



NPA *Bulletin*

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National Parks Association of the Australian Capital Territory Inc



**Full steam ahead at
Glenburn**



**NPA scholarship
awarded**



**NPA's own art
exhibition**

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

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From the President

With so much of the ACT held within conservation reserves it would be easy to conclude that the ACT's biodiversity is very well protected and there should be few issues to concern an organisation like the NPA ACT. And certainly we should be thankful for the natural values encapsulated within the borders of Namadgi National Park. However, the highland biodiversity held there represents only one end of the spectrum of the ACT's ecosystems. At the other end, the ACT's lowlands face many development pressures.

The NPA ACT has been pleased to be involved in the process that led to the Commonwealth strategic environment assessment of Gungahlin. This assessment is expected to see the reservation of many areas of high conservation value in that area and should strengthen connectivity between Yellow Box-Red Gum communities in the north of Canberra.

New threats to biodiversity

Elsewhere, the large urban developments in the Molonglo Valley will add to the threats facing the biodiversity in that area. The proposed river corridor reserve for the Molonglo is very narrow and will be subject to intense recreational pressures from the large populations proposed on both sides of the river. The NPA ACT is currently involved in the community consultation surrounding the development of the plan of management for the river corridor.

To the west of Belconnen, the Riverview development (still in proposal stage) will see a new area of land opened for urban expansion. The full effects on biodiversity as a result of this proposal are yet to be verified, though it is expected that some land within the development area will be allocated as conservation reserves.

More tasks for Parks and Conservation ... but same resources

All these proposed additions to the reserve estate have to be managed over the long term. However, the budget available to Parks and Conservation has not been increased to adequately cover long-term maintenance. This has been a problem for many years. After the 2003 bushfires, former ACT Forest areas such as the Lower Cotter and Glenburn are now managed by Parks and Conservation, without commensurate budgetary increases.

A review into the funding of Parks and Conservation, currently in progress, has the potential to establish a baseline of funding for the ACT's reserves. It needs to recognise that the complexities facing the protection of the ACT's environment cannot be adequately addressed through the annual budgetary process. Surety of funding over the long term for Parks and Conservation will improve the effectiveness of the protection of the ACT's biodiversity.

First NPA ACT Honours scholarship awarded

Since my last President's report there have been a couple of developments that I want to share with you. First, the NPA ACT's inaugural annual scholarship to support an Honours student working in areas pertaining to *'the conservation of flora and fauna in National Parks and Nature Reserves in the ACT'*

(continued next page)



The 'Four Pillars' approach to conservation — the federal Coalition's environment policies

In October 2013, Greg Hunt, the new Minister for the Environment, held a roundtable for representatives of many of the nation's environmental groups. The object of this roundtable was to present the new government's plan for the environment. For over an hour and a half the Minister discussed the plan and fielded questions about it.

As a participant at the roundtable, I was impressed by the apparent openness of the new Minister and his knowledge of the portfolio. It was a very competent performance by the Minister, who spoke without notes. And while I do not agree with some aspects of the Coalition's plan I did come away from the meeting feeling that dialogue was possible on these differences.

The Coalition's 'A Plan for a Cleaner Environment' has four 'pillars':

- clean air
- clean land
- clean water
- heritage protection.

Clean air

This has three major components: an Emissions Reduction Fund, One Million Solar Roofs, and Twenty Million Trees. Under the Emissions Reduction Fund, the federal government will abolish the carbon tax and will seek to meet Australia's emissions reduction target (5 per cent below 2000 levels by 2020) by purchasing 'the lowest-cost abatement via reverse auctions — a "carbon buy-back"'. This direct action approach is a contentious issue with a range of critics stating that the funding available is insufficient to allow even the modest emissions reduction target to be met.

The One Million Solar Roofs program will provide \$500 rebates to support the installation of one million solar rooftop solar energy systems over 10 years.

The Twenty Million Trees program

seeks to fund tree planting until 2020. The Minister indicated that the funding would be available to both community and state and territory projects.

Clean land

This pillar introduces the Green Army, Landcare Recovery and Approvals Simplification programs.

The Green Army program seeks to build the 'largest standing environmental workforce in Australia's history' to combat land degradation, clean up waterways, and revegetate and conserve habitats.

The Landcare Recovery program seeks to merge the existing Caring for Our Country and Landcare funding. For small and medium size projects, local priorities and decisions will be made by natural resource and catchment management authorities, while larger projects will be assessed and managed by the federal government.

Approvals Simplification seeks to create a 'one-stop shop' for environmental assessments and approvals under national state laws. The Minister has stated that this process would not lessen federal government environmental responsibility, but it is difficult to see how this will not occur.

Clean water

The three key programs under this pillar are the Murray-Darling Plan, Water Security, and Reef 2050.

It is pleasing to see continued federal support for the Murray-Darling Plan. The federal government states that it seeks to 'achieve the best outcomes for the Government's investment in the Basin by delivering effective national management, fixing inefficient infrastructure and empowering local communities to deliver water reduction targets'.

Water Security comprises of the creation of a 'panel of water experts,

measures to harness stormwater and the potential for new dams in northern Australia'.

Reef 2050 comprises three major components: the establishment of a \$40 million Reef Trust comprised of private and Commonwealth funds; a \$2 million Crown of Thorns starfish eradication plan; and a \$5 million turtle and dugong protection plan. It will be interesting to see how effective these programs are in light of continued pressure from coal and other interests to further develop areas in and around the Reef.

The Minister has stated that existing marine park boundaries will not change but there may be changes to the plans of management that regulate activities within the marine parks.

Heritage

Again, this pillar has three key components: Community Heritage, Antarctic Strategic Plan, and Heritage Icons.

The Community Heritage program will include a number of community heritage grants, and looks to boost funding for federal Australian historical societies and the Australian Heritage Council.

The Antarctic Strategic Plan will develop a 20-year strategic plan for Antarctic and Southern Ocean research and establish a new Centre for Antarctic and Southern Ocean Research.

The Heritage Icons program will initiate a National Icons awards program and contribute \$1.5m to restoration work at Port Arthur.

The above forms a very brief précis of the environment plan. I would welcome NPA ACT member discussion on the plan either through the Environment Sub-committee or the *Bulletin*.

Rod Griffiths

From the President *(continued)*

and surrounding areas' has been awarded to Amy Macris. The NPA ACT is proud to contribute to ongoing research on biodiversity and looks forward to hearing about the results of Amy's research into the effect of the fungal disease, chytridiomycosis, on genetic diversity in Alpine Tree Frogs.

Bouquet for Glenburn group

Second, the NPA ACT has been a keen

supporter of the work being conducted by the Friends of Glenburn. On a recent visit to the heritage sites at Glenburn, I was very impressed with the amount work that has been completed at this important heritage site. Well done to all concerned.

Vale Julie Henry

Finally, and on a sad note, I was informed recently about the death of Julie Henry, one of the NPA ACT's life members. Julie

was a past president of the NPA ACT and was a leader in the push for the creation of Namadgi National Park. The photo of Julie standing on top of Mt Kelly during one of the early reconnaissance trips for the national park proposal has stayed in my mind as an iconic representation of the NPA ACT's values. On behalf of all the members of the NPA ACT, I offer our condolences to Julie's family.

Rod Griffiths

NPA Honours Scholarship

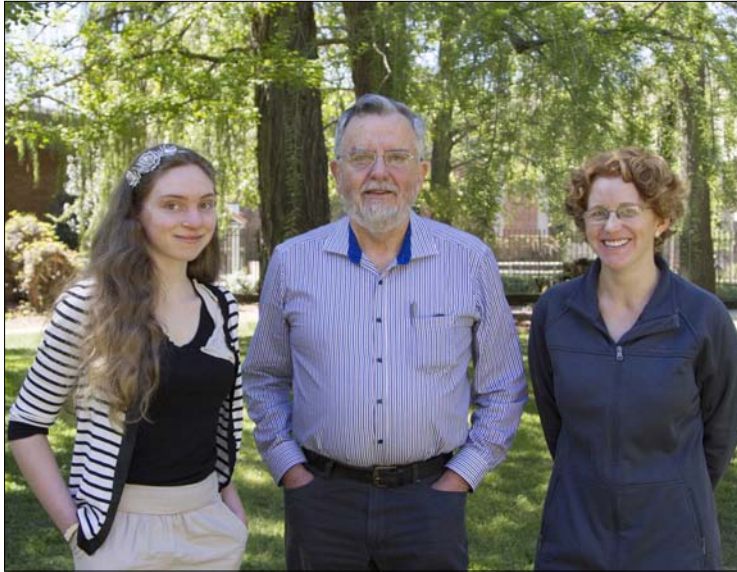
Over 18 months ago your committee decided to fund a university scholarship and approached the ANU Fenner School of Environment and Society for advice. The school recommended we award an Honours candidate to get the greatest benefit, and together we settled on an award of \$9 000 for one candidate a year for 3 years. The scholarship will be available to students who:

- have been successful in gaining entry into the Honours year of a program of study through the Fenner School of Environment and Society;
- have an excellent academic record;
- are intending to undertake research in areas pertaining to the conservation of flora and fauna in National Parks and Nature Reserves in the ACT and surrounding areas;
- have willing and suitable supervision; and
- hold Australian Citizenship.

The first round of advertising undertaken towards the end of last year, for an awardee to start in first semester did not yield a candidate meeting our criteria, so the advertising was repeated for someone to start in semester two of 2013.

In September we learnt that the successful candidate was Amy Macris, who comes from Bateman's Bay. Rather than précis her very nice thank you letter we thought you should read it in full.

I would like to sincerely thank the National Parks Association of the ACT for providing the scholarship in biodiversity management in National Parks and Nature Reserves.



Amy (left) with NPA's Chris Emery and her supervisor Dr Ceridwen (Crid) Fraser. Photo by Clive Hilliker, ANU.

My research will investigate the effects of the fungal disease, Chytridiomycosis, on genetic diversity in Alpine Tree Frogs. It is likely that declines induced by this disease have caused a loss of genetic diversity in local Alpine Tree Frog populations but this has not been assessed. An understanding of genetic diversity levels in remnant populations is essential to determining their viability and will have important implications for the management of this species. Chytridiomycosis affects approximately half of all frog species worldwide, so my research may contribute to the conservation of other frog species in the ACT area and beyond.

For my project I will be collecting mouth swab DNA samples in Canberra and surrounds, as well as using some existing samples covering the entire range of the species. The

scholarship will allow me to sample more comprehensively and also to use a method of sequencing that can provide great insight into my research question. I will be using novel genotyping by sequencing methods to compare genome-wide diversity between chytrid affected and unaffected sites and to measure patterns of genetic differentiation across the range of the species.

The scholarship will also assist with my living expenses and ease significant financial pressures, meaning that I'll be able to spend less time doing casual work and more time on my thesis. It will be wonderful to be able to focus completely and produce a more in-depth analysis.

I am very grateful for this opportunity which will make an enormous difference to my honours year and project. Please contact me if you would like any more information, and I look forward to sharing my findings with you at my final presentation in June next year or any other time that is convenient to Association members.

*Many thanks and kind regards,
Amy Macris.*

We look forward to arranging a suitable General Meeting date when Amy can meet members and present her findings or perhaps a progress report.

Chris Emery



NPA ACT Christmas Party **at Nil Desperandum (Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve)** **Sunday 8 December from 11:00 am**

Bring your picnic lunch and Christmas cheer. Nibbles, Christmas cake and some drinks will be provided.

Meet at the double locked gates off the Cotter to Tidbinbilla road (western side) a few hundred metres south of the turn off to the Deep Space Tracking Station. If travelling from Tuggeranong/Tharwa, the gates are on the left hand side of the road about 1.5km north of the turn off to Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. Given dry conditions most cars should be able to drive right into Nils.

Check *Burning Issues* and the NPA website for any last-minute changes.

Please contact an NPA committee member if you need a lift (details page 23).

Promotion and Engagement working group

After several years of admiring the successes of our Committee in so many areas I have joined in and offered to help out with encouraging more active involvement by existing members and attracting new ones.

Supported by the Committee, I now convene the *Promotion and Engagement working group*, whose other members are Bernard Morvell and Steve Small.

All voluntary groups face the challenges of the ageing of the old faithfuls and attracting and engaging new members. Our society has seemingly insatiable demands on our time, resulting in an overall reduction in volunteering, especially amongst the younger members of our community.

My background involves working with individuals and groups in a social systems/networking model and this underpins our approach. We have begun by getting an understanding of the many different aspects of our varied programs, and are following up by telephone contacts with all members who have joined since the beginning of 2011. This has been a most useful exercise and all have appreciated our contact to welcome them to NPA.

Our membership database has been very helpful in providing details of the interests of these new members. Results so far are encouraging, examples being one member considering joining the environment subcommittee and others interested in helping out with graphic design and *Waterwatch*, in leading walks and in assisting with exhibitions and stalls. We are inviting those we contact who do not attend our general meetings to do so. When full details are known, we will make personal invitations to our Christmas party at *Nil Desperandum*.

At some future time we may survey all our membership for information on their interests, their ideas on how we can better use the skills of our members and other suggestions about how we can become even more effective.

How you can help

Please consider whether you, or someone you know, can help out by making contact with one of the groups below.

Environment subcommittee: collaborative submission writing and research (for example, whether voluntary lands agreements can be arranged under a leasehold jurisdiction); organise a seminar. Contact Rod Griffiths 6288 6988 or 0410 857 731.

Website: visit the website more often, send in news items, report broken links. Contact Chris Emery 6249 7604.

Office administration: designing forms, occasional help with mail-outs, ad hoc backup for office volunteers. Contact Sonja Lenz 6251 1291.

Publications subcommittee: the next NPA ACT book being worked on is on insects of the ACT and region and (in addition to the author) another with knowledge about insects would be helpful. Contact Kevin McCue 6251 1291. Kevin also uploads photos to our website in the Gallery section and always welcomes additional photographs.

General meetings: arranging guest speakers; setting up meeting room and equipment; co-ordinating supper. Contact Graham Scully 6230 3352.

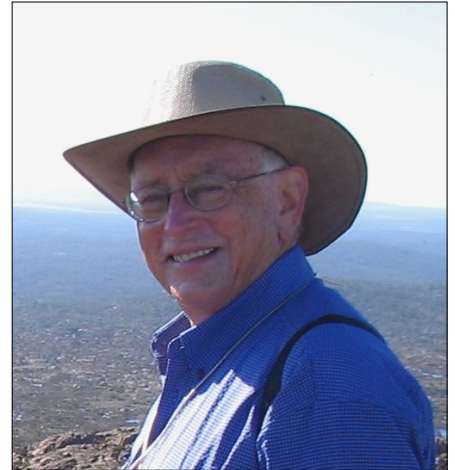
Assistance at stalls and public events to sell our publications and attract new members: join a pool of people to help out occasionally. Contact Graham Scully 6230 3352.

Bulletin working group: the *NPA Bulletin* is published four times a year, and has a voracious appetite for short articles, photos and any other items of literary or artistic merit that might appeal to our members. Letters to the editor on matters of concern are also very welcome, but unfortunately are seldom received. Offers to help with the production of the *Bulletin* will also be very welcome. Contact Max Lawrence 6288 1370.

NPA working parties: the focus is Namadgi National Park but the group also undertakes tasks in ACT and NSW nature reserves: weed control; track and hut maintenance; in NSW, fence removal in Dananbilla Nature Reserve and hand weeding of rare and endangered plant (*Swainsonia recta*) plots established along the railway verge between Royalla and Williamsdale. Contact Martin Chalk 6292 3502.

Outings subcommittee: please help keep our outings program alive by volunteering to lead outings. New leaders are welcome and the Outings Convenor is happy to give orientation and get you started. Contact Mike Smith 6286 2984.

Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group (GBRG) work parties: weed control in the Gudgenby Valley, with the main focus on blackberries and briars; a planting program including collecting seed and



growing local species; erosion gully and internal forestry road rehabilitation; barbed wire fence removal; mapping of rabbit warrens, and undertaking research and rainfall monitoring. Contact Michael Goonrey 6231 8395 or Clive Hurlstone 6288 7592.

Waterwatch: an ACT Government program which GBRG assists in Namadgi by regular measurements of water quality. This comprises bi-monthly water physical/chemical observations and wildlife reports, an annual macro-invertebrate count (in October) and an annual riparian assessment (in February). Contact Martin Chalk 6292 3502.

The Friends of Glenburn: scheduled work parties are held on the first Tuesday of February, May, August and November to help the parks service protect and conserve sites in the Glenburn/Burbong historic precinct in the Kowen Forest. The area includes the ACT's oldest marked graves; Glenburn Homestead, comprising a slab home and a pisé home; and several homestead ruins and their orchards. Tasks include mowing, weeding, digging out and poisoning blackberries, painting post-and-rail fences and other jobs negotiated with the parks service. Contact Col McAlister 6288 4171, e-mail cvmac@grapevine.com.au.

Graham Scully



Environmental research in progress

Responsibility for ACT scientific research on environmental matters currently lies with the Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate (under Minister Corbell). The actual hands-on management of conservation and land management occurs within the Territory and Municipal Services portfolio (under Minister Rattenbury). While this separation of functions is not something the NPA ACT is comfortable with, NPA has benefited from having been invited to attend the major seminars run by ESDD's Conservation Planning and Research unit to showcase their ongoing scientific research to their TAMS counterparts, among others.

This year's exercise — ECO FOCUS SEMINAR 2013 — was held on 21 August at the CSIRO's facilities at Gungahlin Homestead. Well over 100 people turned up and, as expected, there were many familiar faces in Parks uniforms, and also a few from our fellow conservation groups. Nine papers were presented in the space of three hours, so there was little opportunity for discussion. Also, because the papers related to ongoing research it was not always possible to be very definitive about the conclusions to be drawn. Subject to these caveats the following is a brief summary of proceedings.

Vegetation mapping

Emma Cook, Vegetation Ecologist, Conservation Research

This presentation described progress on mapping vegetation communities of the Kowen, Majura and Jerrabomberra districts. Over 20 000 hectares have been mapped, with an overall classification accuracy of 83 per cent. Native vegetation covered 58 per cent of the study area. A combined area of 2 778 hectares of Yellow Box–Apple Box woodland and Blakely's Red Gum–Yellow Box woodland was mapped within the study area. Both are listed as Endangered Ecological Communities under the Nature Conservation and EPBC Acts.

Grassland Earless Dragon — genetics and movement study

Professor Stephen Sarre, University of Canberra

This endangered species has experienced both gradual long-term and dramatic short-term declines in range and population size. This research is investigating potential mechanisms behind that decline, including a hypothesis that increases in ambient temperatures

contract the diurnal window suitable for lizard activity and drive individuals to seek thermal refugia for longer periods, compromising opportunities to secure resources.

Post-fire recovery and the Burned Area Assessment Team

Margaret Kitchin, Manager, Conservation Research

The Burned Area Assessment Team (BAAT) is a joint ACT — NSW multi-disciplinary team that undertakes rapid assessment of affected areas immediately following a bushfire. The unit was deployed to the Wambelong fire in the Warrumbungles National Park in January to identify the post-fire assets at risk and the mitigation options available to land managers. In this way some of the lessons learned from our own 2003 experience are getting wider application.

The Casuarina Sands fishway

Matt Beitzel, Aquatic/Riparian Ecologist, Conservation Research

The Casuarina Sands weir and fishway were rebuilt in 2000, with effective fish passage uncertain. Funding was recently obtained from the Murray–Darling Basin Authority for a trial fish passage. Fish have been tagged and several modifications to the fishway have been tested. This will continue until reliable fish passage is achieved. Additional work includes further tagging to assess population levels, angler take, fish movements, and regular monitoring.

Small mammal surveys — Broad-tooth Rat and Smoky Mouse

Murray Evans, Senior Ecologist, Conservation Planning and Research

Richard Milner, Senior Ranger, Parks and Conservation Service, TAMS

Until recently there have been no systematic ACT surveys for the Broad-tooth Rat or the Smoky Mouse for at least 20 years. There have been only two confirmed sightings of the Smoky Mouse, both dating back nearly 30 years, so it is uncertain whether any at all still exist within the ACT. In the ACT the Broad-tooth Rat is confined to high elevation bogs in Namadgi, and a recent survey found them in 13 of 14 bogs surveyed. This survey did not use traditional trapping methods, and instead used evidence of occupation (runways, feeding areas and scats) along transects within bogs.

A new survey of small mammals in

Namadgi is planned, with a particular focus on detecting the Smoky Mouse. This will use new camera technology instead of the traditional tunnel trapping methods. Between 50 and 100 sites will be surveyed.

Monitoring Murray River crayfish in the ACT

Katie Ryan, Aquatic/Riparian Ecologist, Conservation Research

An initial survey of this species in 1988 revealed that despite evidence of distribution throughout the length of the Murrumbidgee within the ACT, catch rates were patchy and low in comparison with other parts of their range. Accordingly the ACT Government banned fishing of the species in 1993 and put in place a monitoring program. A review of this program has revealed that the species is still at risk in the ACT, and that in fact more work needs to be done to the monitoring program to establish better insight into the size, characteristics and distribution of the ACT population. Work is proceeding on a number of alternative sampling techniques.

Endangered bog and fen plants — off site conservation and seed ecology

Lydia Guja, Seed Conservation Ecologist, Australian National Botanic Gardens

Alpine Sphagnum Bogs and Associated Fens (ASBAFs) are an endangered ecological community listed under the EPBC Act. Because of their inherently small, fragmented and isolated populations, they are particularly threatened by processes such as climate change. The ANBG is working to conserve plants through genetically diverse, long-term ex situ seed collections, and by research designed to inform management and restoration practices on the seed ecology and biology of such plants.

As well as laboratory work, the project includes a seed burial experiment at Ginini Flats to reveal the longevity of seeds in peat and moss substrates in the field. The experiment will also reveal natural conditions that drive germination and its timing, and any patterns of dormancy cycling.

Improving cat management in the ACT

Kathryn Eyles, PhD candidate, ANU

In 2011 the ACT Government, with funding from the Invasive Animals CRC, commissioned a telephone survey of ACT residents to determine cat owner-

(continued on page 7)

Take a pencil too



NPA art exhibition at Namadgi Visitor Centre



No matter how much or how little time you have to spend in Namadgi National Park, take a hat, sunscreen, water, camera, notebook and don't forget to

'Take a pencil too'

"The 'Take a pencil too' exhibition at the Namadgi Visitor Centre features some brilliant artwork from members of the National Parks Association (NPA) who, each year, take part in an art week in Namadgi," said Brett McNamara, Manager of Regional Operations, National Parks and Catchments.

"For one week, members of the NPA stay [at Gudgenby Cottage] ... to sketch, photograph, paint, sew and write about the beautiful bush setting that surrounds them.

"The group takes the time to observe Namadgi's natural environment, watching the way the light falls on the valleys and mountains as the sun sets and listening to the tunes the birds whistle while nestled in the trees. As a result, they have created some inspirational pieces," Mr McNamara said.

NPA President Rod Griffiths said "Members don't often have the time to really explore the flora and fauna of Namadgi, often not fully absorbing the beauty of the area. Art week, however, gives them the opportunity to take it all in".



Setting up at NVC. Photos Rod Griffiths, Adrienne Nicholson

Environmental research in progress *(continued)*

ship and community attitudes to management controls. The declared cat containment suburbs of Forde and Bonner were particularly targeted. It was found that ACT residents were generally responsible cat owners, and that they strongly supported cat containment.

Other research shows that domestic cats have been recorded travelling 390 metres and 900 metres into ACT nature reserves. Fifty per cent of Canberra suburbs are within 500 m of threatened fauna habitat, and a further 27 per cent are within 1000 m of fauna habitat. It was concluded that further steps were needed to promote responsible pet ownership and ensure protection of vulnerable wildlife. Such actions might include a system of cat registration, a targeted extension of cat

curfews, and increased public education, compliance and enforcement.

Monitoring wildlife by spotlight counts 1976–2006

Claire Wimpenny and Don Fletcher, Fauna Ecologists, Conservation Research

This presentation emphasised the importance of spotlight counts as a record for land managers of the abundance or otherwise of both feral animals and wildlife; the need for consistency of counts in terms of timing and frequency, species covered, geographic coverage, timing in relation to control measures and other events; and the maintenance of consistent records. Originally the counts were often established to monitor rabbit populations, but they were found to be very useful in

keeping track of the abundance of other species including foxes, dingoes, pigs, the Red-necked Wallaby and Eastern Grey Kangaroo, and even deer.

Guidelines were laid out for the efficient running of the spotlight program, and some deficiencies in the way the program was run in the past were mentioned. Sites covered by the program include Googong, Tidbinbilla, Gudgenby and experimental sites at Boboyan, Mt Clear, Orroral and Glendale. The Gudgenby site is particularly promising because of the length of transect and the relationship evident between dingoes, foxes, the Red-necked Wallaby and rabbits.

Max Lawrence

Farewell to Julie Henry, Life Member of NPA ACT

Julia Henry, born in 1917, recently passed away in Sydney at the age of 95. Known to her NPA friends as Julie, she was made a life member of NPA in 1973. The following words about Julie appeared in the Golden Anniversary edition of this *Bulletin* (March 2010):

Julie's long involvement in conservation and with environmental groups is based on a great love of the bush and a determination to inspire others to 'cherish it and protect it fiercely.' She joined the NPA ACT committee in 1961, soon after arriving in Canberra, and served for nine years, including a term as President. Julie worked hard on the proposal for an ACT national park, convening the sub-committee which explored for, and compiled the initial submission for, a national park in the ACT (Gudgenby/Mount Kelly area). She also represented the NPA, speaking to the Senate Committee inquiry into the Black Mountain Tower.

Julie is perhaps best known among younger members of the NPA for fellow life member Fiona Brand's photo of her on the summit of Mt Kelly, taken during the now legendary 1962 bush walk to check out the area as a possible national park site. Fiona worked with Julie on those early submissions. Her memories of Julie are as follows.



Remembrances of Julia Henry

Julie Henry came from Queensland to work in the Commonwealth Public Service in 1961. As she had a background of pack walking in the bushland and concern for the natural environment, she joined the newly formed National Parks Association of the ACT and quickly became a member of the committee.

Dr Nancy Burbidge, the founder of the NPA ACT and its aim 'A National Park for the National Capital' suggested that a sub-committee be formed to explore the mountainous area of the ACT to find a site for a national park.

Dr Robert Story, Julie Henry and NPA Secretary Fiona Brand consequently joined an Alpine Club bush-walk led by Alan Bagnall to walk to and climb Mt Kelly in 1962.

We walked through beautiful forested areas, beside a clear creek, across clear frost hollows, and finally dumped our packs where we would camp overnight. Unburdened we climbed Mt Kelly, 6 001 feet high. From the rocky summit the views were magnificent in all directions. We had found our national park area.

Julie, Robert and Nancy wrote the national park proposal using expert information about the geology, plants, mammals, birds and reptiles from CSIRO and ANU scientists. Julie and Fiona compiled four copies of the proposal, with maps and photographs added, in Julie's small room in Havelock House.

A copy of the proposal was handed to the Minister for the Department of Territories in 1963. The issue was reintroduced again and again until

finally, in 1984, Namadgi National Park was declared.

In those early years another issue was the building of the Black Mountain Tower. Opposition was expressed by conservation groups as the ridges and hilltops surrounding the city of Canberra were regarded as conservation areas.

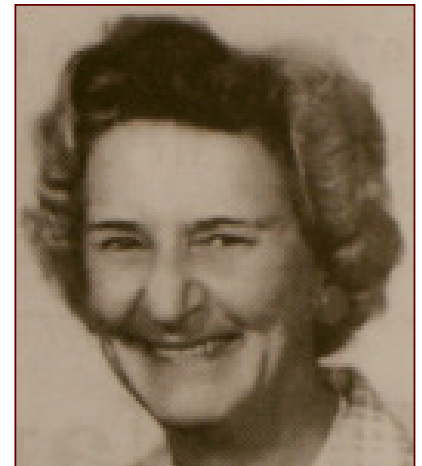
The matter was taken to court and Julie became NPA's spokesperson at meetings held about the plans for building and in the court proceedings. As we all know, the project went ahead and a road was built to the summit, and the tower and buildings appeared.

When Julie retired from the Public Service, she left the ACT to live closer to family in NSW. However, she was always interested in the ACT National Parks Association and enjoyed reading the *NPA Bulletins*.

The National Parks Association of the ACT owes much to this forceful member, as her initial interest and drive for a national park was the basis for NPA's final achievement.

Note: Members of the NPA ACT always called her Julie but her signature on the first climbers' book on Mount Kelly is Julia Henry.

Fiona Brand



Vale Allan Fox

Allan Fox was a notable New South Wales conservationist, and a friend to many in NPA ACT. Sadly, he passed away early in November as a result of a stroke he suffered a few weeks earlier. Allan is remembered by his friends in NPA NSW as having made a long and lasting contribution to the conservation, management and interpretation of

Australia's natural and cultural heritage. From his early days bushwalking with the Caloola Club to his work life in the NSW Education Department, the Fauna Protection Panel, the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, and his lives as consultant, author, photographer, advocate for the environment,

interpreter, educator, story teller and friend, Allan touched many lives. He was a guest speaker at NPA ACT General Meetings on several occasions.

A memorial service for his Canberra friends to celebrate his life was held at the Australian National Botanic Gardens on 20 November.

A 'superb' bird outing to Dananbilla Nature Reserve



My interest in joining the NPA ACT workparties to the former Elliot family property 'Barrelli' (see September 2013 *Bulletin*) was not to learn from Martin, Mike and Brian how to dismantle and remove barbed-wire fences, but more to catch a glimpse of the Superb Parrot and perhaps a Babbler or two. Finally on my fourth tour of duty, Sonja's third, we did see the Superb Parrot, actually a small flock of them, overflying the Hume Highway just north of Yass and then another two near Boorowa, before making the obligatory stop at the Superb Bakery to join the other NPA members.

The team dismantled nearly a kilometre of fences in the first day-and-a-half so eyes were quite focused on the fence, down not up, but we were amply rewarded with bird sightings around the farmhouse as we relaxed after work and Klaus took notes. I have included a few photos to share with you.

Casual investigation revealed a pair of vocal, melodious Rufous Songlarks building a nest in the long grass just metres from the house, a shy but anxious

Grey Shrike-thrush nesting in the roof of the house out back, while the old engine room had become the haven of swallows and a pair of Willy Wagtails, the latter with two rather large resident 'teenagers'.

Adrienne spent her waking moments in the house glued to the big north-facing windows overlooking the power line and a large fig tree

which was a hive of activity for all sorts of avian visitors, including a family of four Weebills. After breakfast on the first day, Ranger Andrew Moore arrived and was giving a post-breakfast prep-talk on the land restoration project outside the front door when a Diamond Fire-tail perched in the tree behind him whistling his hypnotic quiet song.

There were surprisingly few raptors and Sonja made the only snake sighting though we all enjoyed the Bearded Dragon which had to be helped down from his sunny fence-post before we could begin to dismantle the fence. Kathy had made a delicious fruit cake which we demolished over the days with much pleasure, lounging in the shade of the old nature reserve boundary. Meals were a do-it-yourself affair back in the house following welcome hot solar-powered showers and then shared pre-dinner nibbles and wine. Martin brought along his trusty guitar and we all enjoyed his music after dinner.

The pleasure wasn't over for the drive home to Canberra via Boorowa was

through Grey Box woodland i.e. Superb Parrot territory. We took a shortcut down Fishers Lane where a large flock of White-Browed Wood swallows, obviously parents and their fledglings, were feeding. A single Bee-eater flashed by and there were all the other usual suspects including Ravens, Magpies, Peewees, Galahs, Cockatoos, Blue Wrens etc; and then there were the Superb Parrots.

All in a day's work.

**Kevin McCue
Fencer**



Photographs by the author

Top left. Superb Parrot

Above. The 'teenage' pair of Willie Wagtails.

Below left. Martin on guitar and vocals.

Below right. The work party at lunch (l to r) Sonja Lenz, Martin Chalk (Leader), Rupert Barnett, Brian Slee, Adrienne Nicholson, Kathy Saw and Mike Smith. Klaus Hueneke was absent and Kevin McCue took the photo.



Glenburn/Burbong historic precinct: action continues and the Minister visits

Since my last report in the June NPA *Bulletin* many things have happened including a visit by the Minister, Shane Rattenbury MLA.

The key actions have been:

- wrapping the headstones of the Colverwell graves with black plastic for three months and then removing the dead lichen with soft brushes.
- erecting two more interpretive signs — one at Coppins Homestead ruins and one inside Glenburn Homestead. This brings to five the number of signs in the historic precinct. They help visitors understand the historical context of the sites. Thanks Parks Service.
- liberating the ruins of Curleys Hut from blackberries. Recent research has revealed that it was built in 1882–83 by William Collier. It was a five-room slab cottage with a full-length verandah and a separate kitchen.
- staff and students of the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) visiting Colliers orchard. Aspects of the orchard are being included in some courses. One group of students is preparing a detailed map of the orchard and it will make specific recommendations for the orchard's preservation.
- publishing an article on the NPA website <www.npaact.org.au> under The Friends of Glenburn describing the protection and conservation work that has been carried out in the past eight years by the Parks Service and The Friends of Glenburn. A second article will update my 2007 monograph on the precinct in the light of new information, including the location of the Kowen School, the fabric of Curleys Hut, who lived there and when, and the Edmonds time at

Colliers Homestead and their departure from Glenburn Homestead.

- conducting drives/walks to some of the historic sites for the National Parks Association of the ACT. These tours provide an ideal opportunity for the general public to visit and appreciate the early European historic sites, which are otherwise behind locked gates in an operating pine forest.
- tidying up the sites of Glenburn Homestead, the Colverwell graves and Colliers Homestead ruins and orchard by mowing and poisoning grass, and digging up and poisoning emerging blackberries before the 19 October visit by the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Shane Rattenbury MLA.
- showing Minister Rattenbury some of the protection and conservation actions that have been undertaken by the Parks Service and The Friends of Glenburn over the past five years. Parks Service staff and members of The Friends explained what had been done at Glenburn Homestead, the Colverwell graves and Colliers Homestead ruins and orchard and what still needs to be done. The Minister was most interested in the little known but rich early European heritage in the Glenburn/Burbong area of the Kowen forest. He thanked the National Parks Association of the ACT, The Friends of Glenburn, the Canberra Bushwalking Club, The Canberra Institute of Technology and the Office of the Surveyor-General of the ACT for their support and help to the Parks Service.

Photographs

Top right. The Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Shane Rattenbury MLA, talking to Park staff and a member of the Friends of Glenburn between the two homes of Glenburn Homestead. Photo Len Haskew.

Above right. Diane Thorne and her sons Andrew and James at Colliers Homestead ruins. Diane is the granddaughter of John James and Agnes May Edmonds. Photo, Col McAlister.

Left. Curleys Hut ruins in July 2013 after being liberated from blackberries. Note the two stone steps at the front of the ruins. Photo Col McAlister.



- showing some of the descendants of John James and Agnes May Edmonds (who built Glenburn Homestead) Colliers Homestead ruins and orchard and Glenburn Homestead on 19 October. The Edmonds family was associated with Colliers Homestead prior to building Glenburn Homestead. It was some years since the descendants and some of their families had seen both homesteads and they were pleasantly surprised to see the major protection and conservation work that had been carried out, particularly the removal of blackberries at Colliers, the stabilisation of both homes of Glenburn Homestead and its new post-and-rail fence to protect the homestead from rabbits and stock.



- appearing on *ABC Radio 666* on the afternoon of 21 October to be interviewed by Melanie Tait about Glenburn/Burbong. I was nervous but I think it went OK. I also showed

(continued next page)



Forthcoming NPA social events

Mapping our world: Terra Incognita to Australia, National Library of Australia

Wednesday 8 January. Bookings have been made for 15 people, entry is free. To ensure a place, contact Graham Scully 6230 3352 or scullymob@southernphone.com.au. Meet in the National Library foyer at 10:00 am. It is planned to follow the exhibition viewing with a light lunch.

This remarkable exhibition brings together some of the world's greatest maps, atlases, globes and scientific instruments, many of which have never before been seen in the Southern Hemisphere.

Treasured items from some of the world's greatest map collections tell the remarkable story of how Australia came to be on the map, and reveal the history of and struggle to imagine and document the world: from the earliest imaginings of the Earth and the night sky, through to Matthew Flinders' landmark *General Chart of Terra Australis* or Australia in 1814.

Canberra's early bush schools and teachers. Hall School Museum

Thursday 23 January. Entry is free, but a gold coin donation is welcomed. Hall School Museum, 10:00 am. We will conclude our visit with lunch at the delightful local Gumnut Cafe. Contact Graham Scully, 6230 3352 or scullymob@southernphone.com.au so that a table can be reserved.

The exhibition tells the stories of the Australian Capital Territory's first public schools and teachers, and the families and communities they served.

A dozen small schools had already closed by 1913. Many former school sites are obscure and forgotten. The Nerrebundah ('Long Gully') School site lies under the tarmac of Yamba Drive. A few are commemorated with plaques, such as at Church Rock Valley and Gibraltar in the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, or marked with heritage signage like Mulligan's Flat and Weetangera schools. All of them, however, have considerable significance among the families and communities they served, or the descendants of those who taught in them.

This exhibition tells the stories of the small and scattered bush schools absorbed into the Federal Capital Territory in 1911 and still in operation in 1913 when the city was named. The first of these schools opened in 1870 and the last, at Hall and Tharwa, closed in 2006.

Graham Scully

Glenburn/Burbong historic precinct *(continued)*

Stephen Easton from *City News* the Colverwell graves, Glenburn Homestead and Colliers Homestead ruins and orchard on 24 October. I am hopeful that an article will appear in *City News*. I also hope both activities will lead to a wider knowledge and appreciation by Canberra and Queanbeyan residents of the early European heritage in the area.

- planting three pine seedlings at Glenburn Homestead to replace the very large dead and dying pines that were cut down in 2008 because they threatened to crash onto both homes.
- on 27 October, showing 16 descendants of John and Catherine Coppins the ruins of Coppins Homestead. Apart from Rhonda Boxall, who had come up from near Wollongong on a couple of occasions to assist The Friends clear the blackberries from around the ruins

and the large Osage Orange tree, none of the other descendants had seen the site; and

- commencing work on the capping and repointing of the walls of Colliers Homestead ruins. The work commenced in November with the Parks Service providing the skilled labour and The Friends the 'grunt' to mix and transport the cement mortar. Several wheel barrows of rocks were removed from the ruins site so that the grass can be mowed safely.

Over the next few months two new important actions will be undertaken by the Parks Service.

The first is the erection of a rabbit-proof fence around Colliers Homestead ruins and orchard. This will not only help control rabbits but also pigs and cattle that are damaging the site. The Friends of Glenburn will assist with the cost of the fence by drawing on funds



provided through the National Parks Association of the ACT from a grant and from donations by individuals.

The second is the replacement/repair of the corner posts of the Glenburn Homestead slab home. This skilled work will be done by the Parks Service staff.

The Friends will also be busy over the next few months with general maintenance of the sites including mowing/whipper-snipping grass, poisoning/digging out re-emerging blackberries and also painting the new post and rail fences at Glenburn Homestead and the Colverwell graves with a second coat of decking oil.

Col McAlister



Above right. CIT students laying out part of the string grid prior to preparing the map of Colliers orchard.

Left. Four generations of the descendants of John and Catherine Coppin in front of Coppins chimney ruins (from a great grandson aged 87 to a great, great, great, grandson aged four). Photos Col McAlister.

Classic books for a budding amateur naturalist

Wild Flowers of Australia, by Thistle Y. Harris (1938)

What Bird Is That?, by Neville W. Cayley (1931)

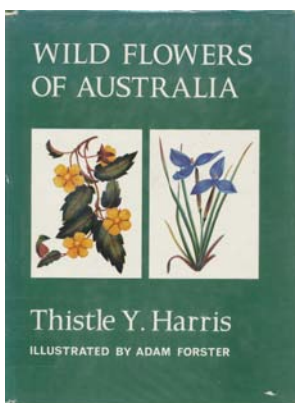
Furred Animals of Australia, by Ellis Troughton (1941)

Australian Seashores, by W.J. Dakin (1952)

In 1967, after a fleeting career as a teacher of woodwork and metalwork, I was able to slip into the back door of Macquarie University as a mature-age student. It had a wonderful collection of half-year courses which I could try and pass or fail, and fail again, without being kicked out. After two years belly flopping in English, Philosophy and the abhorrent Sadistics (!?), I swan dived in the Earth Sciences and Ecology. With limited means I even went out and bought the above classics in hardback at \$5.95 each (perhaps \$60 today) and, intending they last a lifetime, covered them in plastic.

It was before quality colour photography so the plates were carefully done by hand with colour pencils or watercolours. Dakin's book was a little more advanced with strong black and white photo plates. The text was printed on lightweight, highly absorbent, creamy coloured paper and the plates on dense, shiny paper commonly used today. They had a look, a feel, a smell and a style which I love to this day.

Wild flowers



In her book, Thistle Harris (what a name for a botanist who adored native flora) depicted numerous species from our region, including native raspberry, native cherry, kurrajong, happy wanderer, trigger plants, various tea-trees and several grevilleas. All were illustrated by Adam Foster, formerly Carl Ludwig Wiarda from Emden in Germany. The

book had come about because Adam had developed a friendship with David Stead, a pioneer conservationist, and because David was, in today's unrestrained jargon, Thistle's lover. Years later, Adam Foster's paintings were donated to the National Library which published them in 2010 as *A Brilliant Touch — Adam Foster's Wildflower Paintings*. The charming little hardback was designed by Sarah Evans who also did Matthew Higgins' *Rugged Beyond Imagination*, the history of the Namadgi area.

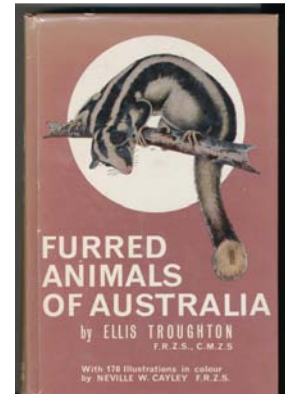
Some 20 years ago Thistle put out a call for seeds of the happy wanderer. They were intended for planting on road batters. I sent her a bag full to which she soon applied some heat to open them up for germination and placing in little pots. The Department of Main Roads went with the idea and in late winter one now sees banks of purple cascading down otherwise barren embankments.

Birds



The illustrations in *What Bird is That?* are not quite as animated as in modern bird guides like Simpson and Day, Slater or Pizzey, nor do they show the difference between males and females and juveniles but they are crisp, to scale and rich in colour. The text placed more emphasis on distribution, migration patterns, calls made, the nature of the nest and the colour of the eggs than the detailed plumage of the birds. Caley's description of the habits of the Little Tern, i.e. 'usually in flocks nesting on sand spits near an inlet with two or three spotted and blotched eggs in a shallow depression', accords with what I know from the south coast. He did not mention the, 'Do a turn for a Tern', slogan coined by NP&WS to save the endangered species but would no doubt agree if he were still alive.

Furry animals



Three defining features of Ellis Troughton's book on furry wild things are the easily understood, not-too-scientific text, the long descriptions of their habits and the use of oral history. A Miss Lily Ivey reared a sugar glider in suburban Sydney: 'The baby was smaller than a dollar piece and could only be fed two drops of sugary water at a time. Even then it was quite distended. Once grown up it enjoyed cooked vegetables such as cauliflower, pumpkin and potatoes, as well as arrowroot biscuits dipped in tea'. It seemed incongruous but I could almost imagine Lily and the glider sitting down to high tea. If there were any small mice around the glider would, according to Lily, pounce on them with great speed and kill them by biting them in the back of the neck.

On a recent trip to Central Australia a ranger told us about Stick-nest Rats that used to build elaborate homes out of sticks and body excretions. I looked up Ellis' book when I got home. When Major Mitchell first came across them in 1838 he thought they were piles of brushwood for Aboriginal signal fires but after breaking some nests open they were surprised to discover soft nests containing small animals with ears like rabbits, downy fur and short hind legs. In 1844 Charles Sturt found that the metre-high structures had about five entrance holes around the base and a hole into the ground which may have been used as a cooling off place. Fascinating. Unfortunately, and as foreshadowed by Ellis' book, the species soon became extinct. Damn.

The seashore

As well as being easy to understand and chatty in style, William Dakin's book displays a penchant for poetry,

(continued next page)

The Biggest Estate on Earth

NPA's guest speaker at its first 2014 General Meeting — on Thursday 20 February — will be Professor Bill Gammage, author of the award winning book *'The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia.'*

This book was reviewed in the June 2012 edition of the *NPA Bulletin*. The first paragraph of the review read:

The central thesis of this weighty but very readable tome ... is that prior to European settlement Aboriginal people used fire to very carefully manage the entire Australian landscape. The result was a far more open panorama than we know today, more akin to the parkland estates held by European gentry in their northern hemisphere homelands. Gammage maintains that once Aboriginal people were no longer able to tend their country, it became overgrown and vulnerable to the hugely damaging bushfires we now experience. Importantly ... he maintains that 'what we think of as virgin bush in a national park is nothing of the kind.'

For the full review, check out the NPA website www.npaact.org.au and follow the links Our Publications, The Bulletin, Back Issues. Or better still, buy the book and read it. Or best of all, come to the February General Meeting and discuss it with the man himself.

I Don't Know Your Name

I don't know your name
silent majestic one
I see
your buttressed trunk
the vines that wrap you

bird calls
in your dark tangled
canopy
for two thousand years
the sound of dripping rain

way down below
I'm on a slippery track
rain patters
my parka hood
turning me inwards

my right hip groans
my left knee wobbles
how long
can I go on for
you ... will outlive ... me

Gerry Jacobson

Sketches of the Glenburn historic precinct by NPA member Gary Thompson

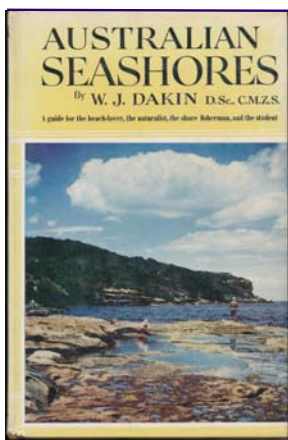


The shearing shed from the west



Glenburn homestead across the paddocks from the east

Classic books for a budding amateur naturalist (continued)



something rarely seen in biology books of today. The Flotsam and Jetsam chapter is introduced by these pertinent lines from Emerson.

*I wiped away the weeds and foam,
I fetched my sea-borne treasures
home;
But the poor, unsightly, noisome
things
Had left their beauty on the shore,
With the sun and the sand and the
wild uproar.*

Perhaps the poetic touch was due to Isobel Bennett and Elizabeth Pope who completed the book after William's death. They also observed that 'lonely beach wonderers are often romantic and may see nothing except what is in each other's eyes'. All this in a scientific text!

It was their book that helped me verify the hard to believe notion that a thing that looked like a seed cone could actually be the egg case of a shark. It also taught me that the white limy lumps

'crowded in inextricable confusion' at mid-tide level was a worm called *Galeolaria caespitosa*, that what had inspired some artistic ceramic activity were the dried up holdfasts for kelp and that the intricate necklaces of little sandy balls lying on the beach were made by a crab called the Sand Bubbler. The photogenic balls are left over after the organic matter has been sifted out.

These are books to be treasured and passed on to a keen nephew or niece and not to be put out at the next Lifeline book fair.

Klaus Hueneke

A trip along the Upper Murray River

The first 100 km of the Murray River passes through some very rugged and scenic countryside, much of it very inaccessible. In this first stretch, the river descends about 1 100 metres through the Kosciuszko and Alpine national parks. It then flows into a broad fertile valley that is used extensively for farming. It takes 2 400 km to descend the final 300 metres to sea level.

Having paddled over many years most of the Murray River I was interested in walking along the upper reaches of the river. During a Canberra Bushwalking Club (CBC) walk with Karen, the idea arose of walking along the Murray from the source to Tom Groggin — a distance of about 70 km. Karen had already walked the Black-Allan Line (the straight NSW-Victorian border from the Murray source to Cape Howe), so for both of us it was an extension of our earlier travels along opposite ends of the NSW-Victorian border.

Earlier accounts

The problem with planning this walk was the lack of information. My First Edition 1:100 000 Jacobs River map shows a 'Foot Track' that leads from the Cascade Trail down to the confluence of Tin Mine Creek with the Murray River and from there closely follows the Murray downstream on the Victorian side to Tom Groggin. However, we did not know of anyone who had walked this track and the track did not appear on later maps. Also, with respect to the Upper Murray, the July 1982 edition of the 'it' (the CBC Newsletter) stated:

There are few tracks in this area. Fishermen's tracks continue for some way up the River from Buckwong Creek. An old 1909 Mines Department map shows a mining track along the river from Tom Groggin to 'Pendergast's Old Hut' on Limestone Creek, but there is no trace left of it.

Furthermore, the only report¹ of anyone travelling along the river from the source to Tom Groggin was a party who walked and li-loed in several stages in the 1980s taking about a week following the river. On their final day they followed a track along the river from Tom Groggin Top Flat down to Tom Groggin but since that was 25 years



ago we did not know if the track still existed. After our trip I found that Rod Wellington, a Canadian, had walked and mainly rafted down this section of the river as part of his source to sea expedition in December 2009–March 2010. His account² of this section of the river would not have given much hope of an easy walk. Rod is the veteran of many expeditions and recently paddled the Missouri–Mississippi River system from source to sea. Even later I read *Crossing the Ditch* by James Castrission, which is his account of paddling across the Tasman Sea with his mate Justin Jones. Their first expedition in kayaks was with friend Andrew on the Murray from source to sea in late 2001. In it he briefly describes how walking below Cowombat Flat they became 'surrounded by bluffs in scrub that was near impenetrable' so they surfed their packs down the rapids in freezing water for three days. All their gear got wet including their sleeping bags and matches so they spent the nights shivering in their wet thermals and needed to resort to 'spooning' each other. Fortunately, when we started our walk we were not aware of these horror stories from intrepid adventurers who had preceded us.

Murray source to Tom Groggin

One of our party had contacts in high places so, after leaving a car at Tom Groggin, we were able to gain vehicle access to the Cascade Trail to be dropped off near the Murray source to begin our walk. This would allow us up to eight days walking along or in the river. The walk was set for 24–31 March 2013. There were only three walkers in this 'party of peers' — Karen, Bob and myself. By the end of the first day we were camped about one kilometre downstream of Cowombat Flat after having visited the metal pole at the Murray source. We had mixed feelings about finding brumby tracks that assisted our progress through the forest below the flat.

On Day 2 we continued to follow the brumby tracks. These would peter out occasionally or head away from where we wanted to go, so there was a bit of scrub bashing before picking up another trail. We had lunch beside the Murray just before the Surveyors Creek confluence. Downstream of here the valley falls steeply on both sides down to the river so we decided to gain some height on the NSW side and then traverse along the 1 100 metre contour for a couple of kilometres. This was a difficult climb through trackless scrub with full packs on a warm day. We then descended down a spur to the river at the upper end of McHardies Flat, crossed the river and found our drivers of Day 1 camped at the Poplars Camping Area at the end of McCarthys Track near Round Mountain. We had walked about eight kilometres for the day. That night we were well fed and 'watered' and a very enjoyable evening followed.

Progress on Day 3 was very good. On the NSW side we found numerous

(continued on next page)



Photographs. Top. Mike Bremers on Forest Hill above the Murray source. Right. Sometimes walking in the river was preferable.

A trip along the Upper Murray River *(continued)*



brumby tracks along the river flats. By the end of the day we had covered about 13 km. We camped about 4 km, as the crow flies, upstream of the Tin Mine Creek confluence.

On Day 4, progress soon became much more difficult. The vegetation became lush and thicker and we could find only faint animal tracks at best. Our speed dropped to about 500 m per hour. We then decided that walking in the river was quicker (1.5–2 km per hour) than on the banks and by lunchtime we had reached the Tin Mine Creek confluence. Later in the afternoon we camped about three kilometres, as the crow flies, downstream of the Tin Mine Creek confluence. Our campsite was a rocky/sandy beach that required some landscaping to ensure a good night's sleep.

It started raining early on Day 5 and we continued the river walking. Progress was slow because the river was now becoming narrower and deeper and flowing through a steep-sided valley; walking in it was becoming difficult. During the day we saw two dark-coloured deer standing in the river shallows. Campsites were difficult to find but we pitched our tents early on the wet afternoon on a rocky ledge and small sandy beach not far above water level. While we had walked only about 4 km for the day, the scenery on Day 5, as on Day 4, was the most beautiful of the trip.

Our campsite was only 2.5 km, as the crow flies, from Tom Groggin Top Flat but we knew it would take us all of Day 6 to get there. The weather had cleared and, in order to cut off a large bend in the river, we crossed to the NSW side and climbed about 150 m up to the 800 metre contour, crossing several spurs

along the way, before descending back down to the river. By lunchtime, we were exhausted and had covered only 2 km but we had now reached the river flats and 'rejoiced' at finding brumby tracks once again, while simultaneously cursing any environmental damage that they may cause. Progress then was relatively fast to Tom Groggin Top Flat. This area had evidence (e.g. tarps, frying pan) of regular visitors over many years. It gave us great confidence that we now had a relatively easy walk out to Tom Groggin the next day.

Our optimism at the end of Day 6 started to disappear early on Day 7 as we followed brumby tracks that either petered out or headed in the wrong direction — we cursed those brumbies even more! We decided to climb high up a spur and descend another back to the river where we were pleased to find a distinct track with evidence of pruned branches. This track followed the river all the way to Buckwong Creek camping area on the Davies Track. Since it was Easter Saturday there were people camped in the camping area. Unfortunately, our first sight of another human in almost five days was a boy having a crap behind the bushes that shielded him from the campsite but this was next to the

track that we were walking along. Welcome to civilization! We camped near here, which left an easy walk to the car at Tom Groggin the **next** morning.

Tom Groggin to Damms Bridge

Close scrutiny of the Rooftop's Corryong–Omeo–Thredbo Adventure Map shows that the Harrington Track follows the Murray River for about 20 km downstream of Tom Groggin and then fire trails generally follow the river for most of the way to Damms Bridge. Damms Bridge is where the Murray

(continued on page 16)



*Photographs. Top. Clover Flat rapids, Murray River
Right. Upper Murray River*

A trip along the Upper Murray River *(continued)*



Colemans Bend, Upper Murray Valley

flows out of Kosciuszko National Park. From this point downstream the Murray River flows through a broad fertile valley used for dairy farming. Damms Bridge is called ‘Maguires Bridge’ on the topographic maps but other maps and road signs refer to it as Damms Bridge.

The Harrington Track is not well publicised but the information boards at each end of the track give some interesting information. The original Harrington Track was constructed by hand by the Victorian Mines Department in 1895 over an 8-month period. It extended 61 km from Towong to Tom Groggin. The track fell into disrepair but was reopened during the First World War, then again during the 1930s depression. In 1975 and again after the 2003 bushfires work was undertaken to ensure that the present day 20 km track remained open for recreational purposes.

This walk was set for 4–6 October 2013 with the CBC and again there were three of us in the party. After a lengthy car shuffle we walked 8 km from Tom Groggin, through Tom Groggin Station (prior permission sought) to the start of the Harrington track at the Stony Creek campsite by the river.

We knew that Day 2 was going to be a very long day. The sign at Stony Creek made us realise that we would be walking about 5 km further than originally estimated and that the section of the track that follows the river closely actually contained a number of climbs. Downstream of Stony Creek the Murray flows through the ‘Murray Gates’ between two large mountains — Hermit Mountain on the Victorian side and Granuaille Mountain on the NSW side. These mountains tower 900 m above the river making the Murray Gates some of the best continuous rapids in southern Australia. From Stony Creek the track climbs steeply over Hermit Mountain, which gave us good views of the snow-clad Main Range, and then descends even more steeply down to the Murray River at Hermit Creek. We had morning tea here but it would make a great spot for camping as it is just below a grade 4 rapid. We quickly continued on the ‘flat’ section of the Harrington Track. There are many spectacular views of the river from this section of track but often it is from quite a height looking down to the river below.

About an hour after lunch we reached

the Bunroy Station end of the Harrington Track. We followed an overgrown fire trail to get to the Indi River Track and then it was an easy 4–5 km to reach the Bunroy Creek campsite beside the Murray River. It took us 9 hours to cover 26 km with a total climb of 1 050 m.

The original plan for Day 3 was to cross the Murray River, scrub-bash for less than a kilometre to Hoggs Hut and then follow the fire trail for 4 km to the car at Damms Bridge. However, the river was flowing quite swiftly and none of us wanted to enter the 10°C water to see how deep it was on the far side. The alternative was to head for Bunroy Mountain on fire trails and then to follow the overgrown Whitseds Track across private property (prior permission sought and granted) down to the Upper Murray Road just north of Damms Bridge. We reached the car at Damms Bridge for an early lunch. This section took us 4 hours to cover 14 km with a 600 m climb.

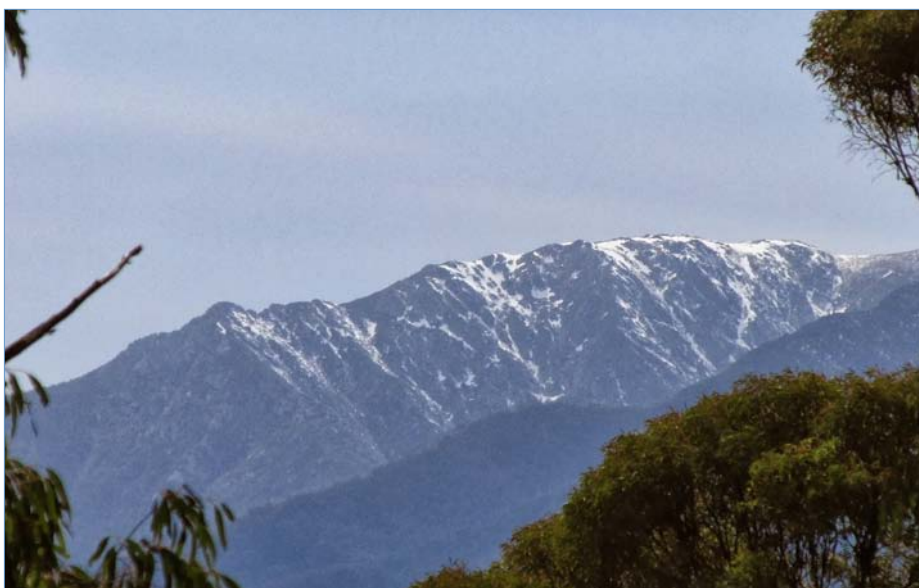
My recommendation to anyone repeating this trip from Tom Groggin would be to do it over four rather than three days. That would mean that our second day could be split over two days allowing for more time to appreciate the river. If a one-night walk was desired a very good option would be to walk the Harrington Track from Bunroy Station to Hermit Creek (13 km) camping overnight before returning to Bunroy Station. This would allow for views of the river without any excessive climbing. Day walks are also possible in other parks in the Corryong region.

Mike Bremers

References

1. <http://xnatmap.org/adnm/docs/mirv/mriv.htm>
2. <http://zeroemissionsexpeditions.com/expeditions/murray-river-source-to-sea/expedition-timeline-days-1-12-the-infant-murray/>

Photographs supplied by Mike Bremers



Bushwalks

Lake Ginninderra and Mt Rogers

Walk: Sunday 13 October 2013

Participants: Brian Slee (Leader), Steve Hill, Margaret Power

Weather: Clear sky, breezy, temperatures mid-20s.

Leader's comments

Is Belco a poor and miserable place? Many Canberrans seem to think so. Easily avoided, anyhow. As a Woden Valley resident, maybe I had a dim view of Belconnen but in 2010 I found it had a winter abundance of swimming pools that Woden now completely lacked. On excursions to use the facilities I looked around and found the flash new Belconnen Mall with its new bus interchange. Free-flowing Ginninderra Creek fed a grand lake; one embankment hosted a new arts centre. I thought: Yarralumla Creek in Woden is a concrete ditch, feeding neither lake nor wetland. Where is Woden arts centre? Fresh food markets? Who feels comfortable using Woden bus interchange?

I drove the southern rim of Belconnen: it was beautiful. I led a walk from the western end to Uriarra. I went on Esther's walks: Aranda bushland, Mt Painter, The Pinnacle. All beautiful.

Superb parrots: superb! (Rare elsewhere in Canberra.) So I contrived NPA walks through West Belconnen, taking in Dunlop lakes and grasslands, Charnwood homestead, Mt Rogers (704 m) and Ginninderra Creek. Sitting on the mountain, I imagined a walk connecting it with the lake. Here 'tis.

John Knight Park is a lovely haven at the eastern end of Lake Ginninderra. From there we set off along Emu Bank at 9:35 am. The Telco tower atop our destination was visible across the slightly rippling lake. A few joggers about.

Margaret saved embarrassment at the end of the lake by steering us to Coulter Drive underpass. From Edman Close we followed a grassy watercourse through Florey, under Ginninderra and Copland drives, past the BMX track and found a shady glade for morning tea (and Steve's Tim Tams), watching an under-manned cricket match at Melba I oval. We were visited by a white labrador, theme breed of the day.

Heading north, the map came out to help link Melba Tennis Club to Mt Rogers Community Centre via bike path, park, cul-de-sac and crescent.

Thereafter a track took us under Kingsford Smith; we scrambled up a grassy slope and slumped on a bench, with views. Chatty passers-by, a chocolate labrador. Then a black one. An easy foot pad took us up past the tower to Mt Rogers. Lunch under a gum, out of the breeze, views across CSIRO's green fields to the northern border. Quiet and lovely.

The return to Melba I was by a more obvious route, descending east past massed flowering photinias then south and under Verbrugghen Street. It was getting warm so after passing back under Copland, we stopped at Read Place barbeque in Evatt, waiting for snags and cordial. Nothing. Off we trudged, eventually reconnecting with the lake and stopped for afternoon tea at Kangara Waters retirement village's Birrigai Cafe. Not bad. A cold front was moving in. A further 200 metres and we were at the cars before 3:00 pm. Altogether 12 km.

Brian Slee

Jerusalem Hill (almost)

Walk: Sunday 11 August 2013

Participants: Brian Slee (Leader), Max Smith, Peter Anderson-Smith

Weather: Cold, sunny, windy with some gusts; clouding over in afternoon.

Leader's comments

The plan was to depart Calwell at 6:30 am, drive to Dead Horse Gap, snowshoe from there on Cascade Trail and climb Brindle Bull Hill. However, although it had been a poor season, a dump of snow had fallen on a sound base in the week before the walk. Would conditions be good enough to get us as far as elusive Jerusalem Hill instead?

At Cascade Trail we set out at 9:10 am on solid snow but it had become patchy by Thredbo River crossing. Prospects were not bright but we nevertheless turned south, away from Brindle Bull, and began climbing Bobs Ridge. The 200 metre rise was a slog but hard snow had soon returned and

conditions were excellent for snowshoeing. Seven brumbies filed away. Atop the ridge we turned onto Great Dividing Range and found a sheltered spot for a break at 11:00 am, overlooking Boggy Plain, Thredbo River and Chimneys Ridge. Not a lot of snow on them but quite a panorama in bright sun.

From there we took a gently undulating course south-east, peak-hopping for an hour through burnt snowgums while taking in views to The Pilot and Cobberas Mountains in Victoria and the many dark, treacherous valleys between. A fox pranced out of view. At 12:15 pm we were on unnamed peak (1 827 metres), 1.5 km short of Jerusalem Hill, but as we were 7 km from where we started, far enough for a day.

After lunch we took the easy option and simply followed our outward track in the now nicely crunching snow. Main and Ramshead Ranges were spectacularly lit as cloud first billowed on the western horizon then shelled in at 2 000

metres. Back at the car about 3:00 pm.

After the usual Sundance beano at Jindabyne, we were among the traffic back home. It had taken 10 minutes to get through Jindabyne on the way down but holdups shifted to Cooma and the entrance to Canberra for the return. Nothing major, however, and we were at Calwell at 6:15 pm.

Snowshoe walks to Jerusalem Hill were on the NPA program in 2010 and 2011 but we twice ended up on Ramshead as there was little snow south of the Alpine Way. This time we were a hill short. It would require a 6:00 am departure, too early for most. Lovely remote area worth exploring further, however.

Brian Slee

Bushwalk

Mt Anton (on snowshoes)

Walk: Sunday 8 September 2013

Participants: Brian Slee (Leader), Kathy Saw, Max Smith, Mike Bremers, Peter Anderson-Smith, Margaret Power

Weather: Chilly; consistent breeze; high cloud thinning in the afternoon.

Leader's comments

A metre of ice/snow supported us when we snowshoed across Blue Lake on 1 October 2012. In early Spring 2013, flippers would have been more useful. Record temperatures were quickly destroying the season's best fall. When we reached Guthega for this walk, departures were outnumbering arrivals. Guthega Pondage was overflowing the wall, a rare sight.

Ridge tops were bare of snow but the eastern slopes had some so we set out at 9:10 am and found a solid base once we were on the other side of Illawong Bridge. We scrambled to the first line of snowgums and had a break. Skiers were

scattered across the slopes ahead. A red robin briefly fluttered, like a flame on ice.

It was five years since we last snowshoed to Anton (2 010 metres). We were soon to be reminded what an exhausting 400 metre climb it is. There were a few tumbles as we slowly made our way to the bare ridge above Pounds Creek. Snow still bridged the creek and once crossed, we followed another's footsteps up to the saddle south of Anton. Half the group then climbed to the summit on snow from the south-east while the others rock-hopped west and settled for lunch north of, and just below, the top. We were in easy shouting distance of each other!

Soon after one o'clock we set off down the steep eastern slope. Afternoon snow usually has 'give': you lean back, the snowshoe sinks and you descend a comfortable staircase. Surprisingly, the surface was slippery, the base ungiving; some bum slides ensued.

The light was brightening as we shuffled out of Pounds Creek; we then

followed our tracks back to Snowy River. Snowshoes stayed on across the bridge and we found good snow for much of the way to Farm Creek. Back at Guthega before four.

Two of the group were staying in the mountains so the remainder piled into Mike's new Prado for the return trip to Calwell, arriving 7:00 pm. Hardly any traffic. Monaro Highway was lined with road kill, in excess even of the usual carnage.

Anton is a lovely area to walk in. Little Twynam is an alternative future destination, keeping north of Twynam Creek and returning via the beautiful slope south of the creek.

South Australia, a flood of crystal clear water is heading your way. When the new government sets about diverting it elsewhere, however, you might puzzle why you voted so generously for them on 7 September.

Brian Slee

Guthega Pondage. Photo Mike Bremers



PARKWATCH

*Edited extracts from recent journals
and newsletters*

Hunting in National Parks — where we stand now

The NSW National Parks Association welcomes decisions by the NSW Government to respond to the overwhelming concerns of the community about recreational hunting in national parks. The government's new Supplementary Pest Control Program differs dramatically from the unacceptable proposal that was originally put forward. The new program will initially occur in only 12 parks in NSW, not 75. Within those parks, it will occur only as part of planned operations, when and where NPWS staff consider it necessary. While a limited number of professional volunteer hunters will be involved, they will be operating under the direction of NPWS staff. Hunters will be required to have equivalent training to that of professional NPWS staff, rather than just an R licence, and children will not be able to participate in the program.

There were many players in the state-wide campaign to keep our parks safe. Our special thanks to all our NPA branches and volunteers. Thanks to everyone who supported this campaign. Because of our combined efforts, amateur, ad-hoc recreational hunters will not be allowed to roam about unchecked in our national parks.

Nature NSW, Vol. 57,
No. 3 (spring 2013)

Keep the Capes Wild campaign

In spite of the TNPA's best efforts, and with help from other organisations such as the Tasmanian Conservation Trust and the Peninsula Environment Network, the fully approved (since mid-late 2012) 'Three Capes Track' development is ready for construction. How has this come about? Largely by the government very carefully avoiding dealing with the substantive issues raised by the TNPA and others in relation to this development. The good news, however, is that the state government has, at least initially, reduced the track from the original 5-night 'Three Capes Walk' that took in both the eastern and western parts of the Tasman Peninsula, and traversed the bulk of the Tasman National Park, to a 3-night walk on the eastern part of the Peninsula only — essentially now a 'Two Capes track'. The state government continues to maintain,

however, that it is committed to the entire 'Three Capes Track' project.

TNPA News, No. 17 (winter 2013)

Annual passes and national parks entrance fees

Some national parks charge a vehicle entry fee — these funds go directly to supporting conservation programs and to building and maintaining facilities in the national parks and reserves of NSW. If you're a regular park visitor, you can save on motor vehicle entry fees by buying an annual pass. An annual pass is great value for money, covering entry fees to your nominated park or parks for either 1 or 2 years and is also a terrific way to show your support for the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. Annual pass holders also have the option of receiving NPWS quarterly e-newsletter, *Naturescapes*, which provides excellent information on great parks to visit and new and exciting events and activities.

Nature NSW, Vol. 57,
No. 3 (spring 2013)

National Rabbit Management Facilitator appointed

With the worrying trend that rabbit numbers are again on the rise, the Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries, the Invasive Animals CRC and the Foundation for Rabbit-Free Australia have jointly announced the appointment of Dr Lisa Adams as the first National Rabbit Management Facilitator who will work to support community-led rabbit management. Rabbits threaten more than 75 nationally threatened plant species and five threatened ecological communities.

To assist landholders to better control wild rabbits, the Invasive Animals CRC has published the *PestSmart: Glovebox Guide for Managing Rabbits*. It is available free to download at http://www.feral.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/RabbitGBG_web.pdf

Nature NSW, Vol. 57,
No. 3 (spring 2013)

NSW Government review of the *Threatened Species Conservation* and *Native Vegetation Acts*

The NSW Government has announced that there will be significant changes to the *Native Vegetation Regulation 2005*, following the release of the independent

facilitator's report on native vegetation management. Under the new regulation, farmers will be able to access a wider range of exemption and self-assess low-impact clearing activities. The NSW Government at the same time announced its intention to review the NSW *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*.

In NSW NPA's view the *Threatened Species Conservation* and *Native Vegetation Acts* are the foundation for the protection of ecological communities and individual species found on private land in NSW. The Acts set out important regulatory, environmental assessment, independent listing and species recovery mechanisms that are world leading and supported by the majority of the community. The NSW Government's review follows on from its decision to weaken land-clearing controls and other environmental protections of our natural terrestrial and marine heritage. Its intention to integrate key provisions of the Acts into the new planning regime (which places economic development as an overriding concern and removes consideration of ecologically sustainable development) is a major threat to the protection of biodiversity, soil and water quality. These resources also provide important environmental and economic services to rural and urban communities.

NSW NPA rejects any option that removes the Acts from the statute books, or diminishes the level of environment protection in their provisions. Such actions would pander to the extreme elements of the rural community and the Shooters and Fishers Party. We call on the NSW Government to better resource the implementation of the Acts, ensure effective compliance and ensure that the new Planning Act does not interfere with or reduce the protection of native vegetation or threatened species.

Nature NSW, Vol. 57,
No. 3 (spring 2013)

NPA helping to achieve the Great Eastern Ranges vision in the Illawarra–Shoalhaven

The Great Eastern Ranges Initiative (GER) has emerged as one of the largest conservation projects of its kind, with a vision to link protected areas and habitat on private land from the Grampians (Vic.) through NSW and the ACT to Far North Queensland. Achieving a conservation 'corridor' on this scale will depend on collaborative projects like the

(continued on page 20)

PARKWATCH (continued from page 19)

Illawarra Rainforest and Woodland restoration project. NSW NPA is working with the GER to establish a collaborative partnership in the Illawarra–Shoalhaven that brings together a broad range of organisations who are active in the region to strengthen our efforts to restore nature. Together, participants in the Illawarra–Shoalhaven GER partnership will ensure that the amazing biodiversity of the region can be maintained in a changing climate by protecting and enhancing corridor and landscape connections from the Royal National Park south to Batemans Bay.

The partnership was launched by the local Member for Heathcote, Hon. Lee Evans MP, at Sublime Point on 3 March 2013. Already it has grown to involve a number of local organisations including Conservation Volunteers Australia, Landcare, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, and local government. So far, the partnership has identified 10 major regional corridors that will be targeted by partners. In each, local projects are being developed that will strengthen partners' current efforts by mobilising assistance and the involvement of other organisations and the community. Our vision will lead to the creation of local 'corridors of effort' that restore lost linkages in the landscape and achieve the wishes of GER in this vital part of the landscape.

Nature NSW, Vol. 57,
No. 3 (spring 2013)

Invasive species — national election commitments

To protect the landscapes and species that are quintessentially and uniquely Australian, it is essential to deal with the growing multitude of invasive species as a national priority. Although Australia has done well to keep out any agricultural pests, we rank globally as one of the very worst affected countries due to environmental invaders. A great many of the world's most harmful invaders are here and continuing to spread. To turn this around will require a more ecological approach to biosecurity and a greater community involvement in law and policy reform. Invasive species threatening the environment have been neglected in comparison to those invasive species threatening industry. The reforms we propose will save big costs in the long term, and stem losses of biodiversity as well as agricultural productivity.

Establish environmental health — Collaboration is essential to meet the challenges of environmental biosecurity.

To bring together governments, the community and industry to improve biosecurity preparedness, identify research and control priorities, and build capacity, a body called Environmental Health Australia should be established. This should be modelled on the existing industry–government partnerships, Plant Health Australia and Animal Health Australia.

Work to achieve a strong invasive species target with a funded plan — Getting down to business on invasive species requires a national plan with meaningful targets. The government should commit to achieving within 5 years a net reduction in the impacts of invasive species. This requires a baseline assessment of condition, and assessment of the measures and funding necessary to achieve the target. Essential elements of achieving the target include measures to protect declining mammals of northern Australia, eradicate foxes in Tasmania and Yellow Crazy Ants in Queensland, and implement threat abatement plans for other invasive species.

Establish an independent biosecurity authority with an expert biosecurity commission — To ensure decisions are science-based, independent of politics, transparent and precautionary, an independent authority with an expert commission is needed. A new Biosecurity Act should be introduced to also foster a stronger environmental and community focus, which includes best practice elements, a statutory role for the Environment Minister and a focus on environmental priorities such as islands (which are highly vulnerable to invasive species).

Conduct a parliamentary inquiry into Australia's preparedness for new environmental invaders — Recent quarantine failings, as exemplified in the establishment of Myrtle Rust, Asian Honeybees and several infestations of Yellow Crazy Ants, demonstrate systemic failings in planning, surveillance and responses for new environmental invaders.

Regulate movement of exotic plants — As identified by the 2009 Hawke review of the EPBC Act, there are major gaps in the regulation of the movement of exotic plants within Australia. If states and territories do not agree through the Council of Australian Governments to amend their laws within 1 year to regulate plants consistent with their invasion risks, this should be achieved by using existing provisions of the EPBC Act.

Restore national weed research capacity — Australia needs a research program to develop effective technical and policy responses to the great challenges of weed prevention, eradication and control, equivalent to that of the former Cooperative Research Centre for Weed Management.

Strengthen invasive species threat abatement — Many of our greatest threats require a collaborative approach to planning, research and control efforts. Effective action against major invasive species threats can be achieved by strengthening processes to systematically list and abate key threatening processes under the EPBC Act.

Nature NSW, Vol. 57,
No. 3 (spring 2013)

When national parks fail

One of the primary roles of our National Parks is conservation of nature. This includes the plants and animals that are native to Australia, and the vegetation communities and landscapes that make up their habitats. Largely because of past clearing practices, some of our plants and animals have suffered such extensive loss of habitat that they are now declared endangered. In some cases, the only environment that offers them protection is our national parks, which cover less than 5 per cent of the state.

NPAQ has recently written to National Parks Minister Steve Dickson asking him to explain what measures are being taken to protect the habitat of rare species in the 13 national parks and National Reserve System properties affected by grazing, and what monitoring regimes are in place to ensure that cattle do not breach fence lines and graze habitat for these species. While \$500 000 has been set aside by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service to fence off critical habitat areas for these rare species, this article highlights the threats that have led to these species being listed as rare in the first place.

Both Forest Den (5 900 ha, 100 km north of Aramac) and Mazeppa NP (4 100 ha, 75 km west of Clermont) provide habitat for the vulnerable Squatter Pigeon. The main threats are loss and fragmentation of habitat due to clearing, overgrazing by sheep and cattle, and degradation by invasive weeds such as Buffel Grass. Loss of groundcover means it is more exposed to predation by avian and terrestrial predators. Camping was not previously permitted in Mazeppa NP because of the sensitive nature of the

(continued next page)

PARKWATCH (continued)

gidgee and brigalow communities. QPWS has recently lifted restrictions on camping and NPAQ has sought advice on why this has occurred.

Moorrinya NP (32 600 ha, 90 km south of Torrens Creek) provides habitat for the Painted Honeyeater and Julia Creek Dunnart. Again, the main threats are destruction of habitat [by] agriculture and grazing. The Julia Creek Dunnart is threatened by cat predation and invasion by the exotic Prickly Acacia and heavy grazing. These and other threats have already led to 28 mammal extinctions in Australia.

The Littleton National Reserve System property (80 000 ha at the junction of the Gulf Plains and Einasleigh Uplands bioregions), is home to the endangered Gouldian Finch, one of Australia's most iconic bird species. Some of the known threats to the Gouldian Finch include habitat decline due to grazing pressure, fire, infrastructure development (transport corridors or mining operations), and disturbance from cattle to its dry season water sources. Littleton also provides important habitat for the Black-throated Finch. The decline of this species began in the early 20th century, and studies indicate that this occurred in line with the rise of pastoralism. While losses have been most severe in the southern part of its range, where grazing is the primary cause of range contractions, other threats such as coal mining are actively threatening this species in Queensland.

As Queenslanders observe Threatened Species Week in early September, we are reminded again of the vigilance and advocacy that is required to ensure that no more of our unique wildlife become extinct.

NPA News (Qld), Vol. 83,
Issue 8 (September 2013)

Kimberley — not out of the woods

The announcement that Woodside and its joint venture partners will not proceed with a LNG processing hub at James Price Point came as a relief, but little surprise to those watching the project's rising costs, controversy and opposition over the past year. Woodside's April announcement to develop the project instead using Shell's floating LNG technology appeared to deal the final blow to WA Premier Colin Barnett's dream of processing Browse Basin gas onshore. Yet even before celebrations were underway the Barnett government restated its plans to industrialise the

pristine Kimberley coast. Premier Barnett is doggedly going ahead with his compulsory acquisition plans for James Price Point, even without Woodside. Compulsory acquisition has become the new battle front and Premier Barnett is leading the charge.

As it currently stands, the terms of the compulsory acquisition of the land can be used for Browse Basin gas only as a condition of the state agreement with the Traditional Owners. So in order for the site to be used for unconventional gas, a whole new agreement has to be made. This involves re-negotiating with the Traditional Owner community.

The WA Government has determined it will pay \$30 million to acquire the land and confirmed its aim to see Canning Basin gas flow through a processing hub at James Price Point. The Canning Basin's unconventional gas resources are about 229 trillion cubic feet; approximately 1½ times WA's currently identified offshore resources. Buru Energy has been exploring for gas and oil in the Canning Basin, alongside Mitsubishi, Conocco Phillips and PetroChina. Barnett is pushing for the federal environment minister to smooth the way and avoid further environmental accountability.

The window for the Barnett government to change their course for the Kimberley is fast closing. The state needs to rescind approval for a development at JPP, respecting its people, the place and the voice of so many Australians.

Habitat, Vol. 41, No. 3 (July 2013)

CITES 2013 — Big wins at global wildlife trade meeting

In March, 178 national representatives and many interested parties (including Humane Society International) convened in Bangkok, Thailand, for an important conference on the international trade in endangered species: the 16th Conference of Parties of the *Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna* (CITES).

Every 3 years these meetings determine which species require protection from international trading and where protection can be relaxed. On the whole, it was a pleasing success with great leaps in the protection of wildlife threatened by international trade. Two-weeks long, the meeting closed with many positive conservation outcomes, including the adoption of (nearly) every proposal to provide new or increased protection. Disappointingly, HSI and others were not

successful in banning trade in polar bear products and the animal's status remains unchanged despite evidence that the species is imperilled. Important measures to protect rhinos, elephants, cheetahs, freshwater rays and a host of others were also agreed.

On its 40th anniversary, CITES has demonstrated that it remains relevant and indeed vital to ensuring that species are not detrimentally affected by international trade.

Humane Society International Newsletter,
Vol. 19, Issue 2 (July 2013)

It's unique but it isn't safe

The Great Barrier Reef has been in the headlines recently, with many groups worried at the proposed port and industrial developments planned along the Queensland coast. Humane Society International shares their concern, particularly where developments and increased ship-traffic would affect the critical habitat of protected species like the dugong and turtle. HSI is also alarmed that if the federal government hands over environmental powers to state governments, these developments could be even more detrimental.

The international community is also paying attention. In 2011 the United Nation's World Heritage Committee voiced its 'extreme concern' at the approval of major developments. And a delegation has given the federal government a number of actions that need to be taken to improve the protection of the reef. We await our government's response but if it is determined that the reef's world heritage status is at risk, the committee could put it on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Humane Society International Newsletter,
Vol. 19, Issue 2 (July 2013)

Compiled by Hazel Rath

Bird Book

**A whole new edition of
NPA's**

***Field Guide to the Birds
of the ACT***

**will be published before
Christmas. Something for
your Christmas stocking!**

NPA notices



National Parks Association Calendar

	December	January	February	March
Public holidays	Wed 25 Thurs 26	Wed 1 Mon 27	—	Mon 10
General meetings	—	—	Thur 20	Thur 20
Committee meetings	Tues 3	—	Tues 4	Tues 4
NPA Christmas Party ¹	Sun 8			
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration ²	Sat 7 ³	—	Sat 8	Sat 8

Further details: 1. At *Nil Desperandum*,
 2. GBRG. Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre, 9:15am or Yankee Hat car park 10:00am
 3. Includes GBRG Christmas Party. Please note: this is the **first** Saturday of the month (not the usual second Saturday)

New members of the association

The NPA ACT welcomes the following new members:

Novica Ivkovic
 Anita Black (re-joining)

We look forward to seeing everyone at NPA activities.

This *Bulletin* was prepared by:
 Editor, Max Lawrence;
 Sub-editor, Ed Highley;
 Presentation, Adrienne Nicholson



NPA ACT Christmas Party

at *Nil Desperandum*
 (Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve)

Sunday 8 December
 from 11:00 am



Bring your picnic lunch and Christmas cheer. Nibbles, Christmas cake and some drinks will be provided.

Access details are shown on page 4.

Check *Burning Issues* or the NPA website for last minute details.

Contact an NPA committee member if you need a lift, or for further information (see opposite page).

Ginninderra Falls Association

Christmas Gathering

Sunday 1 December
All Welcome!

2pm-3.30pm Strathnairn Arts Centre
 90 Stockdill Drive Holt
 (Café and Gallery open)
 3.30pm-4.30pm Shepherds Lookout

View the Murrumbidgee Gorge crossing the NSW/ACT border (bring a cushion and a drink).
ginninderra.org.au

Association Office

The NPA ACT office is now at Unit 15 / 28 Lena Karmel Lodge, Barry Drive, Acton, together with the Conservation Council.

NPA ACT President Rod Griffiths and the management committee wish all NPA members and their families a safe and happy Christmas break and all the very best for the New Year.

Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group GBRG Christmas Party

Saturday 7 December

Join the work party in the morning and then enjoy a convivial Christmas lunch at Gudgenby Cottage.

Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre at 9:15 am.

Bring a plate to share.

For further information contact
 Michael Goonrey on 6231 8395 or
 Clive Hurlstone on 6288 7592

Cover photographs

Front cover

Main photo. Esther Gallant's NPA 'Relaxed pack-walk' team crossing Rendezvous Creek, November 2013: (left to right) Di Thompson, Sally Stephens, Kathy Saw, Rene Lays, Sue Hunter, Judith Webster, Tim Walsh and David Large.

Photo Esther Gallant

Insets. Left. Capping the stone walls of Colliers Homestead ruin. Dean Darcy is not only a ranger but a bricky too! (article page 10)

Photo Max Lawrence

Centre. Amy Macris, inaugural winner of the NPA's Honours Scholarship at the Fenner School (article page 4).

Photo Clive Hilliker, ANU

Right. Namadgi Visitor Centre staffers Michelle and Jess helped install the NPA ACT Art Week exhibition at the centre (see page 7).

Photo Adrienne Nicholson

Back cover

Main photo. Snow on the Camels Hump, Tidbinbilla, July 2013

Photo Max Lawrence

General Meetings

Third Thursday of the month, (not December or January)
8:00pm, Uniting Church hall, 56 Scrivener Street, O'Connor



Thursday 20 February 2014

Parks in 1788

Bill Gammage

Adjunct Professor, Humanities
Research Centre, ANU

After 'bush', a word brought from South Africa, the most common word newcomers used to describe Australian landscapes in 1788 was 'park'. How did these parks come about? The talk will sketch the main elements of Aboriginal land management at the time Europeans arrived.

[Bill's 2011 magnum opus *The Biggest Estate on Earth. How Aborigines Made Australia* challenges established conceptions of the form of the Australian landscape, past and present.]

Thursday 20 March

To be advised

April

There will be no General Meeting in April 2014 (Easter). Instead, there will be an NPA event at Orroral Homestead to celebrate Heritage Week. Details will be in the March *Bulletin*.

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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The NPA ACT office is in Unit 15 / 28 Lena Karmel Lodge, Barry Drive, Acton, together with the Conservation Council. It is staffed by volunteers on an irregular basis. Callers may leave phone or email messages at any time and they will be attended to. The post office mail box is cleared daily.

* the office move to new premises in Barry Drive is imminent.

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Household membership	\$44	Single members	\$38.50
Corporate membership	\$33	<i>Bulletin</i> only	\$33
Full-time student/Pensioner	\$22		

All the above subscription categories reduce to \$11 if a donation of \$100 or more is made.

Advertising

The *Bulletin* accepts advertisements and inserts. Contact the Editor for information and rates.

NPA Bulletin

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

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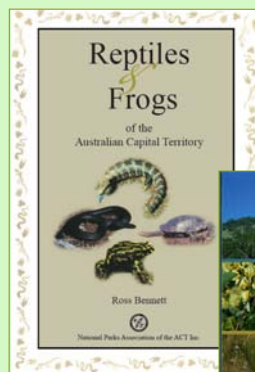
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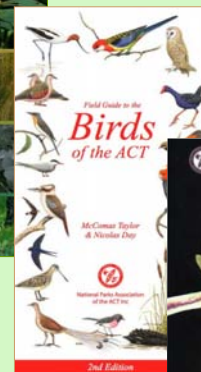
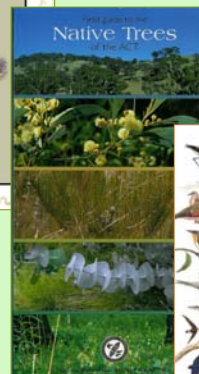
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