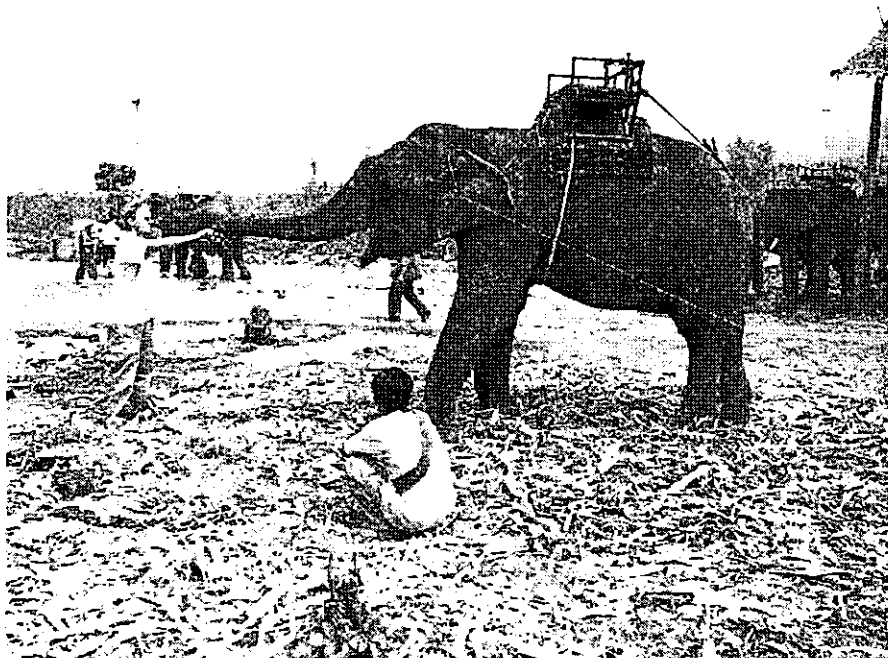
Due to rapidly expanding tourism demands over the last four or five years, the Phi Phi Islands NP has suffered a lot of environmental damage resulting from garbage disposal problems and encroaching tourist facilities. The government seems at a loss as to how to balance the tourism and environmental demands but at the moment the environment is losing.

We only glimpsed the Thai national parks but realised that population and development pressures are causing problems similar to those facing our park managers in Australia. The Thai national parks are beautiful, but the managers have very limited resources and are facing an uphill battle against a rising population and expanding tourism industry, either of which could destroy the unique environment and therefore the tourism which Thailand depends on.

Useful web site:

<http://www.trekthailand.net/list/>

Kevin McCue and Sonja Lenz



*Sonja thanks the elephant with a bunch of bananas after a long ride. The Khun Chae National Park, located an hour's drive to the northeast of Chiang Mai, was declared a national park in 1995. One of the tourist attractions here is an enormous fig tree that grows near the park headquarters. This tree covers approximately 1660 sq m and supports a great number and variety of epiphytes. Khun Chae national park has two guest houses with a capacity of 35. Photo Kevin McCue.*

## NPA CHRISTMAS PARTY

**Sunday 12 December**

Put this date in your diary for an important social gathering for the association. Details will be given in the Outings Program.

## New Members

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

Marijke Gilchrist..... Braddon  
Helen Kaye ..... Fraser

Paul Lashko..... Bruce  
Neil Sloan & Amanda Pratt..... Braddon  
David & Elizabeth Teather..... Canberra  
Kerrie Tucker..... Canberra  
Brad Wilson ..... Banks

# Over the Booth to the Bog

I decided to go on an NPA walk. A 2C/D, "The Bog" to be led by the affable, low-key leader, Max Lawrence looked suitable. But it was on a Saturday (May 8). I would have to miss my Saturday punting.

I left my car outside the TAB at the Kambah Village shops and travelled past Glendale Crossing to the end of the bitumen, in Max's vehicle. There were eight starters for the walk to the Bog.

The first section was a comfortable descent from the carpark to the aptly named Dry Creek. I enjoyed this part of the walk until Max pointed out that the corresponding ascent, on the way back, would not be so pleasant.

The next stage was the hard one: a climb to the top of the Booth Range. There was some discussion and map interpretation to determine the actual vertical rise involved. But figures mean nothing. Uphill is uphill—made no easier by areas of broken rock, blackened fallen trees and a summit that appeared to recede as we ascended. When we did reach the top there was no rewarding vista. Through the trees and haze it was just possible—looking west—to make out the peaks of Namadgi, Kelly and Burbidge. At our feet, the remains of an old barbed wire fence managed to entangle my bootlaces.

Then it was downhill again to the Bog: a large clearing straddling Swamp Creek which flows northerly into the Naas River. Max related that the Oldfield brothers had leased the area (in earlier times) from their base at Cotter Hut. A shepherd had lived in a hut at the Bog. On a previous visit, Max had found remains of the hut consisting of a gabled roof resting on low posts which, Max explained, you could shelter under if you bent double and were prepared to take your chances with spiders and snakes. But that was before the January 2003 bushfires. Now the remains of the hut were an assorted collection of sheets of corrugated iron. The clear area was covered by rank brown grass with areas of bare earth—whereas Max



*NPA walkers at the Bog on 8 May 2004. (left to right) Tim Walsh, Janet Thompson, Max Lawrence (leader), Russell Wenholz, Martin Chalk, Allan Bills and Peter Wellman. Photo Neville Esau.*

remembered it as being green and parklike. However, there was water in the creek and some fence posts had survived.

We lunched at the Bog and I watched the sun start to descend in the north-west sky. I imagined how the shepherds living here must have watched the sun through the seasons—what else was there to watch that was moving? Max destroyed this image for me when he explained that the locality was too cold for human habitation and that the shepherd moved to another hut downstream in more livable conditions. There would have been very little sunwatching.

After lunch we headed back. No prospect of something new to see. No cut lunch to look forward to. I accused Max of trying to upgrade (or is it downgrade?) the walk to a 2C/D/E by leading us through some rock outcrops

that I had not noticed on the way out. Things improved after we topped the Booth Range and began the long descent to Dry Creek. Conversation between walkers increased. Wearily, I recalled Max's warning of the climb from the creek back to the parking area. Among the eight of us there were varying degrees of preparedness—physical and mental—for this last section. Each walker traversed it according to their own degree of preparedness and then enjoyed the reward: to sit down, to take the boots off and look back over the completed walk.

I dozed a little on the drive to town. I was back at my car (in front of the Kambah TAB) by 4:15pm so I went in and had a bet on the last races in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. I should not have bothered.

**Russell Wenholz**

Note: Members may place advertisements for personal items in the Bulletin without charge

## **Bushwalking boots for sale**

Hi Tec Lady Altitude HWO12 Dark choc/black  
Size US 080, Europe 39. Worn on only four occasions on short day walks. Sell for \$100 (Retail \$209).

Ring Cath at work on 6215 2561.

## **Great Australian Bushwalk**

It is hoped that all over Australia people will be bushwalking on Sunday October 24. See Outings Program for details.

# Tennent Homestead—post-fire



*Tennent homestead as it was in 1993.  
Photo Babette Scougall.*

The Conservation Plan of Management prepared by Eric Martin and Associates (EMA) in June 2004 for the ACT Heritage Unit is now available. It updates the 1993 Conservation Plan prepared by Roger Hobbs by recording the extent and impact of the January 2003 bushfires and establishes new management policies for the site. The conclusion reached by EMA is that, despite the bushfire, "the site remains one of local significance and must be conserved".

The site is on the Register of the National Estate, ACT Heritage Places Register and National Trust of Australia (ACT) Register of Classified Places.

The firestorm that swept through the northern foothills of Mt Tennent was particularly severe and left the Tennent Homestead Precinct as a charred ruin, with one exception—the 1970 garage. Interestingly, a group of NPA members (Reg Alder, Les Pyke, Frank Clements, Len Huskew, Col McAlister, Syd Comfort (and others?)) spent a day nailing up flattened pieces of old corrugated iron onto this structure. Perhaps their work helped to save it from being burnt. EMA suggest that the garage could be used as part of a display or for interpretation purposes once the doors are repaired.

Other than the garage and two walls of the pisé dwelling, the rest is little more than burnt stumps and posts and twisted sheets of corrugated iron. EMA consider that most evidence of construction techniques and workmanship has been lost in the fire, therefore, any new structure or any reconstruction of lost elements is considered inappropriate, and the site should be preserved and managed as a ruin. At the same time, they point out that it's important to ensure that the surviving building, ruins and vegetation are protected from

unnecessary loss or damage.

Unhappily, I have to agree with their recommendations. This is a great shame as Tennent was the only intact cultural heritage site left in Namadgi National Park. I've always felt that its value to the park was never fully appreciated or used to best advantage. It's unfortunate that so little can be done for what's left of the pisé dwelling other than for it to be "monitored on a six-monthly basis to identify when and if stabilisation or conservation measures need to be introduced to slow deterioration". It is noted that the walls will need to be propped to slow their collapse.

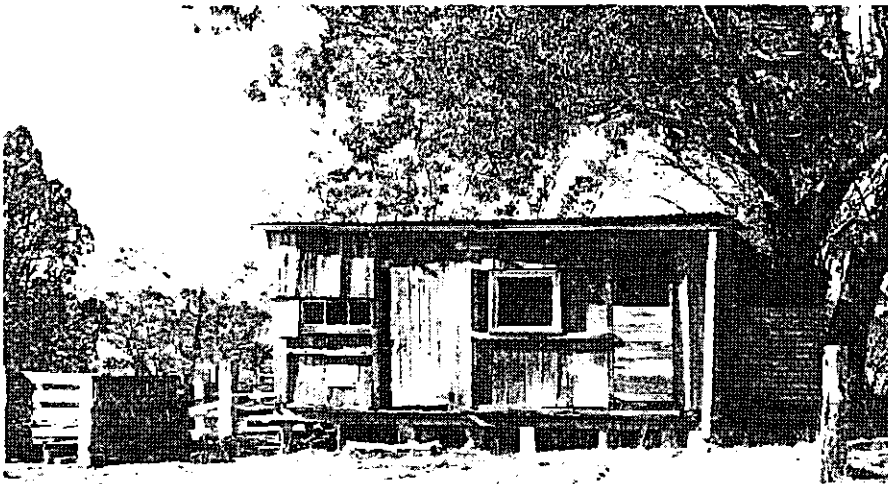
Even though the site has been assessed as asbestos contaminated, some tidying up will need to take place. This new Plan of Management states clearly that "It is important that experienced conservation practitioners and tradespeople are involved in any future works on the Precinct and that sound conservation principles are applied to any work, so that character and significance of the place will be retained and conserved."

An important element of the conservation plan is interpretation. It is suggested that the site be interpreted as a whole, with three key elements: i) setting and landscape; ii) homestead group; iii) woolshed and yards. It is also recommended that plaques (images and text etched onto aluminium plates) be erected at key locations.

So that the site can be interpreted as a whole, it is recommended that the boundary fence of the precinct be extended beyond that proposed in the 1993 report, taking in the upper dam and cultivation paddocks. Unfortunately the new all-metal fence, erected since the firestorm, separates the upper dam and old fence lines from the homestead precinct. What I don't understand is why this fence no longer follows the old park boundary east of the woolshed. Instead, it continues downhill between the 1970s orchard and the upper dam, across the two water courses, turns to the north and follows the fence line west of the precinct. Does that mean that Tennent Homestead Precinct is no longer part of the national park?

Large quantities of gravel and debris have been washed off the fire-damaged slopes of the mountain and deposited in Folly Hollow. Both dams and water

*Continued next page*



*A reminder of what has been lost: the western end of the Tennent woolshed  
as it was in 2000. Photo Babette Scougall*

# Conservation management plans for Namadgi

In June of this year the ACT Heritage Unit engaged consultants to prepare conservation management plans for Orroral Woolshed, Tennent Homestead, Gudgenby precinct (not including the homestead), Cotter House and six huts in Namadgi National Park. Community organisations interested in these places were invited to be represented at a hastily called seminar on June 1 and NPA members David Large, Dianne Thompson and Syd Comfort attended.

Representatives expressed their concerns that the short notice did not allow organisations to prepare considered positions on these places and thus the discussions would reflect personal observations rather than the full views of the organisations.

Questionnaires were completed and there were discussions on relevant issues between the representatives and the consultants, summaries of the discussions being prepared. The development of the conservation plans has proceeded and at the time of writing those for the Orroral Woolshed and Tennent Homestead have been received by the NPA. These are of particular interest to association members because of the NPA's active involvement with these sites over a long period.

Babette Scougall is keenly interested in the preservation of Tennent Homestead and outlines the conservation management plan prepared by Eric Martin and Associates in a separate article

Pip Giovanelli has prepared the conservation management plan for the

Orroral Woolshed and an outline of this, based on the executive summary in the report, is set out below. It is intended to report on the remaining conservation plans in a subsequent edition of the *Bulletin*.

## Orroral Woolshed management conservation plan

*The Orroral Woolshed, part of the Orroral property, is located a short distance from the homestead. The NPA was heavily involved with the restoration of the homestead which is now a much-visited heritage site. Visitors to the homestead often also look at the woolshed which, although from a much later period, is an important part of the Orroral precinct. The following extracts provide a summary of the conservation management plan for the woolshed prepared by Pip Giovanelli.*

"Orroral Woolshed is culturally significant for its association with the pastoral activity in the Orroral Valley, and in particular the shift from cattle to sheep grazing following the purchase of the property by Andy Cunningham in 1928. The building is a good example of a small-scale shed and is the only shearing shed remaining in Namadgi National Park. It is highly valued by several community groups as a component of the park's cultural heritage as well as for its educative value. The interior of the shed has a high degree of integrity. Because of its location within the Orroral Homestead precinct it already enjoys high visitation, and has excellent

interpretative potential for local, interstate and international visitors.

"The woolshed meets the threshold for entry to the Heritage Places Register in its own right. However its heritage significance is inextricably linked to the Orroral Homestead precinct, including the slab dwelling, Gregory's ruin, former outbuildings, structures, fences and ploughlands. Therefore it is recommended that the proposed listing of the homestead and ploughland in the ACT Heritage Places Register be expanded to encompass the whole of the precinct.

"Some sections of the structure are in very poor condition, particularly the east wall and the junction of the roof and the north wall. Part of the roof has blown off, the structure is open and it will only be a matter of time before there is structural collapse. In its present state the building is not safe to enter and the surrounding site is dangerous, with numerous trip hazards, sheets of iron lying unsecured on the ground, and the ever-present risk of more iron sheets blowing off the roof and walls.

"A costed and prioritised scope of work has been prepared that suggests the bulk of the work be done by contractor or by the Service, as it is in excess of that which could be satisfactorily tackled by a volunteer group. Some minor work and maintenance could be done by volunteers, however, given the high visitation, the Service must remain ultimately responsible for site safety."

Syd Comfort

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## Tennent Homestead—post-fire *continued from previous page*

courses are full of gravel and much has been swept into the homestead area. Hoof prints of animals now crisscross this wide expanse of gravel.

The Statement of Significance (4.4) summarises EMA's findings:

- The Tennent homestead and woolshed ruins and associated landscape elements are of local significance as surviving reminders of a small struggling 19th century pastoral holding selected under the Land Act of 1884.
- The cleared setting, fences around the homestead, orchards, quince and

kurrajong trees are representative of the subsistence living and modification of native landscapes by European settlers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

- The lack of improvements after 1920 is representative of the impact of the selection of Canberra as the national capital. The complex illustrates the threat of bushfires and the impact of the 2003 bushfires and the resulting loss of ACT's heritage assets.
- The surviving kurrajong trees are unusual in their application as domestic trees.

- The welded steel sheep dip is a rare and unusual detail.
- The only other elements that reinforce the story of the homestead are the Bega stove, ships tank, wool press and chimney remains.

Anyone interested in this evocative old site with its quaint humble structures will find this Conservation Management Plan of interest. It is 78 pages long and a copy is available from the NPA office.

Babette Scougall

# Cotter work party

On Saturday 22 May, seven members participated in an impromptu work party in the vicinity of the Cotter House. Namagdi Ranger, Darren Roso, had been concerned about the amount of creek bank and creek bed erosion in one of the tributaries of Licking Hole Creek and needed some help to implement his anti-erosion plan.

This particular creek has a rather small catchment that essentially comprises the western side of Coronet Peak. However, the fires denuded the area of vegetation and consequently allowed the rainwater run-off to have a scouring effect in the creek. The vegetation is now recovering, making this small creek difficult to follow.

Darren's plan comprised locating "coconut logs" in the eroded areas to slow water flow and cushion the banks and creek bed from the direct impact of the flowing water. The "coconut logs" comprise a 2m long hessian sausage filled with the husks of coconut, sewed together with hemp string. They are imported from India and are reported to be free of any living matter. Additionally, they are supposed to fully degrade in about five years—so, no follow-up work party to remove them. The logs were held in place with timber or iron stakes (again degradable), as appropriate.

The task was completed in about an hour with the only complication being

the negotiation of the creek with a 10kg, 2m, willful sausage over one's shoulder.

While the hard labour was underway in the creek bed, Kevin exercised the President's prerogative and he and Sonja stayed at the Cotter House and removed the top strand of barbed wire from the compound fence. Darren reported that it had, on occasion, caused damage to wildlife, and with the cessation of horse travel in the area, the barbed wire no longer served a purpose.

Darren and the majority of the group walked the 2km from the site of the creek back to the Cotter House and inspected various sites on the way. After lunch the valley was left to resume its peaceful recovery while the work party drove back to the Orroral Gate. Although the day consisted more of driving than working, it allowed the NPA to participate directly in ranger work activities. And on this occasion, Darren and the two non-NPA helpers who were on hand would have had a full and tedious day had the NPA not been able to assist. Additionally, the day allowed those who



"Coconut logs" wedged into an eroding corner of the creek. Photo Martin Chalk

attended to see the post-fire Cotter Valley without the need of a long walk and overnight camp.

Martin Chalk

## PARKWATCH

### Expansion of Horse Riding in Kosciuszko National Park Opposed

The National Parks Association of NSW (NPA) and the Kosciuszko Huts Association (KHA) today announced their deep concerns about the expansion of horse riding opportunities in Kosciuszko National Park (KNP), as facilitated by proposed actions contained within the KNP draft Plan of Management (PoM).

The two organisations share strong concerns at the level of damage to the Park's heritage and environment caused by horse riding. The depth of these concerns has brought them together for the first time to rectify elements of the proposed Plan of Management.

They are demanding the following strict management controls over horse riding activity in Kosciuszko:

- No new horse camps to be established at Behrs Flat, Geehi Village, Currango Homestead and Old Yellow Bog, as foreshadowed in the draft PoM, or anywhere else in the Park.
- The closure and rehabilitation of existing horse camps at Cooinbil, Long Plain, Rocky Plains, Wares Yard and Pinch River because they constitute a direct threat to European and Aboriginal heritage values and the fragile environment at these sites.
- No vehicular access for horse riders throughout the Park—all horse riding must be "ride in—ride out", and
- At no time should horses be permitted within 200 metres of huts or tethered within 200 metres of watercourses.

Joint Media Release, National Parks Association of NSW, Kosciuszko Huts Association, July 8, 2004

### Fixing the Murray

A \$500 million deal will deliver up to an extra 500 gegalitres of water a year to the Murray River. A scientific report released in October stated that a flow of 1500 gegalitres of water was needed to arrest the river's long-term decline. According to the Australian Conservation Foundation, the water will be focused on six ecologically important sites. These are: the Murray Mouth and Chowilla flood-plains in South Australia; Bunbower and Koondrook-Perricoota Forests, Barmah-Millewa Forests, and Hattah Lakes in Victoria; and the River Murray channel (the "main artery") of the Murray River). The decision is regarded as the first step in returning health to the river system.

Wild, April-June, 2004

Compiled by Len Haskew

# Environmental announcements

## Two new reserves

Two new grassland reserves created in the Jerrabomberra Valley will help preserve the habitat of threatened species such as the grassland earless dragon, one of the ACT's most threatened species, and the striped legless lizard.

Announcing the creation of the reserves, the Chief Minister and Minister for the Environment, Jon Stanhope, said about 90 per cent of the world's grassland earless dragon population is now confined to the Majura and Jerrabomberra valleys.

The new reserve to the west of the Monaro Highway, on part of the Woden and Callum Brae properties, is an area of 190 ha of native grassland and habitat and 100 ha of yellow box-red gum grassy woodland.

To the east of the Monaro Highway, in an area stretching from Mikes Hill on the ACT/NSW border at Queanbeyan to the Defence communications facilities at Harman and Bonshaw; an area of about 235 ha of native grassland and habitat will be protected. The reserve was next to similar habitat across the ACT/NSW border in the Queanbeyan Nature Reserve at Letchworth. It is currently occupied by the Department of Defence will be managed for its conservation values and will form part of the reserve once vacated.

## Callum Brae reserve

A new reserve at Callum Brae will protect about 150 ha of yellow box-red gum grassy woodland, which is identified as a priority for protection in The ACT Lowland Woodland Conservation Strategy.

Announcing this on July 22, the Chief Minister and Minister for the Environment, Jon Stanhope, said that only 34 per cent of the original box-gum woodlands remained in the ACT—but this stood in positive contrast to the less than 10 per cent of the original extent of the box-gum woodlands remaining in the ACT region.

The Government intended to establish heritage precincts around the Callum Brae and Woden Homesteads in addition to preserving natural value. "These will preserve outstanding examples of our early rural settlement that display the important role that the rural environment has played in shaping the ACT," Mr Stanhope said.

## Save the frog

Although the latest survey indicates that there are only about 100 adult northern corroboree frogs in the wild in the ACT, a second captive husbandry facility is to be built at the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve to accommodate the large numbers of the frogs it is planned to raise. It is expected to be operational by January 2005.

The status of the northern corroboree frog has been reassessed from "vulnerable" to "endangered".

Last year, about 300 eggs were collected from Namadgi National Park, resulting in 290 one-year frogs at mid-2004. A second collection, made in April 2004, will form the second generation in the Tidbinbilla facility.

Corroboree frogs take three years to reach breeding maturity.

An interpretive display is expected to be opened at the Tidbinbilla Visitor Centre by September, and designs are in hand for a future "live display". The interpretive display will provide information on the frog, its habitat, and the impact of the 2003 bushfires.

## Big ecological footprint

Canberra's "ecological footprint" gives cause for "prudence about the impact of our consumption on the environment," according to the Chief Minister, Mr Jon Stanhope. He was commenting on findings contained in the report *Measuring Our Progress: Canberra's Journey to Sustainability*, which looks at how well the ACT is progressing towards sustainability.

The ecological footprint measures the amount of land required to support the lifestyle and was one of two perspectives for assessing progress towards sustainability. The other comprised 11 "core dimensions" covering social, economic and other factors.

Due in part to Canberra's higher than average incomes and fewer than average persons per household, Canberra's ecological footprint is higher than cities such as Melbourne and Sydney, the report showed. The footprint of 5.7 hectares per person equates to a total land use of 1.8 million ha.

Copies of the report can be obtained at ACT Government Shopfronts, the ACTPLA Shopfront

and the Environment ACT Information Centre.

## Tree plantings

Plans to plant around 30 000 trees around Canberra last autumn were put on hold because of continuing drought conditions, but the ACT Government remains committed to begin wide scale planting as soon as there is suitable rainfall.

## Recreational forest

A recreational forest—Deeks Forest Park—is to be established in the burnt-out Mount Stromlo area. Named after Canberra Olympic runner Robert de Castella, the park will cover more than 1500 ha and will contain a mix of native trees, exotic species and pines, and will include woodland settings and open areas.

## New Commissioner

Dr Rosemary Purdie has been appointed as the new Commissioner for the Environment following the retirement of the inaugural Commissioner, Dr Joe Baker.

"There were a number of highly qualified candidates for the position, but Dr Purdie's extensive experience in environmental issues at both a local and national level made her the outstanding choice for the position," the Chief Minister, Mr Jon Stanhope, said.

## New member

Mr Paul Perkins has been appointed a member of the ACT Natural Resource Management Advisory Committee. Mr Perkins is an adjunct professor at the Centre for Resources and Environment Studies (CRES) at the Australian National University, Chair of the National Environment Education Council and recently retired as Chief Executive Officer of ACTEW Corporation. He is also an Honorary Life Member of Environment Business Australia.

The advisory committee is a non-statutory body which advises the Minister for the Environment on natural resource management issues in the ACT as well as performing the role of "Territory Body" for the delivery of the Natural Heritage Trust and other related natural resource management investment programs.

Compiled by Graeme Wicks



# The ACT Lowland Woodland Conservation Strategy

This document was released by Environment ACT in March this year. It is very comprehensive, containing 132 A4 pages plus 12 A3 maps (folded to fit) and one A3 table. It covers all lowland woodland, not just the endangered yellow box red gum grassy woodland (YBRG), and includes all the endangered and vulnerable plants and animals that are associated with grassy woodland.

Endangered or vulnerable species and communities covered by this strategy are yellow box red gum grassy woodland (endangered, Action Plan 10), a leek orchid (endangered, AP 4), small purple pea (endangered, AP 9), hooded robin (vulnerable, AP15), swift parrot (vulnerable, AP 16), superb parrot (vulnerable, AP 17), brown tree creeper (vulnerable, AP 18), painted honeyeater (vulnerable, AP19), regent honeyeater (endangered, AP 20), varied sittella (vulnerable, new), and white-winged triller (vulnerable, new).

When the original Action Plans came out in 1997-1999 they were seen to be quite comprehensive but were criticised for the piecemeal approach of looking at interdependent species individually. Not only is the latter criticism answered by this new document, but further research has been done so that records of the occurrence of these species and regional context are even more comprehensive. Canberra Ornithologists Group has provided much of the information about birds. The fact that so many of these Action Plans are included in this strategy is a strong indicator of the need to protect lowland grassy woodlands for the whole community of organisms they support.

Woodlands covered are at an altitude of 600m to 1000m and include dry shrubby box woodland adjacent to YBRG on mountain foothills and dry hill slopes and tableland valley snow

gum grassy woodland. This expansion recognises the way that communities merge. Other ACT woodlands such as subalpine snow gum, brittle gum dry forest and river fringes are not included as they are protected in Namadgi National Park, Canberra Nature Park or in river corridors (for which a riparian strategy is being produced). Also included is secondary grassland, where groundcover plants are those found in YBRG, but trees have been removed, as trees can readily be reinstated.

Threats and actions for each threatened or vulnerable species (and some other uncommon plant species) are considered separately in the text, with descriptions in Appendices, with the conclusion that all woodland fauna will be advantaged by conservation of large, well-connected areas of woodland in sound ecological condition. The strategy looks at connections to NSW as well as within the ACT. However, some birds are more wide ranging than areas covered by reserves and so off-reserve conservation will be important for them. Off reserve conservation will also be important for woodland remnants on rural leases and areas such as the Majura Firing Range.

As well as recognising the need for good connectivity between areas of woodland, the strategy recognizes the need for replication of large areas, so that events such as January 2003 fires do not severely damage our entire woodland.

Following the section on individual species, lowland woodland is considered as a series of five complexes—Gungahlin, Majura-Kowen, Callum Brae-Jerrabomberra Valley, Tuggeranong-Naas, and North Murrumbidgee-Lower Molonglo. Each of these complexes is divided

into units such as Red Hill, Mugga Lane West, Mugga Lane East, Wanniasa Hills and Farrer Ridge for Callum Brae-Jerrabomberra, with each being considered on its merits. A map showing distribution of woodland and another showing landuse are included for each complex. These maps are useful and comprehensive but unfortunately include at least some horse paddocks as Public Land (Nature Reserve).

The real "meat" of the document is Table 6.1 which summarises the vision, goals, objectives, actions and performance criteria for protecting woodland.

This strategy is certainly a great step forward for the protection of woodland in the ACT, in particular because it made obvious the regional significance of the ACT's woodlands, and two large remaining areas of lowland woodland, Gooroo and Callum Brae, are now protected as part of Canberra Nature Park.

There are limits to its value, however. It mentions the need for education, largely through community parkcare groups. I believe that education needs to be much more widespread if we are to successfully look after these areas. For example, as long as people consider that it is more important to be able to drive individually to work than to preserve natural values and to build houses anywhere, these areas will always be under threat. The current tension between the need to reduce fuel loads and the need for fallen timber to protect some birds is an example of one of the difficulties. Table 6.1 mentions the need to manage controlled burns to reduce the direct effects on fauna but does not mention them as a threat through the removal of fallen timber.

**Eleanor Stodart**

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## Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group

The annual general meeting of the group held on August 18 reelected the committee with Clive Hurlstone continuing as President and Eleanor Stodart as Secretary. The meeting noted with great satisfaction that all of the pines of the old Boboyan plantation had

now been felled after the Parks Service completed the removal of trees remaining after ACT Forests had harvested all the merchantable timber. Discussion then shifted to the plan for the rehabilitation of areas now cleared.

Namadgi Park Manager Brett McNamara who attended the meeting said that the Parks Service hoped to be able to burn the trash from the clearing next April and to seed into the ash as

*Continued next page*

# Early Bushwalkers of the Canberra Region—by Reg Alder

Most of us remember Reg Alder as an enthusiastic bushwalker and a dedicated photographer. But Reg was also a great gatherer of information on many topics, especially bushwalking, and he had an extensive collection of bushwalking magazines, particularly *The Sydney Bushwalker*, a large library of historical books and a fund of memories and recollections all relating to the early development of bushwalking near Sydney and in the south-eastern region of NSW. He was a close friend of many of the early bushwalking pioneering legends including Dot Butler, Myles Dunphy and Marie Byles.

Just before becoming so seriously ill Reg decided to put some of his memories about the early bushwalkers of the area around the ACT into an article for the *Canberra Historical Journal*. With his health rapidly deteriorating, this was no easy task, occupying him just prior to hospitalisation for the last time. Unfortunately, he did not live to see his article published in the journal in March of this year. Reg was too ill to do the final editing and this task was undertaken by his friend (and the journal's editor) Graeme Barrow.

*Early Bushwalkers of the Canberra Region* provides a little of the historical background of bushwalking in general but it concentrates on walks undertaken by members of The Sydney Bushwalkers commencing in the early 1930s. He begins with an account of Myles Dunphy's epic 1930 walk which became Myles' inspiration for the Kosciuszko National Park. On this journey Myles encountered innumerable mobs of wild horses.

There is an account by Marie Byles of her inadvertent trespass on the Cottar (sic) catchment where she said the government official whose duty it was to preserve the purity of Canberra's water supply could have had the party "shot at dawn". Instead, the official

provided them with a substantial morning tea and advised her on the easiest way to climb Bimberi and then to return via Kangaroo Creek. There are numerous other accounts of walks to places such as Kosciuszko, Yarrangobilly and Kiandra. For today's readers probably the most fascinating feature of these accounts is the chance meetings with various locals—including "the dirtiest looking man" the chronicler of one walk had ever seen, and the two Chinese half-caste boys at Lob's Hole. The "dirtiest man" proved to be an avid cultivator of pansies and when he started talking pansies the writer "thought he would never stop". He also presented them with a lettuce when they left.

"Rather vague tourist maps" were all that many parties had to guide them on some lengthy journeys and they depended on chance meetings with the "locals" to give them realistic advice. When they did have more reasonable maps there were still serious limitations. Another party intending to climb Bimberi in 1940 travelled using a "10-mile-to-the-inch map which was mostly large white spaces". They were often alarmed/confused by the manner in which intended destinations "seemed to oscillate backwards and forwards according to local and official estimates of the distance". On one occasion Alex Colley was met by a horseman who had sought the party out especially to tell them "not to follow the sulky's tracks because the chap in it was lost". In 1945 one party recalls meeting an old bushman, who also grew prize winning gladioli, who walked back to the Goodradigbee from Nyngan—400 miles away—during "the off-time for gladioli".

It seemed that the generosity and kindness of the many landholders

and rural workers who lived in almost total isolation knew no bounds. Comments such as "but, oh, were the cups of tea given me by the kindly landholder between Naas Creek and the Murrumbidgee welcome!" and "Onwards I went and from a distance saw Mr J Bluett waiting for me on the spur to give me a lead, and the most careful directions to Mt Franklin". Others who had never come on walks before prevailed upon walking parties to stop the night.

We are also introduced to the concept of environmental awareness that was beginning to grow in these pioneer bushwalkers. In 1941 Brian Harvey was able to record "the complete absence of cattle", his particular bugbear, in the area near Cotter House and "the restrictions on firearms, etc that seemed to make the wildlife more plentiful".

Still, according to Reg, it was a matter of grave concern to the old-time bushwalkers that the declaration of reserves caused "the resumption of the properties of friends [who] had gladly [given] food, hospitality and help". Reg saw the spinning of yarns, the hospitality and the generosity of both settlers and bushwalkers as mutual benefits. He concludes his article by saying, "No longer is the friendly greeting and hospitality bestowed on the passing bushwalker". He evidently missed and mourned the passing of this rural custom.

There is much to interest and engage us all in *Early Bushwalkers of the Canberra Region*. The article can be found in the *Canberra Historical Journal*, No 53, March 2004 (pp2-14). Copies of the journal can be found in most public libraries and the Canberra Historical Society can be contacted on 6262 8881. The society also has an office at the Canberra Museum and Gallery.

Len Haskew

## Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group *continued from previous page*

soon as practicable. He is investigating the use of a helicopter to spread the seed over most of the area with volunteers from the group covering areas inaccessible to aerial seeding. He said that this type of seeding had proved successful in recent work in the Eildon

area in Victoria. During discussion it emerged that although there was enough seed to cover the area, there would be little to spare so that careful use of the seed would be necessary. However there was a good deal of

investigation to be done before a decision could be made.

With some promising results already achieved the group was looking forward to the opportunity of completing the seeding in the coming year.

Syd Comfort

**National Parks Association Calendar**

**General Meetings**

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

	September	October	November	December
<i>Public Holidays</i>		<i>Mon 4</i>		<i>Mon 27, Tues 28</i>
General meetings	Thu 16	Thu 21	Thu 18	—
Committee meetings	Tue 7	Tue 5	Tue 2	Tue 7
Bulletin Working Group <sup>2</sup>		Tue 12		
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration <sup>1</sup>	Sat 11	Sat 9	Sat 13	Sat 11
Great Australian Bushwalk		Sun 24		
NPA Christmas Party				Sun 12

**Thursday 16 September 2004**

*Making the waters clear.*

Andrew Winter

ACT Forests

ACT Forests is responsible for the management of the pine plantations located in the lower Cotter Catchment that were destroyed in the ACT bushfires of January 2003. This fire event resulted in a change of management emphasis for these areas from primarily commercial one to one with a stronger focus on water quality. It is widely recognised that roads are a significant sources of erosion and sedimentation in commercial forestry environments. A number of key strategies are being implemented including removal of approximately 50% of existing roads and the upgrading of many roads and stream crossings. Specific erosion control projects are also being completed. Steep areas and areas associated with creeks and streams are being re-established to native plant species.

Andrew will provide an overview of how ACT Forests are implementing

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

these projects and how they fit in with the strategic plan for rehabilitation of the lower Cotter Catchment.

**Thursday 21 October 2004**

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

The draft of the new Namadgi National Park Plan of Management will be released for comment early in 2005. The NPA ACT Committee believes that it is important to have input from members on what NPA's response should be, and also assist with NPA policies for the wider ACT conservation estate. To facilitate this, the Committee will hold another short forum to discuss issues that will lead to policies for NPAACT. At this meeting we will discuss 5 topics. Nature and Purpose of Namadgi National Park, Land use in close proximity to National Parks and reserves, Flora and fauna management

and conservation in Namadgi, Walking Tracks and Settler and Post Settler Culture.

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

**Thursday 18 November 2004**

*The Kokoda Track*

Ian Hawke

This talk will address the Track as a walk which combines a number of challenges with significant Australian history. Kokoda means many things to many people and in this talk Ian will recount his experience and those of the group with whom he walked. Observations of the going, vegetation, locals and the evolution of the Battle of Kokoda will be supported by photographs taken during Ian's walk in August 2003.

**NPA Bulletin**

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