

# NPA Bulletin



Volume 42 number 2  
June 2005

**NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION (ACT) INCORPORATED**



**Spotlight on work parties**

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**Eleanor Stodart Grove dedicated**

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**Snow in February**

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

#### Aims and objectives of the Association

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

#### Office-bearers

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

#### Committee members

Chris Emery	6249 7604 (h)
Steven Forst	6251 6817 (h), 6219 5236 (w)
Judy Kelly	6253 1859 (h, after 7.30pm)
David Large	6291 4830
Sonja Lenz	6251 1291 (h)

#### Immediate Past President

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

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<i>Bulletin Working Group</i>	Syd Comfort	6286 2578 (h)
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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
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Concession	\$25		

#### Advertising

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

#### NPA Bulletin

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

#### Deadline for June 2005 issue: 1 May 2005

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

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Cover Photo: Rod Griffiths and his daughter Caitlin planting a Black Sally seedling at the dedication of the Eleanor Stodart Grove (pages 6-7). Photo Fiona MacDonald Brand

# From the President

For those of us born and raised in Canberra, it is inevitable that some of the values of our founding fathers and experiences of natural extreme events such as bushfires, floods and droughts, would have inculcated our consciousness, if only by osmosis. The changes to Canberra, the ACT and surrounding areas of NSW up and down the coast in the last 50 years have been dramatic, not all of them desirable. The old Molonglo River dividing the town so effectively at times of flood (remember them?) was a great playground for kids of both sides of town, home for water rats, insects, reptiles and birds, and the garbage dump at the bottom of Telopea Park a useful resource for spare parts, half empty paint tins, old bikes etc. Now the tree-lined waterway through the centre of town is gone, covered by an ornamental carp-filled lake, full even as trees die throughout Canberra, stressed for lack of water.

The growing population brought many changes, at first in a trickle—new town centres, wider roads, more facilities like the bowling alley, another picture theatre and swimming pool, fewer trees, smaller parks. When the city reached 100 000 residents it was about right for me in terms of services, hospital care and quality of life but growth didn't stop there. I was involved in a very minor way with construction of all the additional dam-building projects after the raising of the lower Cotter Dam; first Bendora with its gravity water pipeline to Stromlo, then Corin and lastly Googong Dams. The

culture of employing university graduates and school leavers on such projects over the Christmas holiday period was one of those innovative features of life in the small bush capital killed off by growth and economic rationalism. I didn't realise at the time that these dams on the Cotter River were a crucial element in the decision to establish Namadgi National Park.

Planning bodies such as the NCDC and all its antecedents seemed to get it about right, mixing the needs of the Commonwealth Government and local citizens without a profit motive. The population growth could have been stopped there before traffic jams, a growing road toll, water restrictions, hospital waiting lists, unemployment, air and noise pollution started eroding our quality of life. If only!

We stand at a new threshold, 300 000+ people, a new water source required if not yet essential, the health care system in crisis, the much longer urban perimeter presenting a substantially bigger bushfire target than it did in 1952 (as shown in January 2003). Why push for yet more growth, a greater population unsustainable as it is already? We are being snowed by the glitter and gloss of new plans for the city centre, more concrete and steel and more bitumen replacing the trees and parks, more apartments for yet more people with all our social problems. The private sector is motivated almost exclusively by economic profit for the owners and shareholders, not quality of life for the citizens. The NCDC and later government planning bodies were

and are held responsible through the democratic processes of elections, community consultation and long-term planning, in contrast to private developers. As a result of government planning Canberra became the Bush Capital, a unique city where the native flora and fauna could be seen everywhere in the suburbs only kilometres from the city centre.

Whether the private sector takes a greater role in the planning function or not, the push for more and more development and people, for bigger houses and apartments on smaller blocks with no room for trees needs a counterpoint to protect the wildlife and habitat we seem to be hell bent on changing. When I attended school in Canberra we thought nothing of finding blue-tongue and frill necked lizards, skinks and geckos in the playground, even an occasional echidna. Not today I fear.

NPA ACT was ultimately successful, after its formation in 1960, to promote the establishment of a national park for the ACT; perhaps now we need another national park in the ACT to complement Namadgi NP, a new national park in the north of Canberra. The ACT Government has, with the creation of Goorooyaroo and Mulligans Flat Nature Reserves, created a wonderful basis for another national park containing examples of lowland native grasslands and yellow box-red gum grassy woodlands. Should we do it? Can we do it?

Kevin McCue

## Notice of Annual General Meeting

### National Parks Association of the ACT Inc.

All members of the Association are invited to attend the Annual General Meeting to be held at the  
Uniting Church Hall, O'Connor  
at 8:00 pm on Thursday 18 August 2005

The business:

Minutes of the 2004 AGM  
President's report  
Financial report

Appointment of auditor  
Election of office-bearers and committee  
Any other business

Please note that all office-bearer and committee positions become vacant at the AGM and that nominations for the ensuing year are welcome. See *Bulletin* back cover for the nomination form for office-bearer and committee member positions for the coming year.

Following the formal business and guest speaker, members are invited to join in the traditional AGM supper.

# Sugar gliders of Mount Ainslie

NPA members who attended the general meeting on February 17 were treated to a delightful film and commentary by local historian and naturalist, Matthew Higgins. Matthew's film, *The Little Aerialists of Ainslie*, traces a night in the lives of tiny sugar gliders whose colony of eight animals lives on Mount Ainslie.

Prior to screening the film, Matthew recounted how, during a dawn walk on

the mountain, he first saw one of the sugar gliders. Over the next few nights, he was able to see more of them, using his ears to locate them initially. Being nocturnal marsupials, sugar gliders are rarely seen by walkers on Mount Ainslie. Matthew eventually located the gliders' den in a tree hollow and decided to undertake his first filming project. The filming with a video camera took place over several moonlit

nights. Fortunately Matthew could get quite close to the little creatures without disturbing them. In some cases, infra-red light was used.

The film shows the gliders moving between trees near the den and feeding on tree sap oozing from wounds in the bark deliberately made by the gliders and kept open for repeated visits. In addition to the tree sap, food sources include pollen and insects.

Considering predation by owls, kookaburras, cats, foxes and goannas, it is surprising that these little marsupials are able to subsist so close to the urban environment. Sadly the den has now been taken over by honey bees and the gliders have moved on.

This film by Matthew Higgins is a delight. It has been screened across Australia as part of the 2004 CSIRO Scinema Film Festival where it has been met with deserved critical acclaim. For those who missed this NPA presentation, copies of the film are for sale. Contact Matthew Higgins.

**David Pfanner**

*Editor's note: In recent walks in the Ainslie area Matthew has spotted a tree near the old glider den with a glider, possum and owl all sharing the same tree. So night life on Mount Ainslie continues apace!*

*Mount Ainslie sugar glider.  
Photo Matthew Higgins*



## Call to end cattle grazing

*NPA ACT has joined with a number of other concerned organisations in endorsing a call on the Victorian Government by the Victorian NPA to end cattle grazing in the Alpine National Park. The following letter, addressed to the State Minister responsible for the environment, sets out the Victorian NPA's position.*

Dear Mr Thwaites

We ask you to end licensed cattle grazing in the Alpine National Park, one of Victoria's most significant protected areas.

Alpine cattle grazing has been clearly identified, through 60 years of scientific research, as a cause of:

- threats to the survival of many alpine species;
- soil compaction and erosion;
- deterioration of ancient peat beds and bog pools, and damage to streams and waterways;
- widespread changes in vegetation structure.

Grazing in the park compromises the headwaters of many of the major rivers in Victoria, including the Murray, Mitta Mitta, Kiewa, Mitchell, Macalister, Tambo, Buchan and Snowy. Indeed cattle grazing in sensitive natural areas, particularly wetlands and waterways, is clearly an outdated, unsustainable farming practice.

Global warming now poses a significant and growing threat to natural systems in the alps, making effective management of natural values even

more important.

Cultural heritage values associated with grazing traditions can be accommodated in less sensitive areas in the region. It would be irresponsible to continue cattle grazing in the park, compromising both formation of a three-state Australian Alps National Park and possible World Heritage listing for the region.

**Yours sincerely,  
Charlie Sherwin  
Director, VNPA**

# Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group news

The dedication of the Eleanor Stodart Grove on May 7 is covered elsewhere in this issue. However if the grove is to prosper and the current dry conditions continue some additional care will need to be provided. One task is to erect further kangaroo-proof wire screens and this should be done in coming work parties.

In April the Parks Service carried out a successful burn of the trash from the felling of the remaining pines last year. This opens the way for reseeded the 80ha cleared. I understand that the Parks Service has made arrangements for this area to be substantially seeded by helicopter using Victorian contractors familiar with the technique. The role of the Regeneration Group will be to seed areas not covered from the air and to spread special seed such as *E. stellulata*.

The April work party was given over to weeding in the area of Frank and Jack's Hut. Near the creek there are some areas of blackberry that are beyond hand removal and will need spraying by contractors. However for the first time the group used backpack sprays to control smaller areas of blackberry while continuing to control individual weeds mainly by the "cut and dab" method.

Responsibility for the cover of members on work parties is now provided by an insurance policy arranged and funded by the ACT Government. Under this arrangement it appears that it is desirable for the group to retain its incorporated status.

Work parties on the second Saturday of the month resume in June, details being shown in the outings program. New members are always most welcome.

Syd Comfort



*Above: Kevin McCue and Sonja Lenz "cutting and dabbing" among good "regenerated" growth, west of Hospital Creek.*

*Right: Syd Comfort among the rocky outcrops and burnt pine branches with new eucalypts and ground cover doing well.*

*Photos Adrienne Nicholson*



## Use of generators in the Cotter Reserve

*Association Committee Member, Chris Emery, has received the following reply to a question he asked about generators in the Cotter Reserve. Allan Bedell, Acting District Conservation Officer in the Parks and Conservation Service, answered his query. Members may be aware that the ACT Government has recently been seeking community views about development in the Cotter Reserve area.*

Thank you for your inquiry concerning the use of generators in the Cotter Reserve. The Cotter area is part of the Murrumbidgee River Corridor and ACT Parks and Conservation Service permits group use of recreation areas along the Corridor with prior approval. Permission to use equipment such as jumping castles must be sought as part of the approval process. The Cotter is identified in the Murrumbidgee River Corridor Plan of Management as being suitable for large groups and so it is

unlikely that we will move to prohibit this type of activity given the type of facility and planned use for the Cotter. However, given your concerns and Brian's advice that the generator was intrusive we will review our procedures for approval. This may include restrictions on times, days or duration of the use of noisy equipment and looking at designating certain areas for such activities.

# Dedication of Eleanor Stodart Grove

*On Saturday May 7 a grove in the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Area within Namadgi National Park was planted with tree seedlings and dedicated to the late Eleanor Stodart who had contributed so much to the rehabilitation of this area. The following are excerpts from an address made on the occasion.*

The idea of dedicating a grove to Eleanor Stodart originated within the ACT Parks and Conservation Service. It was taken up enthusiastically by the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group and supported by the National Parks Association. And so we are here today.

On behalf of these organisations I extend a warm welcome to you all and particularly to members of Eleanor's family, most of whom have travelled some distance for the occasion. I would also like to welcome Brett McNamara, Manager of Namadgi National Park, Kevin McCue, President of the National Parks Association and Clive Hurlstone, President of the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group.

This grove is sited in an area long inhabited by local Aborigines and there are many reminders of their occupation

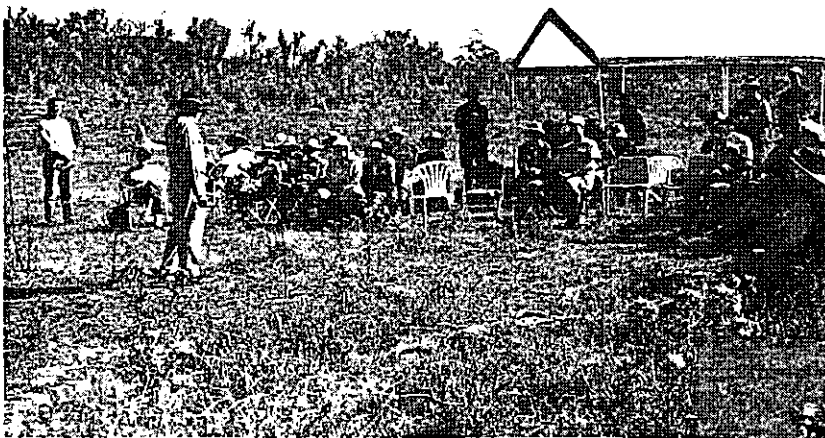
around us. The early European settlers moved here in the 1830s with recognised settlement from 1837. For over 150 years the pastoral industry dominated and continued after the area became part of the Federal Capital Territory with the Bootes family operating Gudgenby until the late 1980s. In the mid 1960s the Commonwealth planted the Boboyan Pine Plantation but after Namadgi National Park was declared in 1984 the pines were judged to be inappropriate in the national park. Removal of the pines commenced in 1997 and regeneration to native species initiated.

Eleanor became involved in this from the outset and until her death was a driving force behind the project. She was particularly keen to see the regeneration of black sallies (*Eucalyptus stellulata* to Eleanor) in this Hospital Creek area, so our planting of this grove with black sally seedlings has special meaning. Of course Eleanor's contribution

to the conservation of the natural values of the ACT was not limited to the Gudgenby regeneration project and she brought her considerable energy and scientific understanding to many other aspects of conservation. I see today as an opportunity to celebrate Eleanor's contributions and to take inspiration from her achievements into our own lives.

*Eleanor's brother, John Kingsmill, has written expressing the family's appreciation of the dedication.*

Syd Comfort



*It was a great day for the photographers.*

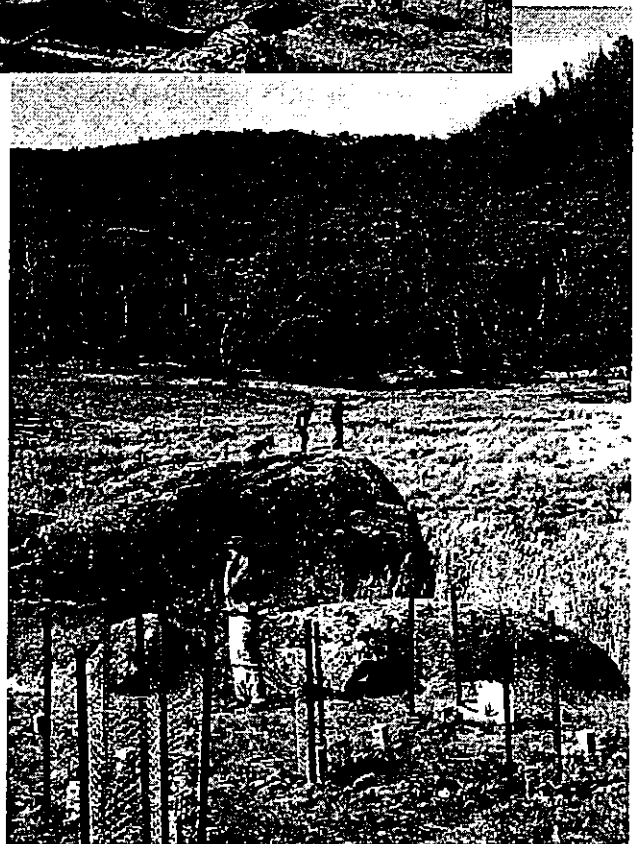
*This page, clockwise from above left: Welcoming guests: Hugh Stodart (left) responding on behalf of the family; Ranger Darren Roso explaining the planting scheme to members of the Stodart family (and Martin Chalk).*

*Opposite page, clockwise from top left: Lunch; Planting seedlings in rip lines; General view of the grove during planting; While Duncan Stodart ponders, the younger generation test themselves on a granite outcrop; Fire-bluckened logs add to the challenge.*

*Photos from Martin Chalk, Barbara Comfort, Fiona MacDonald Brand and Adrienne Nicholson*







# Association news

## New Committee Member

Association stalwart David Large has been welcomed back to fill a vacancy in the Committee. The photo at right shows David on the Nungar Fire Trail during the Boggy Plains circuit walk he led in February 2005.

(Photo Syd Comfort)

## GST Change for NPA ACT

There's been a change in the NPA ACT's GST status. Previously, the NPA ACT had elected not to register for GST. This meant that it was not required to send to the Tax Office 10 per cent of its membership fees or book sales. Similarly, it wasn't able to claim back from the Tax Office any GST it had paid as part of its purchases.

However, due to some significant costs looming relating to the reprints of the NPA ACT's tree book and bird book the Executive decided that it would be in the NPA ACT's interests to be able to claim the GST back from these expenses. The downside is that that we now need to take GST out of any book sales and membership but for the next couple of years the amounts we get back from the Tax Office will be bigger than what we are required to remit. This might also mean some minor adjustments to book prices and membership levels to make them a bit more GST friendly.

The NPA ACT is able to opt out of GST registration at any time and so the Executive will monitor its receipts and payments to work out if it is in its interest to do so.

## Computer grant sought

The NPA has lodged an application under the Volunteer Small Equipment Grant Scheme to allow it to upgrade the office computer system including the installation of WindowsXP. The upgrade is required because the current computer cannot support the programs needed to maintain the website and is too slow to efficiently perform other association tasks.



## Horse Gully Hut

In 2004 the association agreed to be responsible for monitoring the condition of Demanding Hut in the Naas Valley and since then NPA groups have visited the hut as part of the task of assessing the hut's condition and noting any work that should be undertaken. The association has now agreed to also monitor the condition of Horse Gully Hut, located about 2.5km from Demanding. Horse Gully was built in 1940 by Margaret Roseby's father. Margaret will be known to many members as a keen walker with a strong interest in local heritage.

## Support for *Bulletin*

The *Bulletin* is an important link within the NPA and also serves to present the association to a wider audience as it is distributed widely within the ACT community. The Bulletin Working Group, which is responsible for the preparation and distribution the *Bulletin* would welcome further support from

members. Particular areas in which members may care to help include wrapping and posting, and in attending group meetings at which the future direction of the publication is agreed. The association is fortunate in being well supported by a number of authors and photographers but there is always room for new talent and new ideas. The contact is Syd Comfort, phone 6286 2578.

## The 2005 Great Australian Bushwalk

The Great Australian Bushwalk, which was founded by the NSW NPA, was first conducted in the ACT in 2004 and had great support from the Government and the public. A date, Sunday October 16, has been set for this year's walk so this is a date for the diary.

## Members' notices

Advertisements from members may be published in this column without charge.

### SNOW TENT FOR SALE

Mont 2-3 person snow tent,  
beautifully made expedition quality,  
vestibules each end, plus snow skirts.

Best offer to Graham Scully, ph 02 6230 3352



# Tinderry Twin Peak with Max Lawrence Sunday 1 May 2005

*This is what you're promised in the Outings Program:*

"A solid climb of nearly 800m (on the vertical axis!), mostly on the steep Mount Allen and West Tinderry fire trails. Final 2km to the summit is through bush, and involves some rock scrambling. Great views."

And *this* is what you get!



*Above: Leading the pack up the fire trail (l to r) Paul Lashko, Margaret Power and Eric Pickering*

*Above right: "through bush ... some rock scrambling"*

*Right: Tinderry Twin Peak summit*

*Below: The group on a "slab with a view", below the summit*

*Below right: Pat Pickering (left) and Annabel Wheeler keeping their footing on the gravelly Mount Allen fire trail.*

*(Photos by walk leader, Max Lawrence)*



# Water issue update

## A good result for the environment

ACTEW Corporation released its future water options report to Government on April 15. The report has recommended utilising currently unallocated flows in the Murrumbidgee and Cotter systems to supplement our current water supply and thus forestall the need to decide on the building of a new dam for 10 to 15 years.

The core recommendation is the building of a weir at Angle Crossing to enable water to be pumped from the Murrumbidgee to the Googong Dam. The infrastructure required to achieve this includes a pumping station and pipe into the Googong Dam which are estimated to cost between \$35 million and \$40 million.

This option would be combined with a modification of the current pumping of water from the Murrumbidgee just below the Cotter, whereby water is pumped from a weir to the Stromlo treatment plant prior to use by Canberrans. The modification would use the existing pipe network with a diversion around the Googong treatment plant to pump water from the Murrumbidgee into the Googong Dam at a cost of about \$20 million.

Using both these weirs will enable the use of Googong's storage capacity, which is unused due to a lack of rain and land use issues in the catchment.

This is a great outcome for the "no dam" campaign as it is now very unlikely that a dam will be built in the near future. This gives Canberra time to determine whether its population is likely to grow to the 500 000 level by 2032 envisaged by the Canberra Spatial Plan which formed the basis of earlier ACTEW water option proposals. There is also the opportunity to continue to track the effects of climate change on our water storages.

A further benefit of the course of action suggested by ACTEW is that programs to reduce and reuse water will have to be continued. The ACTEW recommendations are based on achieving a 12 per cent reduction in water use by 2013 and a 25 per cent reduction by 2023.

Though we would argue that these figures could be more ambitious, they are still significant and will require the spending of \$40 million or more during the first phase until 2013. Any failure by the ACT Government to commit to achieving these targets would put Canberra's long term water supply in jeopardy.

## The campaign goes on

Unfortunately ACTEW has recommended that the building of a new dam on the Cotter or a large or small dam at Tennent and the supply of water from the Tantangara Dam via the Murrumbidgee, continue to be considered as future storage/supply options for the ACT Government.

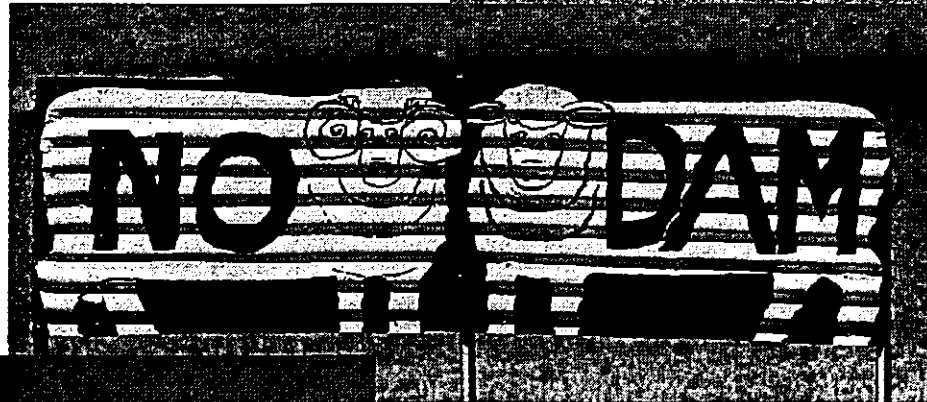
The ACT Government is undertaking a whole-of-government review of the ACTEW recommendations and could conceivably decide to recommend the immediate commencement of building a new Tennent Dam or Cotter Dam both of which are unsuitable solutions. So the campaign will continue until the Government commits itself to not building a new dam.

The Conservation Council will seek to permanently remove the Tennent



Dam from future consideration, raise the issue of planting pines in the lower Cotter, defend environmental flows and promote "reduce and reuse" options.

**Adrian Whitehead**  
Conservation Council of the South  
East Region and Canberra



*The local "No Dam" campaign*

*Land holders along the Naas and Boboyan Roads have put in a concerted effort to produce entertaining but heartfelt signs showing their perceptions of the effects a proposed dam for the ACT, sited south of Tharva, would have on their livelihoods and on their picturesque environment. The signs are black and white, most are painted on corrugated iron sheets, with some displaying fine observation and artistic talent for the animals depicted, and others a nice turn of phrase. Entertainment and something to think about on the drive to Namadgi.*

*Photos Adrienne Nicholson*

## Murrumbidgee Walking Track project

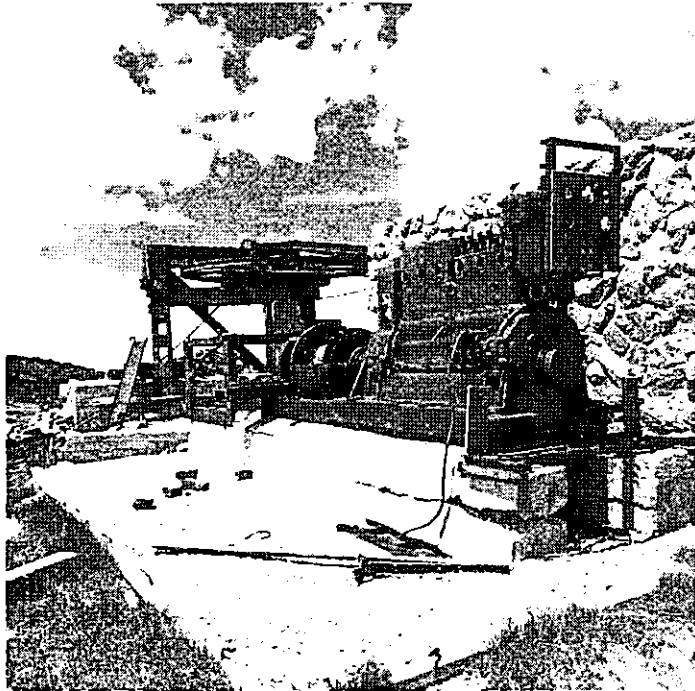
*Stephen Alegria, the Parks and Conservation project officer for the walking track, has forwarded the following information.*

The reconstruction of the Murrumbidgee River walking track from Point Hut to Casuarina Sands is well on the way to completion. The 25km track also includes several new or upgraded loop track sections at sites of interest such as Pine Island and Kambah Pool. An extensive network of loop tracks is also under construction at the Cotter. The majority of walking tracks have been constructed to allow management access by quad bike. To this end, around ten new high quality bridges will be constructed at various locations.

One of the most exciting aspects of the new and upgraded walking tracks along the Murrumbidgee is the installation of an innovative track marker system, which was originally developed in South Australia by the Royal Geographic Society. The system has been adopted by the National Parks and Wildlife South Australia with extensive support in implementation and installation by the SA Friends of Parks Walking Trails Support Group. This track marker system has in its ten-plus year history evolved to become an easy to install/maintain, vandal resistant and relatively inexpensive innovation. It provides an effective, detailed and versatile system for providing track users with a variety of navigational, safety and interpretive information.

Parkcare and walking group members are invited to participate in the installation of the track marker system under the guidance of the Parks and Conservation walking tracks project officer. The work is not too onerous or time-consuming, and the results should be very satisfying. Tasks involved in installation range from physically demanding (hammering in starposts) to less strenuous tasks like placing stickers on the metal posts. Of course, walking sections of the track is compulsory! Installation is scheduled to commence in late April/early May. Depending on the rate of progress, work will continue for several weeks. Exact timing will be negotiated with interested people.

# Ruins above the tree line



As I worked my way through the *Kosciuszko National Park (KNP) 2004 draft Plan of Management*, two things caught my attention: the removal of the remains of the Stillwell lift head and of the ruins of Kunama Ski Lodge. As I had been to neither of these places, I resolved to visit both and take photographs before all traces were gone.

The Stillwell lift head certainly is in a ruinous state. Its construction has been no match for the conditions at the exposed site. Amid strewn besser-blocks and the remaining stone walls, the steel pulley mechanism and the engine block of a six cylinder diesel are the only two items that resemble their original condition. Indeed, exploring the site does require some care and I can see the concerns for public safety that might have prompted park management to wish the removal of the ruin.

Nevertheless, the site does mark an episode in the use of the Ramshead Range and as such, is a part of the history of alpine skiing in Australia. Perhaps the pulley mechanism and the engine block could be left on site, with suitable interpretation material, as a reminder of a time when big ideas were

readily taken up and were equally readily abandoned when their implementation was found to be wanting. (It would certainly have been cheaper to let nature gradually reclaim these items than have them air-lifted out!)

The only link between the Stillwell site and the Kunama ruin is skiing. Nestled below the northern face of Mount Clark, the Kunama Ski Lodge would

have commanded a spectacular view down the valley. Its isolated and protected location also would have afforded both a comfortable living environment and a sense of achievement for those who had access to the structure. Unfortunately, its builders did not consider avalanche as a factor for, on 12 July 1956, its snug location against Mount Clark was its

undoing. Not only did the avalanche destroy the building but also took the life of one Roslyn Twynam Wesch.

The ruin now comprises the stone foundations, the rusting remains of a water tank and a couple of car batteries — in addition to a memorial plaque to Roslyn Wesch.

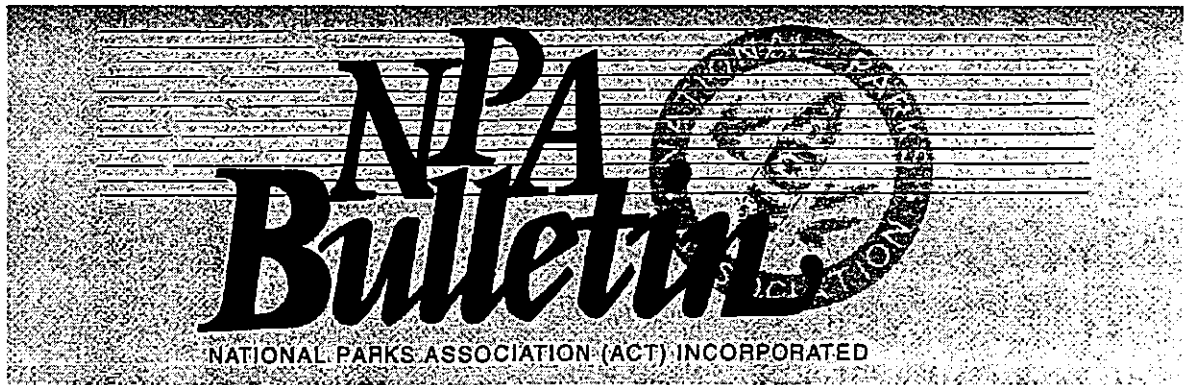
The small size of the ruin and its isolated location ensure that it is difficult to see. Although I knew of its approximate location, I had never observed it from the Lakes Walking Track, which passes above and to the west of the valley. On this occasion I only observed it in the last 200m of the two hour walk from Charlotte Pass. Accordingly, I find any argument about the site not fitting into the environment difficult to sustain; particularly as I walked past the much more obvious and equally ruined Foreman's Chimney on my return to Charlotte Pass.

Given that the site has historical links and is a memorial to a human tragedy, I would like to think that apart from the removal of the water tank and the car batteries, the Kunama Ski Lodge could remain alongside Foreman's Chimney as a reminder of activities on the Main Range that are gone forever.

**Martin Chalk**



*Photos. Above: Diesel engine block and pulley mechanism. Stillwell site. Right: Kunama Ski Lodge ruin. Photos Martin Chalk*



# NPA OUTINGS PROGRAM

June 2005 — September 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 work parties, 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 convener 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 kilometer. 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.

**4 June Saturday Walk**  
**Red Rocks on the Murrumbidgee**  
**Map:** Tuggeranong 1:25 000  
**Grading:** 1 A/C/E  
**Leader:** Steve Hill  
**Contact:** 6231 9186

email: landshil@webone.com

A relatively easy walk mainly on track, but involving a little rock scrambling along the Murrumbidgee "corridor" from the confluence of Tuggeranong Creek to Red Rocks. We might divert to the "canyon" on the way (some mild rock scrambling to do this). This was one of the most scenic stretches of the river, but has been badly burned in parts. It is recovering and the variety and form of recovery is quite interesting — especially now that we have had some rain. We should see a large variety of native birds and kangaroos. Meet at the Urambi Hills car park near the corner of Athllon and Learmonth Drives at 10.00am for a pleasant day. No vehicle costs.

**5 June Sunday Walk**  
**Honeysuckle Ridge**  
**Map:** ACT 1:100 000  
**Grading:** 2 A/B  
**Leader:** Steven Forst  
**Contact:** 6251 6817(h), 6219 5236(w)  
steven.forst@aca.gov.au

A walk from the Honeysuckle Creek tracking station camping ground out to the ridge overlooking Orroral Valley. Meet at Kambah shops car park at 8:30am. Drive: 100 km, \$30 per car.

*Work Party*

**11 June Saturday Work Party**  
**Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group**  
**Contact:** 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 at Yankee Hat carpark at 10:00am. Work for the rehabilitation of the old Boboyan pine forest area. Tools will be provided.

**19 June Sunday Walk**  
**Mt Coree**  
**Map:** Cotter Dam 1:25 000  
**Grading:** 2 A  
**Leader:** Margaret Power  
**Contact:** 6253 0131 (after hours) or  
margaret.power@act.gov.au

Meet at Deeks Forest car park (near the corner of Cotter and Uriarra Roads) at

8:30am. We'll start our walk from Blundells Flat Road, adjacent to the site that was the arboretum (now gone). The walk will follow the Pabral Road fire trail and then the Coree Summit fire trail to the top of Mt Coree. We'll have lunch at the top while we enjoy the views. After lunch we'll return to the cars via the same trails (with just one short deviation from the route used to go up). The walk covers 14.5km, with an ascent of 650m (including a couple of fairly steep bits). Drive: 80km, \$25 per car.

**22 June Wednesday Walk**  
**Leader:** Mike Smith  
**Contact:** 6286 2984 or email  
msmith@netspeed.com.au

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

**25-26 June Pack Walk**  
**Corang Circuit**  
**Map:** Corang 1:25 000  
**Grading:** 2 A  
**Leader:** David Large  
**Contact:** 6291 4830 or  
david.large@bigpond.com.au

An easy walk (track and footpad) from the Wog Wog entrance to the Budawangs. Walk via Corang Peak to camp at Canowrie Brook. On Sunday follow Corang River to the Lagoon then return to Wog Wog along the worn track. Drive: 240km, \$72 per car.

**29 June Wednesday Walk**  
**Theodore to South Lanyon**  
**Maps:** Tuggeranong and Williamsdale  
1:25 000  
**Grading:** 2 A  
**Leader:** David Large  
**Contact:** 6291 4830 or  
david.large@bigpond.com

Walk from Theodore via Callahan Hill to Mt Rob Roy and then on to Mt Rose and drop down to the farm track at GR 917656 and walk through South Lanyon Station to Tharwa Road. Mostly on track and a little open forest. Car shuffle involved. Meeting details to be advised by the midweek walks email list or contact the leader.

**3 July Sunday Walk**  
**Bungonia Gorge**  
**Map:** Caoura 1:25 000  
**Grading:** 2 A/E  
**Leader:** Mike Smith  
**Contact:** 6286 2984 or email  
msmith@netspeed.com.au

Meet at netball court carpark on Northbourne Ave just past Southwell Park at 8:00am. A walk on track across Mt Ayre (great views) and then steeply down to the junction of the Shoalhaven River and Bungonia Creek. Follow the creek upstream through spectacular Bungonia Gorge which involves some rock scrambling. Climb (400m) out via the steep "Efflux" route. 220km drive (\$66 per car).

*Work Party*

**9 July Saturday Work Party**  
**Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group**  
**Contact:** 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 at Yankee Hat carpark at 10:00am. Work for the rehabilitation of the old Boboyan pine forest area. Tools will be provided.

**9 July Saturday Walk**  
**Beginners Navigation Exercise:**  
**Boboyan Hill & Grassy Creek**  
**Maps:** Yaouk, Shannons Flat 1:25000  
**Grading:** 2 B/C  
**Leader:** Martin Chalk  
**Contact:** 6268 4864 (w),  
6292 3502 (h)

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 9.00am. This walk is in rolling country that is a mixture of forests, clearings, river valleys and low ridges and is ideal for those who would like to brush up their bush navigation in a variety of terrain and vegetation. It will commence at Brayshaw's Hut and proceed west via the ridge to the north east of Grassy Creek before crossing the Creek and climbing the Boboyan Divide. It will return to Brayshaw's via Westerman's Hut. Each leg has particular features to aim for and the task of finding these will be shared around the participants. If you wish to participate in the navigation exercise, please bring your own maps and compass — GPS receivers will be relieved of their batteries! If this is not you, come along for the walk any way. Drive: 160km, \$48 per car.





## ***NPA ACT Membership Renewal and Donation Appeal***

Dear Member

It is again time to renew your membership of the National Parks Association of the ACT. In this way you can continue to support the ACT's leading community organisation working for the conservation of the natural and cultural heritage in Namadgi National Park and ACT Nature Reserves.

By renewing you will also be able to enjoy the NPA ACT outings program and our stimulating general meetings with interesting guest speakers. You may wish to join one of the committees, help write and produce the *Bulletin* and email newsletter *Burning Issues*, contribute to NPA ACT submissions on conservation issues and activities, or help maintain the Association's website.

The coming 12 months will be busy ones for NPA ACT. We will provide comment on the draft plan of management for Namadgi National Park and publish a new edition of the tree book and bird book. We are planning to hold a seminar to publicise scientific work being done that is relevant to Namadgi National Park, the science that should underpin management plans. We must entice new members and that will require an appropriate and attractive advertising campaign. At the same time we must get out as often as possible to enjoy the wonderfully diverse nature parks around us.

**Renewal** This year's form is very similar to last year's with various payment alternatives and optional age group box. A reminder for those members who joined after 01 April 2005: you have already paid a subscription for the forthcoming year and do not need to renew.

**Donations** Your generous donations in the past have supported the funding of NPA ACT's office equipment upgrade, the preparation of reports for the various fire enquiries and printing of guide books on the birds and trees of the ACT region. The level of donations has also meant that NPAACT has not had to raise membership fees to maintain the Association.

When making a donation at this time please use the space on the renewal form to indicate the amount and remember that donations over \$2 are tax deductible. A receipt will be provided.

Thanking you in advance

Kevin McCue

President NPA ACT

31 May 2005

**17 July Sunday Half Day Walk  
Glenburn Historic Precinct**  
(Including Colverwell Graves)  
**Grading:** 1 A/B  
**Leader:** Col McAlister  
**Contact:** 6288 4171

A pleasant half day walk around several historic sites in the Kowen Forest including Collier's homestead, Glenburn homestead, Glenburn shearing shed and the Colverwell graves. Meet at Kingston Railway Station at 8.30am. Drive 50km, \$15 per car.

**23 July Saturday Walk  
The Long Flat**  
**Maps:** Colinton, Bredbo 1:25 000  
**Grading:** 3 A/B  
**Leader:** Martin Chalk  
**Contact:** 6268 4864(w)  
6292 3502(h)

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.00am. The walk will start at the Mount Clear camp ground. We will travel south along Grassy Creek to the NSW border, and then follow it to the most southerly point in the ACT. The return will be along the peaceful length of the Long Flat and then either along the bush track back to Grassy Creek, or via Chalker's Chimney to the Horse Gully Hut road (depending on interest). This walk guarantees secluded valleys, open forests, history and a dose of heavy breathing. Drive: 160km, \$48 per car.

**27 July Wednesday Walk  
Booroomba Rocks Carpark to  
Namadgi Visitors Centre**  
**Maps:** Corin Dam and Williamsdale  
1:25 000  
**Grading:** 2 A  
**Leader:** David Large  
**Contact:** 6291 4830 or  
david.large@bigpond.com.au

The Parks and Conservation Service has been rebuilding the Australian Alps Walking Track between Booroomba Rocks carpark and the Namadgi Visitors Centre which was virtually destroyed during the 2003 fires. This walk is to look at the new route and how far the work has progressed. Car shuffle involved. Meet at Namadgi Visitors Centre at 9:00am.

**30-31 July Pack Walk  
Royal National Park Coast Walk**  
**Map:** RNP 1:30 000  
**Grading:** 2 A  
**Leader:** David Large  
**Contact:** 6291 4830 or  
david.large@bigpond.com.au

Experience the heathlands and magnificent ocean views of the Royal National Park. Depart from Canberra early, arriving at Otford mid-morning, then walk down to Burning Palms and through South Era to Garie Beach where we stay overnight at the YHA hostel. On Sunday we walk through Wattamolla to Bundeena, take the ferry to Cronulla and train to Sutherland and back to collect cars at Otford. The YHA is a Wilderness Hostel with basic facilities. Numbers limited to 12 as the hostel has two 6-person dorms, so contact leader early to ensure a place. Bring sleeping sheet, an evening meal and breakfast as well as lunches for both days. Drive 500kms, \$150 per car, plus hostel fees (about \$12) and train/ferry fares.

**Work Party**

**13 August Saturday Work Party  
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group**  
**Contact:** 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 a Yankee Hat carpark at 10:00am. Work for the rehabilitation of the old Boboyan pine forest area. Tools will be provided.

**13-14 August Pack Walk  
Round Mountain and Quiltys  
Mountain**  
**Map:** Endrick 1:25 000  
**Grading:** 3 A/C/E/F  
**Leader:** Philip Gatenby  
**Contact:** 6254 3094 or  
philip.gatenby@dewr.gov.au

Most of this walk is off tracks. It is also partly exploratory. The plan is to climb Round Mountain on the first day and, time permitting, the western edge of Quiltys Mountain, or we may leave this to day two. A number of short climbs and creek crossings will be involved. Contact leader for more details by Wednesday before the walk. Drive: 240km, \$72 per car.

**14 August Sunday daywalk  
Back Perisher on snowshoes**  
**Map:** Perisher Valley 1:25 000  
**Grading:** 1 B (in snow)  
**Leader:** Brian Slee  
**Contact:** 6281 0719 (h) Email:  
brianslee@iprimus.com.au

Participants need to be fit. Depart early from Kambah Village in order to secure parking at Guthega. After skirting south around the village crossing Blue Cow Creek via the bridge we will climb steeply up Back Perisher. After a break we will cross the valley to Mt Perisher (2054 metres) for lunch. Return via long descent of Farm Creek. Great views, magnificent snowgums. Afternoon tea in Jindabyne. Book with leader for departure time and weather check. Participants hiring snowshoes (try Jurkiewicz at Fyshwick) should be in possession of them before scheduled departure. Return drive 420km, cost \$120 per vehicle, plus \$16 park entry fee for vehicles without permit

**21 August - Sunday Walk  
Orroral Valley Circuit**  
**Map:** Corin Dam 1:25 000  
**Grading:** 2 A/C  
**Leader:** Mike Smith  
**Contact:** 6286 2984 or email  
msmith@netspeed.com.au

Meet at Kambah Shops at 8.30am. A walk initially along Cotter Hut Road starting from the old Orroral tracking station site. At saddle near weather station leave road and climb to unnamed rocky peak 1339m for lunch and views of Orroral Valley. Continue on to Sawpit Creek and return along Orroral Valley track via old stockyards and site of Rowley's Hut. Total 400m climb. 100km drive (\$30 per car).

**24 August Wednesday Walk**  
**Leader:** Mike Smith  
**Contact:** 6286 2984 or email  
msmith@netspeed.com.au

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

**27-28 August Pack Walk****Long Point****Map:** Caoura 1:25 000**Grading:** 2 B**Leader:** Steven Forst**Contact:** 6251 6817(h), 6219 5236(w)  
or [steven.forst@aca.gov.au](mailto:steven.forst@aca.gov.au)

Ring leader before Thursday. A walk down into the Shoalhaven gorge from the Long Point lookout near Tallong. A campsite by the river. A walk to the bottom of Bungonia gorge as a side trip. A long haul (600m climb) back up to the Long Point lookout on Sunday. Drive: 240km, \$72 per car

**31 August Wednesday Walk****Leader:** Steven Forst**Contact:** 6251 6817(h), 6219 5236(w)  
or [steven.forst@aca.gov.au](mailto:steven.forst@aca.gov.au)

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

**4 September Sunday Walk.****Bungonia Tops****Map:** Caoura 1:25 000**Grading:** 1 A/B**Leader:** Col McAlister**Contact:** 6288 4171

An easy loop walk taking in the three main lookouts with breathtaking views (Bungonia Lookdown, Jerrara Lookout and Adams Lookout). A side trip to view Bungonia Gorge and the Shoalhaven Gorge from Mt Ayre. Meet at the Netball Centre carpark, Northbourne Ave Lyneham at 8.00am. Drive 220km, \$66 (+ Bungonia entry fee) per car.

**Work Party****10 September Saturday Work Party  
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group****Contact:** Syd Comfort 6286 2578,  
[scomfort@netspeed.com.au](mailto:scomfort@netspeed.com.au)  
or Clive Hurlstone 0407 783 422,  
[clive.hurlstone@csiro.au](mailto:clive.hurlstone@csiro.au)

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

**17-18 September Pack Walk****Mt Burbidge****Map:** Yaouk 1:25 000 and  
Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000**Grading:** 2 C/D/E**Leader:** Philip Gatenby**Contact:** 6254 3094 or  
[philip.gatenby@dewr.gov.au](mailto:philip.gatenby@dewr.gov.au)

The top of Mt Burbidge is about 700 metres higher than the Yankee Hat Car Park where the walk starts. The first day's walk will involve a climb with packs to Bogong Gap and from here a climb to the summit of Mt Burbidge without packs. The return on the second day will be via Rotten Swamp and Middle Creek. Contact leader for more details by Wednesday before the walk. Drive: 140 km \$42 per car.

**18 September Sunday Walk****Mt Anton on snowshoes****Map:** Perisher Valley 1:25 000**Grading:** 2 B (in snow)**Leader:** Brian Slec**Contact:** 6281 0719 (h) email:  
[brianslee@iprimus.com.au](mailto:brianslee@iprimus.com.au)

Participants need to be fit. Depart early from Kambah Village in order to secure parking at Guthega. Descend to Farm Creek and cross on flying fox. Following Snowy River, we will cross it at Illawong bridge. Climb steep ridge above Twynam Creek to Pounds Creek and then Mt Anton. After lunch, return same way or if conditions permit, via Tate East Ridge, beautiful area. Afternoon tea in Jindabyne. Book with leader for departure time and weather check. Participants hiring snowshoes (try Jurkiewicz at Fyshwick) should be in possession of them before scheduled departure. Return drive 420km, cost per car \$120 per vehicle, plus \$16 for vehicles without park entry permit.

# “Burrawang” – not just a “bush block”

Once again Den and Geoff Robin had generously offered the grassy paddock that adjoins their charming fenced flower garden, as a campsite for NPA members over the Anzac weekend, 22–25 April.

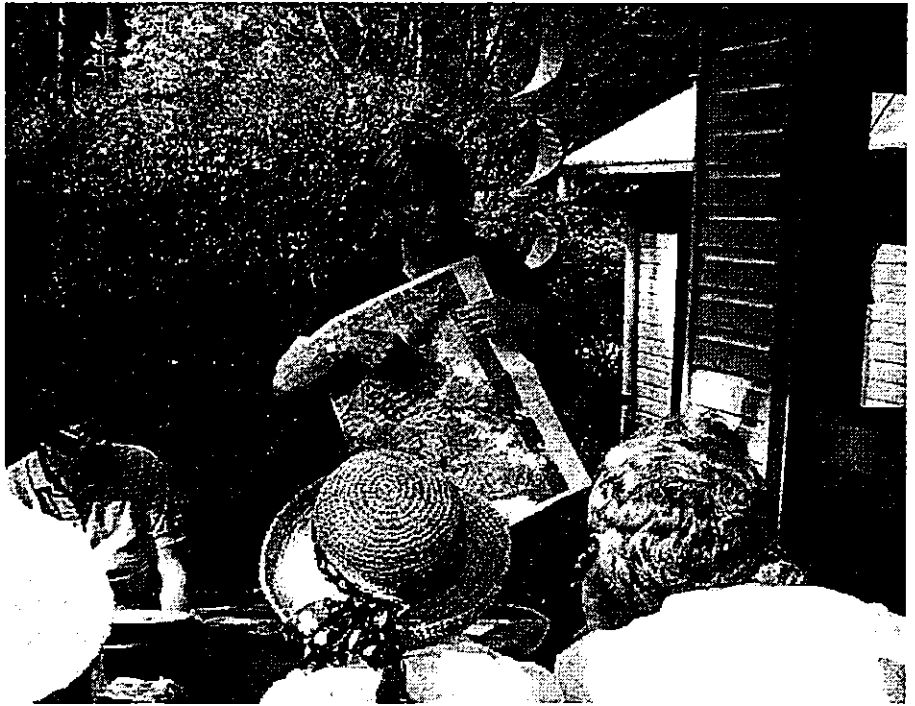
At the NPA meeting of September 2003 Den talked in some detail about their 41ha property and the conservation agreement she and Geoff have entered into with the NSW Minister for the Environment. Basically it means that as owners they will conserve the biodiversity and habitat of their block, and not engage in any further clearing of the natural bushland.

By early afternoon Saturday, nine NPA members had arrived, chosen camp sites, eaten lunch and were ready for a guided stroll around the perimeter of “Burrawang”, which nestles in the wooded foothills of Gulaga (Mt Dromedary) and shares boundaries with both Gulaga and Kooraban National Parks. We climbed steadily along a fire trail until Gulaga suddenly loomed into view; amazingly close and looking entirely different to when seen as a tourist or bushwalker visiting Central Tilba.

Our circuit took a little over two hours during which we observed the abundance of burrawangs (macrozamia) for which the property is named, and admired the splendid forest of eucalypts and remnant rainforest species. It is this lovely forest which is home to a number of threatened species such as the sooty and powerful owls, yellow-bellied glider, several rare frog and bat species and possibly long-nosed potoroos.

On our return to camp most folk were ready for a cuppa while others were keen to try the bush shower. When John and I arrived earlier in the day, Geoff had been hammering in the last nails of a hessian screen to provide modesty for the guests!

On Sunday we climbed Najunuga (Little Dromedary) — the small rocky hill seen on the left of the highway when travelling south from Narooma past the Tilba villages. Najunuga can only be accessed by crossing private property so one of Geoff and Den’s neighbours, Tilba farmer Mal Dibden, helped arrange permission and joined us as our guide. Before setting off on our walk, Mal gave us some history of the local dairy industry. He mentioned the changes over the decades from individual small cheese manufacturers to the development of large co-ops and now the search for new products and



*Den Robin explaining to Deidre Shaw (left) and other weekend campers the hows, wheres and whys of “Burrawang” and its surroundings. Photo Kevin McCue*

niche markets. Mal, who has spent his life on land initially cleared by his grandfather, is a conservationist with a special interest in the protection of Wallaga Lake and provided many interesting perspectives on the changing land use of the region.

After negotiating various barbed wire and electric fences to wander over a number of paddocks, we arrived at the base of Najunuga which rises like a rock-capped, bushclad island above the surrounding sea of brilliant green kikuyu, an introduced African grass which the cows like and which makes the paddocks around Tilba look lush even in times of drought. We huffed and puffed through thick bush to reach the rocky summit at 200 metres. From this vantage point one could either admire the pastoral views extending to the sparkling blue sea or let one’s gaze linger lovingly on the natural bushland of the hinterland hills, fortunately now conserved in the two national parks mentioned earlier.

We completed the excursion with a swim in somewhat swirly surf and then took a wander around the Tilba district cemetery which consists of two small fenced lots on a grassy hill behind the beach.

That evening a shared meal was enjoyed on the deck of Den and Geoff’s house. Den’s daughter, Gabi, had slaved over the fuel stove to cook two delicious lasagnes and the rest of us contributed either pre-dinner nibbles or

desserts.

Gathering for breakfast around the barbecue fire next morning provided yet another opportunity for informed and lively debate on conservation issues. It was then time to pack up camp but there was a final treat in store before farewelling our hosts.

We drove north to Handkerchief Bay and enjoyed a walk south along the cliff and beaches of Eurobodalla National Park to a delightful lake, Nargal, hidden behind the dunes. The lake is small and reed fringed; home to little grebes, musk ducks and a flotilla of swans. John and I swam out towards the swans and found that, rather than be afraid, they were curious about these unfamiliar water creatures. The swans glided together, communicating with their quiet mewling sounds, but at no time were they threatening to us. Afterwards we relaxed on the small strip of sandy lake shore with whistling kites and sea eagles soaring overhead. Fruit cake and tea around a picnic table at Handkerchief Bay, rounded off our walk and these happy few days.

Den and Geoff are enlightened custodians of their “bush block” and it was a privilege to be invited to visit “Burrawang”.

**Judith Webster**

# Colverwell graves need protection



*Margaret Colverwell's headstone in the small family graveyard.*

Many association members have enjoyed Col McAlister's walks into areas of heritage and cultural interest, one of the most fascinating being the Kowen Forest in the eastern part of the ACT. Located within this area are the Colverwell graves, the oldest recognised European graves in the Territory. In the March 2005 issue of the *Canberra Historical Journal* Col has set out what is known of the Colverwell family and graves in a thoroughly researched and detailed article.

Briefly, Luke and Mary Colverwell, both transported convicts, moved to Dirty Swamp, in what is now Kowen or Glenburn, soon after their marriage in 1831. Elizabeth and Margaret, two of their four daughters, died by accidental drowning on the same day, in December 1837, their burials being the first in what became a small private graveyard in which their parents were also subsequently buried. Luke Colverwell erected head and footstones over the graves of the two girls and these now lie on the ground within the wooden fenced graveyard.

*The Colverwell graveyard in the Glenburn heritage precinct.*

The Glenburn heritage precinct which includes the graves was classified by the National Trust in the 1980s, listed on the Register of the National Estate in 1992, and nominated for inclusion in the ACT Interim Heritage Register in 1997. This nomination is being investigated by ACT authorities. There have also been three government-funded studies into the area.

Col is very concerned about the poor condition of the graveyard and the deteriorating state of the gravestones due to lichen damage and stone erosion. He wrote to the Chief Minister on March 15 seeking Government help:

*Dear Mr Stanhope,*

*I am writing to request your Government to provide funds for the conservation of the Colverwell graveyard and gravestones in the Kowen forest. By way of background, I enclose the March 2005 issue of the Canberra Historical Journal which contains the article Colverwell Graves: The Case for Urgent Action which I wrote.*

*The Colverwell graveyard is a*

*small private graveyard in which four and probably five members of the pioneering Colverwell family are buried.*

*There are four engraved gravestones (two headstones and two footstones) in the graveyard. All belong to two young girls, Margaret and Elizabeth, who tragically drowned in December 1837. Margaret was 5 and Elizabeth 6. Their father, Luke Colverwell, erected the gravestones.*

*The graveyard contains the earliest known marked European graves in the ACT. They are ten years older than the oldest marked grave in Queanbeyan.*

*The graveyard is thus a significant heritage site.*

*Unfortunately, the whole site is deteriorating rapidly. The fences surrounding the graveyard are in need of repair. And the gravestones require conservation work to remove and/or control lichens and, more importantly, to slow down stone erosion.*

*I do not believe that large sums of money would be required. But urgent action needs to be taken to ensure the graveyard's survival for future generations of Canberra residents.*

*I would be happy to show you the site if you would like to see it.*

*Yours sincerely  
Colin McAlister*

*(Continued next page)*



# Park to protect local biodiversity

Cathy Robertson, Geoffrey Robertson and Andrew Russell, who are committee members of the Southern Tablelands Ecosystems Park (STEP), made a presentation to the April meeting of the association outlining the objectives, scope and program of their organisation.

STEP is a relatively new organisation, the committee being formed in 2002 and incorporation achieved in the following year. In 2004 a workshop on reptiles of the Southern Tablelands was conducted in Birrigai. The principal objective of STEP is the protection and conservation of the biodiversity of the local region. A major avenue through which this is to be achieved is through the establishment of a regional botanic garden. It is also planned to work through the provision of educational programs and the development of an ecosystem recovery centre for the Southern Tablelands.

The organisation aims to conduct its work on a strong scientific basis. The botanic gardens would include a herbarium concentrating on local species, and the plantings would relate

to the local region. There would be opportunities for interpretation, communication with other botanic gardens, assistance in raising plants and provision for the exchange of plants between collections. A fundamental aspect of STEP is cooperation with community groups, and already good links have been established with a number of other organisations. It is through such a link that progress is being made towards the establishment of a demonstration garden. The outdoor centre, Birrigai, has land available for such a project and although full agreement has not yet been reached, STEP has developed plans that would see the development of an ecologically appropriate landscape on the site.

This project aims to:

- illustrate the concept of an ecological garden;
- acquire the skills needed for such a garden;
- assist Birrigai's educational programs; and
- build community partnerships.

The area selected is a degraded site of 4.5ha, sloping to the north with a number of rocky outcrops and remnant

grassland, shrubs and woodland, but also some remnant exotic plants. The plan is based on sustainable design principles and envisages the establishment of a number of different plantings appropriate to the various parts of the garden such as native lawn, dry shrubland and permanent wetland. A looping track would link the components. Later, such developments as school programs and vegetation trials are envisaged.

The presentation gave a comprehensive picture of STEP's vision and concluded with an invitation to members to become involved in its activities.

The postal address is:  
Southern Tablelands Ecosystem  
Park Inc  
PO Box 987  
Civic Square ACT 2608.

Syd Comfort

## Colverwell graves need protection *continued from previous page*

In his reply, the Chief Minister advised that a citation for the graves is being prepared to enable them to be included in the ACT Heritage Register. He also advised that the graves are the responsibility of ACT Forests which has been unable to carry out earlier recommendations to preserve the area due to urgent work resulting from the 2003 fires. The Chief Minister recommended that Col or other organisation seek a grant under the ACT Heritage Grants Program to allow the most urgent work to be undertaken.

Replying to the Chief Minister on April 15 Col drew attention to the impracticality of the suggested Heritage Grant because grants for heritage conservation and urgent works are only for places on the ACT Heritage Register. Catch 22!

Seeking Government leadership and commitment in this matter, Col has

requested a review of his request for the provision of Government funds to enable work to be done to conserve these important relics. That's where the matter rests at the time of writing (May 12).

Those interested in the graves will have another opportunity to inspect them with Col on July 17 when he will lead a walk into the area. Details are in the current walks program.

Syd Comfort



*Trudy Taylor, Editor of the Queanbeyan Age, inspects the grave stones with Col McAlister. Photos Max Lawrence*



# Work parties — members have their say

“Work” and “party” are two concepts that do not seem to go together yet that is what we call an event where volunteers gather, shoulder tools and go forth to clear, eradicate, plant, build or dig to improve the natural environment or restore old buildings in historical areas.

The NPA has two ongoing programs of work parties but most of our members are not attracted to them. The Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group has a monthly commitment and the Yerrabi Track Maintenance Group has a quarterly commitment.



*Above: Lunchtime relaxation and planning at Gudgenby Bush Regeneration site last February. Photo Adrienne Nicholson*

*Left: Martin Chalk and Adrienne Nicholson working on a fallen log blocking the Yerrabi Track in April. Photo Fiona MacDonald Brand*

“On Saturday, 26 February Adrienne Nicholson and Philip Gatenby joined me in an attack on the willows on the Gudgenby. The willows had re-established themselves in the vicinity of the axe-grinding grooves in the preceding six months and were growing at a remarkable rate (about 1.5m to 2m over the period). The Namadgi ranger responsible for the area, Bernard Morris, was grateful for our assistance as he had already used contractors to spray the woody weeds in that area but the willows around the river had not been tackled.

Bernard spent a couple of hours of his day delivering the Gudgenby Bushies trailer so we could use some of the tools (thanks Bushies, for your as-

sistance) and removing some briars. Over five rather warm hours, Adrienne, Philip and I used the cut-and-dab technique to despatch 21 willow plants, an untold number of briars and one large blackberry. At the end of the day we rewarded ourselves with a cool dip in one of the many rock pools in this part of the river.

There will be a need to conduct follow-up work in spring and to tackle the remaining willows that we did not have time or energy to address. So, if you would like to help in the management of Namadgi and see the immediate effect of your effort, keep an eye on the spring walks program.

**Martin Chalk**

*(continued facing page)*

The Yerrabi Track was built in 1987 by NPA members and has been maintained by members ever since. Martin Chalk organises the quarterly work parties. It is pleasant to be out in Namadgi National Park working on the track, chipping out thistles, watching and hearing the birds, admiring the trees and the views, and just working shoulder-to-shoulder with a party of fellow NPA members. The lunch hour is a time of catching up with the doings of other members and discussing the projects ahead.

A work party is a very satisfying activity, so come and join in and find out for yourself

**Fiona MacDonald Brand**

*Right: Martin Chalk and Phil Gatenby attacking the willow growth on the Gudgenby River in February. Photo Adrienne Nicholson*



# A new vision for Namadgi

The National Parks Association guest speaker at the general meeting on March 17 was Sharon Lane, Senior Planner for Environment ACT. Ms Lane presented a detailed overview of the development and content of the *Draft Management Plan for Namadgi National Park*. The plan, soon to be released, will be available for public comment for two months following the release.

In response to the earlier discussion paper by Environment ACT, 70 submissions were received from the public. Not surprisingly, these submissions were dominated by the issue of recreational access to the park. The consultation process included meetings with governmental advisory groups and numerous workshops with community organisations such as the Conservation Council and affiliated groups, tourism and rural lessees. There is also ongoing liaison with ACTEW, Emergency Services Authority and the Interim Namadgi Advisory Board.

Following the 2-month comment period for the draft plan, a report on public submissions and a final plan will be prepared for Cabinet and Ministerial approval.

Sharon Lane presented a Power Point outline of the structure of the draft plan but without policy details.

The chapters presented were:

1. A New Vision for the Future
2. Introduction: Purpose, Scope and Legislative Framework
3. Park Zoning
4. Place of Waters (Water Resource Management)
5. A Place of Nature (Landscape and Biodiversity Protection)
6. A Place of Past and Present Meaning (Protecting and Managing Cultural Heritage)
7. A Place of Fire (Fire Management)
8. A Place for Community Wellbeing (Recreation and Visitor Use)
9. A Place for Learning (Communication, Education and Research)
10. A Place with Community (Neighbours, Community Groups and Volunteers)
11. A Protected and Managed Resource

Because of the NPA's particular interest in issues of protection and management, the issues outlined in Chapter 11 are included below:

Environmental Quality

Water Quality, Water and Energy Use, Air Quality, Noise, Waste Management, Contaminated Sites.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Systematic monitoring program to gather information about the state of the environment and to support

adaptive management.

Environmental Impact Assessment guidelines for assessment Administration

Fees and charges; park concessions and commercial activities.

Operations

Fire Trail Management; Utilities, Service Providers and other Government Organisations; Use of Fire Arms; Domestic Animals; Resource Use and Extraction.

Implementation Plan.

Following the presentation of *A New Vision For Namadgi* there were a few questions and clarifications regarding:

1. the consistency of the plan with those relating to the Australian Alps, Tidbinbilla, and the Brindabellas;
- 2 the park boundary and the biosphere;
- 3 zoning and the access of horses into the park.

Prior to the presentation on Namadgi National Park, Adrian Whitehead, Project Officer for the Conservation Council, gave a short address on water use in the ACT. An article by Adrian on this subject is included in this issue on pages 10-11.

David Pfanner

## Work parties — members have their say *(continued from facing page)*

Come on folks!

Work=doing a bit for the environment which as NPA members, we support.

Party=enjoying yourself with like-minded others.

A lot of fun can be had on work parties while doing your bit for your local national park. NPA has, in the past, had a good reputation for providing a willing labour force for some of the "thankless" tasks that will always need doing in "our" national park (and further afield). General work parties were resurrected, with Martin Chalk and Phil Gatenby as joint organisers, to assist with rehabilitation after the January 2003 fires. However, at the work party in February (crack willow "cutting-and-dabbing" downstream from the Middle Creek/Bogong Creek junction) the two leaders, Martin and Phil, had only one Indian—me!, while in April, Martin had only Fiona and me to assist with the maintenance of the Yerrabi Track. It would be great

to see more participants supporting these outings. You might just cut wattle seedlings encroaching on a track; you might cart a bucket of cement up a hill and repair rock steps! As a volunteer, you only have to do as much as you can, and it's a good day out, particularly if the *party* numbers can swell beyond three.

The work party on Saturday April 23 involved maintenance of the Yerrabi Track; thistle cutting in the "swamp" area, cutting wattle regrowth threatening to obscure the track in places, making sure the drainage bars could cope if they are ever needed again, and cairn and track outlining in the rocky upper levels where the lack of vegetation can still lead to doubt as to where the track really is. Sadly, at the

moment it is hard to imagine the need there was for past work parties to put a bridge and cords across the creek and along seepage areas. Although it was a magnificent day with the temperature comfortable for putting in a reasonable effort, there was not a single walker on the track while we were there that day.

Adrienne Nicholson



Right: Martin Chalk and Phil Gatenby "cutting-and-dabbing" blackberry growing among rocks. Photo Adrienne Nicholson

# Snow in February!



*The hardy NPA group who eventually reached the Townsend goal, not quite realising how far they had come — nor how far they had to return.*

Despite the distance, the time in the car and the fullness of the day, there has developed a solid following of keen walkers who have come to enjoy the NPA's summer day walks in the Snowy Mountains. And why wouldn't there be, because the multiplicity of colours and contrasts, the views and the abundance in wildflowers make this place just as special in summer as it is in winter. As long as one is careful and well prepared, the magic of this, Australia's "highest" alpine wilderness, never abates.

During last year, the vibes coming my way suggested that another attempt to visit the region around Mount Townsend and Alice Rawson Peak was highly desirable. It is a big walk; one we usually start from the top of the Thredbo Chairlift; but we are

constrained by the chairlift's operating hours. I decided to avoid Mount Townsend this year, and rather focus on the quite different, in many ways more spectacular, views from Alice Rawson Peak and then scramble down into Albina cirque to visit a beautiful moraine-dammed pond high above Lake Albina itself. I had really enjoyed a trial run of this walk in early January, in beautiful clear weather, and I had the timing of the walk worked out nicely.

A week out from the day, the weather was looking good and already there was strong interest in this little excursion. But, by mid week, a most unusual cold snap hit south eastern Australia which brought with it sizeable snow dumps throughout — including on our ranges west of Canberra.

All this in early February ...

Yes, indeed. And I was told there was a general cover of well over 30cm of snow on the ground in the Snowy Mountains. I thought we were in a global warming thing!! This made me wonder just how the walk I was supposed to lead to Alice Rawson Peak that Sunday was going to go. Throughout Saturday the Thredbo ski cams suggested there remained an extensive cover of snow, one that was not going to melt overnight.

Three car loads of potential — umm — likely — victims remained keen to go on Sunday; and while the weather around Canberra was forecast to be magnificent, I was wondering both how we would go if the snow hadn't melted enough and whether the fresh, humid sou' westerly winds forecast for the mountains would cause the main range to be in cloud. We left Canberra under brilliant blue gold dawn skies.

As we started to sight the Snowies from the road past Cooma, it was clear there was still heaps of snow down to 1800m and the bigger peaks were in cloud. After a little consultation, I decided to abandon the scheduled walk and instead, drive to Charlotte Pass and ... suck it and see. Well, we found we were in an environment of a general cover of snow, melting as the temperatures were now above freezing — just — and the sou' easterly wind was quite fresh. The snow cover had drifted towards a metre deep in some places. Wading or rock hopping across the Snowy River to head towards the Main Range was not a popularly received suggestion; as it was raging in the spring snow melt. But the whole scene did look beautiful, especially in the light brought through scudding swirling cloud whipping around the peaks. Very photogenic, indeed.

So we sloshed and trudged up the track towards Mount Kosciuszko for about five clicks, admiring the constantly changing scenes — scenes which all of us regulars were very familiar with, but which were so very fascinating and beautiful in the light and cloud show we had before us. We stopped for morning tea near the bridge over the upper Snowy River and watched snow bergs floating down stream. This is February isn't it, and we are in Australia ... aren't we? And we found the most beautiful snow bank against the river nearby. Those who were mildly peeved about me whimping out on the bigger walk were in complete forgiveness by now.

*(continued on facing page)*



*Frozen lake water and snow bank just upstream from the bridge over the Snowy River on the track to Kosciuszko — in February! Photos Steve Hill*

# NPA ACT Comments on "Living Parks"

*NPA ACT submitted the following comments on a draft document from the NSW Department of Environment and Conservation document Living Parks which is to be "a draft sustainable visitation strategy for NSW national parks".*

We were very concerned that the document enshrined commercial activities in all national parks in a way which could lead to unnecessary and damaging activities. Our policies state very firmly that national parks are for the protection and enhancement of the natural values of the environment as an ecologically viable and sustainable system. The following comments on *Living Parks* therefore echo the comments we made on the proposal to expand the commercial lease at Perisher.

All private profit making activities in national parks must include measures

to compensate the government for the high public costs incurred to reduce the ecological damage. It must also address the costs of de-construction and rehabilitation of the site when infrastructure including buildings, walkways, roads etc are no longer viable.

Far from enabling greater public access to the park, private development will lock up scarce resources in private ownership and increase costs to the average public park user through increased service charges, higher traffic flows and commercially dictated changes to services, ie services would not be directed at the public good but at private profit. This is fine for private land, not for publicly owned landholdings.

Many private enterprise activities are not core to national park values, eg retail outlets for clothing and sports equipment. Such facilities are not

appropriate in parks. They belong in the village and towns which service the park area and which often experience economic hardship. A clear example of how private development in parks can adversely affect the surrounding region is seen in the alpine area with fluctuating real estate prices and investment uncertainty because of the increased concentration of non-core facilities in alpine resorts.

The *Living Parks* document should therefore discourage all private development and private commercial activities in national parks. Such activities should take place in the surrounding towns and villages rather than in the parks where the risk of irreversible environmental damage is so high.

Christine Goonrey

## Snow in February! *(continued from facing page)*

Anyway they now knew how uncomfortable that walk would be and the risks in the cloudy conditions higher up were obvious.

After a feed of Tim Tam double coated chocolate emergency rations, I suggested we head off-track downstream for about a kilometre to visit a beautiful gorge where the Snowy River drops about 40m to be joined by Rawson Creek flowing — on this day, roaring — from the slopes of Mount Kosciuszko rising about four kilometres south west. The snow-banked gorge and tumbling light green melted snow water truly was beautiful. A great place for lunch, out of the wind, yet perched on the rocks overlooking the gorge. Name a restaurant that could match such a scene!!

From there we trekked direct to Seaman's Hut. There were quite a few people visiting there and I think we might have stirred the interest of a couple of younger people who said they were keen about what the NPA stood for. The ever changing, mottled white scenes on the Main Range required more photography.

Well, what to do now — it being about 2 pm and none of us were ready to go straight home ... I know, why not pop up to the western ridge of the Stillwell plateau, which from looking at



*The Abbots, including Townsend, from Seaman's Hut.*

the map is called Kangaroo Ridge — why I don't know, it is much too high and bleak for roos around here. We could wander along there back to the cars instead of the track.

After a relatively gentle 130m climb to the southern and highest rocky knoll of Kangaroo Ridge — where much of the snow had melted in the scattered sunlight — we trundled along the ridge visiting several rocky knolls on the way to wonder at the ever changing scene before us. By now we were even catching glimpses of our intended destination that day, Alice Rawson Peak, through the swirling clouds and afternoon sunlight. After visiting Stillwell itself at the northern end we followed the ridge back down to Charlotte Pass car park to remove our wet pants and boots for the trip home.

We were ready for home by then!! Oh, and the TAB at the Kambah shops was shut ... Damn!!

A measure of the magical attraction of this mountain paradise was the gentle, often repeated suggestions in the car on the way home, that we should try again to do the scheduled walk later in the month. My response that the chairlift soon would be shutting down an hour earlier at the end of the day, merely aroused the suggestion that such a walk was entirely

doable from Charlotte Pass. Oh, and let's visit Mount Townsend and Alice Rawson, maybe giving the pond a miss.

So, on the last Saturday in February, two car loads of keen masochists completed quite an epic walk, one which is less in total distance than from Thredbo, but being mostly off track and including crossing wetter than usual lands was more strenuous. It was a fabulous day as you can see from the smiles on the summit of Townsend. Mind you they had not quite thought about the return trip to Charlotte Pass — doesn't it look a long way off? Nah, the return was going to be all down hill ... It was, wasn't it?

Steve Hill

# Book review

## Monga intacta. A Celebration of the Monga Forest and its Protection

Edited by Robyn Steller

130 pages. \$55 + \$1 postage

*Monga intacta* is a beautifully designed and presented book which brings together a diversity of contributors ranging from artists, photographers, writers, scientists, and those who confronted the bulldozers in the forest. The book represents the commitment and dedication of many people who worked long and hard to have Monga forest protected.

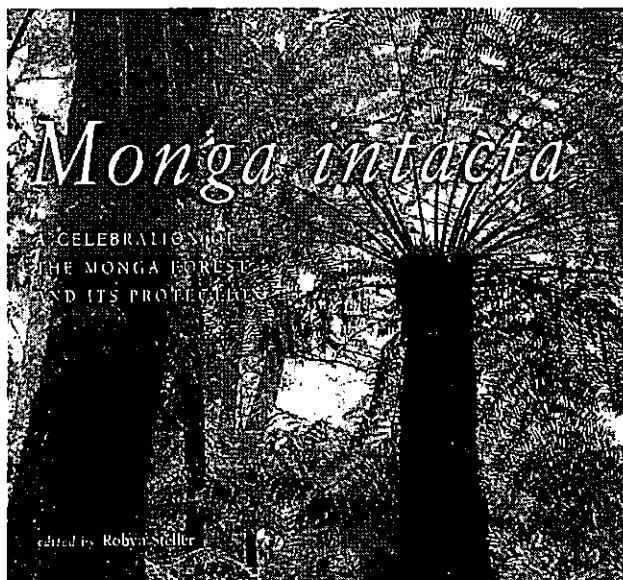
Monga lies to the south east of Braidwood and adjoins the escarpment that faces the coast. The King's Highway crosses one of its principal rivers, the Mongarlowe, en route to the Clyde Mountain.

Robyn Steller published the book and dedicated it to Peter Herbst who was instrumental in establishing Friends of the Mongarlowe River to campaign for the protection of Monga forest. The Australian Greens, the National Parks Association of the ACT Inc., The Wilderness Society and Friends of the Mongarlowe River Inc., contributed to the costs of the publication and are acknowledged with the other contributors.

Len Haskew from NPA ACT became interested in Monga, and led several NPA walks to the forest in conjunction with the Friends of the Mongarlowe River. I joined one of these outings to sample the cool, quiet depths of the forest, and to see the spindly Monga waratah, and plumwood (called after local campaigner and writer, Val Plumwood) or pinkwood, *Eucryphia moorei*, which is related to the Tasmanian leatherwood. Our lunch spot was next to a clear stream bordered with luxuriant treeferns.

The book is divided into five parts: *History, Inspirations, Landscape and Ecology, Life in the Forest* and *A People's Fight*. What emerge are the wonder of the forest and the fact that much remains unknown.

Michael Scott-Lees' dramatic photograph of treeferns provides the introductory visual impact to the book on the cover and the first two pages. It sets the scene for further visual treats with a delicate fern frond motif on the pages facing each section, and Christine Payne's botanical drawings of orchids, of the Monga waratah and plumwood.



The centre of the book opens to a series of small, exuberant watercolours by Paris Silvester, vignettes of life in Monga, ranging from tree ferns to parrots, a lyrebird, forest, and water views. Rhubard's part whimsical poems accompany the paintings:

*I see the spinning drifting leaves  
Flutter earthward in the breeze  
And birds canoodle in the trees  
In an ancient forest glade.*

Many other fine photographs, mostly coloured, feature in the book along with poems by local poets.

The earliest inhabitants, the Aborigines, lived as several tribes or clans; they travelled inland from the coast via routes that were adopted by the Europeans, the Corn Trail being just one example. Myths and legends arose in conjunction with the land's features and Dave Tout Nadijwoji of the Monga area shows his connection with the stories he tells of the country.

The first European settlers in the Braidwood area included timber getters involved in selective logging which caused far less damage to the forest than the present highly intensive and mechanised industry. One early family was the McRaes who owned a timber mill which was subsequently sold to Boral in the 1980s. Archival photos illustrate this part of the book and an interview with Violet McCrae who died in 1992 gives a taste of her times.

Timber from Monga built early Braidwood and workers' cottages in Canberra and Goulburn; it also provided the props in goldmines that dotted the district including Araluen and Majors Creek.

Poets contribute to *Inspirations* along with a beadmaker's creation which reflects her response to Monga. Photographer John Reid describes his out-of-body experience in Monga, with

a photograph of Fishman who represents the unknown and inexplicable.

Under *Landscape and Ecology*, Brendan Mackey, from the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies, gives a valuable overview of Monga with the intriguing fact that a sand dune, formed 30,000 years ago in the Pleistocene Age, sits under the western edge of Monga.

Monga's geographical position exposes it to coastal influences, bringing it mists and rain and keeping it moist which is particularly significant as the Southern Tablelands and much of NSW is bitten by drought.

Mackey refers to Monga as a sponge and as a possible refuge in drought for flora and fauna during our "human driven climate change" which makes forests like Monga even more precious and highlights the need for governments both globally and nationally to address climate change seriously and responsibly.

Mackey describes the pinkwood, *Eucryphia moorei*, and Monga waratah, *Telopea mongaensis*, as "remnant Gondwanic species" from when Australia was part of ancient Gondwanaland. Both plants have very restricted distributions, another indicator of Monga's uniqueness.

Under *Life in the Forest*, the reader is introduced to the mammals, birds, insects and frogs of Monga. In each case, but particularly with the insects and frogs, the authors emphasise that much is unknown. If you don't know what you have, you won't know when it becomes extinct. Obviously more money and resources are needed for research into our fauna and flora.

David McDonald, author of the chapter on birds, makes the valid and important point that bird observers are recreationalists who are not sufficiently recognised as such in plans of management for national parks.

Keith McDougall, in looking at "Rare, threatened and interesting plants and animals" reveals that many grass trees are threatened with root rot caused by the pathogen, *Phytophthora cinnamomi*. Threatened species include the spotted-tailed quoll and yellow-bellied glider, and four owls: the barking, masked, powerful, and sooty. The stuttering barred frog hasn't been seen since the 1970s.

Most chapters provide reference

(Continued on facing page)



lists, and species lists are given for plants, mammals, birds, frogs and insects. Many of the authors in the book are well known in their respective fields. Some of the chapters overlap a little, as in discussing the Monga waratah and the pinkwood, but usually different aspects are emphasised.

The last section, *A People's Fight* recounts the campaign that developed in response to the logging of Monga in the 1990s.

Andrew Wong who trained as an ecologist and now works for the Wilderness Society, writes of his reaction to Monga, of standing inside a huge tree and seeing hundreds of eyes staring down at him, the eyes of funnel web spiders. He remained remarkably calm. Andrew describes encountering a giant mountain grey gum, of showing an NPWS officer the same tree and how this experience helped influence NPWS's action to have Monga gazetted as part of a national park.

Members of the

Forest Action Group stood in front of bulldozers, were arrested and charged. They returned to the forest and persisted with their action whilst simultaneously holding a protest camp in Badja State Forest. They scrubbed the forest roads which means they hauled tree trunks and limbs on to the roads and made them impassable.

Robyn Steller describes how several older men, who would not normally be associated with arrests as a result of

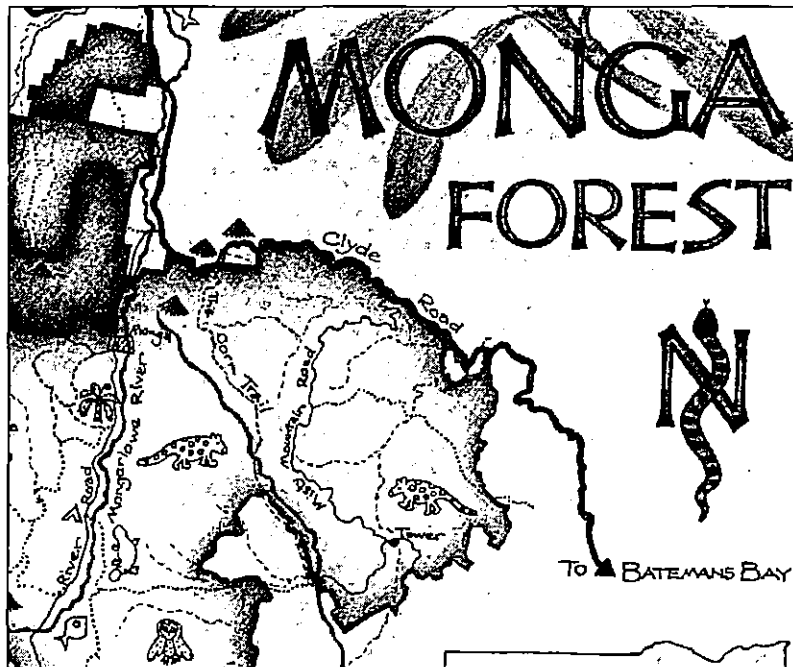
standing in front of bulldozers to stop logging, faced court charges.

It takes courage and fortitude to face arrest in the forests, especially in today's increasingly mean political climate.

*Monga intacta* is testimony to everyone who helped secure Monga and is a reminder that Monga must continue to be watched and protected with a management plan that recognizes its vulnerability and uniqueness. It's a book that should be bought not only for its content but for the principle of conservation and preservation. Congratulations to Robyn Steller for bringing it together.

Judy Kelly

*At the time of going to press we have just learned of Robyn Steller's death. This is a great loss and we extend our deepest sympathy to Robyn's family and friends.*



## PARKWATCH

### Recovery time for the alps

The VNPA is determined that the future for Victoria's Alpine National Park will be a good one, not a bad one. The alps deserve that. They deserve a real chance to recover.

If there is any single unequivocal indication that cattle damage the alps, it must be in the response of the two organisations currently dedicated to rehabilitation of damaged ecosystems on the Bogong High Plains.

The Bogong High Plains Restoration Alliance, an association of alpine ecologists and trained volunteers, is currently rehabilitating a few of the many cattle-damaged peat beds south of Falls Creek, in currently licensed cattle grazing areas.

The Alliance is able to do this now for one simple reason; cattle have been out of the Bogong High Plains since the 2003 fires, and recovery has been so slow it is clear that, even under the existing legislation, they should not be allowed back for years. And given that the Government may end grazing permanently (hopefully by the time this edition of Park Watch arrives at your

door), then there is even greater reason to start on the rehabilitation.

The other organisation currently working on alpine rehabilitation, Parks Victoria, has put tens of thousands of dollars into work on peat beds (or moss beds, or peat bogs or what you will ...), and enlisted the help of volunteers from universities in Wodonga and Albury. But because grazing is still permitted in many areas, Parks Victoria feels compelled to limit this work to areas north of Falls Creek, such as Mount Nelse Creek, where cattle licences were ended around ten years ago.

That is, the agency empowered to manage cattle in the park can enlist the help of the public to rehabilitate damage done by cattle in areas from which licences have now ended, but is unable to fix damage within current grazing licence areas because cattle would wreck the rehabilitation works.

*[Vic] Parkwatch, March 2005*

### Bad news for World Heritage

Australia's World Heritage-listed Lord Howe Island was dealt a severe blow by the NSW Government when

final zoning for its marine park was recently announced. Only a token 27% was allocated as sanctuary. A far cry from conservation groups' suggested 90+%.

With outstanding environmental values and unusually low human pressure, Lord Howe Island offered a unique opportunity to protect and preserve large pristine waters with limited disruption to existing fishing activities. However, almost three-quarters of the park will remain open to fishing pressures.

The next marine park to be announced is in the Manning Shelf Bioregion, on the midnorth coast. It will probably lie between Newcastle and Forster. It is imperative that we gain support for significant sanctuary areas in this proposed park to ensure that we properly protect the future of NSW marine life.

*National Parks Journal, April-May 2005*

*(more PARKWATCH on page 22)*



# PARKWATCH

(more PARKWATCH on page 21)

## Too soft on horses

A new National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) Horseriding Policy for national parks is close to finalisation. The latest draft seen by NPA still does not set out clear circumstances when horseriding in national park is not permitted, as the present policy does. Instead it relies on the discretion of the NPWS Regional Manager.

Given the pattern of NPWS readily allowing horseriding in response to local pressure, this is of major concern. The Minister for the Environment is due to finalise the policy in the coming months. Please send a letter to the Minister asking for a stronger policy that prevents horseriding in environmentally sensitive sites, not a weaker one.

*National Parks Journal,  
April-May 2005*

## Darling Basin initiative gets off the ground

About 150 people from across the Darling Basin, gathered in Moree in northern NSW on February 25th to discuss the future management of the Basin's rivers. Due in no small part to the number of ACF members and supporters present at the meeting, the need for environmental flows figured prominently in the discussion. The meeting was very positive, focused on the future and overwhelmingly supported the establishment of a community led initiative to guide the integrated management of the rivers of the Darling Basin.

A working group of 13 people from across the basin and representing different sectoral interests was established to guide the process for the next few months with a view to bringing some firm proposals back to the community. State Ministers from Queensland, NSW and South Australia, who were present at the meeting, offered to support the process and provide access to the Murray Darling Basin Ministerial Council.

ACF welcomes the initiative as a step forward for the Darling, although it's early days as yet, and will keep you informed of its progress and opportunities to get involved.

*habitat, April 2005*

## Blue Mountains groundwater quality threatened

Because groundwater in the Blue Mountains is generally good, the principal threats are climate change (a

universal problem) and environmentally unsustainable extraction (very much a local problem). Think about this local problem when you see golf courses, sports fields and some household gardens proudly proclaiming their use of bore water. Think about it when you hear that Blue Mountains groundwater is being extracted at little cost and bottled as high-cost mineral water. Think when you read that local coalmines tap certain aquifers to the tune of tens of megalitres (a megalitre is the volume of an Olympic swimming pool) per day. Think when you next see hanging swamps stressed by groundwater depletion, springs drying up, and greatly reduced flows in creeks and rivers. And think once again when water costs increase, your use is restricted, your garden is dying and Sydney's dams are falling! Yes, the use of bore water (i.e. groundwater) has consequences: the user gets the benefit but we all bear the costs (environmental degradation, reduced and costly water access, falling reservoirs). Simplistically they steal water as it enters the dam; we pay to get it from the dam.

*The Colong Bulletin, March 2005*

## Goats herded out of national parks

Premier Peter Beattie and Environment Minister Desley Boyle said Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service contractors had mustered 3900 goats in two 10-day musters late last year from Currawinya National Park, removing another 200 in February.

"Without a doubt feral goats are one of our most damaging pests. They remove plants and break branches off shrubs and their hooves break up the soil and leave it prone to erosion," Mr Beattie said.

"The goats taken off were big enough to be sold, and worth about \$25 each. QPWS received \$5 a head and the rest was income for contractors," he said.

*[Qld] NPA News, April 2005*

## Trust for nature donates land at Melba Gully

The Jewel of the Otways, Melba Gully State Park off the Great Ocean Road 3km west of Lavers Hill, grew by 8 hectares on 2 January 2005 thanks to a land donation from Victoria's Trust for Nature. The park now totals 73 ha.

This will help ensure the protection of plants and wildlife, including four

threatened or rare species: the Otways Black Snail, the endangered Spotted-tailed Quoll, Bristly Shield-fern and a rare moss (*Trachyloma*).

Trust for Nature received the land through a generous donation from a private individual as part of a bequest in 1975.

"Trust for Nature is committed to conserving all significant environmental areas in private ownership and in working with local communities to achieve real sustainable solutions," Trust for Nature Director, Dr Michael Looker said.

The announcement of an additional land donation coincides with the release of VEAC's recommendation that Melba Gully be included in a new Otway Ranges NP.

*VNPA Update, February 2005*

## Grey nurse sharks — in need of intensive care

Our harmless Grey Nurse Sharks are dying. Within 10 years they may have joined the Tasmanian Tiger on the list of extinct species. For over 20 years the Grey Nurse has been listed as protected, yet their numbers are still declining and essential real protection of their habitat areas has been ignored.

NPA - Marine has realised it's time for a new approach to save this misunderstood species. Hence the creation of the "Let Lucy Live" Campaign. Lucy is our harmless Grey Nurse Shark and will form the face of our new look campaign.

The campaign will initially focus on Maroubra, one of the 16 small critical habitat sites along the NSW coast. Less than 500 Grey Nurse Sharks remain along the entire east coast of Australia. Queensland has already protected their habitat sites yet NSW is lagging behind while more of the few remaining individuals continue to die.

With accidental hooking from recreational fishing being the primary cause of their decline, 1500-metre sanctuary zones must be created around each critical habitat site. Such sanctuaries prohibit fishing activity but allow non-extractive activities such as swimming, snorkelling, diving and boating. This improves the diversity and abundance of life within the sanctuary but also spills out into the surrounding areas therefore improving fishing quality outside the boundaries.

*National Parks Journal,  
April-May 2005*

Compiled by Len Haskew

# Environmental news

## Orchids protected

Two orchids, one of which is confined to a single Brindabella site, have been declared as endangered species, following a recommendation from the ACT Flora and Fauna Committee.

The only known local habitats of the Canberra spider orchid (*Arachnorchis actensis*) are a small number of sites on Mount Majura and Mount Ainslie, while the Brindabella midge orchid (*Corunastylis ectopa*) is found in just one area on a steep slope in a tall *Eucalyptus radiata* forest in the Brindabella Range.

Only 235 specimens of the Canberra spider orchid were recorded during surveys in 2003, most of them close to urban development and recreational trails. The flower of the orchid is smaller than a five-cent piece and has long thin crimson petals with white edges that curl at the tips. It flowers in spring.

In February 2004 there were only 35 known specimens of the Brindabella midge orchid, a lone population extremely vulnerable to road maintenance, erosion or natural catastrophe. Its green to reddish purple flowers emerge from late January to March, after rain.

A monitoring program and protection measures are to be developed for both orchids.

## Gums heritage listed

The role played by the Friends of Aranda Bushland in the listing of the Aranda Snow Gums site on the ACT Heritage Places Register has been acknowledged by the Chief Minister, Mr Jon Stanhope.

Announcing the listing in March, Mr Stanhope said the snow gums, which line the edge of the frost hollow at the base of Aranda Bushland and Black Mountain, are an excellent example of the gums that once formed a fringe around the grassy plains upon which Canberra has been built.

Convener of the Friends of Aranda Bushland, Mary Falconer, said the site demonstrated the transition from the treeless natural grasslands, through snow gums into the adjacent yellow box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*)–red gum (*Eucalyptus blakelyi*) grassy woodland, then into forest dominated by scribbly gum (*Eucalyptus rossii*) and red stringybark (*Eucalyptus macrorhyncha*).

The group initiated the conservation and interpretation of the site in the early

1990s and spearheaded a formal listing on the interim Heritage Register in 1998.

## Flow guidelines

Draft environment flow guidelines for rivers and streams across the ACT were released on May 9 for public comment. The consultation period began on May 13 and submissions will close on July 14.

The guidelines set out the environmental flows needed to maintain healthy aquatic ecosystems in local rivers and streams, and will replace those dating from 1999. They will form the basis for future water allocations under the Water Resource Management Plan and future licensing for water abstraction.

The Chief Minister and Minister for the Environment, Mr Jon Stanhope, said the draft guidelines were based on better scientific data and a better understanding of the environmental issues, and represent a significant departure from the old guidelines, particularly in relation to flows in the Cotter catchment.

"As a result of monitoring in the wake of the 2003 bushfires and advice from the Cooperative Research Centre for Freshwater Ecology, the Government has learnt much about the flows required to protect the Cotter River and has been able to more precisely define the flows needed to protect aquatic ecosystems," he said.

The guidelines and supporting documents are available from the Environment ACT website at [www.environment.act.gov.au](http://www.environment.act.gov.au) or from ACT Government shopfronts.

Written submissions on the Draft Environmental Flow Guidelines should be sent to: Environmental Flow Guidelines, Water Resources Unit, Environment ACT, PO Box 144, Lyneham ACT 2602. Comments can also be emailed to [WaterResources@act.gov.au](mailto:WaterResources@act.gov.au) or faxed to 6207 6084.

## Salinity no problem

Salinity is not a significant problem in the ACT, according to the Chief Minister. He said about 53 per cent of the ACT is national park or nature reserve, much of the area that has been cleared is now covered by urban development, and there is virtually no intensive irrigation in the ACT. The largest man-made source of salinity in the ACT is sewage.

Mr Stanhope said on April 6 that in contrast with some areas of the Murray-Darling Basin where salt interception systems removed thousands of tonnes of salt a day from the rivers, the ACT was licensed to put small amounts of salt into the system — a practice known as "exporting".

The ACT had implemented a water resource strategy, *Think water, act water*, which would result in the reuse of large amounts of water from sewage treatment plants and reduce the amount of salt going into the rivers.

## Pests prohibited

The supply of some pest plants will be prohibited in the ACT as a result of the new law which also prohibits the supply of material contaminated with certain pest plants and animals. It strengthens enforcement provisions for the issuing of directions to landholders to eradicate or control pest plants or pest animals.

The Chief Minister said the *Pest Plants and Animals Act 2005*, passed by the Legislative Assembly on May 5, would establish a system for declaring pest plants and pest animals based on their threat to agriculture, the environment or the community. It would provide for the development of management plans for how the threat will be managed.

The new law recognises certain classes of pests that reflect their distribution or abundance and the practicality of controlling or managing them. A declaration may state that a pest plant must be suppressed, which means that its level of infestation must be reduced. It is likely that pest plants such as willows or broom will fall into this class.

Alternatively, a declaration may state that a pest plant must be contained, which means that its level of infestation must not be allowed to increase. This recognises that the pests of concern are so well established and widespread that total suppression is not a practical proposition. Examples of this class of weed would be St Johns wort and Paterson's curse.

Mr Stanhope said the Government would ensure that the declaration of pests in the ACT was undertaken in a consultative way so that there is a high degree of commonality in a regional approach to pest management.

Compiled by Graeme Wicks

**National Parks Association Calendar**

	June	July	Aug	Sept
<i>Public holidays</i>	<i>Mon 13</i>			
General meetings	Thur 16	Thur 21	<b>Thur 18</b>	Thur 15
Committee meetings	Tues 7	Tues 5	Tues 2	Tues 6
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration <sup>1</sup>	Sat 11	Sat 9	Sat 13	Sat 10
Bulletin Working Group <sup>2</sup>	Tues 21	14		

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**

Third Thursday of the month

8:00pm

Uniting Church hall  
 56 Scrivener Street  
 O'Connor

**Annual General Meeting**  
**Thursday 18 August**

**Thursday 17 March 2005**

*Camping and skiing in the 1940s.*

Geoff Hall.

Geoff Hall recalls some of his experiences of bushwalking, camping and skiing in the Canberra region in the immediate post-war period. A long bike ride over gravel roads could precede a bushwalk and there was plenty of snow at Mt. Franklin but getting there and back could be tricky.

**Thursday 21 July 2005**

*Hidden heritage—European coastal explorers on Australia's southeast corner.*

Trevor Lipscombe, NPA member.

Find out about some little known coastal heritage sites in or near the national parks of Australia's southeast corner from the author of a new book on the European coastal exploration of NSW and Victoria. Trevor will have copies of his book *On Austral Shores* for sale on the night at a special price of \$35 (RRP \$49.95).

**Thursday 18 August 2005**

**Annual General Meeting**

*Canoeing the US-Canadian Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.*

Esther Gallant, NPA member.

The Boundry Waters is a land of waterways encompassing the northeastern part of the State of Minnesota and the southwestern part of the Province of Ontario. Millions of acres have been set aside here as wilderness accessible only by canoe or kayak including ponds, lakes, streams and rivers. Esther will show images from several trips to this area in her home state and tell about the historic importance of the area to the Indians and the 17th century fur trade.

**Nominations for NPA office bearers and committee 2005/6**

Nominations are sought for office bearers and committee members to be elected at the AGM on August 18. This form can be photocopied and used for nominations.

We nominate ..... for the position of ..... in the NPA ACT for 2005/6

Proposed by .....(signature)

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

..... (date)

**NPA ACT Bulletin**

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