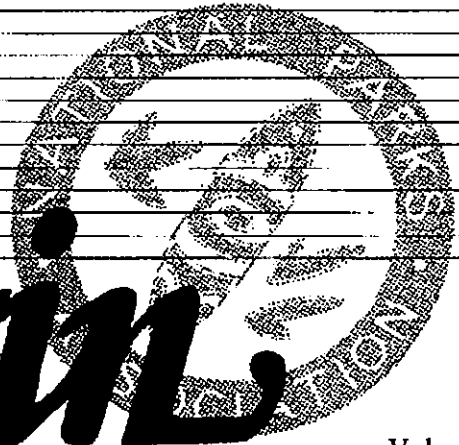
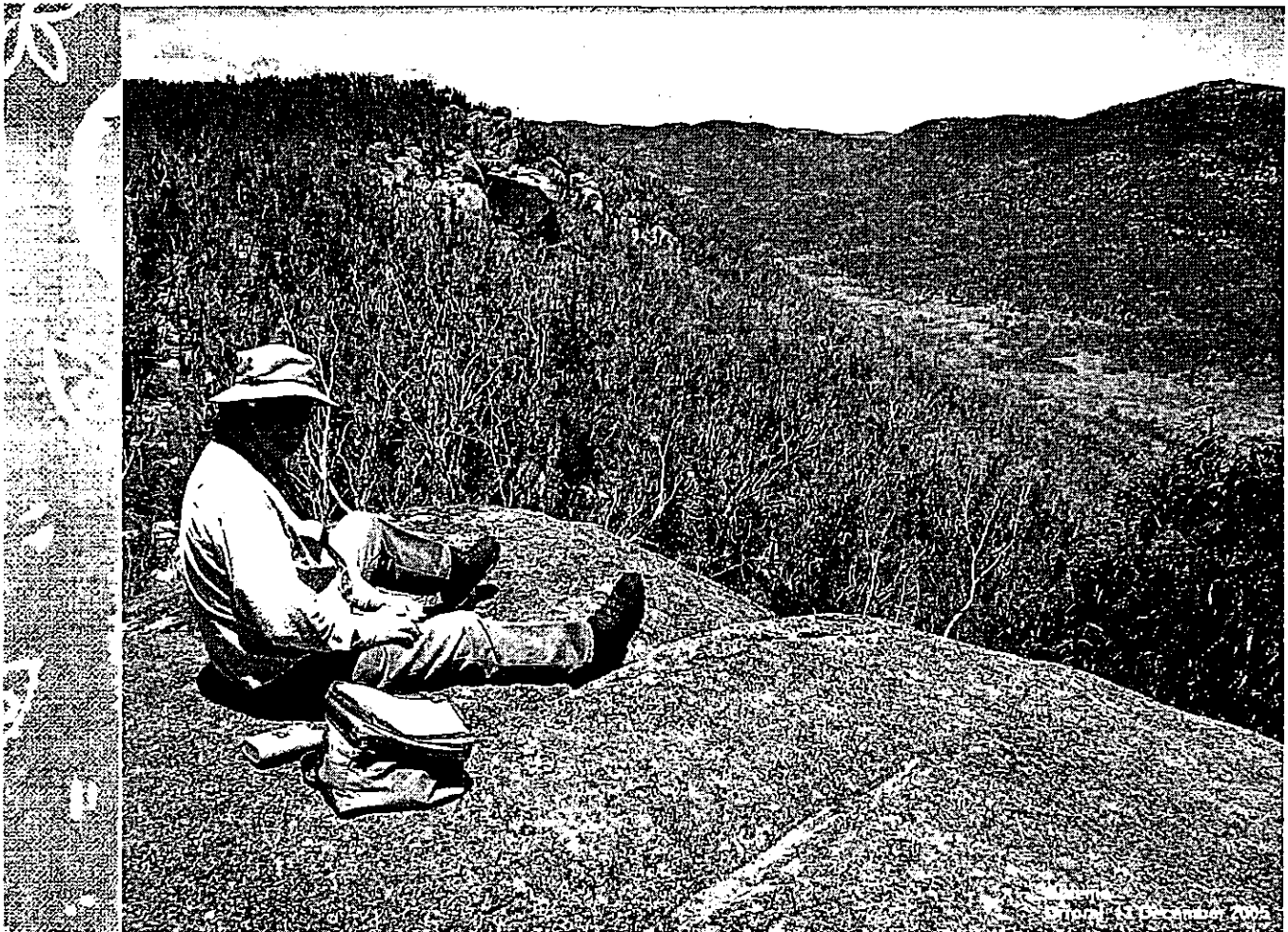


NPA Bulletin



Volume 44 number 2
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NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF THE ACT INC



NPA to oppose new Namadgi fire trails

Climate change – a hot issue for parks

NPA moves in with Conservation Council

The basalt boundary beckons

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

National Parks Association of the ACT Incorporated Inaugurated 1960

Aims and objectives of the Association

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

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NPA Bulletin

Contributions of articles, letters, drawings and photographs are always welcome. Items accepted for publication may also be published on the NPA website. Send all items to The *Bulletin* Team, admin@npaact.org.au, or postal address above.

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From the President

The new year began with the rather disturbing news that we had to vacate the NPA office in Chifley by Easter. However, rather than being a disaster, the move opened up an exciting opportunity to co-locate with the new offices of the Conservation Council South Eastern Region and Canberra. A very able team led by Sonja Lenz sorted old files, cleared out rubbish and moved all our equipment so that by mid April, we were comfortably established in the new premises. Our special thanks go to our intrepid office workers for all their hard work over the past years: Diana Heins, Jenny McLeod and Kathryn Wingett have worked quietly and solidly in the old office, but Jenny and Kathryn are not making the move to Civic. The more accessible location should make it easier for members to pop in and maybe volunteer for a few hours' work to help keep the office administration under control.

In the middle of all this, many of us took advantage of a very special NPA

camping trip in March. The Ian Currie Memorial Camping Trip to Wapengo celebrated the memory of our much loved life member and past president, Ian Currie, who led some memorable car camps to this spot (photo page 18). As dusk fell and the incoming tide silently filled the Wapengo lagoon we sat around sharing food and wine, telling stories about old friends and remembering the good times. It was especially moving that Jean Currie and her family were sitting at our campfire as we recalled Ian's legendary love of chocolate and sweets, his organising abilities when it came time to strike camp and his infectious enthusiasm for the bush which drew so many new members in all those years ago. Special thanks to the Clark family, especially Sebastian, for letting us stay and to Adrienne for organising the trip.

Another highlight of our outings program was the special walk to celebrate Frank Clements' 80th birthday (see photo page 18). The



birthday cakes and canapés were carried all the way in to Brandy Flat Hut and Frank blew out the candle with more breath than most of us would have after a climb up that steep hill. It is events like this that make me realise what stalwart souls NPA members are and what makes NPA so vigorous an organisation.

Christine Goonrey

Thanks to Neville

The Executive Committee would like to extend its thanks to Neville Esau for his work as *Bulletin* Editor over the past year. Neville took over on Syd Comfort's retirement and worked hard to ensure the *Bulletin* kept up its high standard. Our thanks also go to Maxine Esau who assisted Neville and kept the wheels of editing turning smoothly.

Neville has arranged for Max Lawrence to edit this edition, and Kevin McCue will then do



the September edition. This gives the Committee a few more months to find a permanent replacement for Neville.

We hope Neville's contributions to the *Bulletin* will continue, especially his reports from the far flung places he will be visiting and that he will be available for advice and support to the new Editor when he/she is found.

Christine Goonrey
President

Notice of Annual General Meeting

National Parks Association of the ACT Inc.
All members of the Association are invited to attend the
Annual General Meeting to be held at
the Uniting Church Hall, O'Connor at 8:00 pm on

Thursday 16 August 2007

Business: Minutes of the 2006 AGM	Appointment of auditor
President's report	Election: office-bearers and committee
Financial report	Any other business

Note All office-bearer and committee positions become vacant at the AGM.

Nominations for the ensuing year are welcome. Use copies of the form on page 7 of this *Bulletin* to nominate members for office-bearer and committee member positions for the coming year.

Following the formal business and guest speakers, members are invited to the traditional AGM supper.

Cover Photo: NPA member Graeme Barrow ponders the effects of fire on Orroral Ridge and Valley, December 2005. Photo by Max Lawrence

Fire trail report

With \$9 million in the kitty for fire trails from the current ACT Budget, the ACT Government has been busy ploughing up the park over summer. Parks, Conservation and Lands (now part of the Territory and Municipal Services portfolio) have worked hard to make sure the proper flora and fauna surveys and cultural heritage assessments have been carried out for newly affected areas. We understand that the park managers and staff have also tried to keep the tree felling, rock removal and grading within acceptable limits but it is an impossible job trying to build roads in a national park which do not impact on the landscape.

The latest Development Approval (DA) open for public comment was for alterations to the Grassy Creek Fire trail to remove it from the creek area, allow tankers to access the area and to allow greater use of prescribed burning in the area. NPA ACT has made a submission but we hold little hope of influencing the work in the current climate of fear

and anxiety which some elements of our community continue to ferment.

Further work has also been carried out on the Two Sticks Road in the northern part of the park, without a DA because it is already an existing fire trail. Here we see the need for heavy vehicle access under the current fire fighting regime and because of implications for the cross-border fighting of fires.

It is the continued emphasis on access for heavy fire fighting equipment which continues to worry us. There seems little capacity in the ACT's current rural fire fighting strategising to adapt to less destructive, more long-term fire mitigation strategies which are being adopted in other jurisdictions and overseas.

Environmental Impact Statements are being prepared for the proposed Orroral Ridge and Stockyard Spur Fire Trails. These trails would push roads into pristine bushland, disturb fragile ecologies, destroy stunning natural

scenery and create erosion problems for decades to come.

Yet Parks, Conservation and Lands have no option but to push ahead because these roads are mandated in the draft Strategic Bushfire Management Plan. NPA ACT will be fighting fiercely to prevent these two trails, not just on ecological grounds but also because these trails will open up new areas of the bush to illegal 4WD and trail biking and enhance the incidence of fire through arson and accident.

Meanwhile, some local landowners continue to stir alarm in the media about mismanagement of the national park causing a fire crisis. They want more trails, more burning. You have to feel sorry for park staff caught between these constant media alarms, the fire management regulators out measuring the park for its flammability and angry conservationists getting very disturbed by the loss of natural values — not to mention the bulldust now floating over the park in large quantities.

Christine Goonrey

NPA to oppose new fire trails in Namadgi

On 19 April 2007 NPA ACT was contacted by Brown Consulting about four new fire trails proposed for Namadgi National Park. The four trails are known as Bullen Range, Spencers Border, Orroral Tors and Stockyard Link. The consultation process consisted of an exhibition of maps at Namadgi Visitors Centre from April 28 to May 6 with an opportunity to talk with the consultants from 3:00–7:00 pm on May 2. Because the information was

not to be made available electronically, NPA negotiated to have the maps and the community response forms up on our own website. We also got good coverage on the ABC's *Stateline* program.

The **Bullen Range** fire trail is surrounded by private property and although erosion would drain straight into the Murrumbidgee, it would not be a core concern for us.

Spencers Border fire trail, on the NSW/ACT border at the southern end of the park, is separated from an existing fire trail on Spencer's property by a three-strand wire fence. Building this trail would be a complete waste of public money and a caution that fire fighting relations between jurisdictions are not working as well as we might hope.

Stockyard Link fire trail starts by running through a wetland, carries on across an exposed ridge, then plunges down a steep spur, which has defied all road building attempts to date, then ends up at Corin Dam.

Our main objections to this fire trail are that it will create erosion directly into the Cotter River; it will always require extensive and costly maintenance simply to ensure it could be used by vehicles; and it will be used to introduce inappropriate prescribed burning to a key area of the catchment. We oppose this trail vigorously.

Orroral Tors. The fourth fire trail starts at the collimation tower on Orroral Ridge and extends right along the ridge to join Smokers fire trail about

(Continued on page 5)



NPA ACT President, Christine Goonrey being interviewed for ABC Stateline, Orroral Ridge, 2 May 2007 Photo by Max Lawrence

More fires burn into parks than out

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) has described claims by NSW Farmers that it does not fight fires vigorously enough as "offensive" and said they fail to recognise the dedication of NPWS staff who work extremely hard on the fire fighting front-line to protect the community.

NPWS Chief, Dr Tony Fleming, said twice as many bushfires entered national parks than leave them and this had been the case for at least the last 20 years. In 2005-06, 5 per cent of NSW fires were in national parks.

In this past bushfire season 70 per cent of national park fires were kept to below 10ha. Another 20 per cent were

between 10 and 100ha.

"During this time only 3 per cent of fires grew larger than 1000ha and these were managed by the NPWS in close cooperation with the NSW Rural Fire Service and other agencies," Dr Fleming said.

NSW Farmers had issued a public statement claiming the NPWS did not maintain fire trails, but the NPWS maintained a 10 000km fire trail network, conducted regular hazard reduction burning, worked closely with local fire authorities and had an active and dedicated fire management team.

"I am very disappointed by the claim and am frankly getting tired of

the continual sniping from the sidelines by people who are not held to account for their claims which are generally made without a shred of evidence," Dr Fleming said.

The NPWS had pioneered the approach of using helicopters to get specially-trained crews into remote areas so they can avert disasters by putting the fires out before they have a chance to make a run, and its success in quickly containing the vast majority of fires was largely due to the skills of the service's 550-strong remote area fire-fighting team.

Graeme Wicks

Many bushfires but no disasters

A total of 113 bushfires were recorded on the south-east of NSW in the 2006-07 bushfire season, burning a total of 32 000ha of the national park estate. Only three of these fires escaped from park boundaries and affected only 170ha of private land, while 11 fires entered parks from outside burning 1130ha of national park.

The largest fire was the Long Plain complex, which burnt about 20 000ha in the northern end of the Kosciuszko National Park. The vast majority of the fires were contained to a very small area of a few hectares.

These facts and figures were given by the NPWS Southern Branch Director, Alistair Henchman, who said there had been "considerable angst" when the season started early with high temperatures and severe drought right across the south-east.

"Across the Monaro and in the mountains we experienced severe frosts

until December," he said. "This plus the lack of rain throughout spring meant that in many cases conditions were drier than in the 2002-03 season. In the end we were lucky that while it was extremely dry, in most cases we did not experience the same howling hot north-westerly winds we saw in 2003.

"Many people will recall in January 2003 Kosciuszko National Park received almost 60 lightning strikes in an afternoon which started 45 bushfires. We didn't get that this time. We got fires in groups of half a dozen at a time.

"This meant NPWS resources were able to cope using remote area fire fighters in rapid response teams to extinguish fires when they were still small. This was a major factor in our success at being able to contain the majority of fires to small areas." Mr Henchman said.

In March, the NPWS was preparing to start the routine hazard reduction

burning program, with plans, weather conditions permitting, to carry out nearly 40 burns covering an area of around 15 000ha in the south-east. When this was completed, the combined effect of hazard reduction and wildfire since the 2001-02 season would mean that half of the south-east's 1.6 million hectare national park network will have been effectively fuel reduced, Mr Henchman said.

"We'll also get back to our routine maintenance schedule and the work of maintaining the 7000km fire trail network in the South East. In 2005-6 the NPWS maintained around 2000km of firetrails and we expect to do more this financial year to maintain a three year maintenance cycle for every firetrail in the region's national park network," he added.

Graeme Wicks

NPA to oppose new fire trails in Namadgi *continued*

a kilometre from the locked gate off the Corin road. Its purpose is to enable a program of frequent intense burning every 2-3 years from the proposed road down into Orroral Valley to establish a low fuel zone on these slopes. An undefined prescribed burning program would also be carried out into Blue Gum Creek.

Our reasons for objecting to this fire trail are numerous. It would destroy the highly valued experience of following a footpad trail through some of the loveliest and most unusual scenery in Namadgi. It would require the blasting of rocky tors and the destruction of Aboriginal sites. It would open up the

area to illegal 4WD and motor bikes and increase the incidence of arson. The prescribed burning would reduce vegetation and leaf litter on the steep scree slopes of Orroral Valley with resulting erosion into Orroral River and possibly destabilise significant tors such as Cathedral Rocks.

Many members attended the consultation on May 2 and made their points of view very clear. Numerous technical points were raised and not successfully answered. The flora and fauna survey is limited and not likely to show the richness of the area in non-drought times. We have not seen any

cultural heritage information, nor spoken to the consultants.

We have been assured that our comments on the social history and the social values of the areas will all be incorporated as a separate appendix to their report, but there is some doubt as to the weight put on our comments on the ecological values of the areas or our assessments of the proposed fire regimes. By the time this *Bulletin* goes to press it will be too late to contribute your views but we do get another chance if the process goes on to the next stage.

We will keep you informed.

Christine Goonrey

Senate inquiry into national reserves

The Senate *Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts Committee* handed down its report on the inquiry into national reserves on 12 April 2007. Copies of the report and submissions made to the inquiry can be obtained from the website:

http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/ecita_ctte/nationalparks/report/index.htm

The report acknowledges the role of the national reserve system in providing habitat for endangered species and ecosystems. Less than 11 per cent of Australia's land area is presently within the National Reserve System, including both government and non-government protected areas. Protected areas are generally isolated and unevenly distributed over the landscape. Regions of high conservation importance may have few or no protected areas.

World Wildlife Fund reports that 105 native plants or animal species are considered extinct, and 1590 are at risk of extinction, with little sign of widespread recovery. The main extinction driver is habitat loss due to lack of adequate protection.

A major expansion of protected areas is urgently needed for Australia's natural ecosystems and high-value wildlife habitats. We need a major shift toward conservation-based management across the landscape. Protected areas must be buffered and connected to allow wildlife to move

and seek refuge from climate change. Only a large, well-buffered, well-connected and well-managed protected area system can carry our threatened wildlife and ecosystems safely through the coming upheavals of climate change.

Cause for concern

One recommendation which causes some concern for national parks is Recommendation 11 which suggests that states and territories should pursue increased access for vehicles, horses, bikes, shooters etc to national parks and reserves. This seems to fly in the face of the report's overall recognition that the reserve system is already fragile and fragmented. Increased pressure from recreational vehicles would seem to be the last thing states and territories should be pursuing.

Martin Taylor of WWF has been tracking the work of the Senate Committee and considers that the report gives some hope that there may be increased funding for the reserve system from the next round of National Heritage Trust funding and that this is the best outcome we can expect from the report. Right at the end of the recommendations the committee does suggest that more federal funds from the National Heritage Trust 3 fund (from the sale of Telstra) should be spent on managing the nation's reserve system.

Where fires start

Martin has also been tracking the claims that terrestrial protected areas are badly managed for bushfires, weeds and pests compared to areas exploited for timber and livestock. He has compared these claims with evidence presented by the land management agencies themselves. For example, the claim is repeatedly made that bushfires come from national parks onto private land and forestry reserves but no hard data was submitted in support of this claim. On the other hand, NPA NSW submitted evidence that: "looking at the 2003-04 fire season, of the 5 600 fires during that period, 186 started on park and stayed on park (3.3%) and only 13 started on park and moved off park (0.2%). Sixty four fires started off park and moved onto national park (1.1%). The remaining 95.3% burned entirely off-park."

As one of only two developed countries that are considered megadiverse, the international spotlight is on Australia to do a model job of protecting our irreplaceable natural heritage. Australia must make major strategic investments and work fast to build its protected area system and complementary conservation networks or we face an unprecedented wave of extinctions as climate change gets underway.

Christine Goonrey

Luxury resort approved for national park

The approval of a luxury resort to be built partly in a World Heritage-listed site in the Wolgan Valley, near Lithgow, may have set a dangerous precedent for commercial developments in national parks.

The \$60 million resort to be built by Emirates Hotels (Australia) and comprising 40 individual luxury suites is due to open in 2008.

Part of the development will occur in the Wollemi National Park, which will be offset by Emirates handing over 114.5ha of forested land to National Parks and leasing 39.5ha of cattle-degraded National Parks land.

The NSW Planning Minister, Frank Sartor, approved the application in April, subject to strict environmental and heritage conditions and the finalising of agreements with the Department of Environment and Climate Change and the

Commonwealth Department of Environment and Water Resources.

Emirates says the resort will give guests "unbeatable views of the mystical Blue Mountains" and "a once-in-a-lifetime journey into the wilderness".

"Spread out at the foot of towering sandstone cliffs, this luxurious homestead is set amongst 3600 acres of protected area," it says. "The only resort in this World Heritage Site, the Wolgan Valley is the living embodiment of Emirates' dedication to conservation, aimed to ensure the protection of endangered Australian wildlife.

"The resort takes up a mere 2 per cent of the surrounding area. As a result, the number of visitors to this exclusive resort are strictly monitored to limit the impact on the fragile surrounding environment."

The head of the National Parks and Wildlife Service of NSW, Dr Tony Fleming, said he was comfortable with the development proceeding as long as public access to the park was maintained.

However, the executive officer of the NPA NSW, Andrew Cox, said the project's approval created a dangerous precedent, and a spokesman for the Colong Foundation said the foundation did not want it setting a precedent for resorts in the Blue Mountains.

Other sites reported to be under consideration by Emirates Hotels for resort development include the Daintree rainforest region in Queensland, the Margaret River region in Western Australia, the Great Ocean Road in Victoria, and the Byron Bay hinterland in NSW.

Graeme Wicks

Climate change — will our parks survive?

The climate change debate continues to make headlines in our federal election year and there is sure to be much more noise to add to the confusion with both sceptics and believers digging in to defend their versions of our future. So far most of the comment has been on water issues but we also need to consider how our biodiversity might be affected and what that might mean for the management of our national parks.

A few years ago the Australian Greenhouse Office produced a report, *Climate Change: An Australian Guide to Science and Potential Impacts*, edited by Barry Pittock. While the science of climate change is advancing rapidly this report remains relevant and contains some sobering predictions for the impact of global warming on our biodiversity and natural areas.

The conclusions of the report on biodiversity include:

- Changes in climate exert additional pressure and have already begun to affect biodiversity.
- Climate change is projected to affect all aspects of biodiversity, and this will occur in the context of other human activities and stresses, including increasing concentrations of carbon dioxide and land-use change.
- In general, human-induced climate change will cause many species to move polewards or to higher elevations, where that is possible.
- Globally, by the year 2080, about 20 per cent of coastal wetlands could be lost due to sea level rise.
- For many species that are already vulnerable, the risk of extinctions will increase.

The report points out that Australia was isolated for millions of years, and its ecosystems have evolved to cope with unique climate and biological circumstances. Australia has a very limited altitude range and is bounded to the south by ocean, which limits the potential for migration of species.

Despite large year-to-year climatic variability, many Australian terrestrial species have quite limited ranges of long-term average climate, of about 1 to 2°C in temperature and 20 per cent in rainfall. Thus, many Australian species have evolved to cope with large year-to-year variability, but not to long-term change in the average climate. Australian ecosystems are therefore vulnerable to climatic change, as well as to other threats including invasion by exotic animals and plants.

Rapid land clearance and land-use change have been occurring as a result of human activity in Australia, and especially since European settlers arrived a little over 200 years ago. This has led to loss of biodiversity in many ecosystems, including an increase in weedy species and animal pests. Land-use change also has led to fragmentation of ecosystems.

Conservation corridors

What can we do to help mitigate these problems? Obviously we need to promote an adequate response to greenhouse gas emissions both in Australia and at a global level and do everything at a personal level to achieve a low emission lifestyle. But that alone will not save our biodiversity from increased risks.

Our colleagues at NPA NSW are advocating the creation of an Eastern Highlands conservation corridor as part of a tri-state network of reserves between Melbourne and Brisbane. Other linkages they have identified to help mitigate the effects of climate change include altitudinal links from the mountains and escarpment to the coast and east-west links. Other priority linkages are along inland river systems including along the Murray from Kosciuszko to the Coorong.

We should strongly support these initiatives and others at a state-wide and Australia-wide level to ensure our own ACT reserves have the best chance to

adapt to climate change by expanding the range through which our local plants and animals can migrate in response to the predicted changes.

Plans needed for ACT

On another level we must also ensure that management plans take the conclusions of the climate change report into account. Few of our plans for ACT parks and reserves have specific management prescriptions that address the implications of climate change. They may address some of the likely consequences such as increased risks from fires, feral animals, and exotic weeds. All of these pressures on natural biodiversity are likely to increase, however, and plans need to bring together current management strategies and climate science to better manage our natural areas into the future.

A final thought on the biodiversity front. It was very disappointing to read recently that the National Audit Office found the federal government was failing to meet its obligations to protect our biodiversity, including threatened plants and animals. It also reported that there was insufficient capacity to properly administer federal biodiversity protection laws.

The audit also raised concerns about the administration of the Natural Heritage Trust program, the government's main financial assistance program. It found that NHT funding was poorly targeted with only 7 per cent spent directly on conservation.

I guess as part of the NPA community across Australia, we need to ramp up our lobbying efforts to refocus the government's priorities on conserving biodiversity, surely the heart of any natural heritage program.

Neville Esau

Nominations for NPA office bearers and committee 2007/8

Nominations are sought for office bearers and committee members to be elected at the AGM on August 16
This form can be photocopied and used for nominations.

We nominate for the position of in the NPA ACT for 2007/8

Proposed by (signature)

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

..... (date)

A geological excursion into southern Namadgi

As we were about to set out on an investigative bushwalk into southern Namadgi, I realised nearly a year had elapsed since the NPA ACT Symposium; part of the delay was biding time for cooler weather, partly time for cogitation and planning. The walk was spawned from the symposium, part of a project NPA ACT and the Geological Society of Australia are undertaking to produce a map of the geology of the ACT. Most of the compilation of the new map has been done using existing maps and Robert Abell's encyclopedic knowledge of the regional geology, but one rock unit needed to be re-examined on the ground.

Bob had planned a relatively short walk, perhaps 14km in all, starting at the ACT/NSW border near the new Grassy Creek firetrail and following the border west until we found the unique geological formation that was our goal. From there we looped around to the north and then generally followed the firetrail back via Westernmans Hut to the parked cars and home.

Six curious members and guests set out with Bob on a beautiful late summer Sunday, March 11, one of the few coolish days since November. For the first 45 minutes we climbed through vigorous regrowth to the Wrights Hill Trig (1345m asl) which afforded splendid views in all directions, thanks partly to the drastic de-forestation around the trig by a few generations of European farmers. Miles Franklin wrote of this area (albeit from the north near Lake George):

I reined in on the crest from which far to the south can be seen the dreaming peaks of the mountains beyond the Murrumbidgee. Their beauty is a banner of spiritual strength to me

... Indeed!

Bob challenged us to shout when we had identified the basalt outcrop which we did, earning valuable brownie points, but it was partly by accident when we stumbled on a low basalt "rock spit" built by surveyor Harry Mouat and his team in ~1912 to mark the boundary etching out the ACT from NSW (see photo). We had seen these "rock spits" on a

Walkers from left to right; Judy, Adrienne, Sonja (standing at the far end of the "rock spit" border marker), Clarence and Chris.



Robert Abell weighing up a chunk of 18 million year old basalt, young relative to other ACT rocks.

walk to Mt Kelly led by Steven Forst and on another occasion near Mt Gingera led by Dave Kelly. Judy Kelly has written up these walks in the *Bulletin* (Dec 2005, p12 and Sept 2006, p12).

The volcanic rocks were starkly exposed along a ridge, heavy and dark, but solid without the tell-tale vesicles (bubbles of gas trapped in the molten rock mass as it cooled) that are typical of the central Victorian basalts for example and widely used in Victorian buildings. A bench can be seen on each

side of the ridge indicative of at least two separate lava flows about 15m thick. But where had they originated? Where was the remnant pipe through which the lava had oozed 18 million years ago? Was the lack of vesicles evidence of a very close source?

The "young" age of the basalt was the main reason for our visit. Apart from these few acres of basalt straddling the ACT border the next youngest rocks in the ACT are a bit more than 400 million years old dating back to the Silurian period. This huge gap does not mean that there was no rock formed in the ACT in the interim, just that those that were here have all been eroded away — some 5km of rock and soil removed from the current land surface between 400 million and 18 million years ago. Then the basalt was inexplicably extruded from deep in the Earth's crust or upper mantle, now approximately 40km below the ground surface in southern Namadgi.

It was somehow satisfying to hold a lump of basalt (see photo) that was young by comparison with the underlying and surrounding rock on which dinosaurs once romped but so much older than modern humans. Satisfying but somewhat awesome to imagine the huge changes in the landscape that have taken place since the dinosaurs roamed these parts. Even over the last 2 million years the basalt has been subject to some 20 ice ages which no doubt wrought significant topographic alteration.

We noticed that the basalt would have been easy to find had we known how much Patterson's Curse loves the veneer of rich basaltic soils. Much weeding to be done here.

A fresh norwesterly wind came up about noon so we headed off north in search of a shady, sheltered spot for lunch. Interest in the excursion wasn't over as we searched out special plants, rocks, flora and fauna to show our overseas guest Clarence, newly arrived from Holland: including; a pink *Caladenia* orchid, an echidna which after a short hike decided to make a subterranean escape despite Adrienne's best efforts to show us how best to hold them, a pair of wedge-tailed eagles spiralling off on a giant wind vortex, a gnarled old flowering *E. stellulata*, a lyrebird display mound and

(Continued on page 9)



NPA ACT news

Sheila Kruse OAM

An honorary life member of NPA since 1979, Sheila died in Melbourne on Thursday May 3. Sheila's story will be told in the next *NPA Bulletin*.

Support good causes

Yes, it's that time of year again when the NPA ACT asks its members to support its good works by digging deep into their pockets to make a donation. However this year, members will find another appeal letter with the *Bulletin*. The NPA ACT has agreed to allow the Conservation Council to appeal directly to our members through an insert to the *Bulletin*.

For those of you who don't know, the Conservation Council is the ACT's peak environment organisation representing around 30 member groups of which the NPA ACT is one. The Conservation Council and the NPA ACT have worked closely together on environmental issues for many years and continue to do so.

The support the Conservation Council provides to the NPA ACT is invaluable. In recognition of this and the other environmental work performed by the Conservation Council, the NPA ACT's executive urges its members to read the

Conservation Council's appeal letter and to support it as generously as you support the NPA ACT.

Donations to the NPA ACT and the Conservation Council (through its Bogong Fund) are tax deductible.

Rod Griffiths

Website Gallery

The NPA website Gallery now has some new directories that contain images from regions of Australia other than the southeast. At the moment, the photos in these new directories are by yours truly, but they need company!

THE GALLERY



Please send me your CDs, negatives or transparencies (negs and trannies will be returned automatically, CDs on request), particularly if they show NPA

members enjoying the bush — the event does not have to be a formal NPA outing.

The NPA website is our showcase. So please support it and show the world that we can still enjoy the wide brown land, even if it is getting browner by the day.

Martin Chalk

Plans for 2008 Symposium

NPA ACT has started planning the May 2008 Symposium. Anyone who would like to contribute some time and ideas or join the small organising committee please contact the convenor Kevin McCue (kmccue@grapevine.com.au or ph: 6251 1291).

We still have a large number of *Proceedings* from the 2006 Symposium, having reckoned on most members buying a copy or two as gifts for their friends when they were published.

Please support NPA ACT by purchasing a copy, only \$22 for members, from Sonja Lenz (silenz@grapevine.com.au or ph: 6251 1291).

Kevin McCue

A geological excursion into southern Namadgi *continued*

teetering tors. Clarence unknowingly topped our efforts by finding a sun-bleached lower jaw, obviously a carnivore, that we thought might have been a quoll but Andrew Claridge (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service) kindly had it examined and assured us it was, even better, that of a feral cat! Clarence's other finds included both upper and lower jaws of a kangaroo, the upper jaw of a wombat, and the skull of a possum.

Westerman's Hut was the last stop of interest. Restored and maintained by KHA, it is a stark reminder of the huge difference in comfort and lifestyle enjoyed by us and the hut residents. No broadband in those days, nor electricity, piped water or refrigeration but plenty of newspapers and probably even time to read them before recycling them into the wall cladding. Europeans are new arrivals compared with the Aborigines whose artefacts we observed widely scattered about the area — the Aborigines themselves newcomers compared with the basalt, itself a young

rock in an ancient, ever-changing landscape.

When you purchase your copy of the new map of the geology of the ACT you too will want to make an excursion to southern Namadgi, to stand on the ridge and wonder at the rocks below your feet and the majestic new/old view of a remarkable landscape stretching out seemingly forever in space and time before your eyes.

Thanks Bob!

Kevin McCue



A venerable old E. stellulata in flower with Grassy Creek flowing gently past far below.

Photos by Kevin McCue

Changes at Burnt Hill



Looking east along the southern Namadgi ACT/NSW border, two side-by-side roads to the summit of Burnt Hill.

Photo by Adrienne Nicholson

Some 12 months ago the then Environment ACT released a preliminary assessment on a proposed fire trail from the Boboyan Road at the NSW border, across Burnt Hill to the east, and subsequently down to Grassy Creek to join the existing fire trail to The Long Flat. The NPA ACT expressed concerns at the proposal and also expressed dismay that a new track on the ACT side of the border across Burnt Hill had to be developed in preference to developing cooperative arrangements with the adjacent NSW land holder who also had a track for much of the proposed route on his side of the fence.

The fires that burnt into southern Namadgi in October 2006 saw the fire trail constructed. There is now an 8m wide trail easement on the ACT side of the border and also one for better than half the total distance across Burnt Hill on the NSW side of the border.

In ascending Burnt Hill, the new trail negotiates some steep slopes and also crosses a number of gullies. The slopes have anti-erosion roll-overs in place but the gullies do not have culverts. In a visit to the site in late February, I observed that the rain had started to erode the trail in the area of the gullies and subsequent work had simply graded over the erosion sites.

Clearly, these areas are going to require a running program of maintenance unless more substantial works are put in place.

As observed on a visit in early March, the timber removed from the trail easement had simply been heaped at the edge of the roadway, forming a row of slash up to 2m high in places.



Viewed from the border fence, the new road passes very closely by this historic survey reference tree.

Photo by Adrienne Nicholson

This obvious reserve of fuel should be dispersed into the surrounding bush prior to the next fire season.

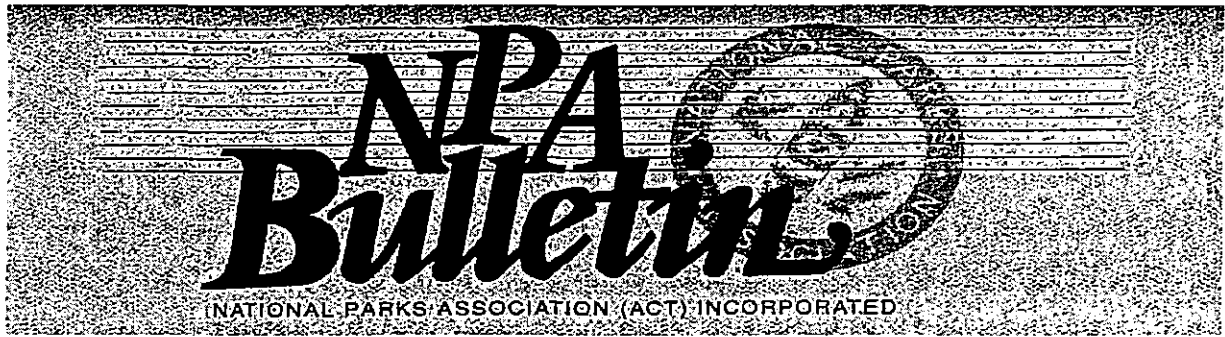
The area through which this trail passes was hitherto difficult to access due to the irregular terrain and the close bush. Furthermore, the area was not a part of any recognised bushwalking routes. Accordingly, it was rarely visited. This has changed with the advent of the fire trail. Access is now easy and the trail affords a round trip for walkers and cyclists from the Mt Clear camp ground by linking fire trails and the Boboyan Road. In short, the area can be expected to be frequented and will now need to be incorporated into the park's weed and rubbish control program.

About three-quarters of the way up Burnt Hill is a survey reference tree that was blazed by Freddy Johnston's border survey team in 1915. All such trees are listed on the ACT Heritage Register and this one is all the more significant, as it is still alive! The tree is located 8m from the border fence and the 8m fire trail easement has been sandwiched between it and the fence. Furthermore, the trail itself has been biased toward the tree such that there is 1m of cleared ground separating the tree from the edge of the fire trail.

The tree has thankfully been avoided during the construction of the trail. However, this action has resulted in a kink in the trail which leaves the tree vulnerable and exposed to drivers who are unaware of its significance (or who have other priorities to consider). Furthermore, road maintenance (this section of the trail is steep) will likely compromise the roots of the tree. Given that access to the adjacent NSW track (located 9m from the tree) has been determined, or deemed, to not be an option, the Burnt Hill trail should be relocated further to the north so that this tree's odds of survival are returned to those that pre-existed the fire trail.

The NPA will keep the area under review and in particular will monitor the ongoing condition of the survey reference tree.

Martin Chalk



NPA OUTINGS PROGRAM

June 2007 — September 2007

Outings Guide

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 EARLY.

Car Camps: Facilities often limited. Vehicles taken to site can be used for camping. CONTACT LEADER EARLY.

Other activities include ski trips, canoe trips, nature rambles and environmental & field guide studies.

Wednesday Walks are arranged on a joint NPA / CBC / FBI basis. Notification and detail is by email to registered members. Only NPA-run walks are shown in this program. For email registration contact the Outings Convener.

Passenger transport. The committee suggests a donation per person to the nearest dollar, of THIRTY SIX cents per kilometer per car divided by the number of occupants in the car including the driver. When odd numbers arise, a total contribution may be 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.

Points to note

Please help keep our outings program alive by volunteering to lead outings. New leaders are most 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.

In voluntarily participating in these activities conducted by the NPA, participants should be aware that they could be exposed to risks that could lead to injury, illness or death or to loss of or damage to their property. These risks could include but are not limited to slippery and/or uneven surfaces, rocks being dislodged, falling at edges of cliffs or drops or elsewhere, risks associated with crossing creeks, hypothermia, heat exhaustion and the risks associated with any of the Special Hazards listed on the Attendance Record and Risk Waiver Form provided by the leader at the start of the activity.

To minimize these risks participants should endeavour to ensure that the activity is within their capabilities and that they are carrying food, water, equipment, clothing and footwear appropriate to the activity. Participants should advise the leader if they are taking any medication or have any physical or other limitation that might affect their participation in the activity. Participants should make every effort to remain with the rest of the party during the activity and accept the instructions of the leader. By signing the Attendance Record and Risk Waiver Form participants agree that they understand these requirements and have considered the risks before choosing to sign the form and waiver any claim for damages arising from the activity that they might have against the club, the leader or any other participants in tort or contract.

9 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 Yankee Hat car
park at 10:00am. Work for the
rehabilitation of the old Boboyan pine
forest area. Tools will be provided.

9-11 June;
Long Weekend Pack Walk
HIDDEN VALLEY, BUDAWANGS
Map: Budawang Sketch Map
Grading: 3 A/B/C
Leader: Steven Forst
Contact: 62516817(h), 62195236(w)
or steven.forst@acma.gov.au

Contact leader by Wednesday. A
winter walk into the Budawangs
visiting Hidden Valley with views of
Quilts Mountain, Pagoda Rocks and
possibly into the Holland Gorge. Walk
in to a base camp near Styles Creek
and then walk with day gear only to
Hidden Valley and the views.
Drive 340 km, \$122 per car

17 June; Sunday Walk
MTS MAJURA AND AINSLIE
Map: Canberra, Hall 1:25000
Canberra Street Directory
Grading: 1 A/B
Leader: Brian Slee
Contact: 6281 0719 or
brianslee@iprimus.com.au

Meet at 9.00 am at McKenzie St
carpark (north of Grayson St
intersection), Hackett. We will follow
steep track to summit of Mt Majura
(Canberra's highest mountain). After a
break, head south on ridge to Mt
Ainslie for lunch there or on the way.
Descend north on track through
Canberra Nature Park and return to
Hackett. Great views of Canberra and
airport. Walk of approx. 10 km.

23 June; Saturday Work Party
HONEYSUCKLE CAMPGROUND
Leader: Martin Chalk
Contact: 6292 3502

This work party involves fence
removal and site works around the
campground. While not as exotic or
glamorous as some, this work party
allows us to assist in the management
of the Park. Meet at Kambah Village
shops at 9:00am.
Drive 87 km, \$32 per car

24 June; Sunday easy Walk
DEVILS GAP &
GIBRALTAR ROCKS
Map: Tidbinbilla 1:25 000
Grading: 1 A/B
Leader: Adrienne Nicholson
Contact: 6281 6381

Meet at 8.30am at "forest" carpark
on Uriarra Rd near the turnoff from
Cotter Rd. Walking in Tidbinbilla
Nature Reserve mostly on tracks. Start
with uphill on the Devils Gap fire trail
before cutting across to the edge of
pine forest. A mid-morning side
adventure to the Devils Pyramid for
those who want to expend a little extra
energy. Follow the ridge along to the
Gibraltar Rocks fire trail. Lunch
among the rocks with a selection of
extensive views, before following the
fire trail down to the road. Short car
shuffle saves a road slog back up to
the start point.
Drive 80 km, \$30 per car

27 June; WEDNESDAY WALK
[Joint NPA / CBC / FBI Activity]
Leader: Phil Gatenby
Contact: 6254 3094(h) or
jandp.gatenby@optusnet.com.au
Details to be advised through the
midweek walks email list otherwise
contact the leader.

8 July; Sunday Walk
SCULPTURES – OLD AND NEW –
COFFEE AND CAKES
Leader: Col McAlister
Contact: 6288 4171

A gentle stroll around some of
Canberra's wonderful old and new
sculptures in Civic, the ANU and the
Parliamentary Triangle. We will
probably have morning tea at the
National Sound and Screen Archive,
drive to the National Library and have
afternoon tea at the National Gallery.
Meet in the car park off London
Circuit near the Reserve Bank at
9.00am.

14 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 Yankee Hat car
park at 10:00am. Work for the
rehabilitation of the old Boboyan pine
forest area. Tools will be provided.

15 July; Sunday Walk
LITTLE YANKEE HAT
Map: rendezvous Creek 1:25 000
Grading: 2 B/C/D
Leader: Mike Smith
Contact: 6286 2984 or
msmith@netspeed.com.au

Meet at Kambah Village shops at
8:30am for this walk from the Yankee
hat carpark. Climb of about 500m to
top of peak through bush with some
regrowth, fallen timber and rock
scrambling. Great views to west.
Return down north face (steep) to
Middle Creek and then back to cars.
A medium/hard walk.
Drive 120-km, \$44 per car

17 July:
WALKS COMMITTEE MEETING
Convener: Mike Smith
Contact: 6286 2984 or
msmith@netspeed.com.au

Meeting to set Outings/Activities
program for Oct to Dec 2007. Contact
convener for details

21 July; Saturday Work Party
HONEYSUCKLE TO BOOROOMBA
TRACK, OR SQUARE ROCK
TRACK REPAIR
Leader: Mike Smith
Contact: 6286 2984

This work party involves track
repair work and restoration of pig
damage. The actual location will be
selected closer to the day. Meet at
Kambah Village shops at 9:00am.
Drive: (Honeysuckle to Booroomba
Track), 87km, \$32 per car. (Square
Rock Track) 65km, \$20 per car

22 July; Sunday Walk
SOUTHERN NAMADGI FIRE TRAILS
Map: Shannons Flat & Bredbo
1:25,000
Grading: 3 A/B
Leader: Martin Chalk
Contact: 6292 3502 (h)

The aim of this walk is to travel the
two new fire trails that have been
constructed in the southern part of
Namadgi in the last 12 months. The
walk will start at the ACT/NSW
border on the Boboyan Rd and then
proceed along the Burnt Hill fire trail
to the point where it divides. We will
then follow it down hill to the north
east across the Grassy Creek valley to
the point where it joins the existing
fire trail to the Long Flat. At the Long
Flat we will follow the new trail that
runs up the ridge to the west of



NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF THE ACT INC.

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. By doing this, you will be continuing your support of the ACT's leading community organisation, working for the conservation of the natural and cultural heritage in Namadgi National Park and ACT Nature Reserves.

Of course you will also be able to enjoy the NPA ACT outings program and our stimulating general meetings with interesting guest speakers. Other activities over the coming 12 months include preparing for the next symposium in May 2008 on the effect of global warming on our national parks and preparing exciting new publications to celebrate our 50th anniversary in 2010. Our campaign activities include opposing fire trails along Orroral Ridge and Stockyard Spur and lobbying for more funding for park management and conservation. Check out our website for more information

If you are able to do a little bit more, please consider joining one of the committees or working groups; or help to write and produce the *Bulletin* and email newsletter *Burning Issues*; maybe contribute to NPA ACT submissions on conservation issues and activities; or help to maintain the Association's website. Fill in the special interest part of the membership form or contact myself or a committee member to discuss how you might like to get more involved (contact details in each Bulletin).

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 2007: 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 new premises, the preparation of submissions on government development proposals for parks and reserves 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

Christine Goonrey
President NPA ACT
1 June 2007

GPO Box 544, Canberra ACT 2601
Phone: 02 6229 3201
ABN: 74 830 219 723

Fax: 02 6248 5343
• Mobile: 0412 071 382
• <http://www.npaact.org.au>

the Long Flat to the ACT/NSW border. From here we will return to Burnt Hill along the border track. If you have been following the debate about new fire trails within Namadgi, come along and see the results of recent work. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.00am.

Drive 160-km, \$48 per car

25 July; WEDNESDAY WALK
[Joint NPA / CBC / FBI Activity]

Leader: Mike Smith

Contact: 6286 2984(h) or
msmith@netspeed.com.au

Details to be advised through the midweek walks email list otherwise contact the leader.

29-July; Sunday Ski Trip

KIANDRA TO FOUR MILE HUT

Map: Mt Selwyn Ski Touring Map

Grading: 2 A

Leader: Steven Forst

Contact: 62516817(h), 62195236(w)
or steven.forst@acma.gov.au

Contact leader before Thursday to discuss transport and the weather forecast. A day of cross-country skiing to Four Mile Hut and back a distance of up to 16 km. Not for absolute beginners but suited to those who may have missed the snow in the last couple of years. Route depends on weather and snow conditions. Will proceed from Kiandra if sufficient snow otherwise vehicle park entry fees will need to be allowed for.

Drive 300-km, \$108 per car

Mid-August for about 2 weeks

GAMMON/FLINDERS RANGES

CAR CAMP

Leader: Di Thompson

Contact: 6288 6084

Join Di for a car camping trip with various activities such as sightseeing, photography, birdwatching & walking. Contact Di by end of July for details

4-5 August; Weekend Pack Walk

ETTREMA GORGE

Joint NPA / FBI Activity

Map: Touga 1:25,000

Grading: 2 D/E/F

Leader: Philip Gatenby

Contact: 6254 3094 or

jandp.gatenby@optusnet.com.au

A walk to the spectacular Ettrema Gorge in Morton National Park. The plan is to start from Quiera Clearing and reach the gorge via Transportation Spur. The next day we'll leave the gorge via Myall Creek or Jingles Pass.

Rock scrambling and a climb of about 500 m involved. Contact leader by the Wednesday before the walk.

Drive 260-km, \$95 per car

11 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 Yankee Hat car park at 10:00am. Work for the rehabilitation of the old Boboyan pine forest area. Tools will be provided.

12 August; Sunday Walk

RAMSHEAD

Maps: Chimneys Ridge, Perisher

Valley 1:25 000

Grading: 1 B (on snow)

Leader: Brian Slee

Contact: 6281 0719 or

brianslee@iprimus.com.au

Depart 6.15am. Drive to Thredbo and park at Dead Horse Gap. Climb ridge just east of Bogong Ck then north-west to Ramshead. Return similar route. Afternoon tea Jindabyne. Steep at first but suitable for beginners. Spectacular scenery. Participants hiring snowshoes should be in possession of them prior to departure. Book with leader for weather check, departure location and vehicle arrangements (chains may be req'd). Drive 420-km, \$150 per car plus Park entry fee

19-Aug; Sunday Stroll & Pancakes

CAPTAINS FLAT

Map: Captains Flat 1:25 000

Grading: 1 A

Leader: Steven Forst

Contact: 62516817(h), 62195236(w)

or steven.forst@acma.gov.au

An easy half day trip to Captains Flat with a climb up to the historic mine site above the town to work off the pancakes or other goodies consumed for brunch or morning tea. Meet at Canberra Railway Station at 9:00 am. Drive 160-km, \$58 per car

22 August; WEDNESDAY WALK

[Joint NPA / CBC / FBI Activity]

Leader: Phil Gatenby

Contact: 6254 3094(h) or

jandp.gatenby@optusnet.com.au

Details to be advised through the midweek walks email list otherwise contact the leader.

25 August; Saturday Work Party

LOWER COTTER CATCHMENT

Leader: Martin Chalk

Contact: 6292 3502 (h)

This work party ventures into new territory as far as NPA work parties are concerned. The lower Cotter catchment is undergoing significant rehabilitation following the removal of the pine plantation. Activities include seeding, planting and weeding. The actual site for this work party will be advised closer to the day. Tools provided. Contact leader for details.

Drive 40-km, \$15 per car

26 August; Sunday Walk

GOOGONG DAM – HELLS HOLE

Map: Hoskintown 1:25 000

Grading: 2 A/E

Leader: Mike Smith

Contact: 6286 2984 or

msmith@netspeed.com.au

Meet at Canberra Railway Station at 8.30am. A walk from Googong Dam picnic area to Bradley's Creek via Gorman's Trig along fire trails with around 250-m climb. Then down Bradley's Creek to suitable lunch spot in Hells Hole area. Return along edge of reservoir to fire trail in borrow pit area.

Drive 40-km, \$15 per car

29 August; WEDNESDAY WALK

[Joint NPA / CBC / FBI Activity]

Leader: Steven Forst

Contact: 62516817(h), 62195236(w)

or steven.forst@acma.gov.au

Details to be advised through the midweek walks email list otherwise contact the leader.

2 September; Sunday Walk

MT ORRORAL

Map: Rendezvous Creek 1:25000

Grading: 2 C/D/E/F

Leader: Martin Chalk

Contact: 6292 3502 (h)

Mt Orroral is a peak that seems to be frequently observed but rarely visited. This walk promises excellent views across Namadgi after a demanding climb from the saddle between Nursery and Rendezvous Creeks. We will return to the Orroral Rd via the eastern slope of the mountain. There will be a short car shuffle between the Nursery Creek track car park and the Orroral picnic ground. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8:30am

Drive 85-km, \$30 per car

8 Sept; 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 Yankee Hat car
park at 10:00am. Work for the
rehabilitation of the old Boboyan pine
forest area. Tools will be provided.

9 September; Sunday Walks
GREAT AUSTRALIAN BUSHWALK
Local Coordinator: Mike Smith
Contact: 6286 2984 or

msmith@netspeed.com.au

The NPA will be hosting a number
of walks for the GAB this year.
Current proposals are walks to Yerrabi
Trig, Brandy Flat Hut, Glenburn
Historic Precinct and Southern ACT
Huts. See the NPA website
www.npaact.org.au for details or visit
the national GAB website,
www.greataustralianbushwalk.org.au

11-12 Sept; Midweek Pack Walk
FOSTERS MOUNTAIN

Joint NPA / FBI Activity

Map: Endrick 1:25,000

Grading: 2 A/D/E

Leader: Philip Gatenby

Contact: 6254 3094 or

landp.gatenby@optusnet.com.au

Fosters Mountain is on the western
edge of the Budawangs. The walk
starts at the Nerriga entrance to
Morton National Park and is partly on
tracks. Some rock scrambling across
creek gullies and through cliff lines
will also be involved, as will a climb
of about 350 metres. Contact leader
by the Wednesday before the walk.
Drive 240-km, \$86 per car

15-16 September;
BURRAWANG COASTAL WEEKEND

Leader: Judy Kelly

Contact: 6253 1859 or

judy.kelly@tpg.com.au

Burrawang is a piece of coastal
bushland of 100 hectares near Mogo
with self-contained cabins. The
weekend options are for short walks
around the property, along the
adjoining beaches and/or following
the cliffline to Malua Bay. Another
possibility is climbing Mt
Murramurrang, near Pebbly Beach. Or
you might want to just relax, read,
sleep, swim or watch the feathered
birds. Suitable for young families.

I have tentatively booked 4 cabins.
Each has 2 beds + 1 mattress upstairs
and a double bed downstairs. Charge
per cabin for one night = \$85.00;
charge per cabin for two nights (eg.
Fri and Sat nights) = \$130.00
Please contact leader by Friday
August 31 for further details.

15 Sept; Saturday Work Party
HONEYSUCKLE TO BOOROOMBA
TRACK, OR SQUARE ROCK
TRACK REPAIR

Leader: Philip Gatenby

Contact: 6254 3094

This work party involves track
repair work and restoration of pig
damage. The actual location will be
selected closer to the day. Meet at
Kambah Village shops at 9:00am.

Drive: (Honeysuckle to Booroomba
Track), 87km, \$32 per car. (Square
Rock Track) 65km, \$20 per car

16 September; Sunday Walk
PARALYSER, PERISHER

Map: Perisher Valley 1:25 000

Grading: 2 B (on snow)

Leader: Brian Slee

Contact: 6281 0719 or

brianslee@iprimus.com.au

Depart 6.15am. Drive to Guthega
carpark. Proceed via bridges over Blue
Cow and Farm Cks before climbing to
The Paralyser trig. Continue to Mt
Perisher before returning via Farm Ck.
Afternoon tea Jindabyne. Some steep
climbs but suitable for beginners with
good fitness. Classic walk. Those
hiring snowshoes should be in
possession of them prior to departure.
Book with leader for weather check,
departure location and vehicle
arrangements (chains may be
required).

Drive 420-km, \$150 per car plus Park
entry fee.

23-Sept; Sunday Walk
MT GINGERA AND BRUMBY FLAT

Map: Corin Dam 1:25 000

Grading: 3 A/E

Leader: Steve Hill

Contact: 6231 9186 or

landshil@webone.com.au

A chance to visit Mt Gingera. We
start with the usual walk from Ginini
car park to the southern summit
(1857) for fabulous views. Then we
drop down a short way to a beautiful,
secluded alpine frosty hollow to the
west called Brumby Flat. We lunch at
another view with a difference. Then
we find our way to a quite spectacular

viewpoint from just below the
Northern summit (1847), before we
drop down to Pryors Hut. The walk is
partly off track but no serious bush
bashing is involved. Meet around the
entrance of the car park at the Cotter
road-Uriarra Road (Deek's Park)
intersection pine forest at 8.30 for a
fabulous day.

Drive 150-km, \$55 per car

26 September; WEDNESDAY WALK

[Joint NPA / CBC / FBI Activity]

Leader: Henry Hatch

Contact: 6290 1138 or

hhatch@netspeed.com.au

Details to be advised through the
midweek walks email list otherwise
contact the leader.

29 Sept to -1 Oct; Pack Walk
MT SCABBY

Leader: David Kelly

Contact: 6253 1859 or

judy.kelly@tpg.com.au

We will start walking at 9am
Saturday from Boboyan car park, via
either Middle Ck or upper Naas Ck,
camping two nights near the head of
Sam's Ck. On Sunday, we will do a
day trip to Mt. Scabby, with extensive
views of the granite peaks of the
Brindabella Range. On Monday, we
will return via Naas Ck to Boboyan
car park, arriving about 4pm. Please
contact Dave by **Wednesday 27th**
September for details..

Drive 120-km, \$44 per car

Outings Convenor - Mike Smith
6286 2984 or msmith@netspeed.com.au

Up the mountain without a paddle



During last year's successful canoe trip on Talbingo Dam (see Max Lawrence's description in the *NPA Bulletin* June 2006), Max and I discussed the possibility of doing a combined canoe trip and walk up Pinbeyan Peak (1203m) which was visible in the distance from our campsite. The trip was set for the Canberra Day long weekend March 17–19. Unfortunately Max was not able to attend but I was joined by long-time paddling friends Ros Webb, Ian Smith and Sandy Berry.

With signs of being near the end of one of our worst droughts, we left Canberra in the rain on the Saturday morning and reached our launching place at O'Hares Rest Area on the Elliott Way shortly after lunch. Along the way we saw that Adaminaby had received some reasonable rain in recent times since pastures were the greenest any of us had seen for that area. We launched our kayaks and paddled to the campsite 4km away. By now it was a warm sunny day and the water skiers were out and about. In fact we found several boats at our intended campsite — which I suppose was not surprising since the sign says that it is maintained by the Tumbarumba Ski Club.

After a rest we realised that the water skiers were likely to stay till the evening so we paddled across the lake

and found some relatively flat ground suitable for camping. The reservoir was about one metre below full level so there was a beach about four metres wide. Apparently Talbingo Reservoir is kept close to full, even in drought, so that hydroelectricity can be generated at the Tumut 3 Power Station.

After setting up our tents, it was not long before Sandy was bitten on her foot by a large bull ant. Minutes later Ros was bitten on the leg and stomach. She considered moving her tent onto the beach to get away from the ants but decided that wine was the first priority in order to help deaden the pain. Thoughts of moving her tent were soon forgotten as we settled down to a pleasant evening on the beach by the water's edge.

The next morning was clear and calm with mist coming off the water. I was first up and soon realised that there were only three kayaks instead of four on the bank. The water had risen about 30–40 cm during the night causing my kayak to drift off. It was floating peacefully about 400 metres away. I borrowed Ros' kayak to retrieve it. Fortunately Ros had not moved her tent onto the beach the previous evening.

After breakfast we paddled about 3–4km to a point (Grid Ref. 214425 on the 1:25 000 1st Edition Ravine map) on the right bank where a ridge rises steadily to a hill marked 1061m on the map. Ros soon decided that a better way to spend a warm sunny day would be to swim and sleep rather than spend it walking 8km through trackless countryside including a 700m climb. It took

90 minutes for the three of us to climb hill 1061m. The final part of the climb was up a scree slope but we were rewarded with superb views down the Tumut and Yarrangobilly arms of the reservoir.

Along the way Ian, uncharacteristically, started swearing. One of those large bull ants didn't appreciate being squashed as Ian grabbed hold of the tree trunk it was on. We headed north west for another kilometre through patches of regrowth, open forest and over rocky ridges including some rock scrambling and then followed Razorback Ridge for about another 2km around to Pinbeyan. The view was partly restricted by the trees and was not quite as good as that from hill 1061, but nevertheless we enjoyed a well deserved lunch. The descent, via the same route, takes two hours compared to the three hours for the ascent.

On return to the kayaks, Ros tells us about a nice beach that she found on the opposite shore about 500m to the south. After shooing off some bees that had taken a liking to Sandy and Ian's yellow kayaks we paddle over for a lovely swim, find that there is some flat ground suitable for tents and make a mental note that this would be a good campsite away from the water skiers.

Again we have a pleasant evening back at the campsite. There was a thunderstorm with some heavy rain in the early hours of Monday morning but by sunrise the rain had eased. The water rose another 30–40cm during the night. We packed up and had a pleasant paddle past mist-shrouded mountains back to the cars.

Mike Bremers



Top. Paddling home on Talbingo Reservoir among the misty mountains.

Left. Ian climbs Mt Pinbeyan, with views back to Talbingo Reservoir

Photos by Mike Bremers

Nancy Burbidge: botanist and visionary — Part 2

This article concludes Judy Kelly's two part story of the life and achievements of Nancy Burbidge, who was recently given recognition in the ACT Honour Walk. Part one was in the March 2007 edition of the NPA Bulletin.

Nancy's early career after her graduation from the University of Western Australia with a BSc in 1937 started with the prize of a free passage to England awarded by a group of shipping companies. She spent 18 months at the Herbarium at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, where she revised the Australian species of the genus *Enneapogon*.

She returned to Perth to study the ecology and taxonomy of Western Australian plants before becoming assistant agronomist at the Waite Agricultural Research Institute in Adelaide where she worked on the regeneration of native pastures in South Australia's arid and semi-arid regions.

Nancy's list of publications indicates her breadth of knowledge and experience. She wrote and illustrated *Australian Grasses* (1968) Vols I, II and III, and worked on what was formerly *Helichrysum* in Australia but is now recognised as occurring only in South Africa. The Australian *Helichrysum* that was has been split into four or five genera.

With Max Gray, Nancy wrote *Flora of the ACT* (1969) and illustrated it with her fine line drawings. She produced *The Wattles of the ACT* (1961) and *The Gum Trees of the ACT* (1963), complete with her line drawings and photographs by Colin Totterdell. Colin's black and white photos are a historical record of some of Canberra's healthy gum trees, lining the streets, in surrounding bushland and in the Brindabellas.

They provide a sobering contrast with the trees of today which are suffering from neglect and drought or post-fire damage.

Nancy's paper, *The Phytogeography of the Australian Region* (1959) was the basis of her Doctorate of Science which she received from the University of Western Australia in 1961, the first woman at the university to do so.

Nancy was direct and forthright and could hold lively discussions with colleagues. Not all agreed with her approach in providing full descriptions of species in the keys to the *Flora of the ACT*, but her approach held sway.

In 1973 Nancy relinquished her role as Curator of the Herbarium to work on the *Flora of Australia* project which the Australian Academy of Science sponsored.

Her broad botanical interest is reflected by her efforts to photograph the handwriting of botanical authors relevant to Australia as a historical record or archive while she was the Australian Botanical Liaison officer at Kew in 1953.

Nancy's interests outside botany were varied and philanthropic. She supported several causes, including

University Women and the Australian Systematic Botany Society.

All these organisations, along with NPA ACT, contributed to the Nancy T. Burbidge Memorial, a small, peaceful amphitheatre at the eucalypt lawn in the National Botanic Gardens, which was opened in 1980.

Honours

In 1976 she was made a Member of the Order of Australia for her services to science and the community. Nancy's other enduring legacies are Mount Burbidge, named in 1992, which lies east of Mount Kelly in Namadji National Park, and 10 plants which bear her name. These include the wattle *Acacia burbridgeae* Pedley, and the grass *Triodia burbridgeana* S.W.L.Jacobs. As reported in the *March Bulletin*, a plaque honouring Nancy's contributions to the ACT has been added to the ACT Honour Walk.

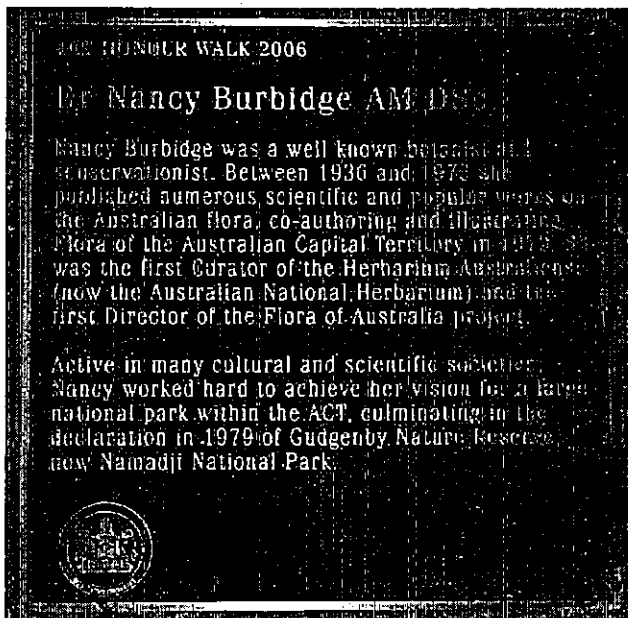
Nancy Tyson Burbidge was born on 5 August 1912 in England at Cleckheaton, Yorkshire. Her father, William Burbidge, was a clergyman who was appointed to the Anglican parish of Katanning, Western Australia, in 1913.

Nancy appears to have inherited some of her forward thinking

from her mother, Mary Eleanor Burbidge, who opened a primary school at the Katanning rectory and in 1922 founded the Katanning (Kobeelya) Church of England Girls' School where Nancy received her early education.

When Nancy was diagnosed with terminal cancer, she was a frequent visitor to the house of Jean and Ian Currie. Jean recalls that Nancy told her GP "that it was his responsibility to see that she was as comfortable as possible for as long as possible, bearing in mind that she still had some publishing to complete and therefore a remission would be highly desirable".

(Continued on page 13)



improving educational opportunities for Aboriginal women via scholarships, and working towards the establishment of a women's hall of residence at the University of Papua and New Guinea. Jean Currie remembers Nancy's support for Aborigines who were trying to establish a base in Redfern and her feeling that they should have been allocated a building.

The introduction to the *Flora of the ACT* states that in the case of common names for plants

"It is a matter for continued regret that we have lost almost all the aboriginal names from the past."

Nancy was a member of the Pan-Pacific and South-East Asia Women's Association ACT, the Royal Society of Canberra, the Australian Federation of

Call for new thinking on conservation

In his address to the March meeting of the NPA, author and conservationist William Lines recalled a meeting of the association that he attended in April 1969 when Judith Wright spoke to an audience of some 200 about conservation.

Conservation was difficult, she said, because the idea ran “counter to all precedent and to our acquisitive habits; and also, of course, to powerful interests vested on exploitive enterprises”. Therefore conservationists had “to fight not only for the wilderness but against the whole historical trend of which the dump-heap is a result. Otherwise the dump-heap will keep growing”. In opposition to that historical trend Wright advocated a new kind of thinking that opposed the whole force and current of existing thinking

In pursuing this path, Lines asserted that most conservation groups have failed to adopt a new approach. For example, in dealing with climate change it is proposed that “we have the technology now to dramatically reduce our carbon emissions through energy efficiency and renewable energy”. He challenged this thinking: if you believe technology caused the problem and advocate a solution based on better technology, how can that represent new thinking? The idea that we can engineer the world through science and technology for the greater benefit of humans, and not suffer any consequences, is central to the kind of

thinking that created the dump-heap in the first place.

Two goals

The speaker identified the two things he considers conservationists are trying to do. One is immediate and urgent: save this reef or that bit of bushland, wetland, river, coast or reef. The second is long-term but also urgent: to change attitudes and politics so that the idea of conservation is more favourably received in the future. Only then can we ensure a longer term success for conservation.

The first goal—securing immediate conservation and protection—requires campaigners who are pragmatic, dogged, and political. Fortunately, we in Australia have a good number of those. Indeed, we have some of the best in the world.

The second goal—changing attitudes—requires a politics and a philosophy that are clear, coherent, persuasive and attractive. Unfortunately, Lines claims, such a politics and philosophy are nowhere to be found. They are as distant from articulation and realisation as they were in Wright’s time. As a consequence we are winning battles but losing the war.

Facts needed

The speaker claims many policies proffered by conservation groups are unanchored by evidence and disrespect science in favour of the religion of humanism. As an example he cites the

support to be found for present immigration policies in some conservation groups.

When Wright addressed this forum Australia’s population was not quite 12.5 million. Today it is over 20.5 million. By any measure that is an extraordinary increase, a good half of which came from immigration. Enormous destruction and loss has accompanied this population increase. Much of what Wright valued and loved, for example, has been destroyed: her mountain home, the Gold Coast hinterland and the coast itself.

Lines calls for an approach that is based in facts: we should apply science and empiricism when fantasy and wishful thinking are so much more attractive and comforting. A coherent conservation philosophy has to be realistic. It has to connect with the real, tangible, physical world. It has to be cognizant of numbers and take account of our physical presence and impact on the planet.

Unfortunately the record shows true originality rarely prevails. The biases of temperament, position and feeling incline people to one or other side of old debates and old divisions. But we must begin the task of developing a new kind of thinking.

Syd Comfort

William Lines’s latest book is: Patriots: Defending Australia’s Natural Heritage, University of Queensland Press 2006.

Nancy Burbidge: botanist and visionary — Part 2 *continued*

Hovea in bloom

Jean writes that before Nancy went into hospital she “came to our house full of anticipatory excitement and asked Ian if he would take us into the Brindabellas because the *Hovea* would be in bloom. Only Nancy could have located it for us—the roads in that area are designed to confuse. We rejoiced in what we saw—cascades of purple *Hovea* covering the slopes—an image to stay with you for ever.”

“When Nancy entered hospital on the last part of her journey she spent most of her time writing a paper redesigning the ward she was in — she felt it was an architectural disaster. During this time Bill Watson (later NPA President) and his wife Edna, visited Nancy each day and fed her with delicious home-made custards.”

Nancy died on 4 March 1977 at the age of 64, seven years before Gudgenby

Nature Reserve was finally gazetted as Namadgi National Park on October 3 1984. The NPA president at the time was Ian Currie, and the Minister for Territories and Local Government, Tom Uren, who was sympathetic to the cause.

Nancy’s publications, lobbying, and mentoring were an indication of her dedication to botany, conservation and to people. Her legacies are enduring ones: NPA ACT continues to observe, research, lobby and to provide social walks outings to ensure their continued protection.

Thank you, Nancy.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Laurie Adams, George Chippendale, Jean Currie, Muriel Edwards and Fiona MacDonald Brand for their memories of Nancy and information about her.

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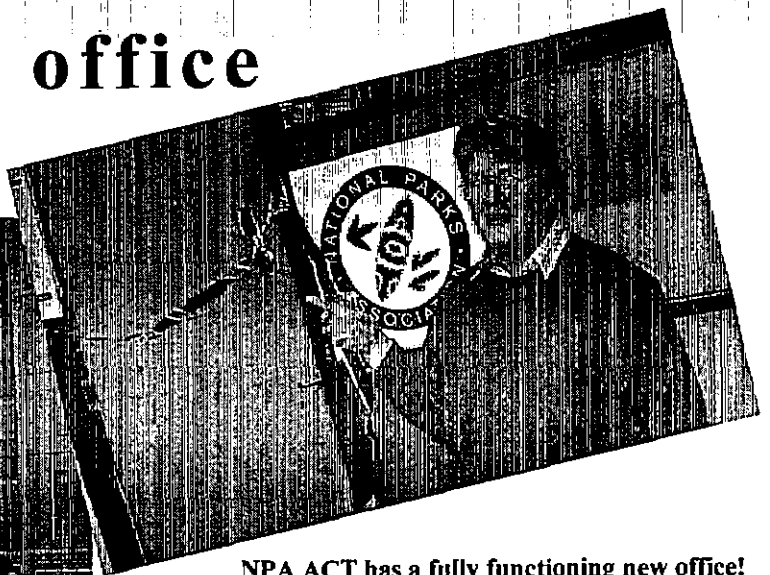
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NPA ACT Bulletin, 40th anniversary supplement March 2000, Vol. 37 No. 1.

Judy Kelly

We have moved office



NPA ACT has a fully functioning new office!

And what a great team effort it was. I would like to thank everyone who volunteered their help before, during and after the actual move to the Conservation Council building in Childers Street, Civic, near the corner of Allsop Street. (See other contact details, p 2.)

Thanks to Max Lawrence, Mike Smith, Tim Walsh and Kevin McCue who supplied trailers and muscle power to move heavy furniture and boxes full of files and books — Mike also disassembled our long cupboard and re-assembled it in the meeting room of the new premises, where it will come in handy as storage space.

Annette Smith and Clive Hurlstone spent many hours going through our vast holdings of *Bulletins*, journals and brochures to sort out duplicates and old copies we no longer need. In addition, Clive thinned out our library holdings as we were moving into a smaller office space. Rod Griffiths took the opportunity to weed out unnecessary and out-of-date financial documents. After arranging the redirection of our mail and telephone, Chris Emery set up the office computer and communications in the new premises on Friday, April 13.

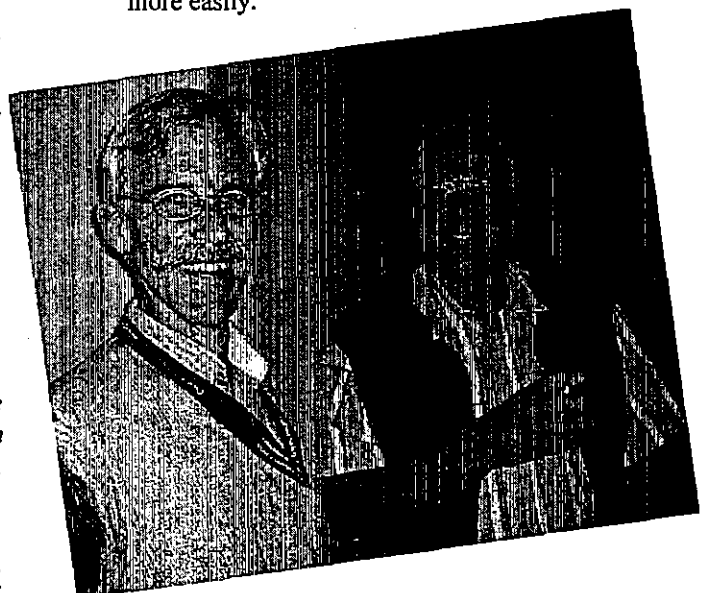
Thank you, Paul Mlakar, for supplying a brand new NPA sign and fixing it to the front of the building. Now everyone can find our office more easily.



*Photos from the official opening of the new NPA ACT office, May 3
Clockwise from above:*

- *Honorary life members Fiona MacDonald Brand and Syd Comfort with NPA Secretary Sonja Lenz (centre)*
- *The new office in Childers Street which NPA shares with the Conservation Council*
- *Christine prepares the ribbon, to be cut by Fiona and Syd*
- *Fiona and Syd complete the formalities. Photo by Michael Goonrey*
- *Trish Harrup (Director, Conservation Council) with Sonja*
- *Chris Emery and Sabine Friedrich*
- *Michael Goonrey and Kevin McCue*
- *Syd, Fiona, Marie Lawrence (behind), Barbara Comfort, Annette Smith, Martin Chalk (behind), Mike Smith, Sabine Friedrich (behind), Chris Emery, Clive Hurlstone, Frank Clements, Christine. Photo by Michael Goonrey*
- *Martin Chalk and Mike Smith.*

Photos by Max Lawrence unless otherwise acknowledged.





We are all indebted to the ongoing efforts of Diana Heins who is working steadily on our new library database. She is checking methodically that all of NPA's library holdings are entered into the new software that Chris Emery put up on our office computer recently. Once that task is completed and all our books have been catalogued, they will receive a place in the office bookshelves to make them more readily available to members. We will be able to search the database to take full advantage of the library which has accumulated since the early days of the NPA ACT and has been up to now a much under-utilised resource.

Another important aspect of our move was setting up a working group convened by Syd Comfort to sort through our archival material with a view to making important documents available to the ACT Heritage Library for safekeeping.

Judy Kelly is continuing to assemble old files currently still in our filing cabinets which are worth keeping as a record of the work of NPA as an important community group in the ACT. She continues the work initiated by the late Sheila Kruse, Thea Exley and David Pfanner, and together with Syd Comfort, Fiona MacDonald Brand and Beverley Hammond will make sure that records of NPA's work will survive into the future.

A big thank you to all of you!

Sonja Lenz
Secretary



PARKWATCH

Bellbirds culled to save forest

For Rob High the tinkling of bellbirds is the noise of his forest being killed.

The far South Coast resort operator is midway through the state's first large-scale bellbird culling program, having gained approval to remove between 2000 and 3000 of the small birds which have invaded his 300 hectare property Mandeni, near Merimbula. ... nearly 2000 have been captured from 40 hectares of gully.

Bellbirds have been implicated in the death of swathes of forest between Victoria and Queensland. Some estimates put the area under threat at up to 2.5 million hectares of native forest in NSW alone.

At Mandeni, healthy trees estimated to be several centuries old are now skeletons, and in a number of Mr High's wet gullies virtually the entire eucalypt canopy is gone.

Bellbirds are in plague numbers, having gone from almost none a few decades ago to as many as 20,000 in the local area, with a population of at least 3000 on Mr High's property.

No one knows exactly why such large areas of forest are dying or how the birds may be involved — it is primarily a case of guilt by association.

But it seems clear the birds displace other species and then disturb the delicate balance of the insects that live on eucalypts, said Mr High and his consultant ecologist, Dr Jim Shields.

"In the area that's been culled there has already been a dramatic increase in bird diversity" Mr High said.

The birds are caught in mist nets and then killed, with the approval of the RSPCA, using carbon dioxide gas.

Mr High said based on the wages of trappers and bird banders as well as equipment, each bird has cost him about \$10 to catch. Bird banding and forest monitoring are part of a management plan to determine the effectiveness of the ecosystem restoration program at Mandeni.

The Sydney Morning Herald
4 December 2006

Bushfires, climate change and forests

Large fires occur in south-eastern Australia because forests are flammable, the terrain is rugged, and most importantly because ignition, severe fire weather and intense drought conditions occasionally coincide.

Importantly, recent published research is showing that the changing

climate is the main driver of Australia's recent large fire activity, especially if the vegetation has been altered through actions associated with land clearing and logging.

So are ecosystems destroyed by large fires?

No, they are burnt and they regenerate. They do not burn with uniform high intensity; some patches are roasted, others are lightly scorched. However, the regeneration capacity of local ecosystems is enormous. Australian plants have mechanisms that allow them to cope with, and even prosper, after large fires, provided these fires are not too frequent.

Plants re-sprout and re-seed, and in healthy, intact ecosystems animals are able to migrate, switch diet, and continue reproducing. Forests regenerate and re-absorb the carbon released, even if the fires are intense.

To prove this, here are some numbers. Scientists from the Ecological Society of Australia have estimated that approximately 12 million tonnes of carbon dioxide were released by the recent fires in south-eastern Australia. A typical value from published studies shows that native forest ecosystems in Victoria and New South Wales absorb about 44 tonnes of carbon dioxide per hectare.

So, when we consider that 21.4 million hectares of forest are in reserves across Victoria alone, these reserves are taking 900 million tonnes of carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere each year.

The Wilderness Society,
(www.wilderness.org.au) March 2007

Improving Ramsar implementation

Australia has 64 Ramsar sites covering around 7.3 million hectares. Governments are working together to provide better nationally agreed systems that will improve Australia's implementation of the Ramsar Convention. This work is being coordinated through the Wetlands and Waterbirds Taskforce, comprising Australian and state and territory government officials who work on wetland issues. Some of the work under way and the expected benefits include:

- *National guidelines for Ramsar wetlands:* The Guidelines will be a series of modules providing clear, nationally agreed guidance on key processes relating to listing and management planning for Ramsar sites. The first module covers

mapping requirements and will be released shortly.

- *Framework for describing the ecological character of Ramsar sites:* The Framework, to be published as a module of the National Guidelines, shows how to describe the ecological character of a Ramsar wetland. An ecological character description is vital for the preparation of site management plans and to guide on-site monitoring. It also helps in assessing potential impacts of actions under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

- *Reviewing the status of Australia's Ramsar estate:* While we understand the condition of many of Australia's Ramsar sites and the management challenges they face, there is no regular or systematic mechanism for assessing this across all 64 Ramsar sites. Work is under way to address this, starting with a rapid "snapshot" of the status of Australia's Ramsar estate, followed by development of an ongoing "rolling review" process. This work will help identify future management and investment priorities, and provide greater understanding of the health of our Ramsar wetlands.

Other work-in-progress includes developing an Australian Wetland Inventory and national indicators for wetland extent, distribution, and condition.

Wetlands Australia, Update 2007

Plans of management could be sidelined

National park plans of management are recognised by all who use them as being satisfactory to very good. The Department of Environment and Conservation, however, has commissioned the University of Queensland to review the management planning process following criticisms from the NSW Audit Office in 2004.

If the recommendations of the review are adopted, then national park planning could become more complex. Imagine values-based land use zones in plans of management, with regional plans operating above these plans, and a greater number of subsidiary plans below them, so that several grey layers are added to the planning process. Meanwhile, state budget reviews would reset the planning agenda each year by funding identified priority actions. On top of this, the "level of service" would

(Continued on page 17)

be defined for each park to ensure that some parks got more money, while other parks got less. Yet while recommending all this, the paper paradoxically says that park plans of management will remain the cornerstone of reserve management. Well I don't think so.

In any event, the usual two drivers appear to be behind these changes: the desire to formalise political intervention in park planning; and provision for more intensive use and development of reserves.

No doubt the Department is trying to regulate processes that have evolved under its nose to cope with political pressures, such as commercial use, high impact user group demands, and international thinking on park management that is influenced by the lowest common denominator needed to accommodate park management in poor countries.

The consultants have reaffirmed the Departmental intention of keeping the plan of management as the cornerstone of the process but the methods of dealing with the above political developments require the erosion of the central position held by these plans (i.e. say one thing, and do the opposite).

The factors in the review report that could undermine plans of management are:

- Limiting to eight the number of park values be managed in each park so that the subsequent values-based planning process could allow parts of national parks without the identified values to fall through the regulatory cracks;
- Values-based management makes it easier to justify major development within park boundaries, by claiming that the identified "values" themselves are not harmed by the proposal;
- Setting management prescriptions by values may mean that areas without "identified" values could receive less than the current national park level of protection — and so the definition of park values, and standards for their management, would become more difficult and political;
- The proposed park zones offer less certainty of outcome and park security when compared with proposals that locate specific developments in specific places under the current plan of management process;
- Under economic imperatives, park zones would inexorably ratchet park areas up the use categories toward increasing development (just like zoning of private land responds to economic pressures);

- The values-based/zoning methodology ensures that the entire park will not be considered or managed as an integrated whole;

- An "adjunct document" that would "cherry pick" park management actions would allow budget-based Ministerial intervention to reset management priorities for the State every year;

- Identification of levels of service for each park that would ensure parks with the identified chosen values or more visitors received more funding.

The Colong Foundation for Wilderness does not support these initiatives. Management planning should instead ensure that national parks and nature reserves generally remain unmodified natural areas, with specific prescriptions in the plans of management allowing for appropriate vehicle access on defined routes, and small, low impact camping areas and other facilities, generally restricted to the edges of parks. No zones that would legitimise resorts, or recreational horseriding or 4WD vehicle use across broad areas of national parks are necessary or appropriate.

The Colong Bulletin, January 2007

"Asian haze" impact on Australian rainfall

Elevated particle emissions resulting from increased economic activity in Asia may have increased Australia's tropical rainfall, according to new research into the way pollution influences our climate.

"Until now, there has been ample evidence that these particles have important effects on climate in the Northern Hemisphere but little such evidence in the Southern Hemisphere," says CSIRO Marine and Atmospheric Research scientist, Dr Leon Rotstajn.

"What we have seen in our latest climate simulations is that the 'Asian haze' is having an effect on the Australian hydrological cycle and generated increasing rainfall and cloudiness since 1950, especially over north-west and central Australia.

"The effect occurs because the haze cools the Asian continent and nearby oceans, and thereby alters the delicate balance of temperature and winds between Asia and Australia. It has nothing to do with Asian pollution being transported directly over Australia."

Dr Rotstajn says this implies that decreasing pollution in Asia later this century could reverse this effect and

lead to an increase in Australian drying trends.

Ecos, December-January 2007

Fallen tree reveals owl secrets

Forests NSW ecologists have first-hand confirmation of their assumptions about the inhabitants of a large spotted gum habitat tree in Bermagui State Forest: the tree fell across an interpretive sign erected in its honour.

"The sign indicated it was a likely roost for a large forest owl," said Forests NSW Southern Region ecologist, Chris Slade.

"This has turned out to be the case with the pellets, bones and skulls collected from within the tree's cavity indicating it was most likely being used by a sooty owl, which thankfully wasn't at home at the time."

The owl had a varied diet of native and introduced species including: Agile antechinus, Long-nosed bandicoot, Common ring-tailed possum, Greater glider, Sugar glider, Bush rat, Rabbit, and Dusky antechinus.

"We will incorporate this new information into a revised sign and we now know that there are long-nosed bandicoots, and all the other species taken by the owl, inhabiting this forest," Chris said.

bush telegraph, Autumn 2007

NCC goes to courts to save shark

Tired of government inaction on increased protection for the Grey Nurse Shark, NCC has lodged a legal appeal to try to force the government to create marine sanctuaries in key Grey Nurse Shark habitat areas. NCC is appealing against the Australian Government's environmental approval for the Ocean Trap and Line Fishery — a commercial fishery that is known to significantly impact on the Grey Nurse Shark. NCC will ask the Administrative Appeals Tribunal to mandate marine sanctuaries and fishing gear changes to significantly reduce the impact of hook and line fishing on grey nurse sharks.

2006 may well be remembered as the year of lost opportunities for the Grey Nurse Shark. During that time we saw the announcement of zoning plans for two marine parks, neither of which fully protected the Grey Nurse Shark key habitat areas within their bounds. We also saw the environmental approval of the Ocean Trap and Line Fishery — a fishery that is known to have significant impacts on the grey nurse shark.

(Continued on page 18)

Rogaining – the facts

Following an article on rogaining in the December 2006 NPA Bulletin, Adrienne Nicholson did some calculations based on the figures it contained and came to some alarming conclusions. When these calculations were put together with the article's references to port-a-loos and a catering tent at the start/finish area, Adrienne was concerned about whether rogaining was an appropriate activity for a national park and outlined those concerns in the last issue of the Bulletin. Here Pat Miethke supplies further facts and figures to clarify the situation with particular reference to Namadgi National Park.

Adrienne's article about the 1000 rogainers and all their trappings was just amazing, but really, it's time to inject a few facts into the argument.

The following figures are all taken from the results lists on the ACT Rogaining Association (ACTRA) website (<http://act.rogaine.asn.au>). I have only taken the five-year period 2002–2006.

ACTRA runs six rogaines each year, with the Australian Championships being held in rotation with other states. Only one event per year is a 24-hour rogaine, the others are five- to 12-hour events and usually do not involve camping.

2006—None of the events was held in Namadgi.

2005—Three events were held in Namadgi. The six-hour Paddy Pallin attracted 94 teams, comprising 216 people; the 12-hour spring rogaine attracted 96 teams, 218 people; the eight-hour nightgaine (no camping) was attended by only 19 teams, 42 people.

2004—One event in Namadgi, the 12-hour Spring rogaine with 75 teams, comprising 174 people.

2003—None of the events was in Namadgi.

2002—This was the year the Australian Rogaining Champs were held in the Naas Valley and gave rise to the figures which are always quoted. The 24-hour event attracted 197 teams, or 449 people, from all over Australia. I'm sure they enjoyed seeing our lovely national park so close to Canberra. The 12-hour spring rogaine was also held in Namadgi, 84 teams, or 210 people.

So only six events of the 30 held in the last five years were in Namadgi. Twenty-four were held in a range of other areas, including other national parks, state forests, private landholdings, and urban areas.

Allow 10 person-days per event for setting and vetting the controls, and five admin persons on the day, though these generally stay in the carpark, and five person-days for collecting the controls. I'll ignore the catering as it is all done in the carpark. This is sufficient

manpower to run a reasonable size event like the Paddy Pallin rogaine.

The average number of events held in Namadgi per year = six in five years = 1.2 events per year. The average number of competitors and officials is 1309 + 6 x 20 persons in five years = 285 persons per year.

Now 285 persons per year is a fair way short of the 1000 competitors tramping around in formation implied in Adrienne's article. How does it compare with NPA person-days per year? Probably fairly well, given the number of walks on weekends, the numbers going on Wednesday walks, and the Great Australian Bushwalk.

In addition, rogainers do not build tracks and structures in the park, and do not light fires in the park, and do not camp anywhere but in approved campgrounds. In fact, even when ACTRA offers a camping option in one of the Namadgi campgrounds after an event, the majority of competitors prefer to drive back to Canberra. The Australian Championships in 2002 was the only event with significant camping. In addition, we bring in port-a-loos to the assembly area, we do not leave litter, and we disperse widely, usually travelling in pairs.

Why do we like to use national parks for some of our events? For much the same reasons that the NPA likes walking there.

Pat Miethke



Left. Frank Clements enjoys his special day at Brandy Flat.

Photo by Max Lawrence

Right. NPA members enjoying the Ian Currie Memorial Camping Trip to Wapengo: Judy Kelly, Margaret Aston, Jenny Morrison, Tim Walsh (mostly hidden) and Janet Thompson at Picnic Point, Mimosa Rocks National Park.

Photo by Adrienne Nicholson



PARKWATCH *continued from page 17*

NCC is trying to make sure 2007 is a more positive one for the sharks. With fewer than 500 Grey Nurse Sharks surviving off the east coast of Australia, it is vital that we take all action we can to increase protection for the sharks.

Despite acknowledgement in the environmental assessment that hook and line fishing, a key component of

the Ocean Trap and Line Fishery, is responsible for up to half of all Grey Nurse Shark deaths each year, environmental approval was still granted for this fishery.

NCC is asking the Administrative Appeals Tribunal to place stronger conditions on the Ocean Trap and Line Fishery to reduce their impact on the

Grey Nurse Shark. Foremost amongst these conditions would be the requirement for marine sanctuaries, or no-take zones, in places where the shark is known to breed and live.

Nature Conservation Council of NSW
(www.nccnsw.org.au)

Compiled by Len Haskew

Book reviews

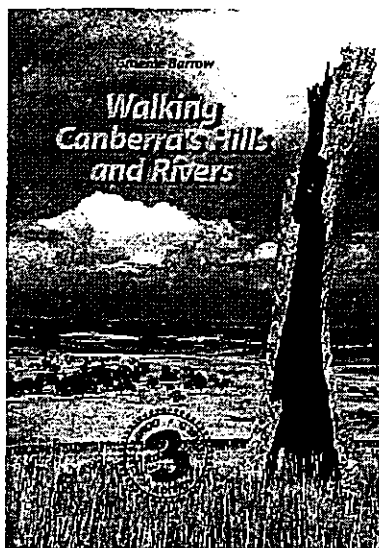
Walking Canberra's Hills and Rivers (3rd edition, 2006)

Graeme Barrow, Dagraja Press, 96 pp, \$19.95

Walking the hills and rivers of Canberra is a different experience now from what it was in 1997 when the second edition of this title was published. The respective covers illustrate the change: a desiccated landscape showing the distant city from Burnt Stump Hill has replaced a replete, well-vegetated pond at Mulligans Flat. We know the dark clouds on the horizon of the new cover carry no guarantee of rain.

In his introduction to the new edition, now approaching 100 pages, the author has not emphasised the effects of climate change; however, the thoroughly revised descriptions of the walks necessarily reflect the drying of the land and the damaging effects of bushfires.

Despite the foregoing, this is not a pessimistic book. The magnificent orange-yellow of the cover photograph has been adopted as a positive theme through the book in the form of headers to each of the 40 walks, simplifying and unifying the presentation. Some walks have been deleted, eg Oakey Hill and Cotter Dam, perhaps because of their currently damaged condition. The total number of walks is up from 30, particularly with new walks near Gungahlin since the establishment of Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve, and additional Cotter walks to replace the



one deleted. Cooleman Ridge walk has been split into Cooleman Trig and Mt Arawang. Shepherds Lookout has been renamed Molonglo Footbridge and East Uriarra has become Murrumbidgee Circuit. Most photographs are new and all are in colour.

The "Walks Location Map" at the beginning of the volume provides a good overall guide. In line with his other publications, the individual walk maps have been simplified. Contour lines have been deleted; the author cites the relevant 1:25 000 map and suggests it be relied upon. This is a sensible change as maps produced by the Central Mapping Authority of NSW (CMA) are now widely available. Because the book is aimed at visitors to, as well as residents of, the city, he

provides a lengthy description of the road route to the start of each walk. This is an unnecessary distraction. Consideration might be given in any future edition to stating the starting point of each walk, so that the point can be readily found in a street directory.

A majority of the walks are graded easy and of two hours or less duration. They are likely to most immediately attract someone strolling in from an adjacent suburb. However, a walk leader with NPA would need to stitch several together to attract a crowd for a day's outing. The book provides clues on how this can be achieved.

The first edition of this title was published in 1989; a similar book preceded it by 12 years. So Canberra is fortunate indeed to have a man of Graeme Barrow's interests and dedication in preparing the books he does. He notices everything and has good instincts. He loves the quiet and rejoices in the seasons, despises vandals, mourns damage caused by over-grazing, poor forestry practices and insensitive installations. Occasionally he relents: for example, his view of Anzac Parade from Mt Ainslie as "suffocatingly bland in its flower-boxed, red-gravelled primness" has disappeared from the text!

Before I finish, has anyone a "before" photograph of the once-majestic tree on Burnt Stump Hill which adorns the cover?

Brian Slee

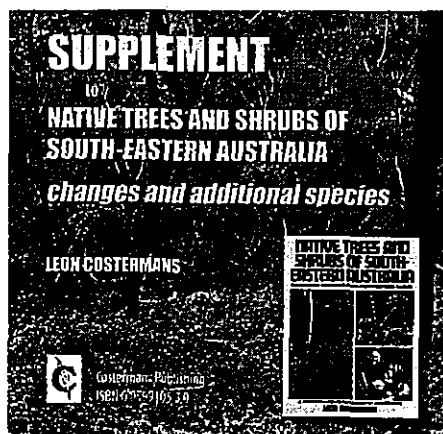
Supplement to Native Trees and Shrubs of South-Eastern Australia — changes and additional species. On CD

Leon Costermans

Costermans's original book was clearly never intended to be much more than an amateur's coffee-table "illustrated working manual", while avoiding the possible tedium, not to mention much extra pagination, for keys to the taxa of the area.

I'm certainly happy with the CD's supplementary worth to people who already have the hard-copy original. Amongst many other aspects, it affects (taxonomically and nomenclaturally) approximately 250 of the area's taxa, including an additional 100 species.

For such people, although it still has no keys, the CD will considerably



enhance the original's value from the point of the "modernisation" of the area's flora. Apart from the very readable and exhaustive coverage by the *Introduction*, plus many more of the author's excellent colour photos, what impressed me about the CD, as particularly "user-friendly", is the

widespread use of computer hyperlinks. These start with the Index to names, allowing the user to rapidly find a pathway through the updates and then to the relevant taxon page number of the volume itself.

All in all, I feel this first supplement will be a worthwhile investment, and make the author's anticipated later supplements that much easier to deal with.

Laurie Adams

Orders for the CD may be placed on-line by going to VNPA's publications secure order form at www.vnpa.org.au (select 'Resources>View our catalogue'). The cost is \$25, including postage.

National Parks Association Calendar

	June	July	Aug	Sept
<i>Public holidays</i>	<i>Mon 11</i>			
General meetings	Thur 21	Thur 19	Thur 16*	Thur 20
Committee meetings	Tues 5	Tues 3	Tues 7	Tues 4
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration ¹	Sat 9	Sat 14	Sat 11	Sat 8

Further details * **Annual General Meeting**

¹ Yankee Hat carpark 10:00am, Clive Hurlstone 6288 7592 (h)
040 778 3422 (mob)

General Meetings

Third Thursday of the month
(not December or January)

8:00pm

Uniting Church hall
56 Scrivener Street
O'Connor

General Meeting

Thursday 21 June

Two flats in the Uriarra Valley

Mark Butz: Environmental scientist

Mark will speak on the natural and cultural heritage values of the Blundells Flat/Shannons Flat area, Uriarra Forest, Lower Cotter.

General Meeting

Thursday 19 July

South Australia's Heysen Trail

Ted Fleming: NPA member

What a pity that this long distance trail seems to be an Australian path less trod. The Heysen Trail is the country's longest walking trail and its 1200kms offer intriguing diversity and many bushwalking challenges. These are the recollections of its seventy-first end-to-ender.

Annual General Meeting

Thursday 16 August

To be followed by

Kahurangi: New Zealand's biodiversity "cold" spot.

Dave and Judy Kelly: NPA members and intrepid walkers

A walk through beech-forest filled valleys to rugged alpine ridges and plateaux in Kahurangi National Park. This less well-known part of New Zealand has similarities to South-West Tasmania.

The association welcomes the following **new members**:

Peter and Jeanette Johnson

Allan Sharp

Miroslaw Pilat and

Gail Baker

We look forward to seeing you at association activities.

NPA ACT *Bulletin*

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