

# NPA Bulletin



Volume 41 number 4  
December 2004

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION (ACT) INCORPORATED



**Policies and plans**

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**Australian Bushwalk was Great**

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**Get-togethers for Christmas-time**

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### National Parks Association of the ACT Incorporated Inaugurated 1960

#### Aims and objectives of the Association

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

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| <i>Secretary</i>      | Christine Goonrey | 6231 8395 (h) |
| <i>Treasurer</i>      | Rod Griffiths     | 6288 6988 (h) |

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| Steven Forst | 6251 6817 (h), 6219 5236 (w) |
| Judy Kelly   | 6253 1859 (h, after 7.30pm)  |
| Sonja Lenz   | 6251 1291 (h)                |

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|                 |                                   |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
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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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#### Subscription rates (1 July to 30 June)

|                      |      |                      |      |
|----------------------|------|----------------------|------|
| Household membership | \$40 | Single members       | \$35 |
| Corporate membership | \$30 | <i>Bulletin only</i> | \$30 |
| Concession           | \$25 |                      |      |

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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 March 2005 issue: 1 February 2005

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

This Bulletin was produced by the NPA Bulletin Working Group.  
 Printed by Copy-Qik, Canberra, ACT.  
 ISSN 0727-8837

*Cover Photo: Ranger Steve Taylor rallies his troops in the Mount Ainslie Forest/Woodland Reserve during the Great Australian Bushwalk on October 24 (pp 6 & 7)*

# From the President

It has been a busy time for environmental issues since the last *NPA ACT Bulletin*. Locally and regionally we have had government elections, globally the Kyoto agreement has come into force.

The Stanhope Government has been returned in the ACT, and the Chief Minister has retained the Environment portfolio among his responsibilities. We can hope that he will put the environment first. The future of our species depends on assigning a high priority to the health of planet Earth's environment.

A huge first step has been taken with ratification of the Kyoto Protocol by Russia which now brings this international agreement into force a decade after its drafting (see box on page 5 for some details). The Australian Government, like the US, has refused to sign the agreement. Nevertheless, 121 countries have ratified the treaty bringing the protocol into force and triggering negotiations next year for a second round of greenhouse gas emission targets.

We must lobby for an enlightened attitude from our federal government, an approach we should expect our ACT Government to support. If the reduction quotas are difficult to achieve, then the government can argue for more flexible commitments rather than reject them completely. Ultimately their response will impact not only on climate change but also on Australian trade and development.

The challenge for a united response by all nations is, in the first instance, one of rallying political will before anything tangible can be achieved, but the clock may be ticking faster than we think, the weather extremes becoming more and more erratic and unpredictable, presaging a worrying climate trend. Climate change may be much faster than predicted and will drastically impact on the biosphere

with consequent changes to human demography and lifestyles.

Climate change is one big problem, land clearing another related problem. The author of a recent newspaper article (*Canberra Times*, October 18, *Times2*, p4) extracted from a Federal Government report the observation that the ACT was second only to Queensland in the rate of tree felling! Some 420 Australian ecologists, biologists and botanists have warned governments of the dire consequences of land clearing; some of the Canberra-based signatories of this *Brigalow Declaration* warned of species extinctions unless the land clearing is stopped (*Canberra Times*, 26 November 2003, p5).

Land clearing for the Gungahlin Drive Extension on Black Mountain and the O'Connor Ridge, and for urban development in O'Malley, has caused intense community disquiet and distrust. In the long term, these land clearances may be somewhat compensated in tree numbers by regrowth and new plantings in reserves such as those at Goorooyaroo and Mulligans Flat, but the destruction of old growth habitat on the O'Connor Ridge and Black Mountain, and of a large part of the O'Malley grasslands, is a severe blow for conservationists and nature lovers in the ACT, let alone for the flora and fauna that perished.

Educating the public, and ultimately the politicians, about the need to conserve our natural state is a first step to bringing about change. The recent Great Australian Bushwalk through Goorooyaroo and Mulligans Flat reserves was a great success in this regard and we congratulate Environment ACT and Marg Wade for the way they organised the event. It went off without an apparent hitch despite the wonderfully inclement weather. Most of the walkers and talkers seemed to enjoy it enormously. NPA ACT members, particularly

Steven Forst and also Adrienne Nicholson and other helpers, did a great job with organising NPA's assistance and setting up and staffing the NPA display.

On such occasions it is as much a pleasure for us to share in the EnvACT rangers' deep knowledge of our parks as it is so obviously for them to share that knowledge and experience. It was interesting to delve into the three NPA field guides (after a hot shower at home) to check on the longnecked tortoise, a possible Pacific heron sighting and the unidentified trees (it was too wet to open the books in the field).

The NPA's third and final Policy Forum took our October general meeting well into the night but it was worth it and I thank all those who stayed. Christine Goonrey guided this worthwhile process through many meetings and email drafts to the final edited version (in preparation) and we are all grateful for her skill and patience.

As usual there is much more to be done—responses to the ACT Bushfire Plan and the Plan of Management for Namadgi National Park in particular will soon have to be prepared. Our Christmas Party is just around the corner, which means it will be getting hotter sometime soon so there will be lots of outings to plan and participate in. I urge all you new members to come and volunteer your time and skills, your committee will value your contribution to making the NPA a more effective voice in the conservation of the national parks and nature reserves of the region.

By the time you read the next *Bulletin* it will be well into 2005, so let me take this opportunity on behalf of the committee to wish you a peaceful Christmas period and a happy start to the New Year.

Kevin McCue, President

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## NPA office volunteers, and a new committee member

The November general meeting gave a warm welcome to new committee member, Sonja Lenz. Sonja has contributed to the association over many years and will bring her experience and enthusiasm to the committee.

NPA ACT thanks Kaye Campbell for the many hours of methodical and meticulous administrative work that she has completed in NPA's small Chifley office and also Judith Webster for her contribution in keeping the office running. We now welcome and

thank Diana Heins, Jenny McLeod and Kathryn Wingett for taking on many of the administrative tasks; it is greatly appreciated.

# Forum helps define policies on parks and conservation issues

The general meeting of October 21 discussed the last group of proposed policies and covered these topics:

- nature and purpose of Namadgi National Park;
- role and purpose of other conservation reserves;
- flora and fauna;
- settler and post-settler heritage and culture;
- walking tracks for Namadgi National Park and other ACT conservation reserves; and
- land use in close proximity to national parks and conservation areas.

Discussions were lively and quite detailed and we now have a set of clear policies which will help guide our comments and submissions over the next year. The most important of these is, of course, our submission on the Plan of Management for Namadgi National Park, which is expected to be released early in 2005.

In brief, the first policy discussed, **nature and purpose of Namadgi National Park**, states firmly that the purpose of the Namadgi National Park is first and pre-eminently the protection and enhancement of the natural values of the environment as an ecologically viable and sustainable system. It also has a valuable role in protecting Canberra's water supply, promoting scientific research and environmental study, conserving cultural heritage both pre- and post-European settlement, and providing opportunities for low impact recreation.

The policy states strongly that the natural environment is the main purpose of Namadgi National Park and this must not be traded off as demand grows for more recreational space and activities, or for the preservation of utilities and other infrastructure, which would thus endanger the reserve's primary purpose. Multi-purpose recreational areas should be separately identified, gazetted and managed for that purpose.

We consider Namadgi National Park is an integral part of the Australian Alps environmental system, landforms and landscapes, and support the Australian Alps Memorandum of Understanding as an important tool for cooperative management of the Australian Alps. A key element of Namadgi National Park is its unique natural landforms and panoramic

scenery. NPA ACT strongly supports the protection of these essential environmental elements from any incursions or disturbances, such as communication towers, pipelines or road works.

In discussing the policy on **flora and fauna**, we recognise that Namadgi National Park and other conservation areas in the ACT contain unique plants and animals, including insects and birds, which would alone justify the most rigorous care and protection. In addition they contain important examples of coastal, mountain, woodland and grassland ecosystems. Namadgi National Park contains a unique mingling of these ecosystems and often marks the most northern or western extent of important species.

We support adequate resourcing to study and detect change in species composition, distribution and frequency without detracting from other important management tasks in the park. The policy details specific strategies we consider would contribute to the protection of the park's unique flora and fauna, including education programs to assist park users to protect the park from incursions of feral weeds and animals, and to promote a greater understanding of the delicate balance of its unique environment.

The **settler and post-settler heritage and culture** policy covers homesteads, huts, ruins, yards, fences, gravesites and other structures which contribute to the cultural heritage of Namadgi National Park.

The principle adopted is that they should be managed in accordance with the Burra Charter to preserve that cultural significance and be kept in good repair. In the event of destruction by fire, or other natural causes, of settler sites, NPA ACT will consider reconstruction on a case by case basis in accordance with the Burra Charter. Recommendations may range from rehabilitation or replacement, to retention of the ruin or acceptance of loss, depending on cultural significance, environmental impact and cost of replacement. Where replacement is not appropriate, the site should be rehabilitated to its previous environmental value although signage may provide indications of previous use.

A comprehensive policy on **walking tracks for Namadgi National**

**Park and other ACT conservation reserves** is based on a classification of tracks which takes into account environmental aspects, general management issues, likely numbers of users, reasons for the existence of the track, the terrain, and costs of construction and future maintenance.

The location and classification of tracks should be carefully planned to comply with management objectives, and shown on any management plans and drawings and maps. They should provide examples of scenery, landforms and features, ecosystems, communities, native wildlife and recreational opportunities. Interpretive and guiding signs and other facilities should be provided, appropriate to the track classification. Tracks should be properly maintained to the standard applicable to their classifications. Existing tracks which are inconsistent with the management plan should be closed and allowed or assisted to re-vegetate.

The management plan may limit the frequency of visits, number of walkers and permits through areas where there are no specific tracks or routes, as required by environmental considerations. In particularly sensitive areas, or where the number of walkers is high, consideration should be given, after assessment of acceptable impacts, to restricting the number of walkers allowed on tracks. Visitors using tracks should be educated not to deviate from tracks, to reduce environmental impact and maintenance costs and to enhance safety.

The meeting also considered a policy on **land use in close proximity to national parks and conservation areas** which states that management of land in close proximity to any national park or conservation area is a critical part of protecting their natural values. In particular, we consider that the ACT Government has a special responsibility to ensure areas bordering Namadgi National Park are leased and managed consistent with the protection of the environmental values of the park as a high priority. In addition, land managers who border on Namadgi National Park and other conservation reserves should have a duty of care to these reserves and their natural values.

*continued next page*

## Notes on Climate Change

### Global Warming

The progressive gradual rise of the Earth's average surface temperature thought to be caused in part by increased concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

### Climate change

Refers to changes in long-term trends in the average climate, such as changes in average temperatures. In *International Protocol for Climate Change* usage, climate change refers to any change in climate over time, whether due to natural variability or as a result of human activity. Note that in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change usage, climate change refers to a change in climate that is attributable directly or indirectly to human activity that alters atmospheric composition.

### Kyoto Protocol

An international agreement adopted in December 1997 in Kyoto, Japan. The Protocol sets binding emission targets for developed countries that would reduce their greenhouse gas emissions on average 5.2 percent below 1990 levels.

### Notes

Temperatures at the Earth's surface increased by an estimated 0.6°C over the 20th century. The 1990's were the hottest decade of the entire century; and 1998, 2001, and 2002 were three of the hottest years ever recorded.

The growing scientific consensus is that this warming is largely the result of emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases from human activities including industrial processes, fossil fuel combustion, and changes in land use, such as deforestation. Projections of future warming suggest a global increase of 1.4°C to 5.8°C by 2100. In addition to warming, increases in sea level and changes in precipitation, including more frequent floods and droughts, are likely. These changes, over time, are referred to broadly as *climate change*.

Unaddressed, climate change will have significant impacts around the world. For instance, sea-level rise will add to stresses coastal communities are already facing, including erosion, storms, and pressures from development. In arid and semi-arid regions, relatively modest changes in precipitation can have large impacts on limited water supplies. Terrestrial, freshwater, and coastal ecosystems are particularly sensitive to climate change, threatening biodiversity and ecosystem goods and services such as fisheries and recreation. Even human health may be threatened as heat waves, extreme weather, and vector-borne diseases become more prevalent.

While some of the effects of climate change may be positive, such as longer growing seasons in some countries that increase the productivity of agriculture and forests, these positive impacts are unlikely to be sustained as the globe continues to warm. Furthermore, even while the nation as a whole benefits, certain regions or sectors, may suffer. Many developing countries are vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change and less able to adapt than developed countries.

Most projections of future impacts do not address what could happen if warming continues beyond 2100, which is inevitable if steps to reduce emissions are not taken, or if the rate of change accelerates. Furthermore, the longer warming persists and the greater its magnitude, the greater the risk of climate "surprises" such as abrupt or catastrophic changes in the global climate.

Even if we are able to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, some further warming is unavoidable. We must plan and take action now to adapt to the changes we will face as our climate changes.

From: [www.pewclimate.org](http://www.pewclimate.org)

## Forum helps define policies ... *continued from previous page*

Recreational, horticultural or cropping activities undertaken in areas bordering Namadgi National Park and adjacent conservation areas must meet specific criteria to prevent adverse impact on the park through the spread of weeds or wild seedlings. A functional buffer zone should be

established around the park from which known pests and plants which would threaten the park are banned; and grazing incursions from surrounding leaseholds must be prevented and repeat offenders should be prosecuted.

The full policies will be published on the new web site when it is

completed. In the meantime, anyone wishing to get a full copy of NPA ACT policies can contact Christine Goonrey on 6231 8395.

Christine Goonrey

# The Great Australian Bushwalk



The Great Australian Bushwalk was held on Sunday October 24 in all state capital cities, but I think little old Canberra can modestly claim to have had the biggest and the best of them all. It all began as a concept developed by our sister organisation NPA of NSW which was subsequently taken up by all of the other NPAs, including NPA of the ACT. In Canberra we had a special advantage in that it was embraced, promoted and very strongly supported by the ACT Chief Minister and Environment ACT.

Planning and promotion of the event had been going on for months. It was decided at an early stage that there would be a choice of two walks, one of 10 kilometres and another of 20 kilometres for the fitter, more adventurous souls. Both would be designed to show off the wonderful northern sections of Canberra Nature Park, particularly the new Goorooyarroo reserve and its Mulligans Flat neighbour. The longer walk would take in, in addition, the Mount Ainslie and Mount Majura reserves.

As the Big Day approached, Margaret Wade of Environment ACT came along to our general meeting on the Thursday evening of the week preceding the walk and briefed us on arrangements in progress. Margaret's big news was that over 650 people had so far registered for the walk, including more than 130 for the longer walk.

The logistics of the exercise were nothing short of awesome. A whole range of government agencies was being conscripted to assist, including ACTION buses to take people from Mulligans Flat to their respective starting points; the ACT State Emergency Service for traffic control, staffing of checkpoints and recovery/rescue of weary walkers; and the Ambulance Service (ditto for wounded walkers).

The commitment of Environment ACT staff and resources





at all levels was very impressive: rangers to lead walking groups; portaloos and water supplies at key points; refreshments at a mid-walk location and at the end; and even a sausage sizzle and bush band to welcome walkers at the end of their stroll. The newly re-elected Chief Minister himself was a keen proponent, and would be out there walking with the rest of us.

On the Big Day everything ran like a well oiled machine—except the weather which got a bit on the damp side. But it had been so dry for so long that people seemed to be quite happy to walk along in the wet, and the relatively mild temperature and lack of wind meant that hypothermia was generally avoided, even by those who got sopping wet (and there were many drowned rats to be seen around Mulligans Flat later in the day).

I chose to do the 20km walk, and was in a group of 34 led by ranger Steve Taylor. Our bus left on time, and we were climbing Mt Ainslie from the War Memorial not long after 8:00am. We eventually got back to Mulligans Flat a bit after 1:30pm, having been on the track for around five and a half wet but happy hours.

Virtually the whole of this was within the wonderful natural surrounds of Canberra Nature Park. We had only one significant uphill stretch (Mount Ainslie), and only one road to cross, Horse Park Drive. On leaving the Mount Majura reserve we crossed the Federal Highway via an underpass, and then had a couple of hundred metres of newly mown track along the fence before crossing Horse Park Drive and entering Goorooyaroo reserve. Canberra truly is the Bush Capital. Where else is there a city where you can enjoy such natural bush (20+km of it!) so close to the city centre??

**Max Lawrence**



*Photos (except one) by Max Lawrence, clockwise from top left:*

- *The marshalling yard at Mulligans Flat (by Adrienne Nicholson);*
- *Boarding the buses for transfer to starting points;*
- *Along the power lines, Mt Ainslie Nature Reserve;*
- *A checkpoint staffed by ACT SES volunteers, Mt Majura;*
- *The morning tea station, Goorooyaroo;*
- *One of the frequent track markers, Goorooyaroo;*
- *Soggy but still smiling, NPA members Judith Webster, Col McAlister and Esther Gallant;*
- *The view from under the brolly—Mulligans Flat;*
- *Ranger Steve Taylor and Environment ACT Executive Director Maxine Cooper among the crowd at a refreshment station;*
- *The track awash in Mulligans Flat Reserve;*
- *Steve Forst and Sue Chadwick with the NPA display.*



# Phil Cheney speaks

*On Canberra Day, 12 March 2004, Phil Cheney, Principal Senior Research Scientist with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, delivered the third Canberra Day Oration, sponsored by the Canberra and District Historical Society. Len Haskew has extracted the following from the report of his speech in the September 2004 issue of the Canberra Historical Journal.*

I have spent my entire adult life studying bushfires. It is a field in which the lessons of science and of history, are hard-won, but easily forgotten.

Fire in the bush is not a man-made phenomenon. Fire is an ecological process that has shaped the flora and fauna of the world and is as "natural" as the sun and the rain. It occurs wherever and whenever the climate produces a flammable environment. In Australia, bushfires have been around for at least eighty million years and as soon as the eucalypts appeared in the fossil record, charcoal was in there with them. ...

The only way to prevent widespread conflagration fire is to use fire to reduce fuel loads well before the extreme weather hits. This is not new. When the Aborigines arrived the climate was probably not much different from that which we have today. They soon recognised the consequences of widespread continuous fuel and extreme weather. Having little capacity for suppression—I am sure they were tough, but there is only so much you can do with a green branch and no clothes—

they resorted to burning. There is now little doubt that they burnt the bush frequently and extensively and in my opinion burnt primarily to protect themselves and their food resources by creating an extensive patchwork of recently burnt ground that limited the spread of intense fire under severe weather.

In southern Australia we cannot now recreate the pattern of Aboriginal burning even if we wanted to. However, we can create a pattern of fuel-reduced areas that, if combined with efficient suppression, will provide for the need to manage our forests for catchment protection, timber production and recreation, our parks for the conservation of our flora and fauna and, beyond the forest edge, to provide for the protection of our farms and homes.

Broad-scale prescribed burning is essential in our forests to allow firefighters the opportunity to suppress fire before it becomes too large, and to provide a balance of age classes after fire for the maintenance of biodiversity. It is also of critical importance to enhance the safety of our firefighters themselves. ...

The only way to have people understand fires is to expose them to it on a regular basis. Fire should be used to reduce fuels in our national parks and pine forests. This is not the ecological disaster that some people would depict. For example, low-intensity prescribed fire on Black Mountain every five years would protect the green canopy of the trees and regenerate the understorey

shrubs. With fire exclusion many shrubs, like the Black Mountain wattle, become scraggy and die out. Some of the beautiful-flowered pea bushes live only for seven to ten years and in many areas only persist as seed in the soil. These species do not need high-intensity fire, but can be safely and successfully regenerated by low-intensity fire applied at the right time of the year. ...

There is a downside of course. The weather conditions that are most favourable for precision burning are stable and will result in a layer of smoke moving into and through urban areas. And to some people smoke is a severe irritant and may precipitate asthma and other allergic reactions. But in the divine scheme of things smoke was not put there just to irritate the human race. Smoke stimulates flowering of many native plant species and has a role in breaking the dormancy of the seed of many others. Smoke is part of that ecological process called fire and a natural part of the ecosystem we call earth.

I consider that a forest subjected to mild prescribed fire, where the scene is one of freshly regenerated shrubs under an intact canopy, is far more attractive and far better for the conservation of biodiversity than long-unburned forest with its sickly understorey of moribund shrubs and massive accumulations of tussock grasses and leaf litter.

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## Namadgi Plan of Management

As readers will be aware, a revised Plan of Management for Namadgi, which would replace the 1986 plan, is in preparation. At the time of writing, early November, the drafting of the plan is progressing and it is expected to be released for public comment in early February 2005.

Sharon Lane of Environment ACT is scheduled to speak at the NPA ACT's March meeting. She will present an overview of the drafting and development of the management plan and its content.

**Sunday 12 December**

Honeysuckle Creek picnic ground at the site of the former tracking station.

**NPA Christmas Party**

Bring lunch, etc. Go for a wander (or don't) in the afternoon.

See outings program.



# Rehabilitation of the Lower Cotter Catchment

Andrew Winter addressed the NPA membership on 16 September 2004 with a presentation entitled *Making The Waters Clear*. Andrew is with ACT Forests and was a fire fighter during the dreadful ACT fires of 2003. He began his talk with a description of the Lower Cotter Catchment before these fires, outlining the multiple-use management of the area. The emphasis on commercial uses included support to the timber industry, recreation and water production.

The effect of the January 2003 fires on the area was disastrous. The heavy rains following the fires further compromised the loss of vegetation and hydrophobic soils. The rain, and winds of 200 kilometres per hour were further associated with massive sediment movement.

The challenge facing ACT Forests was to first plan the future use of the Lower Cotter Catchment after cleaning up the area. Then came site preparation making provision for enhanced water quality and ensuring that the road network would minimise any negative

environmental impact. There was then the planning for future commercial plantation management and for recreation.

The overall concept used by the planners is termed "The Working Forest" which covers a combination of land uses. To implement the concept, management zones are established embracing commercial plantations, natural forests, visual areas, recreation nodes and a rural village fire abatement zone. An expert advisory group was formed which then visited the area. A number of views were expressed, some of which were conflicting.

Among the rehabilitation strategies in view are the removal of some roads, improved stream flow, erosion control and forest re-establishment. With regard to roads, it is expected that road density will be reduced by two-thirds. Adequate access for management purposes, fire protection and recreation will be provided. In the Pierces Creek area, some roads will be closed such as those too near creeks or those on land that is too steep.

To control the flow of water, the effort will be centred on minimisation of sediment movement, erosion control and reduction of scouring. Some impressive photos of this were shown, including a groyne structure costing about \$30 000. For areas where there is a possibility of Aboriginal artefacts buried by sediment movement, Aboriginal elders and the Department of Environment and Heritage is consulted.

Following the talk, NPA members posed a number of questions. One member was interested in the process of setting priorities for the work and another asked about sawmills in the ACT. Andrew said there were three active sawmills in the ACT processing pine logs from the ACT and region.

There was great interest in Andrew's talk which was accompanied by a series of photographs demonstrating the physical problems faced by ACT Forests and progress towards rehabilitation.

David E. Pfanner

## Draft Strategic Bushfire Management Plan released

The Emergency Services Authority (ESA) has prepared a draft Strategic Bushfire Management Plan for the ACT (version 1) which has now been released and is open for public comment until 6 December 2004.

The ACT Government policy on bushfires recognises shared responsibility for reducing bushfire risk and that it is not the Government alone that carries this responsibility. The ESA is the single body to develop, delegate and oversee the implementation of an integrated approach to the management of bushfires in the ACT.

The ESA is required to provide government agencies and the community with policy guidance and advice on bushfire management: this task forms the purpose of the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan. Each organisation is required to develop plans and procedures that are consistent with this plan whilst the community is

encouraged to consider the implications of the plan for them.

From the above it is clear that this document, when finalised, will be a significant force in the development of land management plans in the ACT including those for the national park and nature reserves. I understand that the NPA Committee is studying the draft report in this context and will prepare a response to it in the coming weeks.

At 60 pages in length, this is a succinct report and its scope may be gleaned from the main section headings:

- Context of the plan
- Setting the scene—bushfires and the ACT
- Bushfire risk assessment
- Prevention—minimising bushfire occurrences and impacts
- Preparedness—getting ready to fight bushfires

- Response—reacting to bushfires
- Recovery—restoring bushfire damage
- Standards, monitoring and reporting
- Resource requirements.

I obtained my copy of the report from a Shop Front, but it is also available at the ESA web site [www.esa.act.gov.au](http://www.esa.act.gov.au)

Syd Comfort

**Saturday 11 December**

**Gudgenby Bush Regeneration  
Group Christmas Party**

Please see page 10

# Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group

As Fiona MacDonald Brand's photo at right shows, the Gudgenby group is hat-fashion conscious. Taken during a cool August work party, with a snowy Mount Gudgenby in the background, the photo shows, from left, Syd Comfort, Eleanor Stodart, Clive Hurlstone, Adrienne Nicholson, Sonja Lenz, Hazel Rath and Frank Clements. The photo below, taken by Len Haskew, shows the group's President, Clive Hurlstone, being interviewed by Kirsten Early during the shooting of a short film at the Gudgenby regeneration site. The film has been made for screening on ABC's *Stateline* program.

The December 11<sup>th</sup> work party will be weeding around the trees now growing in the area between the road to



Frank and Jack's Hut and the nearby gully. Being that time of year, work will make way for a Christmas party at midday when we can sit in the shade of the trees we have planted and feel good about it. This would be an ideal opportunity for anyone interested in this project to turn out—work half a day and celebrate the season in a wonderful location!

With the last of the pines now harvested, the group will need all the help it can muster to carry out the seeding of the recently cleared areas during 2005.

Syd Comfort

## For Sale

Bushwalking boots three pairs:

Scarpa leather, size 42, price \$55

Hi Tech leather, size 6/39, price \$20

Aku Goretex (vibram sole),

size 8/42, price \$60.

Please contact John Webster phone  
6241 4646

Feedback from walkers on the **Great Australian Bushwalk** (see pages 6 and 7) passed on by Maxine Cooper of Environment ACT.

*It was all just great. The weather at the end (that downpour) did make it just slightly less than perfect but my 13 year old son and 15 year old daughter, both of whom went under sufferance and protestation, voted it the best walk they had ever been on and said it was greatly enhanced by the inches of mud that they were able to splutter all over each other.*

*I wish to congratulate all who took part in organizing and conducting the event. The [guides] were informative with nothing too silly to answer.*

# NPA Bulletin

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION (ACT) INCORPORATED

## NPA OUTINGS PROGRAM

December 2004 — March 2005

### Outings Guide

#### Walk grading

Distance grading (per day)

- 1 — up to 10 km
- 2 — 10 km to 15 km
- 3 — 15 km to 20 km
- 4 — above 20 km

#### Terrain grading

- A — Road, firetrail track
- B — Open forest
- C — Light scrub
- D — Patches of thick scrub, regrowth
- E — Rock scrambling
- F — Exploratory

Day walks Carry lunch, drinks and protective clothing.

Pack walks Two or more days. Carry all food and camping requirements. CONTACT LEADER BY PRIOR WEDNESDAY OR AS INDICATED IN THE PROGRAM.

Car camps Facilities often limited or non-existent. Vehicles taken to site can be used for camping. BOOK EARLY WITH LEADER.

Other activities include nature rambles and environmental and field guide studies.

### Points to note

Please help keep our outings program alive by volunteering to lead outings. New leaders are welcome. The outings convenor is happy to suggest locations suitable for a walk if you do not have something in mind yourself. Feel free to send in suggestions for outings to the association's office as soon as you think of them, with a suggested date.

All persons joining an outing of the National Parks Association of the ACT do so as volunteers in all respects and as such accept responsibility for any injury howsoever incurred and the National Parks Association of the ACT, its office bearers and appointed leaders, are absolved from any liability in respect of injury or damage suffered whilst engaged in any such outing.

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

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

**5 December, Sunday daywalk  
Mt Stilwell**

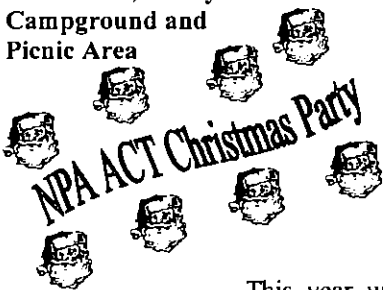
**Leader: Brian Slee**  
**Grading: 2B/C**  
**Map: Perisher Valley 1:25 000**  
**Contact: 6281 0719 or**  
**brianslee@iprimus.com.au**

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 work and  
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**

Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre, Tharwa at 9:15am, or Yankee Hat carpark at 10:00am. Tools for the morning's work will be provided, as will a Christmas lunch, in the shade of 'regenerated' trees.

**12 December, Honeysuckle  
Campground and  
Picnic Area**



This year we plan to hold our Christmas Party at the Honeysuckle Campground. All the usual features; nothing strenuous planned, but a short walk to see the regeneration between Honeysuckle and Booroomba Rocks. Bring your Christmas picnic lunch and relax with nibbles and drinks provided from 11:00am onwards.

**Contact: NPA committee**  
**Steven Forst 6251 6817 (h) or**  
**steven.forst@aca.gov.au**

**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 the 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.

**9 January Sunday Walk  
Mt Nungar**

**Map: Tantangara 1:25 000**  
**Grading: 1B**  
**Leader: Max Lawrence**  
**Contact: 6288 1370 or**  
**mlawrence@netspeed.com.au**

Mt Nungar is a notable peak just to the east of the road into Tantangara Dam from the Snowy Mountains Highway. After a steady 400 metre climb taken at a very easy pace through open bush we should be enjoying some great mountain scenery. Despite the climb, this is quite an easy walk and we will be making a picnic of it, so bring along suitable refreshments. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. Drive: 300 km, \$90 per car.

**16 January Sunday Walk  
Alpine Lakes and Wildflowers**

**Map: Perisher Valley 1:25,000**  
**Grading: 2A/C**  
**Leader: Brian Slee**  
**Contact: 6281 0719 (h) or**  
**brianslee@iprimus.com.au**  
Participants need to be fit due to the steep terrain. Depart Kambah Village 6.30 am. Park at Charlotte Pass and after descending to, and crossing, the Snowy River, head for Club Lake. After a break, climb to Northcote Pass and proceed to Albina Lake for lunch. If time permits, a side trip to Muellers Peak. Return via Albina Lodge ruins,

Mt Clarke and Foremans chimney. Anemones, sunrays and eyebrights guaranteed, in profusion. Afternoon tea in Jindabyne. Book with leader as a weather check is essential. Numbers limited. Drive: 420 km, \$120 per car + \$15 per vehicle not having a park entry permit.

**22 January Saturday Walk  
Dubbo Falls**

**Map: Brindabella 1:25 000**  
**Grading: 2C/D/E/F**  
**Leader: Max Lawrence**  
**Contact: 6288 1370 or**  
**mlawrence@netspeed.com.au**

Dubbo Falls are on Dubbo Creek in the far north of Kosciuszko National Park. We will approach the top of the falls on foot from Boundary Road (four wheel drive only), and will then explore down to the junction with the Goobarragandra River if circumstances allow. Climb of 300m back to cars from top of falls. Numbers limited by the availability of vehicles, and the walk may have to be rescheduled if road and/or weather conditions unsuitable. Phone leader early to book. Drive: 275 km, \$85 per 4wd vehicle.

**23 January Sunday Walk.  
Gigerline Gorge**

**Grading: 2C**  
**Map: Williamsdale 1:25 000**  
**Leader: Pat Miethke**  
**Contact: 6241 2798 evenings.**

This is a pleasant little gorge on the Murrumbidgee just upstream from Tharwa. Exactly how far we get will depend on the water level in the river on the day. Expect sand, rock hopping, pools to swim in, and light scrub. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8 am. Drive 60 km, \$20 per car.

**26 – 30 January Five day pack walk  
Hume and Hovell Track —  
Tumbarumba to Tumut**

**Map: H&H Guide book and strip maps.**  
**Grading: 3A**  
**Leader: David Large**  
**Contact: 6291 4830 or**  
**david.large@bigpond.com.au**  
Five days of walking on the Hume and Hovell Track plus driving time. Walk may go N/S or S/N depending on numbers and transport arrangements. This is a fairly easy walk but with some longish days. We may take the short cuts along the Blowering Dam to fit into time. Contact leader for details and expressions of interest

**30 January Sunday Walk  
The Big Hole and Marble Arch**

**Map:** Kain 1:25,000

**Grading:** 3A

**Leader:** Steven Forst

**Contact:** 625168178 (h) 62195236

(w) or steven.forst@aca.gov.au

Meet at Canberra Railway station at 8:00am. After crossing the Shoalhaven river, a walk on track mainly through open forest to visit the large sink hole over 110m deep, known as the Big hole. Then continue on to the Marble Arch, a limestone feature at the entrance to a narrow limestone gorge. Drive: 180 km, \$80 per car.

**6 February Sunday Walk**

**Snowy Mountains – Alice Rawson Peaks and a Pond**

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

**Grading:** 4 A/C/E

**Leader:** Steve Hill

**Contact:** 62319186 or email:

landshil@webone.com.au

A day of fabulous views when the wildflowers should still be out. This will proceed only if the weather conditions are likely to be safe. We drive to Thredbo (2 1/2 hours) and catch the chair to the top of "Crackenback". We walk along the track towards Mt Kosciuszko and then, along the Main Range track to Muellers Pass. We turn off to climb towards Mt Townsend. But rather than climb it, we will stroll north along the spur to Alice Rawson Peaks for some very stunning views, while avoiding walking on severe fire damage to the west. Then we drop down the eastern side to a large pond about 150 metres above Lake Alpina and scramble back towards the northern end of Muellers Peak to return. The walk will require good fitness, will be partly off track and will involve some climbing. It brings with it an early start and late return to Canberra, but the sights are absolutely worth it. Contact Steve Hill by Friday evening to register and for details of the meeting place. Drive: 400 km, \$120 per car.

**12 February Saturday work party  
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group**

**Contact:** Syd Comfort 62862578,

scomfort@netspeed.com.au

or Clive Hurlstone 0407 783 422,

clive.hurlstone@csiro.au

Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre, Tharwa at 9:15 am or Yankee Hat carpark at 10:00 am. Work for the rehabilitation of the old Boboyan pine forest area. Tools will be provided.

**13 February Sunday Walk**

**Brindabella Ramble**

**Map:** ACT 1:100000

**Grading:** 3A

**Leader:** Steven Forst

**Contact:** 62516817 (h) 62195236 (w)

or steven.forst@aca.gov.au

Meeting at the forest car park on Uriarra Rd near Cotter Road at 8:30 am. A walk in the mountain forest along old Mill Road and Warks Road in the Brindabella range. Visit the cooler south facing folds of the Brindabella range including areas that escaped significant damage during the fires and other regrowth areas. Drive 85 km, \$25 per car.

**20 February Sunday Walk.**

**Mt. Murray.**

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

**Grading:** 3 A/D

**Leader:** Pat Miethke.

**Contact:** 6241 2798 evenings.

This is a long day but is worth the effort to visit such a remote peak on the ACT / NSW border. From Yaouk we walk up the Lone Pine Firetrail for 4 km (390 m climb) and then walk another 4 km (270 m climb) off track through regenerating scrub to the top of Murray. Mt. Murray (1840 m) has two peaks close together, both with great views, one is a rocky outcrop. The total walk is 16 kms. If the day is very hot we may do something shorter. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 7 am. Drive 200 km, \$60 per car.

**19-20 February, Weekend walk**

**KNP, Boggy Plain**

**Map:** Denison, Tantangara 1:25000

**Grading:** 2 B/C

**Leader:** David Large

**Contact:** 6291 4830

Walk from Tantangara Road over the Blackfellows and Blanket Hills ridge then drop down to camp on the headwaters of Tantangara Creek. On Sunday, climb Mt Tantangara before following the Monaro Range back to the cars. Area burnt during Jan 2003 fires, so walking should be through open forest and alpine meadows. Drive 300 kms. \$90 per car.

**23 February Wednesday Walk**

**Leader:** Mike Smith

**Contact:** 6286 2984 or

msmith@netspeed.com.au

Details to be advised by the midweek walks email list or contact the leader.

**26 February Saturday Work Party**

**Gudgenby Area—Middle Creek**

**Leader:** Martin Chalk

**Contact:** 62923502

The lower reaches of Middle Creek are showing signs of re-infestation by Crack Willow. This work party up Middle creek from the vicinity of the homestead and attempt to eradicate them. Meet at the Namadgi Visitors centre at 8:30 am. Drive: 75km, \$24 per car.

**27 February Sunday ½ day Walk**

**Glenburn Historical Precinct,**

**Kowen Forest**

**Map:** Bungendore 1:25,000

**Grading:** 1A

**Leader:** Colin McAlister

**Contact:** 62884171

A walk from the Kings Highway to visit several of the historic sites in the Glenburn historic precinct including: the Glenburn shearing shed; the Cohvwell goares; the Glenburn homestead; and Collies homestead ruins. Meet at Canberra Railway Station Kingston at 8:30 am. Drive 50 km, \$15 per car.

**6 March Sunday Walk**

**Snowy Mountains - Mt Twynam,**

**Peak 2136 and Crummer Spur**

**Map:** Perisher Valley 1:50,000

**Grading:** 4 A/C/E

**Leader:** Steve Hill

**Contact:** 62319186 email;

landshil@webone.com

A day of fabulous views. This will proceed only if the weather is likely to be clear. We drive to Charlotte Pass carpark (2 1/2 hours) and follow the Main Range track to the Blue Lake look out. We climb over the main range near Mt Twynam towards Watson's Crag, stopping at a peak marked as 2136 metres, for views of the Western Snowys. Then we trek to Mt Twynam (2196 m - third highest "peak") for great views of everywhere. We descend via Little Twynam down the magnificent Crummer Spur past the beautiful Headley Tarn back to the cars. The walk will require good fitness, will be mainly off track and will involve regular climbs. It brings with it an early start and late return to Canberra, but the sights are supremely rewarding. Contact Steve Hill by Friday evening to register and for details of the meeting place. Drive: 400 km, \$120 per car.

**5-6 March Weekend Walk  
Hoddles Castle**

**Map:** Endrick 1:25,000

**Grading:** 3A/D/E

**Leader:** Philip Gatenby

**Contact:** 6254 3094 or

philip.gatenby@dewr.gov.au

Hoddles Castle offers great views of nearby parts of the Budawangs. The walk starts at the Nerriga entrance to Morton National Park and is partly on tracks. Some creek crossings and rock scrambling through cliff lines will also be involved, as will a number of climbs of up to 200 metres. Contact leader by the Wednesday before the walk. Drive 320 km, \$96 per car.

**12 March Saturday work party  
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group**

**Contact:** Syd Comfort 62862578,

scomfort@netspeed.com.au

or Clive Hurlstone 0407 783 422,

clive.hurlstone@csiro.au

Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre, Tharwa at 9:15 am or Yankee Hat carpark at 10:00 am. Work for the rehabilitation of the old Boboyan pine forest area. Tools will be provided.

**12 March Saturday Walk  
Goulburn Historical Walk**

**Map:** Goulburn Street Map

**Grading:** 1A

**Leader:** Colin McAlister

**Contact:** 62884171

A walk taking in some of Goulburn's historic sites. This is the weekend of the Rose Festival. Sites to be visited will depend on what is open. Possibilities include: the old Goulburn Brewery, Rocky Hill war memorial, the two cathedrals, the K Water works Museum and Kenmore Hospital. Fees / donations apply at some sites.

Meet at 8:30 am at the ACT Netball Centre carpark just past the Dickson traffic lights on Northbourne Ave. Drive: 200 km, \$60 per car.

**12-14 March Long Weekend Walk  
Mt Kelly**

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

**Grading:** 2A/B/C

**Leader:** Steven Forst

**Contact:** 62516817 (h) 62516817 (w)

or steven.forst@aca.gov.au

A walk to Mt Kelly for views over southern Namadgie and the Bimberi wilderness area. The walk starts from the Yankee Hat car park and proceeds

over the Gudgenby saddle and on to a campsite on Sam's Creek. Visit Mt Kelly the next day as a day walk. Walk out the third day. Drive: 140 km, \$40 per car

**19-20 March, Weekend walk**

**The Main Range**

**Map:** Perisher Valley 1:25000

**Grading:** 3 A/B

**Leader:** David Large

**Contact:** 6291 4830

A walk from Charlottes Pass along the Summit road to Merritts Creek and then follow the snow poles to the Rams Heads. Return to the track to climb Kosciuszko and then take the Lakes Walk to camp near Mt Townsend. On Sunday, follow the Lakes Walk to Carruthers Peak then divert to Mt Twynam before returning to cars. Drive 400 kms, \$120 per car.

**20 March Sunday Walk**

**Corang Peak**

**Map:** Corang 1:25 000

**Grading:** 3/A/D

**Leader:** Mike Smith

**Contact:** 6286 2984 or

msmith@netspeed.com.au

Meet at Canberra Railway station car park at 7.30 am. Note very early start. A longish but not technically difficult walk in the Budawangs from the Wog Wog entrance to Corang Peak which has 360 degree views. Side trip to Admiration Point (scrub bashing) or Corang Arch for lunch. Return by same route or, depending on party, by Corang Lagoon. If heatwave conditions, will walk direct to Corang Lagoon for swim instead of Corang Peak. Drive: 250 km, \$75 per car.

**23 March Wednesday Walk**

**Mountains Majura and Ainslie**

**Map:** Canberra Street Directory

**Grading:** 2A

**Leader:** Rob Forster

**Contact:** 62498546 or

mrforster@homemail.com.au

Meet at 9:00 am at the Antill Street Hackett access to the Canberra Nature Park (just past the last house). Walk up trail to Mt Majura then along the ridge line to Mt Ainslie. Return by the lower route back to the cars.

**27 March Sunday Walk**

**Botherum Plain**

**Map:** Nimmo Plain & Kalkite

Mountain 1:25,000

**Grading:** 2/A,B,C,F

**Leader:** Brian Slee

**Contact:** 6281 0719 (h) or

brianslee@iprimus.com.au

Depart Kambah Village 6.45 am and after passing thru Cooma, take Rocky Plain Road (toward Eucumbene Dam), turn on to Nimmo Road and then on to Island Bend Fire Trail (following powerline) to Gungarlin River. After parking on northern side of bridge, cross it and head south-east to Botherum Hut for a break. Wade across Gungarlin River and continue across Botherum Plain to Kalkite Gap. If feasible, climb Kalkite Mountain for views over Lake Jindabyne. Return by same route. Afternoon tea at Cooma. Book with leader as vehicles with basic 4WD are required for final stretch of road in. Drive: 300 km, \$90 per car.

**30 March Wednesday Walk**

**Gudgenby-Middle Creek**

**Map:** Rendezvous Creek 1:25000

**Grading:** 2A

**Leader:** Syd Comfort

**Contact:** 6286 2578 or

scomfort@netspeed.com.au

A walk up Middle Creek to a rock shelter and axe grinding grooves, then across to the Yankee Hat rock art site and back through the Gudgenby bush regeneration area. Mainly off track through open areas but some scrub. About 14k. Meet Kambah shops at 8.30 am.

# Lemurs, Chameleons and Baobab Trees

A fascinating slide show by Adrienne Nicholson entertained and informed NPA members attending the Annual General Meeting on August 19. Her colourful photographs focused on her trip to Madagascar but also briefly covered the islands of Réunion and Mauritius, visited in transit of the Indian Ocean.

The old volcanic red soils of Madagascar previously supported an abundance of tree cover and varied, unique ecosystems; sadly 85% of the natural forests are now gone, soils are very badly eroded and environmental devastation is a major factor throughout the country. Some rainforests remain on the east coast, but fast-growing, coppicing-type eucalypts have replaced huge areas of native trees in the desperate need for fuel by the expanding population. Efforts are being made to protect habitat in both private and state-

owned reserves and national parks; some are set up and managed by international research and conservation organisations such as WWF.

Any mention of trees on Madagascar must include the curious baobab trees that were well depicted in the slides. Adrienne's photographs also covered commercial crops of sugar cane, sisal and rice, which is the staple food of the Malagasy people.

The original people derived mainly from Malay/Polynesian and African elements, settling some 1500 to 2000 years ago. They are excellent craftsmen and women; in some areas they produce wonderful embroidered tablecloths

(providing income from tourists) and a wonderful variety of basketware (for everyday use, for sale to visitors and a meagre export income).

The many species of lemur are native only to Madagascar and nearby islands. Their intelligent faces somewhat resemble fruit bats or small foxes. Other animals photographed were colourful chameleons, and some endangered tortoises in a captive breeding colony. Due to habitat loss, the birdlife is interesting but not abundant on Madagascar, but we were shown a group of pied crows scavenging refuse on a beach.

We had tantalising glimpses of the small islands of Réunion and Mauritius, particularly the mountainous scenery of Réunion. In the interior of this small dot in the ocean, roads are few but walking is both necessary and popular (and well catered for).

There were certainly those at the meeting who were stimulated by Adrienne's pictures to make their own visit to these islands.

**David Pfanner**



owned reserves and national parks; some

*Top right. A typical posture for a chameleon; hanging on tightly and hoping to go unnoticed (eastern Madagascar)*

*Above. It is important for these ring-tailed lemurs in southern Madagascar to warm up their tummies in the early morning sun.*

*Right. A huge baobab towers over a small reed-thatched house in the savannah country of western Madagascar.*

*Photos Adrienne Nicholson*



# Spring walk in the Tidbinbilla Range

One of the most beautiful mountain ranges in our region can be found at our doorstep. Yes, the Tidbinbilla Range is unusually rugged, very photogenic and has ... well ... had ... a highly diverse, and often rare, vegetation cover. And its peaks offer fabulous views, including views of Canberra.

definitely refreshing, I thought. But Sunday morning dawned a bit of a surprise—cool, near frosty, with scattered cloud. The showers had cleared. Four other NPA members met me at the Kambah shops to drive the very pleasant scenic drive to the base of the Tidbinbillas, and we parked at the

vegetation had been badly burned here, being so exposed to the strong winds of the day of the fire, but snow gum seedlings were returning. The Brindabella ranges to the west looked nice in their blanket of spring snow.

Well, weren't we surprised when not one, but three privately registered four-wheel drives clattered up the track from the north. Oh, they were seeing where this track led, the driver in the lead vehicle said. Indeed, well we suggest that because you guys were in national park territory, you'd better turn around and leave. They did and follow-up action was taken. Ah, the wonders of the digital camera and mobile phone ...

We then continued along the rather treacherous climb, in fresh snow and ice, up to Pierces Trig. It wasn't so badly burnt here. The snow gums were still in leaf and bushes remained. The peak drops vertically to the east offering a panoramic view of the world 600m below: way past Canberra and the north-eastern mountains of Namadgi National Park, the Tinderries, even Mount Tumerang about 70km south-east. Yeah, we'd all been up to the top of Mount Tumerang ... No one that day could boast about their uniqueness of being on that remote mountain top.

It was a great vista for a long relaxing lunch as the temperature hovered around zero, but sheltered from a cold sou'westerly wind. So we retraced our steps along the track to the northern side of the Camel's Hump and climbed the gentler slope to its peak. The views from here are always spectacular, especially from the southern side which is near sheer in most places. The lack of vegetation does enhance the views. We decided to scramble down the southern side through snow, and a little ice on craggy rocky knolls down to the track below. Not for the faint hearted!! Great for photography though.

We were all feeling very virtuous having made that descent and ambled down the track for an hour and a quarter to reach the car where we left it. A good, much needed day in paradise. And when we returned to Kambah, we found that the TAB car park was full.

**Steve Hill**



The range was among the hardest hit beginning of the Mountain Creek Trail.

*Left to right, Judith Webster, Steve Hill, Brian Slee and Greg Lawrence. Photo Di Thompson*

in the January 2003 firestorm. It was only by last July that we were allowed access, and for good reason as it remains very fragile indeed. But the traditional walk up the Mountain Creek trail to the northern end of the Tidbinbilla Range—encompassing the Camels Hump and Pierces Trig—seemed a timely addition to the outings program.

The weather on Saturday September 11, the day before our walk, was happening as forecast, with a quick-moving front bringing some light rain, turning to sleet later that evening. It was a temporary end to spring. The next day was forecast to be snow showers, clearing ...

Stuff it, I thought, I need to get out, so I decided to proceed, even if no one turned up at the Kambah shops meeting place, even if the car park near the TAB was empty. Most of the walk would be on track, and would be in the lee of the weather. It would be doable and

On the way, it was so nice to see green shoots of grass and water in the dams for stock. Some dams near the range were even nearly full!

Following the trail to the northern ridge-meeting at the Camel's Hump was a 6km, 400m climb. And there was a novel sound—that of water in the creeks, rushing down the valley. There was light snow cover, too. The vegetation regeneration, especially since all the rain we had early in spring, was remarkable and had its own beauty. We donned our packs and started the climb up the track, the first 2km being quite steep. The coats and jackets, then jumpers, were soon off. Of course without the vegetation, one had views to the east all the way to Canberra and beyond.

We reached the top of the ridge at the base of the Camel's Hump at about 11:00, and settled in the light snow for morning tea in the sun. The jumpers and woolly hats were soon back on. The



# Tidbinbilla Master Plan released

Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, comprising nearly 5500 hectares adjacent to Namadgi National Park, has for many years carried out a number of conservation, scientific and recreational roles but was seriously damaged by the 2003 bushfires. The ACT Chief Minister's Department has recently released *Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve: Business Case and Master Plan* which was prepared by the Shaping Our Territory Working Group, chaired by Sandy Hollway. The Government has agreed to Tidbinbilla retaining its function as a captive wildlife reserve and assuming an enhanced educational and research focus, and has given its in-principle agreement to this report.

The report concludes that the "new" Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve should be similar to that which existed before the bushfires of 2003, but where possible should do things in a better, enhanced and/or more modern way. A number of initiatives and opportunities that might be pursued are set out.

Three broad groups of objectives are outlined:

- conservation, research, science, and protection of threatened species;
- recreation, tourism, visitor display and enjoyment and/or community participation; and
- education, whether to children or adults, formal or informal objectives.

The report addresses three other considerations:

- Tidbinbilla must compete with numerous other attractions in the ACT, and will succeed in this the more it can establish itself as being unique;
- finding the appropriate balance of activities between those that the government should perform and those that should be left to the private sector; and
- the assessment of the costs and benefits of the investment, noting that while some benefits accrue in monetary terms, many of the benefits are less tangible.

The report concludes that for Tidbinbilla to be "successful" when there are many competing alternatives, everything that is done must be of the highest quality, whatever the scale, and the points of difference between Tidbinbilla and other facilities must be

stressed. "Accordingly, the conservation/research/science/protection of threatened species objective should be paramount."

The report also assesses Tidbinbilla in its relationship to neighbouring locations. In this regard it proposes greater integration with the adjoining Birrigai Centre operated by the ACT Department of Education and Training and the adjoining Block 60, previously under pine plantations, but to be revegetated with native species under ACT Forests' continuing management.

The establishment of the Nature Discovery Centre, to be located in the wetlands area of the reserve, is proposed to provide the main focus for visitors. "It will encourage contact between researchers and visitors, be the place where interpretation and displays occur, and the starting point for a range of walks, guided and otherwise." It would be at the centre of meeting Tidbinbilla's broad objectives and the hub of the reserve in the future. Feasibility studies on the potential to establish a Nature Discovery Centre and a Research Centre within the reserve have been initiated by the Government.

A number of other projects, started or about to start, include:

- an elevated walkway to view the brush-tail wallabies;
- redesigned wetlands;
- an innovative adventure playground;
- stabilisation of Rock Valley Homestead;
- repair of Nil Desperandum Homestead;
- repair of damaged enclosures; and
- upgrading and repair of the picnic and barbeque areas.

The report addresses the many components that make up a complete picture of the reserve, including consideration of Aboriginal and European cultural heritage, the management of the wetlands and water resources, utilities and infrastructure, the road network and fire management. An earlier publication, *Shaping our Territory*, suggested that a future Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve might contain a major function centre and a group of eco-lodges. The current report concludes that their construction in the short term would be a distraction from the main requirement of achieving a

revamped focus on excellence in conservation and research. The appropriate time for considering such projects is seen as some three years in the future, but the report recommends that the master plan should reserve sites so that the possibilities of these projects being constructed are secured.

This discussion is part of a more general one about the provision of accommodation within the reserve and of the part private enterprise should play in this. Part of this discussion is directed at the provision of camping facilities and proposes that when the ACT camping strategy is reviewed the matter of provision of camping facilities in the reserve or in Block 60 should be revisited. Thus the controversial issue of accommodation remains alive.

The Chief Minister, Jon Stanhope, has announced the establishment of a Tidbinbilla Valley Board to advise on ways to better coordinate the conservation, land management, education, recreation and accommodation activities and facilities that are undertaken by both the reserve and the adjacent outdoor school, Birrigai.

Founding Board Members comprise the Chair, George Tomkins, Executive Director—Strategic Projects Implementation (Chief Minister's Department); Dr Maxine Cooper, Executive Director—Arts, Heritage and Environment (Chief Minister's Department); Ms Carol Harris, Director—Southside Schools (Department of Education and Training); Mr Ross MacDiarmid, Chief Executive—Australian Capital Tourism Corporation; and Professor Mike Gore from the National Centre for the Public Awareness of Science (ANU). Senior officers from both Birrigai and Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve also attend. The board meets on a monthly basis.

Syd Comfort

# Conservation management plans for Namadgi—part two

The September issue of the *Bulletin* addressed conservation plans that had recently been prepared for the Tennent Homestead and the Orroral Woolshed and in this article I will summarise the plans that have been prepared for other sites in Namadgi.

## Gudgenby Precinct

This precinct is made up of a number of elements grouped around the original and current homesteads, the Hudson Ready Cut Cottage, the stockyard area and the garden and landscape setting.

The plan finds that the Gudgenby Precinct is of considerable significance within the Territory context because of its building fabric values, cultural landscape values, and its associational values. The Hudson Ready Cut Cottage is of considerable significance in its own right.

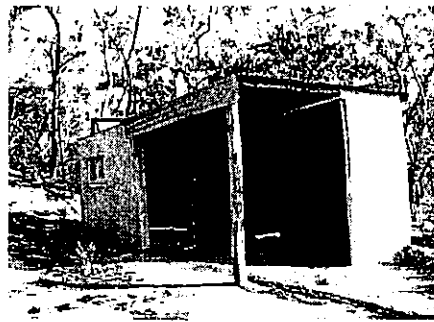


The plan proposes that the precinct be nominated for entry to the ACT Heritage Register. It also makes recommendations for access to the precinct, for interpretation of its cultural landscape and buildings, and for conservation works to all the buildings. In the much debated matter of possible uses for the site, four uses were examined and the option of controlled public use recommended. This would involve provision of facilities for a resident manager and hiring out the site for overnight accommodation for limited numbers for cultural camps, artists' retreats, education seminars, etc. The Hudson Ready Cut may also allow use for possible day, overnight or permanent occupation.

## ACT Forest Hut

This hut, also known as the Bobeyan Hut, located near the present Yankee Hat car park was built in 1966 when planting of the Boboyan Pine Forest was begun. It is ironic that the heritage value of the hut has been recognised at

the very time that the pines which gave it birth have been removed. The hut is a small skillion roofed corrugated iron clad building and incorporates a large fireplace. The hut is in very good condition.



ACT Forest Hut is not in the ACT Heritage Places Register, so the plan assessed the hut's significance and concluded that the hut and an area of 50m radius around it should be registered for heritage significance. The hut is significant for its association with forestry activity in the Boboyan area, physical evidence of which is being progressively removed. It is one of the few forestry sites in Namadgi National Park that represent a now dying out activity, and as such should be protected.

## Frank and Jack's Hut

Frank and Jack's Hut was built in 1954–55 to provide periodic accommodation for Frank and Jack Oldfield and their wives when tending sheep on their property. The hut and the nearby sheep dip are in the current heritage listing and this study confirmed their heritage importance but found that there are several other important cultural features which form part of this heritage complex. These include a dam, track and fences. The hut is the third hut built on the present site, and an Aboriginal site was found nearby. The hut and associated cultural remains are directly



associated with pastoralism in the ACT high country, an industry which no longer exists there. The hut shows the graziers' shelter needs on holdings away from the home property, and is a significant cultural resource. The plan recommends that the area to be registered for heritage significance should be extended, with a 100m radius around the current hut.

## Brandy Flat Hut

The present Brandy Flat Hut was built in the 1980s by the ACT Parks and Conservation Service for the use of walkers and is at least the third hut on this location, the earliest being pre-1892. The hut is not in the ACT Heritage Places Register. This assessment of the hut's significance found the hut to have heritage significance, primarily as an ongoing mountain hut in a precinct with evidence of ongoing use since the 19th century as a location of high country huts for pastoral use, and now for



recreation.

The plan continues "whilst the present hut would be unlikely to reach the threshold for entry to the Heritage Places Register in its own right, the precinct is significant for its cultural continuity, that dates back to pre-European times as evidence of Aboriginal activity has been found. The precinct has a high aesthetic and cultural landscape value, and community groups ... value the place highly as a component of the European cultural heritage of Namadgi National Park and for its capacity to inform them of past lifestyles."

The plan recommends that an area with a 150m radius around the hut be registered for heritage significance. This would include the earlier hut ruins and associated exotic plantings and fences.

*Continued next page*

# Proposal to establish a watering point in the Mount Clear area

*Environment ACT has developed a proposal to establish a watering point in the Mount Clear area to be used for firefighting purposes. The proposal would see the building of a dam fed from a bore, to be used, primarily, for replenishing water-carrying helicopters. The following paragraphs have been extracted from the NPA's response to the Preliminary Assessment prepared for this proposal.*

Following the bushfires of January 2003, the issues of restoring and preserving Namadgi have taken on a new magnitude. We understand the urgent need to protect the remaining areas of unburnt park and to respond positively to the pressures placed upon it by upgraded firefighting regimes. We also acknowledge the concerns of neighbours and other landholders bordering the park.

However, it is absolutely vital that these pressures do not result in avoidable damage and long term degradation of the park through works such as the construction of roads and dams which may not prove necessary or useful in the longer term. Measures for the protection of our unique natural and cultural heritage in Namadgi Park should not be compromised by the current context of a strong response to the tragedy of January 2003.

## Specific comments

The Mt Clear and surrounding regions are recognised by the NPA ACT as highly significant, being of wilderness quality. Fire protection for the Mt Clear region is therefore highly desirable but protective measures should not

adversely impact on the environmental values of the area. The Preliminary Assessment appears to have taken into account a wide range of issues and has, in the main, sought to minimise any adverse impacts. The rationale for the project is sound and we accept that its design reflects the intention to minimise its impact on the area and its location adjacent to a road network appears to reduce the need for roadworks. However, we have serious concerns regarding the following:

1. A site survey undertaken by Keryn Walshe in 1994, which covered the area has not been cited which leaves a serious gap in strategies to minimise cultural impact. (A copy of this survey is held at the Namadgi Visitors Centre.) This survey identified numerous artefacts and gave an indication that a chert industry was conducted in the area. Further significant finds may be expected to occur with the removal of the top soil. The importance of such artefacts needs to be seen in the context of their providing possible evidence for a substantial tool making industry and trade in the area, associated with its seasonal occupation by indigenous people over a long period of time. Consultation will need to be made with the local indigenous community should the proposed works uncover further finds.
2. The management of vehicle access to the dam has not been adequately addressed. We support the decision not to have a formed track to the dam. However problems will arise through
  - a. the need to periodically check for condition and volume held at the dam and at the bore installation.

This will be done by vehicles driving across country; and

- b. the use of the dam, particularly during fuel reduction burns. Some quite large tankers (10,000 litres) could be filling up—but any full tanker can have quite high axle loading. The chosen times at which burns take place such as spring or autumn the soil could have a high moisture content and be susceptible to compaction and damage. In the absence of a formed track an optimal route should be marked across country from the road to the dam and bore using posts with attached reflectors. This will confine vehicle movement to a limited area and allow the impact of access to be monitored.
3. It has the potential to attract feral pigs which would disturb dam edges and could promote weed growth. Weeds will be present post-construction anyway but ongoing soil disturbance by pigs will favour weeds and lead to long term deterioration of the area.
4. The NPA ACT is also very concerned that the location of the dam close to the Bicentennial Trail will encourage usage by horse riders and efforts will need to be made to ensure that this doesn't occur.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Development Proposal. We look forward to your response

**Christine Goonrey**  
Secretary  
On behalf of the National Parks  
Association of the ACT  
5 November 2004

## Conservation management plans for Namadgi

### Conclusion

This series of conservation management plans provides well researched and professional assessments of a number of important cultural sites in Namadgi, and as such constitutes a valuable reference and the basis for assessing their heritage status and for planning their use and conservation. Steps are now being taken to complete the determination of the

heritage status of each site and when these are resolved the conservation management plans will be available to guide a program of conservation.

**Syd Comfort**

*Conservation management plans for Brandy Flat Hut, ACT Forest Hut, and Frank and Jack's Hut were prepared by Marilyn C Truscott, Pip*

*continued from previous page*

*Giovanelli, Alistair Grinbergs with Duncan Marshall, and the plan for the Gudgenby Precinct by Philip Leeson Architects Pty Ltd. The photos are from these reports.*

[*Editor's Note: Cotter Hut and Horse Gully Hut issues will be covered in the next Bulletin.*]

# Parkwatch

## Cattlemen dream an impossible dream

In a move astonishing in its optimism and audacity, the mountain cattlemen have asked for the right to self-regulate their grazing activities, as a means of minimising costs to the state government.

At the same time (in their response to the government's Taskforce inquiry into grazing) they are claiming that the highly degraded peat bogs and mossbeds of the high plains are "flourishing after 170 years of alpine grazing", and that "grazing has left the high country in excellent condition".

This inability to admit the clear damage done to alpine ecosystems by grazing must disqualify them outright from any management or monitoring role.

Victoria's Alpine National Park should be managed as a national park—for protection of the natural systems within the park. And the single most effective move to that end is the removal of cows from within its borders.

There are other management problems as well, of course, and we hope the government is looking to devote better resources towards park management across the State.

We have heard that the Taskforce may defer its report to the Minister until later in the year. If this is the case it is unacceptable.

The VNPA hopes such a delay does not herald a compromise on grazing, or worse, postponement of a decision in the hope that the issue will go away. It won't. The science is unequivocal, and the Minister must act decisively now to protect the Alps.

*VNPA Update, August, 2004*

## Macquarie Marshes add and subtract

NSW Environment Minister Bob Debus announced additions to the RAMSAR-listed Macquarie Marshes (9 June 2004).

The Macquarie Marshes Nature Reserve has now been expanded with the purchase of a 964-hectare property called "Ninnia" which contains large areas of remnant Box woodland and Myall vegetation, and a habitat for a variety of wetland birds.

The addition is welcome but local conservationists blame the four-year dry spell in the Marshes on state government mismanagement (of the Macquarie River), as much as the natural climatic cycle. Local landholder Eric Fischer also

criticised the Federal Environment Minister, David Kemp, for not showing sufficient interest in the Marsh (waterflow) problem.

*National Parks Journal, August/September 2004*

## Spot-tailed quoll recovery in NSW

As a part of the national and NSW recovery process for the spot-tailed (tiger) quoll, DEC are collating and mapping tiger quoll records from as many different sources as possible. They are ... interested in finding out where people have undertaken surveys for quolls, and the methods used (even if the species was not recorded). The mapping will be used as a broadscale planning tool, and highly accurate data is not necessary. The information will assist with the preparation of both the state and national tiger quoll recovery plan.

To report records or to contribute to the survey effort, contact Catherine Price, ph: (02) 9585 6602 or email: [catherine.price@npws.nsw.gov.au](mailto:catherine.price@npws.nsw.gov.au).

*The Web, Winter, 2004*

## Download the latest topographic coverage

GEODATA TOPO 250K Series 2 is a vector representation of the major topographic features appearing on 1:250 000 scale NATMAP topographic maps, designed for use by GIS professionals. Series 2 can be downloaded free from Geoscience Australia's web site and has rapidly become Geoscience Australia's most popular on-line data set, with almost 30 000 titles being downloaded by more than 3500 registered users since it was launched in September 2003.

The data include a range of topographic features such as roads, railways, rivers, contours (50m), vegetation, and reserved area boundaries (e.g. national parks and defence land). With access to appropriate GIS software, users can undertake a range of GIS analysis as well as producing attractive maps for use in reports and publications.

The data set is regularly updated with almost 50 updated tiles added since the launch. Updated data tiles cover areas such as Townsville, Cairns, Alice Springs, Murrumbidgee, Kangaroo Island and Grafton. Users can readily check the Geoscience Australia web site to ensure that they have the latest information for their area of interest.

*Ausgeo News, June, 2004*

## The plight of the parched gums

ACF has recently released a report describing the declining health of redgum and blackbox floodplains along the length of the River Murray. The report highlights the need for environmental flows to rehabilitate these ailing but vital trees that are integral to the ecosystems of the river.

Key findings of the report, *Floodplain Forests and Woodlands in the Southern Murray-Darling Basin*, prepared by ecological consultant, Dr Jane Roberts, include:

- river regulation has reduced both flood frequency and flood duration causing an artificial "drought" for the floodplain forests and woodlands;
- floodplain forests and woodlands are showing signs of stress as a result;
- managed environmental flood events at Barmah Millewa Forest have been shown to improve habitat quality; and
- inadequate flows and salinity are the biggest threats to redgum and blackbox forests and woodlands.

At the June Council of Australian Governments (CoAG) meeting, federal, NSW, Victoria, South Australia, and ACT governments signed off on the so-called "First Step" agreement that seeks to return 500 GL of environmental flows to the river over a five year time period. Whilst this commitment is a step in the right direction, it falls well short of the 1,500 GL that independent scientists tell us the river—and the redgums—need.

Floodplains are an essential element of freshwater ecosystems and are important habitat for countless species of plants and animals. The report's findings are a wake-up call to the risk of us losing these magnificent symbols of our most important river system.

*habitat Australia, August 2004*

## Little Aussie battlers

Brian Purdue and Dennis Hirst, two "ordinary Australian blokes" from the Hunter Valley, New South Wales, were recently awarded the Australian Conservation Foundation's foremost award, the Peter Rawlinson Conservation Award. The two men have been working independently to protect and restore the Hexham Wetlands and surrounding areas for the past decade. They were originally introduced to the area through bird-watching and fishing, respectively.

*Wild, Spring 2004*

*Continued next page*

# Rabbit control in the Gudgenby Valley

As part of the ongoing commitment to vertebrate pest management, Environment ACT has commenced a rabbit control program in the Gudgenby Valley within Namadgi National Park. This work is based partly on the warren mapping undertaken by volunteers in the last 18 months, but is also part of an ongoing program that has been running for many years. The objective is to reduce rabbit numbers by first poisoning, and then destroying the warrens by ripping.

The poisoning component of the program has been designed to minimise the impacts on non-target species. The poison is being fed to the rabbits in feeding stations that have been specially designed to exclude kangaroos and

wallabies. The feeding stations are constructed of a hoop of arc mesh covered in rabbit netting and held in place by two star pickets. There are almost 200 of these feeding stations scattered over the Gudgenby Valley.

Pindone poison is being used instead of 1080 to reduce the impact of secondary poisoning, and this will be further reduced by burying any rabbit corpses that are found.

Before ripping is undertaken a review of environmental factors is completed including a search of relevant databases and this is followed up by detailed site inspections. No ripping will be permitted within 100 metres of any significant site. As many of the warrens

are on rocky knolls, a backhoe, with a one-metre ripper attached to the bucket, will be used to destroy the warrens.

The rabbit control program in the Gudgenby Valley commenced in early September and is expected to be complete by mid-November. If environmental conditions are suitable a similar program will be undertaken in the Orroral Valley in the autumn of 2005.

For further information please contact the Namadgi National Park Visitor Centre on 6207 2900.

**Simon Tozer**  
Ranger, Namadgi National Park  
ACT Parks and Conservation Service

## PARKWATCH *continued from previous page*

### Park logging to be investigated by auditor

During the bushfires of January 2003 a backburn line was to be created along a boundary of the Snowy National Park, Victoria. Instead, a huge "firebreak" was cut that stretched for 60 kilometres. The logs were taken to local sawmills. Environment East Gippsland reports that after environmental groups had been pressing for an investigation into this logging for over a year, the resulting report was finally "swept under the carpet". The Victorian Auditor-General is now investigating the actions of the Department of Sustainability & Environment during the fires.

*Wild, Spring 2004*

### Out of the ashes

After the horror of Canberra's 2003 bushfires, which scorched more than 70 per cent of the Australian Capital Territory, a rare opportunity has emerged to learn how the environment benefits from such a firestorm.

Little is known about the impact bushfires have on waterways but a new research program—supported by more than 100 volunteers—is being conducted through the Community Assessment Monitoring Program for Fire Impacted River Ecology (CAMPFIRE) to learn how long it takes the environment to recover from such catastrophes.

CAMPFIRE is a collaborative effort supported by the Australian Government's \$3 billion Natural Heritage Trust, ACT Waterwatch, Environment ACT, the Australian Government Envirofund, and the Co-operative Research Centre for Freshwater Ecology (CRCFE) and most

importantly, more than 100 dedicated local volunteers.

With \$28,000 from the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust, CAMPFIRE is able to monitor more than 50 sites each month. Sites are monitored to obtain data on turbidity, salinity levels, water temperatures, pH levels, dissolved oxygen, phosphorous, algae, riverbank vegetation recovery and macro-invertebrate animal life.

Michael Schultz, Natural Resource Management Facilitator for the Australian Government, says analysis of the data shows a clear connection between fire severity, weather conditions—especially rain; catchment characteristics such as vegetation, slope, geology and land use; and the eventual impact on waterway health.

"Preliminary findings from data include the increased sedimentation of mountain streams and rivers following severe rain events, which pose a significant threat to aquatic biodiversity, fish species and river habitats," Michael says. "Streams now have increased nutrient levels, water temperatures and algal growth."

This means that the comprehensive data collected by CAMPFIRE volunteers has already made a strong contribution to freshwater ecology.

Nigel Philpot, the ACT Waterwatch Facilitator and CAMPFIRE co-ordinator, says government and business support for the program has ensured the volunteers' work will continue.

*Natural Heritage, Winter 2004*

### Bird conservation without borders

Twelve tracts of largely unprotected land in northeastern Australia have been identified as internationally important areas for birds, in the first management approach of its kind. The Important Bird Areas (IBAs) are an effort to get private land holders and government agencies involved in conservation.

While there have been many efforts to protect birds from threats such as habitat destruction in Australia, this is the first systematic approach to identifying key areas of concern. The conservation group, Birds Australia, identified the areas as part of an ongoing international effort run by BirdLife International. "It's absolutely about identifying priorities," said Dr Michael Weston, research and conservation manager of Birds Australia.

"Those Important Bird Areas are important because they're holding threatened birds or a lot of birds. We want to at least maintain them and maybe improve them if we can. But they're real priorities."

The first 12 Australian IBAs are in North Queensland and include the mudflats and freshwater wetlands behind the Gulf of Carpentaria, which are important to migratory shorebirds, waterbirds and grassland species.

Other IBAs are cattle grazing properties and rainforests in northeast Queensland, and rich agricultural fields of the Atherton Tablelands.

*ABC Science Online, Environment & Nature News 14 October 2004*

**Compiled by Len Haskew**

# Environmental announcements

## Boboyan pines

The Chief Minister and Minister for the Environment, Mr Jon Stanhope, has acknowledged the work of the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group in revegetating land formerly occupied by the Boboyan pine plantation.

Announcing the clearing of the last commercial pine trees from the plantation, he said on September 8 the regeneration of the site would be greatly assisted by the group, formed in 1998 and dedicated to the rehabilitation of the former plantation. "This volunteer group has been greatly involved in the seeding of cleared areas and the maintenance of the young trees," he added.

The removal of the last pines was the realisation of a 20 year plan to phase out pines in the area adjoining the sensitive Bimberi Wilderness area of Namadgi National Park.

## Catchment group

An ACT Water Supply Catchment Management Group has been established to oversee catchment management arrangements in the Cotter catchment. The group will also be responsible for the development and adoption of principles and management objectives for ACT water supply catchments, reviewing preparation of catchment management plans and, for Googong, development of catchment management outcomes that the ACT should require as part of an integrated water supply strategy for the region.

It will encourage partnerships among agencies, including the Chief Health Officer and stakeholders such as the Interim Namadgi Advisory Board, the ACT Natural Resource Management Advisory Committee, Environment Protection Technical Advisory Committee, ActewAGL, land use groups, research and educational

institutions, and community organisations.

Professor Gary Jones, the CEO of the Cooperative Research Centre for Freshwater Ecology, will chair the group, and its membership will include Mr Geoff Butler, the Joint Chair of the Interim Namadgi Management Board, Professor Peter Kanowski, Head of the School of Resources, Environment and Society at the ANU and Dr Penny Gregory, former head of ACT Health. The group will also include the Managing Director of ACTEW, the Executive Director of Environment ACT and the Director of ACT Forests.

## Water labelling

The ACT Government will sign a memorandum of understanding for in-principle ACT participation in the establishment of a national water efficient labelling and standards scheme (WELS). The scheme will implement a labelling and standards requirement on water-using appliances such as toilets and washing machines.

The scheme, expected to be operational in mid 2005, will be similar to the national energy efficiency labelling scheme for electrical appliances, and is expected to conserve 1.4 billion litres of water a year, or 700 Olympic swimming pools, in the ACT alone by 2021, and deliver net savings of \$11 million per year.

## Greenhouse targets

The ACT Government has agreed with all of the recommendations contained in the State of the Environment Report prepared by the Commissioner for the Environment except for one relating to greenhouse targets and one relating to revenue raised from the water abstraction charge.

The Chief Minister and Minister for the Environment, Mr Jon Stanhope, said the Government was considering the

implications of a motion passed in the ACT Assembly requiring the spending of \$114 million in order to meet the greenhouse gases target, and further review and community consultation was needed.

In relation to the water abstraction charge, Mr Stanhope said he could indicate that "we expect to spend more on water resource management in the coming financial year than we receive from the water abstraction charge", but the Government could not commit to directing the revenue to specific programs.

The Government had no difficulty in agreeing with the rest of the report's 25 recommendations relating to air quality, climate change and greenhouse, conserving biodiversity, catchment quality, resource use, and community well-being.

"Over the past three years, funding for Environment ACT has increased by 47 per cent and the Government remains committed to allocating funds and resources to the mutually agreed priorities," Mr Stanhope said.

## "Criminal vandalism"

The Australian Federal Police have been asked to investigate what the Executive Director of Environment ACT, Dr Maxine Cooper, has described as "an extraordinary act of criminal vandalism".

Dr Cooper said on October 12 it appeared that six "very mature" trees on the East O'Malley subdivision currently being developed had been deliberately poisoned.

The retention of the trees had been stipulated as a condition of the land sale, and the trees had been identified and fenced off for protection. Another three trees nearby had also been poisoned.

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## New members

The association extends a warm welcome to new members:

Anita Black.....Yarralumla  
M Cranney..... Rivett  
David Campbell .....Kippax  
Hans Van Haalen.....Mawson  
Peter Hoad.....Latham

All members are invited to participate in the wide range of NPA activities. See the outings program for regular activities and outings; check the Bulletin for working groups and subcommittee opportunities; contact conveners, email the office or leave a

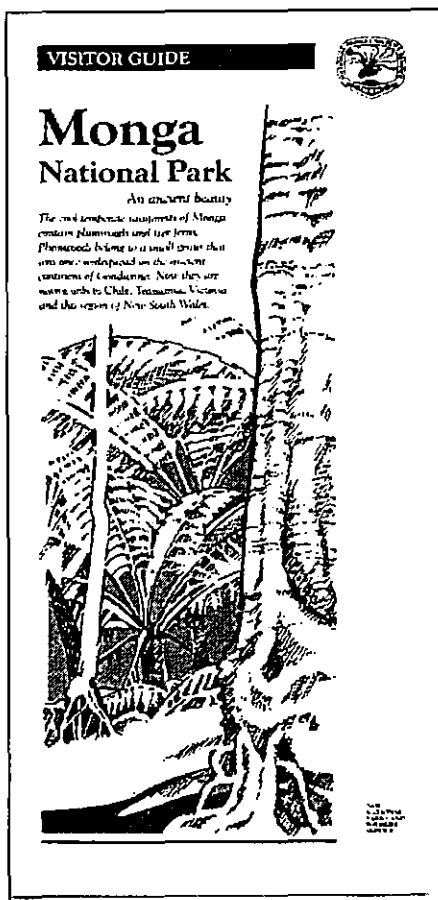
message to volunteer your skills and enthusiasm to assist the association in its aims and objectives

# Two inviting maps

## Monga National Park, visitor guide

Designed to fit in a pocket or a standard business-size envelope, the new Monga National Park visitor guide map is sure to attract a lot of visitors, with a wide range of interests, to the park while also encouraging appropriate conduct to preserve those things that make it special.

Opened out, the pamphlet reveals a good map showing tracks coded from "walking track" to "highway", facilities such as camping areas, wheelchair access and gas barbecues, and geographical and other features. It is concise, but comprehensive.



Produced by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, the leaflet contains short text on five main features setting out what you will see and experience and also giving practical advice, such as this on the Corn Trail:

*The trail crosses high mountain ridges and deep rainforest valleys. There are filtered views of the coastal ranges, lush eucalyptus forests and tranquil streams. You will need to plan your walk. Some parts are very steep and most people choose to follow the trail downhill rather than take the demanding*

*climb. A carpark at the bottom of the trail allows you to do a car shuffle. Access this carpark via Misty Mountain and No Name Mountain Roads.*

An illustrated section gives background information on the Aboriginal heritage, the relationship between the park and the Buckenbowra Wilderness Area, the importance of wilderness areas for biodiversity, the importance of old growth forests for wildlife, the history of European settlement, and the park's Gondwanan heritage.

"The cool temperate rainforests of Monga contain plumwoods and tree ferns," the leaflet says. "Plumwoods belong to a small genus that was once widespread on the ancient continent of Gondwana. Now they are native only to Chile, Tasmania, Victorian and this region of New South Wales."

Monga National Park bears the same relationship to the Friends of the Mongarlowe River as Namadgi National Park does to NPA ACT—the FMR worked for many years to have the area preserved as a national park. Last year on Sunday, December 5, members were able to celebrate the declaration of the national park with a Christmas lunch in the park, and, in their own words, enjoy "the rewards of the years of campaigning".

Copies of the leaflet can be obtained from the NPWS Narooma Office, PO Box 282 Narooma NSW 2546, or telephone 4476 2888. The Braidwood Visitor Information Centre, National Theatre, Wallace Street, Braidwood, phone 4842 1144, also has copies.

Graeme Wicks

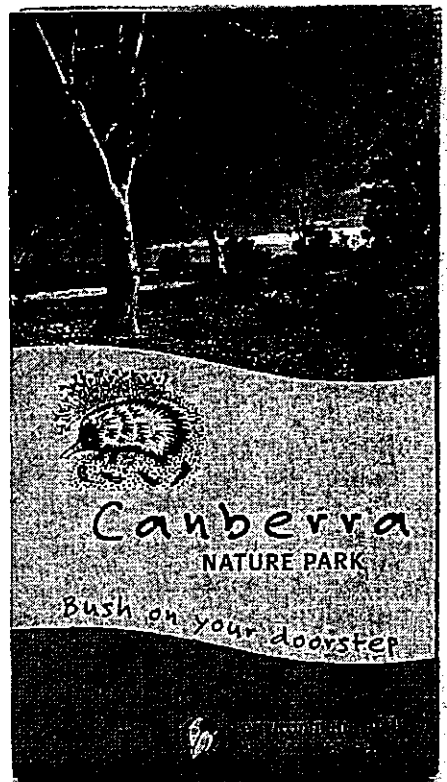
## A new map: Canberra Nature Park—bush on your doorstep

Environment ACT has just published this excellent map, which is a comprehensive guide to the 30 or so representative areas that make up Canberra Nature Park—"the bush on Canberra's doorstep".

Accompanying the map is an excellent text compiled in part by well-known Canberra naturalist Ian Fraser. The text is Ian's usual mix of concise detail and interesting narrative. Many small photographs of habitat, flora or fauna accompany this text. One of these photographs was supplied by NPA member Ted Edwards.

Each of the nature parks is given a small text box listing its main points of

interest and a graphic indicating the habitat type and appropriate activities. Many of the reserves are given classifications such as woodland, grassland or wetland reserves.



The maps of the reserves show the main walking and management tracks. Reserves which are on private property (Callum Brae Woodland and Rob Roy Forest/Woodland) indicate that the owner's permission is required to enter. For walkers and others requiring more details of the tracks in each reserve the map gives an internet reference.

Because one map sheet covers the entire area access streets are not named—only the main thoroughfares in each area. It would probably be a good idea to also take a street directory along with you in addition to the nature park map to find an appropriate spot to start exploring.

*Canberra Nature Park* is an excellent reference and guide to the ACT's woodlands and grasslands which are on the city's doorsteps. The map also indicates the many recreational opportunities which are to be had such a short distance from home.

Copies of the map can be obtained from Shopfronts and Environment ACT offices at 12 Wattle St, Lyneham for a cost of about \$5. Highly recommended.

Len Haskew

**National Parks Association Calendar**

**NPA Christmas Party**  
**Sunday 12 December**  
**See outings program**

|   | Dec 04                          | Jan 05                        | Feb     | March   |
|---|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------|---|
| <i>Public Holidays</i>                  | <i>Mon 27</i><br><i>Tues 28</i> | <i>Mon 3</i><br><i>Wed 26</i> |         | <i>Mon 21</i><br><i>Fri 25</i><br><i>Mon 28</i> |
| General meetings                        | —                               | —                             | Thur 17 | Thur 17   |
| Committee meetings                      | —                               | —                             | Tues 1  | Tues 1  |
| Gudgenby Bush Regeneration <sup>1</sup> | Sat 11                          | —                             | Sat 12  | Sat 12  |
| Bulletin Working Group <sup>2</sup>     |                                 |                               |         | Tues 15   |

**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

**General Meetings**  
*NB: No general meetings in  
December and January*  
usually  
**Third Thursday of the month**  
**8:00pm**  
**Uniting Church hall**  
**56 Scrivener Street**  
**O'Connor**

**Thursday 17 February 2005**

*The little aerialists of Ainslie.*

Matthew Higgins.

Sugar gliders live almost in the centre of the national capital, but how many people know they are there? During 2004 Matthew made a short film about these intriguing marsupials. The film, which traces a night in the life of a glider on Mt Ainslie, was screened across Australia as part of the 2004 CSIRO Scinema Film Festival. Matthew will talk about why and how the film was made, and will be happy to answer questions after the screening.

**Thursday 17 March 2005**

*A new vision for Namadgi.*

Sharon Lane, Environment ACT

Sharon will present an overview of the development and content of the Draft Management Plan for Namadgi National Park.



**NPA Bulletin**

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