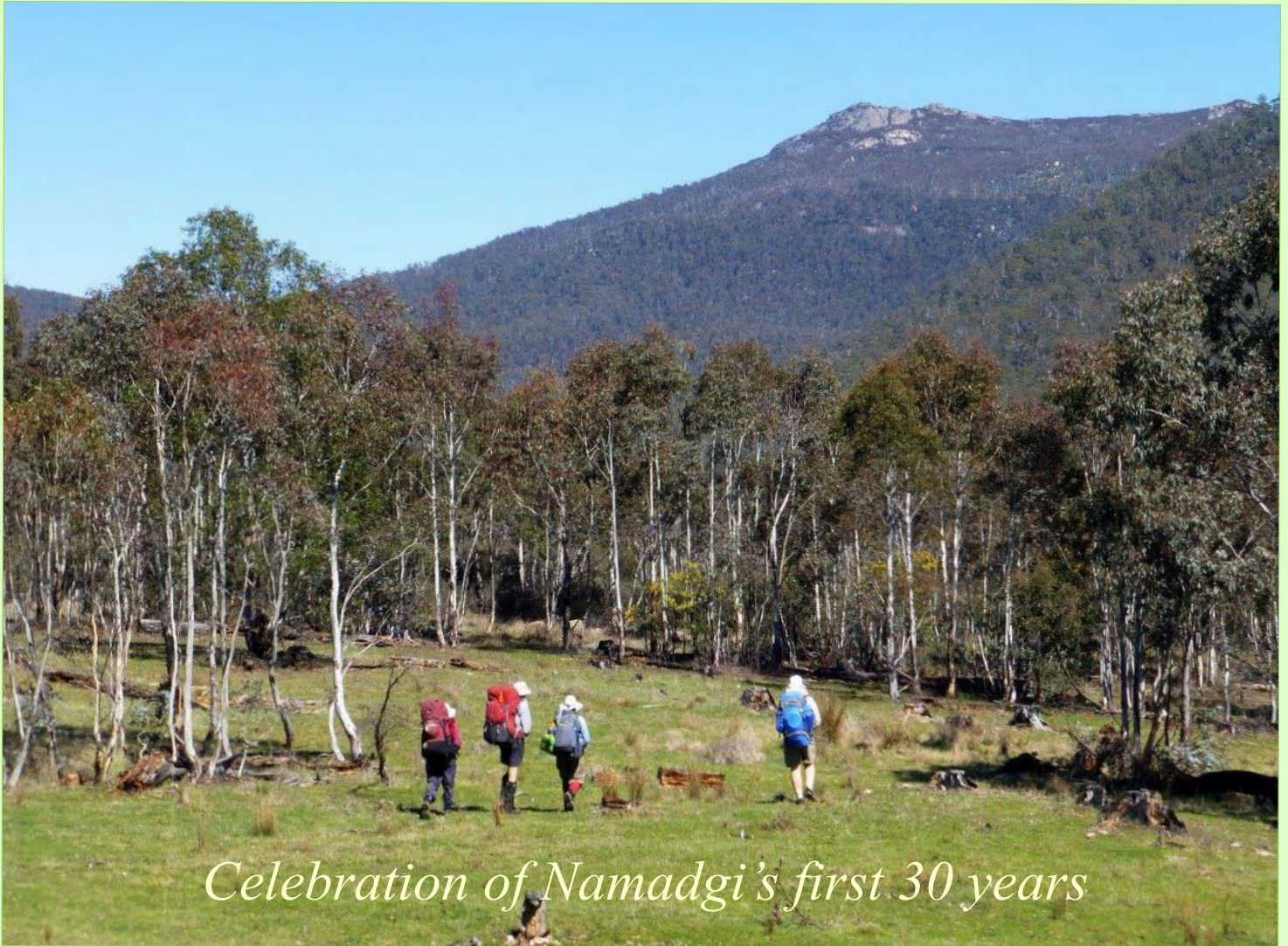




NPA *Bulletin*

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National Parks Association of the Australian Capital Territory Inc



Celebration of Namadgi's first 30 years



**Spring flowers in
Namadgi**



**Bush Stone-curlews in
the ACT again**



**Honeysuckle Creek
nature ramble**

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

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From the President

As I am sure you are now aware, 2014 is the 30th anniversary of the gazettal of Namadgi National Park. NPA ACT and the Parks Service have been active in promoting the awareness of this important milestone. There have been TV interviews and newspaper articles, often involving NPA ACT members, and the following events.

In October, the mood definitely turned festive with the Parks Service holding a get together at the Namadgi Visitor Centre. A number of NPA members attended and our founding member, Fiona Brand, delivered a presentation on the struggle to get the national park created. It was so good that she was asked to deliver it again at a ParkCare event later that month!

In mid-October, the NPA ACT held its own celebratory picnic at Honeysuckle Creek. And what a glorious day it was, with blue skies, mild temperature and good turnout of members. We were able to convince TAMS Minister, Shane Rattenbury, to join us along with three of Namadgi's rangers. Maybe it was the quality of the cakes on offer.

Later in the day, we were joined by Honeysuckle's resident wallabies and kangaroos. However, before this a number of us had departed with the Minister and the rangers to the Yerrabi Track. It was there that, after a pleasant walk to the Tor Lookout, the Minister formally welcomed the new signage. The NPA ACT was involved in the concept and creation of the Yerrabi Track and therefore was very pleased to have also assisted in the production of the new signs.

For anyone who doesn't know about the Yerrabi Track, it is

accessed by the Boboyan Road and is a real gem of a walk, rewarded with wonderful views of the heart of Namadgi. It is well worth a visit.

There are still a few more events planned to celebrate Namadgi's 30th anniversary, including an exhibition at the Namadgi Visitor Centre curated by the NPA ACT.

You may notice that this edition of the *Bulletin* is the first one in many years not to have been edited by Max Lawrence. The NPA ACT has been very lucky in the people who have held the *Bulletin* editorship and Max has been a leading example of this professionalism. Aply supported by Adrienne Nicholson and Ed Highley, among other great volunteers, Max has successfully guided the introduction of a range of changes, including the production of a full colour *Bulletin*. He was even able to tactfully manage recalcitrant presidents. Thanks for all your efforts, Max. I'm looking forward to some guest editorships from you in the future.

Please note that the NPA ACT is looking for a new editor of the *Bulletin*, which Max assures me is not as hard as it may first seem. So don't be shy; it could be a great opportunity for you.

All the best for the festive season.



Rod Griffiths

Celebrating Namadgi's 30th birthday

A celebration was held at the Namadgi Visitor Centre on Saturday 4 October to mark the 30th anniversary of the gazettal of Namadgi National Park, and the establishment of the ACT Parks and Conservation Service to manage the park and other nature conservation areas in the ACT. Current and numerous former staff gathered for the occasion.

Minister Shane Rattenbury opened the show after a welcome to country by Auntie Agnes and a smoking ceremony by Adrian Brown and his niece. NPA life member Fiona MacDonald Brand then gave an excellent account of NPA's strong contribution over 24 years to the creation of the park (see below), her thunder almost stolen by Minister Rattenbury who had earlier generously acknowledged NPA's role.

There followed an hour-long video documenting some of the achievements of the Parks Service and featuring interviews with some current and former staff, with some glaring omissions but a work in progress we are assured.

A magnificent anniversary cake was ceremoniously cut by Shane Rattenbury and served up with a bounteous afternoon tea.

About a dozen NPA members were at the visitor centre to support Fiona and share the celebration. Another group of members were at that very moment walking in the Mount Kelly area where NPA and Canberra Alpine Club members ventured some 50 years ago to explore the core of the future national park.

Congratulations to Brett McNamara and Odile Arman who managed the occasion.

Kevin McCue

The audience at the Namadgi Visitor Centre (above). Fiona recalling the gestation of Namadgi National Park, ably assisted by Daniel Iglesias (below). Photos by Kevin McCue



Fiona MacDonald Brand reminisces on the birth of Namadgi in 1984

Celebrating a birthday arouses many memories of past events which led to the original birth. The birth of national parks — that is, tracts of land of natural beauty, geological importance, or the habitat of native animals, birds and plants — happened in the 1880s in both the USA and Australia.

In Australia, the post-WWII Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme was launched, and the land it was to occupy had to be protected from commercial grazing and development, thus the Kosciuszko National Park was declared by the NSW Government.

In the ACT, a forward-thinking botanist, Dr Nancy Burbidge, working in CSIRO, realised that the alpine country in the western ACT was of equal value and needed complete protection, not just the protected Cotter River which supplied Canberra with water. This ACT alpine area should be protected, studied and cared for by the Capital Territory Authority, just as the Ngannawal people had studied and cared for it over thousands of years.

In March 1960, a public meeting was called by Nancy and fellow scientists to test the interest of the public in the conservation of natural areas. The Institute of Anatomy (now the Film and Sound Archives) assembly hall was full to overflowing with interested citizens who endorsed the idea of a 'National Park for the National Capital'.

That night the National Parks Association of the ACT was formed, a president and committee elected and the follow-up to a decision to hold monthly meetings and outings was planned. Many people became members and one of the first outings was along the Mount Franklin Road.

To gain information for a national park proposal three committee members joined an Alpine Club weekend pack walk to climb Mt Kelly, 6 000 feet high. From its summit could be seen and appreciated the beautiful mountains, valleys and creeks around it.

Over the next year the area was botanically surveyed, and the birds and

animals listed, to add informed weight to the argument that the area be declared a national park.

The proposal was submitted by the National Parks Association to each Minister for the Territory for more than 20 years until Mr Tom Uren in 1984, upon being shown the area, said 'Of course it has to be a National Park'.

Since that original declaration the park has grown and it now occupies half of the ACT. Many managers, rangers and park workers have served in this national park called Namadgi, with great dedication and love.

However, it should always be remembered that this beautiful national park was proposed, campaigned for and served by the membership of the community-based National Parks Association of the ACT.

Fiona MacDonald Brand

NPA celebrates 30 years of Namadgi



A photo album

NPA's celebrations started with participation at the Park Service's festivities. Ngunnawal ranger Adrian Brown officiated at the smoking ceremony and Auntie Agnes welcomed us to Country.



At our picnic at Honeysuckle Creek campground both the President Rod Griffiths and Minister Shane Rattenbury talked about the special values of Namadgi National Park and the role NPA ACT had in establishing and maintaining the park. Thanks to Judy and her helpers there were several home-made cakes and bottles of sparkling wine with which to celebrate this special birthday. Photos Kevin McCue



Meeting up at Yerrabi Track



The walkers take in the scene at the first of the new Yerrabi Track signs



Gudgenby summit Photo Esther Gallant



After the celebration, the organisers and their helpers relax



Beverley Hammond, Fiona MacDonald Brand, Adrienne Nicholson, President Rod Griffiths and ranger, John McRae. Photo by Syd Comfort



The helicopter (top) flies into the Cotter source area (left). Photos by Adrienne Nicholson

Cotter source revisited

Addicted readers of the *NPA Bulletin* will recall articles in the June issue dealing with the setting of the boundaries of the ACT and the inclusion of the Cotter Valley within the ACT permitting the Cotter to become Canberra's major source of water and subsequently a significant component of Namadgi National Park. That issue also reminded readers that 2014 marks the centenary of the first measures to conserve the Cotter Valley and of the appointment of rangers to oversee these measures, thus laying the foundations of the current Parks and Conservation Service. The icing on this year's cake is that it marks the 30th anniversary of the declaration of Namadgi National Park.

The Parks and Conservation Service chose this year of anniversaries to make a unique gesture in recognition of the part played by the members of the National Parks Association of the ACT in advocating the establishment of and subsequently supporting Namadgi National Park. This took the form of inviting a group of members, dare I say 'veterans', to experience the very essence of the Cotter system by flying to, and landing at, the source of the Cotter River accompanied by the Manager of Namadgi, John McRae. On a perfect late-spring day, passing close to landmarks such as Mount Kelly, perhaps last visited in a more toilsome, earthbound fashion, we landed close to the very highest point of the Cotter Valley for a picnic lunch and the opportunity for some rambling in the adjacent slopes: flowers aplenty but water not so, the stream being reduced at this time to a few scattered pools with walking a matter of dodging dry grass tussocks rather than muddy puddles. But a perfect day for photographers, with visibility unlimited.

Our thanks to the park's staff and helicopter crew for their contribution to the day and to Regional Manager Brett McNamara for making possible a day memorable and significant to NPA.



Cotter pools Photo by Syd Comfort

Syd Comfort

Great signs of fruitful cooperation along the Yerrabi Track

After nibbles and champagne, speeches and a picnic at Honeysuckle Creek on Sunday 19 October about fifteen NPA members, three Namadgi rangers, a jet-lagged President Rod Griffiths and guest of honour Shane Rattenbury (Greens representative and ACT Minister for Territory and Municipal Services) headed for the Yerrabi Track. We were there to inaugurate two new information signs, sponsored by NPA and created and installed by Territory and Municipal Services. This continues the team work between the park managers and NPA who built the track in 1987.

Our first stop was near Grassy Flat where the new sign has beautiful photos of some of the local plants and animals with an outline of the ecological significance of the area. After admiring this we straggled a bit as the fit loped on and the leisurely puffed up to Yerrabi Trig and then down through the granite boulders to the massive rock slab that overlooks the ranges that define Namadgi. Here, the second sign is a panorama of the mountains, all clearly named.

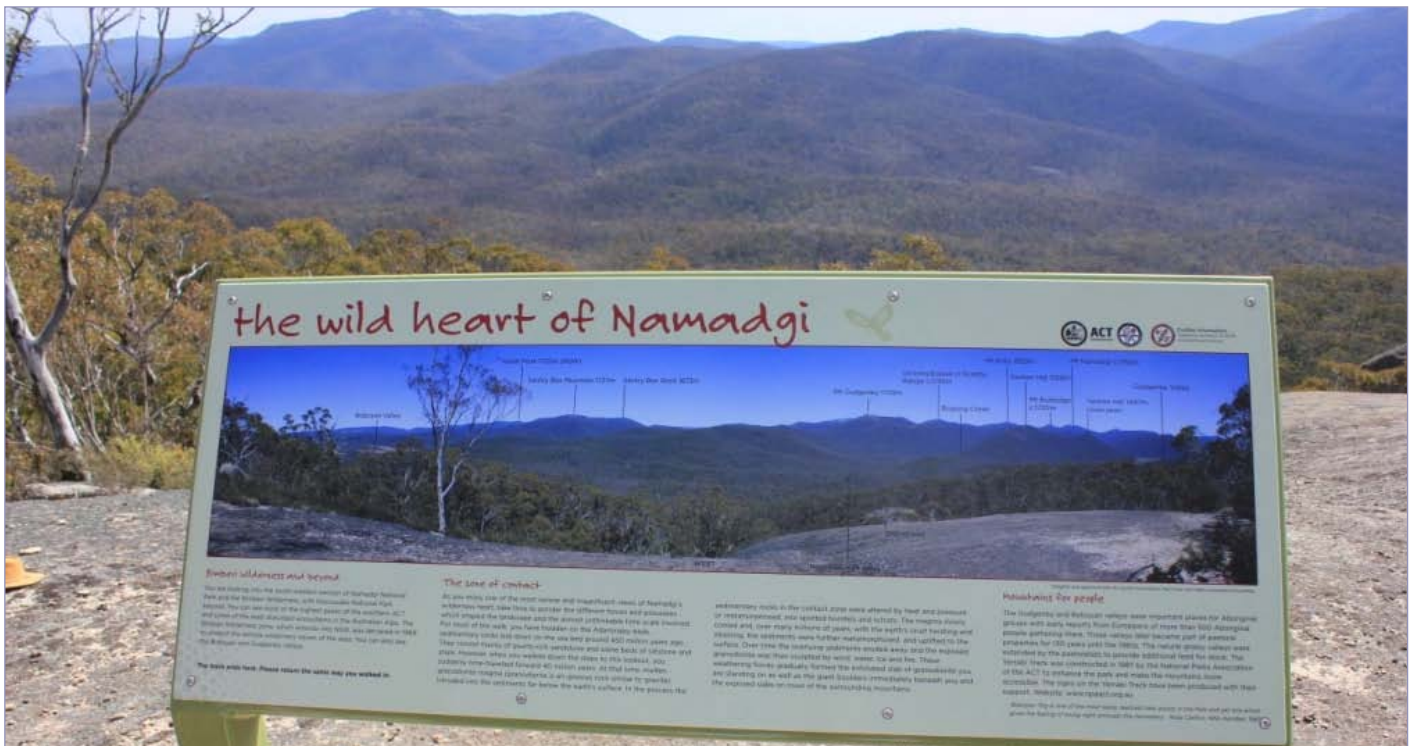
We chatted informally and, as none of us had thought to bring some champagne to launch the signs, Shane and Rod gave us a few words instead to mark the occasion.

We noted that 2014 marks the 30th anniversary of the gazettal of Namadgi National Park and reminisced about all the NPA members who tirelessly battled for recognition and preservation of this wonderful area and for the proclamation of the forerunner, Gudgenby Nature Reserve, in April 1978. Our walk on a track largely made by our members, and the superb new signs, symbolise the hands-on work of NPA and the cooperation between our association, the ACT Parks Service and our local politicians, that make it all happen.

Muriel Story Edwards



The new signs on the Yerrabi Track; (top) near the swampy grasslands, and (below) showing the panoramic view from the granite rock slab. Middle photo: TAMS Minister Shane Rattenbury launching the signs with rangers Kirsten Tasker and Mark Elford and NPA members Hanna Jaireth, Sonja Lenz, Kevin McCue and Muriel Story Edwards. Photos by Rod Griffiths



Reflect, explore and inspire

Weeds, warblers and wildfires were some of the subjects discussed at the celebration of 25 years of Parkcare and Landcare in the ACT. This celebration, which took the form of a whole day seminar at the University of Canberra, was opened by Shane Rattenbury MLA, Minister for Territory and Municipal Services. Being an athlete, he uses ACT nature reserves and appreciates the rehabilitation being done by 35 volunteer groups. He observed that by coming to the seminar, he was lowering the average age of those present! Enlisting young volunteers is essential for groups to survive.

Caroline Wenger, ACT Individual Landcare Winner, 2013, drew attention to the fact that one careless act can destroy years of volunteer work, as, for example, when a footpath and adjacent cleared area was built through carefully tended remnant vegetation.

Professor Clive Hamilton, Professor of Public Ethics at Charles Sturt University in Canberra, observed that attitudes to wildlife have changed over the past few decades, from one of pride in destruction to one of nurture and admiration. 'The natural landscape is the soul of Canberra, thanks to the volunteers who make it what it is', he said.

Diversity of species is dependent on the broader landscape, Veronica Doerr, Senior Research Scientist, CSIRO Ecosystem Services, explained. Protected areas like The Pinnacle, need to be linked to other protected areas within the suburbs, which should also provide links. Residential blocks, streets and public open spaces must therefore be planted with local native species.

Conservation of woodland birds was discussed by Laura Rayner, PhD Scholar, Fenner School of Environment and Society, ANU. She drew attention to the increased number of bird species where there is more urban green space around nature reserves, the habitat provided by dead trees, the positive effect of more eucalypt street

David Tongway explaining how to assess gully erosion, Aranda Bushland.

Photo by Kevin McCue



trees and the importance of gradual staging of large urban developments.

Adjunct Professor Bill Gammage AM, Humanities Research Centre, ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences, told that when Europeans first arrived in the area that is now Canberra, the rivers were described as chains of pools, and the landscape as open plains backed by thinly timbered hills, the lack of scrub being explained by the Aboriginal use of fire.

Fiona MacDonald Brand who is a life member of the National Parks Association ACT, gave a brief history of the formation of Namadgi National Park in which she had played a significant role.

Following the presentations, groups of participants formulated their ideas for the future of nature reserves in the ACT.

Thanks are due to the ACT Government, Environment and Planning, for providing an informative and stimulating day of celebration, and to Parkcare and Landcare volunteers.

Cynthia Breheny

Ed: The second half-day of the forum enabled participants to learn about some aspects of work being done in three Canberra ParkCare areas. The visitors to Aranda Bushland were introduced by landscape ecologist David Tongway to his system of assessing gully erosion and remediation.

Fringe Lily photo by Max Lawrence



Altitude

All the flowers of the mountain. Up there wandering the granite tors, snowgums, tussock, bogs. Sedge and reed and flowers in the water. Flowers under snow drifts melting. Crunch of snow as my boot sinks in. Windy sadness of burnt snowgrass ash dust in the air in my eyes can hardly see the next peak where am I?

altitude
thirteen hundred metres
stark
burnt alpine ash
desolate and fierce

Stand on the peak. Sit down nibbling. Drink from water bottle, rough granite under bum. Seeing the route. The body's knowing. How to swing off the peak sway down the ridge curve into the valley wade through the heath bounce over the tussock sink down by the stream. Running water blessed in this droughty land.

alpine daisies
in the tussock
bread and cheese
under the snowgum
shared with a million flies

Up there always forever snatching the moment sun staring from bluest sky blinding harsh. Memories of winter. Freezing blundering through snow falling off icy skis whiteout eerie scary comforting. At home.

deep night
in silent mountains ...
I wake
to gentle sunlight
on branches of a snowgum

Gerry Jacobson

An update on Parks Service activities

The past six months have been a busy and productive time at Namadgi National Park. On the staffing front, Simon Tozer has moved to the fire management unit and John McRae has taken over as ranger-in-charge. There have been many projects completed and some significant operational achievements. The field officers have built a new BBQ shelter at the Orroral tracking station, which provides some protection from the elements. The old composting toilets have been changed to a pump-out system. The site seems to be too cold for a composting toilet to work effectively. A new oven has been installed in the Cotter Hut and the field officers have built two new tank stands outside. Thanks to the NPA, we have two new interpretive signs on the Yerrabi Track; these were officially unveiled by the Minister on 19 October. The larger of these signs sits on a huge granite slab with panoramic views of Namadgi's rugged interior. The Kosciuszko Huts Association is doing an excellent job maintaining some of our most fragile and remote huts.

Movie-making at Orroral Homestead

A period drama called 'The Foal' was filmed at Orroral Homestead. Cast and crew worked under a strict set of conditions and were closely supervised to ensure that there was minimal impact on this important heritage site. This project, along with the 'Artist in Residence' program at Gudgenby cottage is a great example of adaptive re-use in action.

Frogs freed

Another large batch of captive bred Corroboree frogs was released into the

subalpine sphagnum bogs. Well done to the staff at Tidbinbilla, who are doing such great work with this critically endangered species.

Feral animal control

Rangers and field officers have been working together on a large-scale rabbit control program in the Gudgenby Valley. Early indications are that this program has been highly successful. The 'Gudgenby Bushies' have also made an important contribution in post-control rehabilitation works. The annual pig control program was successfully conducted, with a high percentage of pigs caught on camera subsequently trapped. Methodology for this program has evolved over the years, as has the science and technology. We continue to monitor pig impact in the park and target our programs accordingly.

A big birthday party

On 4 October, Namadgi National Park celebrated its 30th birthday with a party at the visitor centre. It was a gathering of people and stories and a tribute to all those who have contributed over the years. We get things done in this place thanks to the skills, passion and sheer hard work of field officers, rangers and volunteers.

A busy time ahead

The next six months will in all likelihood be every bit as busy as those just gone. The fire season has commenced and staff will be crewing the light units all summer. There are two large hazard-reduction burns planned: one between Honeysuckle and Orroral and the other near Lone

Pine. Timing will depend on the weather. Our rabbit control work at Gudgenby will continue with follow-up fumigation, ripping and rehabilitation. Some new areas will also be targeted. All staff will be heavily involved in invasive weed control. This work includes a large number of external contracts as well as in-house spraying. Our field officers intend to install a new water tank and stand at the Mount Clear pound. Staff will check and do any necessary maintenance on the Cotter Gap section of the Australian Alps walking track. Some new interpretive signs are being planned for the various locations in the Orroral Valley, including the 'Lookout' track. ACTEW is planning some major maintenance works on Corin Dam spillway and is working closely with our staff to minimise the environmental impact.

John McRae, Ranger-in-Charge



Left: New picnic and BBQ shelter at the Orroral tracking station site.

Right: New tank stands at Cotter Hut.

Photos courtesy of ACT Parks Service

The online ranger



At our October general meeting we were honoured to have Daniel Iglesias, Director of the ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS), as our guest speaker. The subject of Daniel's address was *'Towards a digital parks service'*.

In opening his presentation, Daniel noted that Namadgi turned 30 this year, and he acknowledged the important role that NPA played in getting the park established, and that NPA continues to play in support of park managers.

By way of introduction, Daniel gave a brief perspective of PCS and the work it does. The service is responsible for managing 236000 hectares of diverse landscape, or 62 per cent of the ACT. Of this, Namadgi National Park comprises 109000 hectares. Of the 21000 ACT Government employees, 1800 are employed by Territory and Municipal Services, PCS accounting for 183.

In addition, PCS accounts for over 10000 'partner hours', including volunteer input from organisations such as ourselves. While 10000 sounds like a big number, my calculations suggest it amounts to only about five full-time equivalents. So, it would appear the whole PCS labour force numbers 188 people — not many to look after 236000 hectares including our precious national park, the ACT's water catchment, the Murrumbidgee Corridor, Canberra Nature Park, extensive tracts of mostly degraded former forestry land, and the extensive urban interface with all of its hassles of cats, dogs, snakes, weeds, enclosed kangaroos, road kill, vandalism etc. On top of all this, it has to be fire ready during the summer months and the work goes on seven days a week.

Daniel did not of course complain to us about the resources at his disposal, but the above extrapolation of his data pretty

much speaks for itself. It certainly shows up the need for the service to be right up to date with the latest technology.

... we don't have a choice on whether we do digital media, the question is how well we do it.

In describing the task confronting the Parks Service, Daniel referred to the two main objectives outlined in the *Strategic Plan 2013–2015*, namely:

- To conserve our national park, nature reserves and other lands as an integrated system; and
- To provide high quality opportunities for people to use our national parks, reserves and plantations.

Communication is a key element in achieving both goals. The potential of the digital experience to change the way land managers interact with stakeholders and manage protected areas is bounded only by the imagination. It is difficult to imagine a replacement for physically experiencing nature, but a progressive parks service needs to engage digitally to enhance visitor appreciation of the natural world and to collect, process and apply data in a meaningful way. As Daniel points out, we don't have a choice on whether we do digital media, the question is how well we do it.

... people respond more readily to images than words.

Website users are fickle people. The first ten seconds of a website visit are critical in determining a visitor's decision to stay or leave. The probability of leaving is very high during these first few seconds because visitors are extremely sceptical, having suffered countless poorly

designed web pages in the past. Most visitors will leave a website after 20 seconds. If a website holds your attention for about 30 seconds, you begin to see a greater likelihood that a visitor will stay for longer and longer, even up to two minutes, which in web-speak is an eternity.

Also, people respond more readily to images than words. As an example, Daniel showed us a PCS media release reporting on the case of a platypus recovered alive from a truck engine after travelling 15 km from a river crossing beyond Tharwa. This report was taken up so quickly that it was viewed in Ireland on the other side of the world within minutes of being posted.

Daniel's presentation was very much a hands-on affair, with excellent use of the available technology to demonstrate the scope and uptake by the public of video and social media, and the implications of this for park managers. In particular, he demonstrated use of the website www.similarweb.com, which can be used to monitor traffic for particular web sites, and how they rank. Some of those put to the test were very rank.

PCS is looking to upgrade its technical expertise by having specialist people focusing on producing content, videos on current issues, real time updates and twitter conversations, and in using web cams and edited highlights.

Obviously, the parks service is already very much farther ahead in this field than your poor befuddled scribe. Daniel's talk gave us an opportunity to get a taste of things to come, not just in park management, but perhaps in life generally.

Max Lawrence



Photos:
Right: Daniel Iglesias (taken from Google).
Left: Ranger Darren Roso contemplating his beloved Murrumbidgee River (from Daniel's PowerPoint presentation).



Some notable quotes, courtesy Daniel Iglesias

The single biggest problem in communication, is the illusion that it has taken place. (George Bernard Shaw)

When we tug at a single thing in nature, we find it attached to the rest of the world. (John Muir)

I think there is a world market for maybe five computers. (Thomas Watson, IBM Chairman, 1943)

NPAC annual conference report

On the eve of the World Parks Congress, the National Parks Australia Council (NPAC), the peak body for Australia's National Parks Associations (NPAs), held its annual conference.

Delegates from Queensland, New South Wales, ACT, Victoria and South Australia attended the two-day event in Sydney, NPA ACT represented by Rod Griffiths and Kevin McCue (in lieu of Christine Goonrey). Sonja Lenz attended as an observer.

The annual conference of national NPAs plans NPAC's future activities and facilitates an exchange of ideas, achievements and issues.

Invited speakers were:

Martin Taylor from WWF provided a pre-release briefing on the latest WWF report 'Saving Nature's Safety Net'. This report gives an update on the value of national parks and identifies key areas where additional conservation reserves are required.

Pauline McKenzie, Director Coastal, NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, gave a status report on NSW's reserve systems from an official viewpoint.

Gregory Andrews, Inaugural Commissioner for Threatened Species was only appointed four months ago but has already completed a whirlwind consultative tour across Australia. He noted the immense challenges but feels that some steps have been achieved in

meeting these through his appointment.

Rod Dunn and Gary Howling from the Greater Eastern Ranges Initiative (GERI) discussed this ambitious project initiated by NPA NSW to connect natural corridors down the east coast of Australia. The Kosciuszko to Coast (K2C) project, in which NPA ACT is a partner, is a significant component of GERI.

Matt McClland, Activities Coordinator for NPA NSW, challenged delegates to think about why people go bushwalking; what their expectations are and whether bushwalking organisations provide adequate information for people looking to start a particular walk. They have created three short educational documentary films for this purpose.

NPAC's AGM is incorporated into its annual conference and its office bearers were re-elected unopposed:

Michelle Prior (NPAQ) — President
Rod Griffiths (NPA ACT) — Vice President
Russell Costello (VNPA) — Treasurer
Annie Bond (NCSSA) — Secretary
Kevin McCue (NPA ACT) — Public Officer.

In its post-conference press release, entitled '*Global Spotlight on Australia's National Parks*', NPAC urged the Federal Government to:

- Allocate \$500 million over five years for strategic National Park acquisitions across Australia
- Reform the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* to improve the security of our national parks and list these areas as Matters of National Environmental Significance
- Focus future national park and other protected area acquisitions on critical habitats including climate change connections and refugia sites
- Develop national conservation land management standards that ensure national parks retain the values that led to their gazettal.

In the coming year, NPAC will support individual NPA campaigns such as encouraging environmental citizen science participation across Australia and will campaign on feral animal reduction, cats in particular.

The annual get-together is very collegial, everybody sharing the same vision for environmental protection with national parks as the core. We had a working lunch and relaxed together over dinner at a nearby pub. Kevin Evans and the NPA NSW team did a great job and passed the baton to TNPA for next year's meeting.

Rod Griffiths

Gough — a champion for the environment

Former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, who died on Wednesday 22 October 2014, was a true friend of the environment. This resonates especially for NPA members. This year, we are celebrating the thirtieth birthday of Namadgi National Park. It was Tom Uren, the then Minister for Territories and Local Government in the Whitlam Labor government, who declared the park in 1984.

Protection of our natural world was a big part of the Whitlam government's mission. We can thank it for:

- introducing the *Environment Protection (Impact of Proposals) Act 1974*, which required the Commonwealth Government to undertake environmental impact assessments on projects it controlled or funded
- ratifying the *World Heritage Convention*, which gave the federal government a powerful tool to defend irreplaceable sites of natural or cultural heritage such as the Franklin River in 1983
- creating the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, which has been protecting the biodiversity of this natural treasure since 1975
- the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1975 establishing a professional service to manage national parks and work to conserve the ecosystems and species that they protect
- joining the international efforts towards protecting the natural world, including the RAMSAR convention to protect wetlands and the biodiversity of their ecosystems, and the *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora*.

The amazing legacy of a true pioneer of environmental protection.

Kevin McCue

Lawrence George (Laurie) Adams (1929 - 2014)

It is with sadness that we heard of long-standing NPA member Laurie Adams' death on 7 November 2014. Laurie trained as an engineer but changed to botany and taught himself botanical Latin which helped greatly with nomenclature. He worked at the National Herbarium, when Nancy Burbidge was still at the helm there, and in later years. Namadgi National Park was one of his many collecting sites. He was a co-author of NPA's *Field Guide to the Native Trees of the ACT* and in more recent years led some of the Burbidge/Chippendale wildflower rambles on Black Mountain. We are very grateful for his contributions to the NPA and mourn his passing.

Conservation

Bush Stone-curlews released into Mulligans Flat



Good news: Bush Stone-curlews have been reintroduced into the ACT!

Bush Stone-curlews are large ground-living birds not seen in the ACT for nearly 50 years. Once found across much of Australia's woodlands, they have declined in the south-east due to clearing of habitat and predation by introduced foxes and cats.

These birds nest amongst tussock grass, leaf litter, logs or fallen timber during the day, at night they come out to feed and can be heard calling.

The Capital Woodlands and Wetlands Conservation Trust has asked Canberrans, especially in the suburbs close to the Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary, to look out for Bush Stone-curlews and report sightings to them at PO Box 58, Fyshwick ACT 2609.

More information at: <http://bettongs.org/learn-more/curlews/>

Photo by Kevin McCue

Cat containment - a win/win/win for cats, their owners and the environment

Domestic cats

The ACT government is considering compulsory registration of cats and extending the requirements for cat containment already in place in some Canberra suburbs. While cats are great companions for their owners, they can wreak havoc on native birds and animals. Research shows that Blue-tongue Lizards, Fairy-wrens and Ringtail Possums are among the many native species killed or injured by cats.

There are an estimated 110000 cats in the ACT, about half of them feral, many living underground in the stormwater and sewerage drains. ANU Fenner School of Environment PhD student Kathy Eyles and ACT Government senior environmental planner Michael Mulvaney have prepared a background paper on improving the management of cats in the ACT. They recommend that the ACT Government declare nature reserves, wilderness areas and national parks as cat-containment places. Furthermore, the Conservation Council of the ACT (ConsACT) has proposed the phasing in of cat containment across all suburbs by 2025.



Cat containment need not be expensive and it has undoubted benefits for cats and owners, as well as the environment. Cats have been shown to live longer when contained — 14 years versus only 7 years if allowed to wander freely. Many are killed on ACT roads as they roam the suburbs. Cats suffer fewer injuries and illnesses when contained, requiring fewer trips to the vet and therefore lower costs for their owners.

Feral cats

Cats inhabit every part of the ACT. GBRG work party members geo-locating rabbit burrows in the Gudgenby Valley recently saw a large tabby cat out hunting in the middle of the day. Cats have been seen near the Gudgenby Cottage by NPA ACT members attending art week.

Feral cats kill an estimated 75 million native animals every night and are found across Australia. Unfortunately, there are currently no effective strategies for landscape-scale control of feral cats. However, Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) is working to reduce their impact. It is conducting the largest feral cat research program in Australia's history in an attempt to unlock the secret to eradicating them.

AWC has collared more than 40 cats with GPS tracking devices at Mornington-Marion Downs in NW Western Australia in a study that has provided an in-depth understanding of their ecology and impacts. This is

the largest and most advanced monitoring program to accurately measure cat densities using camera traps to identify individuals. The population of feral cats on Mornington-Marion Downs is estimated at approximately 1200. AWC also protects dingo populations because dingoes influence the behaviour of feral cats by harassing and sometimes killing them.

The federal government and the community of Christmas Island are working to eradicate cats from the island in recognition of the damage inflicted on native fauna.

The Conservation Council of the ACT has distributed almost 70000 postcards across Canberra as part of a community campaign encouraging cat containment.

We hope members of NPA ACT will support recommendations of the ACT Responsible Cat Ownership Steering Committee and ConsACT, for the good of cats, their owners, native wildlife and the wider environment.

Kevin McCue

More information at:

<http://www.australianwildlife.org/field-programs/feral-cats-and-foxes.aspx>
http://conservationcouncil.org.au/?post_type=programs&p=1753

Left. Photo from Catnip Australia of a cat in its secure run.

Right. Postcard distributed by the Conservation Council.



2014 NPA art week at Gudgenby Cottage



Wedge-tailed Eagle near Gudgenby Homestead. Photo by Rupert Barnett

Art Week at Gudgenby Cottage this year was, as usual, wonderful; we spent a little more time inside the cottage than in previous years, because of a bout of strong cold wind, but even that did not spoil things. Some kept the homefire burning for the hardy souls who ventured out; one artistic person set up his easel in the kitchen and just kept on painting. We had some day visitors too.

The platypus in the pool near the cottage finally put in an appearance, while that (or those) in the 'platypus bend' pool appeared regularly to those with watching patience.

Painters used oils, watercolours, pen and wash; writers wrote and edited; photographers ranged widely; and Kevin created quite an 'extallation' of Verbascum weeds upended all over the slope near the cottage. A little weaving was done. But most important was the tea party conviviality, both inside the cottage, under the silver birch in the back yard, and on the verandah.

Adrienne Nicholson

Barbara Slotemaker de Bruine's bird list:

- Welcome Swallow
- Australian Raven
- Masked Lapwing
- Maggie
- Wedge-tailed Eagle
- Brown Falcon
- Wood Duck
- White-faced Heron
- Flame Robin
- Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
- Willie Wagtail
- Kookaburra



Chris

Roos
Grazing
Young in pouch
Protected from the cold mountain winds
Mother's warm milk
Nurtures them
Until they've
Grown too
Big

Poetry
and
photos
by
Barbara
Slotemaker
de Bruine

Have you ever seen a flame robin?
Vivid, flame-coloured, foraging.

Welcome swallows fly
All around the verandahs
Building in the eaves.



Hazel

Warm
Humans
By the fire
Quietly they
Sit, write, paint and make
Creating
Works of
Art



Fiona and Hazel

Left. If your early morning cuppa on the front verandah is essential, what's a little cold air?
Photo Esther Gallant

Right. Deep contemplation over a sprig of Forsythia from the cottage garden.
Photo Adrienne Nicholson



Hazel

Climbing Mount Gudgenby

Mt Gudgenby stands imposingly in southern Namadgi National Park, its flanks shining like metal, deflecting sun and heat on a hot day or appearing dour and severe on a grey day. Climbing Mt Gudgenby fulfilled a long held wish for our party of five and was deemed an appropriate way to celebrate the 30th birthday of Namadgi. So there we went for 5–7 November 2014.

Rupert Barnett led us up from Gudgenby Saddle to a camping spot on soft grass near majestic gums. It was close to ideal, except that we had to descend to Naas Creek in the warm afternoon sun to haul up water – eight litres for each of us. An evening reward was Rupert's port and shortbread and the calls of many birds. Lyrebirds, and later the mopoke, were easy for us to identify.

Next day, we made the climb to the summit.

A photographic essay of Gudgenby would include the granite boulders of widely varied shapes; the Ribbon and Snow Gums with their smooth white trunks, the mosses and algae, both moist and dry, and the white-flowered tea tree; it would show the crows, sentinels of the summit rocks and trig, while their superiors, Wedge-tailed Eagles, rode the air currents high above.

We worked our way gradually upward through the forest, past boulders, over lyrebird mounds and wombat holes, then on to the algae-streaked rock slabs with intrusions that looked like fossilised wood. Finally we reached the base of the summit boulders on the eastern side, with slots that defied climbing.

We adjourned for lunch, sitting in lichen-free rocks to avoid the small ants.

After lunch, we found an accommodating slot and Snow Gum trunk on the south-west of the summit bastions. We chimneyed up and presto! We were there. We could see Jagungal and the Main Range to the south with snow smudges that looked like cloud; closer at hand were Mts Morgan, Murray, and Scabby, near Yaouk. Scabby stands above the boggy source of the Cotter River, part of the catchment for Canberra's water supply. To the north-west stood pyramidal Mt Kelly, while Mts Namadgi and Burbidge were nearby.

On our return to the camp, we met a pinkish-backed Blue-tongue Lizard that had deflated itself, fooling us into thinking that it had been injured. We avoided traversing the mint and pea flower bushes as much as possible. Small pink Caladenia orchids occasionally punctuated the ground cover, as did bluebells and yellow Hibbertia.

Next day we returned to the cars via a scrubby ridge south-east from Gudgenby Gap, arriving hot and tired, but elated and mentally refreshed. Thank you, Rupert, for the climb up Gudgenby, another Namadgi outing to enjoy its beauty and, this time, a notable birthday.

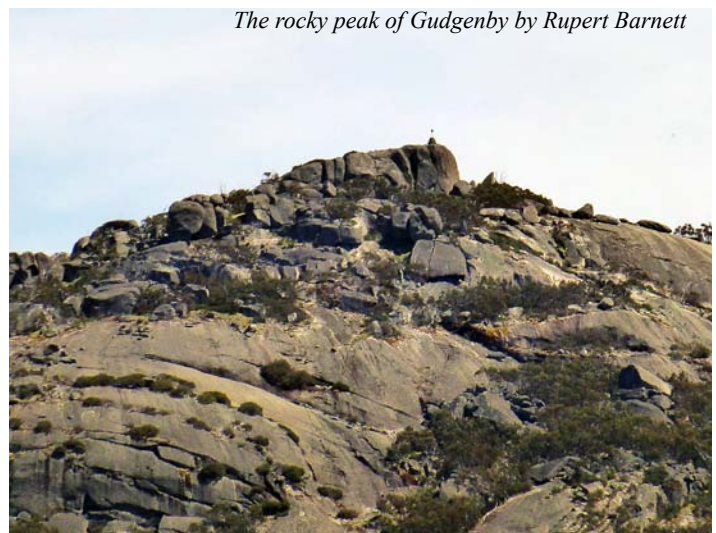
Judy Kelly



Made it! Photo by Esther Gallant



Olearia by Dave Kelly



The rocky peak of Gudgenby by Rupert Barnett

More from Art Week

Viewed from the cottage verandah

Frost white paddocks
Shining in the first light.
Kangaroos feeding on the creek flats.
A joey rejoicing in freedom
Hopping round and round its mother.
Distantly two male kangaroos boxing and kicking.

By the river two wood ducks waddling and feeding
Wood swallows swooping
And falcons flying high following the creek line.
A grove of Black Sallies casting shadows.
From the river the croaking of the frogs.

Fiona MacDonald Brand

Honeysuckle Creek nature ramble

Many hardy NPA ACT souls camped overnight at the orroral campground. I heard they enjoyed a chilly night; but all were up bright and early, well fed, and waiting for their tardy rambling leader next morning.

I had been out that way a few days beforehand, and been disappointed that I found only a few wildflowers blooming, none of them orchids.

So it was just as well others of the group had better eyes than mine. We had barely set out before an orchid flower was found! Rocks and their attached lichens were examined and climbed. A gnomes' hideaway complete with hammock bed was discovered in a burnt out stump. The children examined whatever they found interesting through hand lenses. We did not walk more than a couple of kilometres in all, but lots of things to examine were found. On the way back to the campground for lunch, we found a bowerbird's bower. It was not hard to find once in the vicinity — so much blue, including many choccoy papers, bottle tops and other refuse had been collected. The campground would have been only about 100 metres away as the crow (or in this case, the bowerbird) flies.

An interesting excursion for all who came along; sometimes to learn, sometimes to teach, always to wonder and to examine what's there all around us.

Adrienne Nicholson



Starting to ramble, Max Lawrence



*A cap orchid, Stegostyla sp.,
Graham Scully*



What's this? Graham Scully



The chill at breakfast, Max Lawrence



The close-up, Max Lawrence



The bower, Max Lawrence

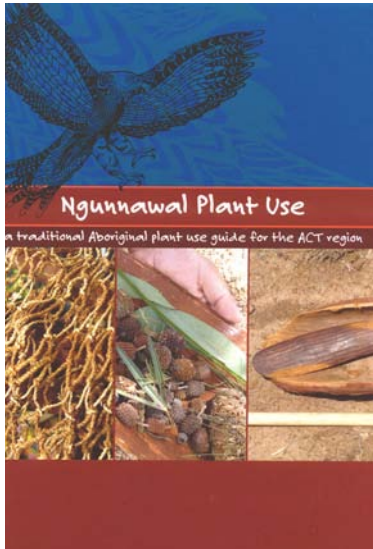


Boys and rocks, Max Lawrence

Book reviews

Ngunnawal Plant Use — a traditional Aboriginal plant use guide for the ACT region

ACT Government Canberra, 2014
98 pages, RRP \$20



This book was produced by the ACT Government in partnership with local Ngunnawal Elders and their families to capture and record traditional plant

knowledge in a contemporary context, to preserve it for future generations and to promote to the broader community a greater appreciation of the cultural values of native vegetation in this region.

This lovely, informative book displays beautiful clear photography with each plant's information presented under the following headings:

Ngunnawal use

Description

Distribution

Propagation

For example, mistletoes *Amyema* sp.

Ngunnawal Use

The fruit from the mistletoe was eaten by the Ngunnawal people. The fruit is high in protein, carbohydrates and liquids and often available at a time when not much other edible vegetation was around.

A second example:

Bracket Fungus (White Punk Fungus)

Laetiporus portentosus

Ngunnawal Use

Ngunnawal Elders recall the use of a red fungus as an insect repellent. The fungus was lit and the smoke from the smouldering fungus kept insects away. It has also been recorded that this fungus was used to carry fire by Aboriginal people between locations.

The introduction to this book covers and lists information about the traditional life of the Ngunnawal people and care of country before the dispossession of their land by European settlers, and then afterwards when they were forced to live in reserves and missions.

Despite changes to their way of life they maintained knowledge about traditional food, cooking methods and use of plants and minerals for medicines, dyeing basketry, clothing and toolmaking.

Following the introduction, there are six chapters covering: Trees; Shrubs; Grasses, sedges and rushes; Forbs and climbers; Ferns; Fungi.

Here is a book to own and use when out in the ACT bushland.

Ngunnawal Plant Use was on sale at the recent gathering to celebrate 25 years of Parkcare and Landcare in the ACT, held at the Anne Harding Conference Centre at the University of Canberra.

It is available from the Namadgi Visitor Centre and other bookshops.

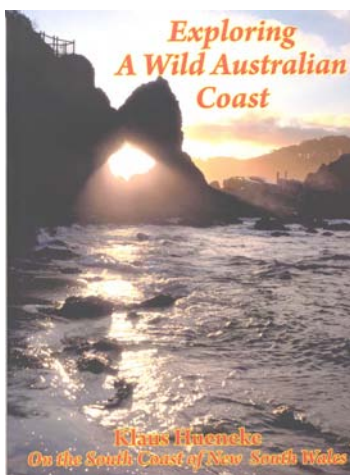
Fiona MacDonald Brand

Exploring a Wild Australian Coast

Klaus Hueneke

Rosenberg Publishing, 2014

208 pages RRP \$30



If you wanted to go down to the coast and enjoy some peace and quiet in a bush setting, then I suggest you read this book. Over the last 20 years or so, Klaus has been exploring and found some very special places to enjoy either on his own, with family or friends. Clearly summer is not the time to join the throngs of Canberrans who rush down the Clyde

but in spring, autumn and maybe winter there are some good places to visit and camp that will enable you to feel close to nature. These secret (and some not so secret) places are revealed in this book.

From Currarong on the Beecroft Peninsula in the north to Eden in the south, Klaus recalls and records his experiences. He has camped in his van or his tent or backpacked at about 30-plus places up and down the coast. There are mud maps in case you can't find the spots, with clues of what to expect to find when you get there; what interesting tracks to take; what other pastime might be possible if you have a canoe. One thing for sure — you must take a billy for a cup of tea whenever you venture from your camp!

I like the poetic language and description of what Klaus sees and feels. You can almost feel as if you are there with him. For example, he saw a large group of Black Swans at Lake Tarouga which all decided suddenly to take flight. Klaus writes: 'They rose as one. The noise of rising giant wings was like the clapping of opera patrons at a breathtaking performance. It was both loud and muffled, if there can be such a sound.'

Dotted throughout the book are little drawings of things that made each place

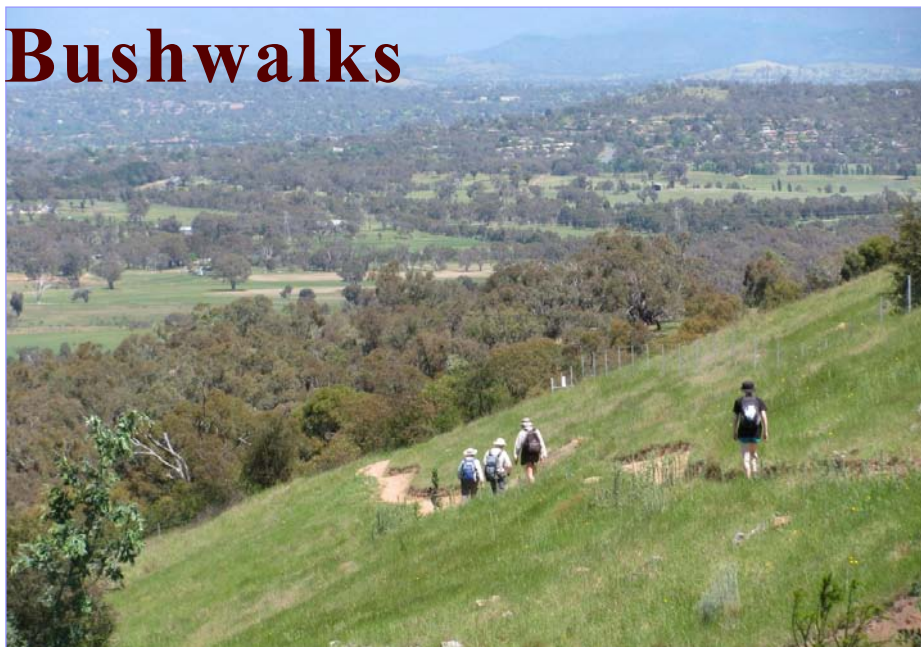
special — birds, flowers, seaweed, beach grass and a host of other nature objects. And of course there are photos too. Memories and history are also included. Sometimes these add to the story and sometimes they are distracting. Poems by a number of different authors definitely enhance the text and help to add to the interest of this book, even if you never actually take the time to drive to the coast.

Hazel Rath

Vale Shirley Lewis

It is sad to note the passing of Shirley Lewis, a member of NPA for a very long time. Shirley and her late husband Glynn were early and very active supporters of our association, leading walks and camps, and encouraging young people's interest in conservation and the bush through activities such as school essay and colouring competitions. Our sympathy goes out to Trevor, who ably carries on their love of the outdoors, and to all the family.

Bushwalks



Brian Slee's group descending. Photo by Max Lawrence

Northern ACT border

Date: 26 October 2014

Participants: Brian Slee (Leader), Max Lawrence, Rupert Barnett, Els Wynen, Esther Gallant, Michaela Popham

Weather: Very warm, sunny with high cloud, cool wind.

Leader's comments: In good conditions, on a 17 km section of the Canberra Centenary Trail, we encountered only eight cyclists and two walkers in five and a half hours. The Northern Border campground was deserted. Less than a year since it opened, the trail may already have gone out of fashion. If so, it is a pity; this is a lovely section.

We parked Rupert's Forester at the end of Hoskins Street, Hall, before steaming

along newly completed Horse Park Drive to the rendezvous point, east of Bonner. At 8.30 am we set out across Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve to the only significant climb of the day, up the ridge toward Oak Hill (latter is closed to walkers). A roo threaded its way through a fence. Apart from magnificent views over Canberra to surrounding mountains, we could see the route ahead, through Gungahlin Eucalypt Plantation (a 1980s project to supply firewood, an objective since abandoned) and past One Tree Hill. First stop was the campground, which includes a water tank, toilet and a couple of open shelters, none yet vandalised. The track in this area is within a corridor, fenced off from adjacent grazing leases. Heading west, it winds through shady forest. Bits of track appear engineered to enhance the experience for mountain

bikers; other bits are old farm roads. Morning tea was in a grassy glen.

At the northern most point, open country is reached (Michaela's GPS-chipped phone confirmed our location). The good season was apparent in greenery stretching away into NSW. 'Beresford' homestead came into view and 'Bannockburn' nudged the border. A pregnant Murray Grey tottered around; several fine black stallions lined the fence. Max pointed out Yellow Box on Spring Range Road; lunch was declared thereabouts at noon.

Yellow was theme colour of the day. Hibbertia and egg-and-bacon plants had been common and then we were mobbed by donkey orchids (*Diuris*). Now bulbine lilies were profuse along with other varieties of flowers. Serrated tussock has been sprayed almost to extinction. The track zigzagged up a slope and turned east where a new, reinforced path, just above the old footpad, leads to One Tree Hill. A medium size raptor circled, gripping a medium size lizard.

It was all panoramic descent from there, wild oats aplenty. A shingleback slunk off. We were in Hall at 2.10 pm and had afternoon tea at Gum Nut Cafe before dispersing at Bonner. First NPA outing in the segment furthest north. Worth repeating.

Apologies to anyone who could not find the start of the walk. Gundaroo Road was relocated west, between Forde and Bonner, and renamed Mulligans Flat Road in 2006. Gundaroo Drive is well south of there. Street directories or GPS devices need to be up-to-date before exploring the northern frontier.

Brian Slee

Historical NPA snippets

On 24 April 1985 Julie Henry wrote in a submission to the NCDC on the policy and development plan for the Gudgenby area:

I... request the Commission ... give due consideration to honouring Dr Nancy Burbidge — a National Park in the Gudgenby area was her dream. The Association was formed in 1960 and as the first Secretary, Dr Burbidge quickly stimulated interest in her idea and 'a National Park for the National Capital' was written into the Association's constitution. She was the driving force behind the research, preparation and presentation of all material submitted by the Association in support of the claim for a national park up to the time of her death. ... association of her name with the Gudgenby area would acknowledge her work in the early stages of obtaining a National Park in the ACT.

In 1991 NPA put in the proposal to name a peak in the Gudgenby area 'Mount Burbidge' and the name was accepted.

Reg Alder wrote the following letter on 2 October 1984 to then NPA President Ross Carlton:

It could seem now with the imminent declaration of Namadgi National Park that the Association's objective of a 'National Park

for the National Capital' has been achieved and the Association will now devote itself to other relatively minor issues.

Travelling along the Piccadilly Circus and Mt Franklin Roads it occurred to me how extensive are the native forest areas remaining outside Namadgi. The Minister has declared a policy of 'no logging' from native forests, but this is only a present policy and can soon be revoked.

I would suggest the Association adopt a new objective — 'The National Capital — A National Park' and work towards the whole of the remaining native forest areas in the A.C.T. to be declared as a national park.

This would be a unique conception and would ensure that at least there would be a substantial enclave in the surrounding pastoral area of NSW preserved for posterity as a natural feature. The total area is large enough and formed within natural features to be able to be self supporting and remain in its natural state.

What foresight!

NPA is now advocating that parts of Canberra Nature Park be included into a new northern national park.

Pack walk to Sams Creek and a little birthday party for Namadgi



The track to the Gap hasn't been the same since the '03 fires, and fallen trees in the middle slopes make it tricky to follow despite efforts to retape and prune it. We reached the Gap for an early lunch though, then continued west on occasional pads to Naas Creek. Beyond it is a track that has long given ready access through these valleys but finding it proved difficult, evidence that the 'wilderness' objectives for the area are being achieved. Once found the

track still helped us — sometimes clear, more often as a vague wheel rut, shrubby bench, aligned pad of wombat or 'roo, or an imaginary line to shove.

By late afternoon we'd left Mt Gudgenby far behind, crossed to Sams Creek, and the tents were pitched on the only dry and flat grassy flat we'd seen. Next morning we explored hills to our west in the Scabby Range, then for lunch dropped to the tarn. Though often dry, now it was a hundred metres long and its reed beds submerged. We'd decided to 'defer' the ascent of Mt Kelly and so returned to our camp early, allowing time to sit in the sun, read or look around, listen to birds and watch a pair of pardalotes watching us.

Camping in a place like that can be special. Around it is that natural world with much of interest. Yet the leader might also offer cheese and bikkies, and the rusting wire around a stump or old bottle remind of other people who lived very different lives here.

We retired as a gibbous moon softened the night, and soon the mopoke's call assured that all was well in its bush.

Rupert Barnett



Rupert's photos, clockwise from top left.

Having crossed Bogong Creek, David, Steven, Esther and Judy wish Namadgi a happy 30th birthday.

Grevillea lanigera near Sams Creek.

Epacris microphylla near the Sams Creek pool.

The watchful male Spotted Pardalote, upper Sams Creek.

Across the Gudgenby Valley to Mounts Kelly and Burbidge and Yankee Hat.



Bushwalk

Paralyser Ridge (vice Pretty Point)

Date: Sunday 14 September 2014

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

Weather: Brilliant blue-and-white day; mild temperatures; chilly breeze at noon.

Leader's comments: Pretty Point has been the NPA destination for beginner snowshoe walks four times: in 2009, when we went to Porcupine Rocks instead; in 2010, to Blue Cow instead; 2012, to Kerry View Hill. This year snow was again lacking so we headed for The Paralyser, the 2001 destination for NPA's first snowshoe walk but absent from the program since 2007.

About 50 mm of recent rain had raised the snow line to 1700 metres so after setting out from Guthega at 9.30 am, we crossed Farm Creek bridge (the wretched old flying fox is still in place, but locked) and climbed the first slope before there was sufficient snow to don snowshoes. Except for some wind-cleared patches, we were on snow for the rest of the 400 metre climb to the trig (1980 m). Despite its fearsome name, The Paralyser is a beautiful place with dramatic views of Guthega Valley and the Main Range. We played 'take our photo' with a trio of skiers from Perisher. Heightism became an issue!

Rather than continuing to Mt Perisher, for a change we stayed on Paralyser Ridge and, after crossing open snowfields and climbing various tors on the way, stopped for lunch out of the



Guthega Pondage. Photo by Mike Bremers

breeze on the southern tip. Comfy seats gazing north. Way down on Kosciuszko Road, Charlotte Pass's oversnow transport chugged laboriously along.

The return journey was initially straightforward. After shoeing a kilometre north we turned and descended, in easy snow, into Old Farm Creek, the western tributary of Farm Creek. We were meant to be in New Farm Creek, the parallel eastern tributary less than 200 metres further on. Ignorance is bliss and the first kilometre down Old Farm Creek was delightful, on solid snow amid colourful snowgums.

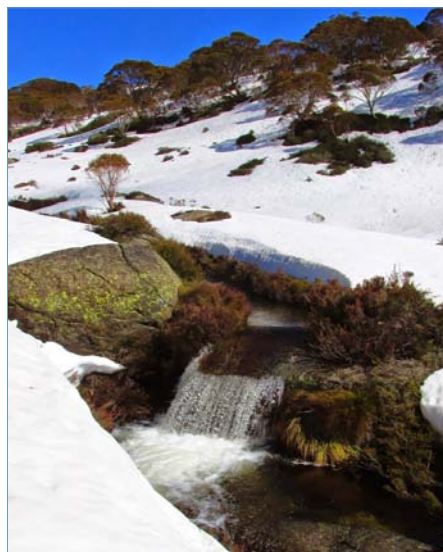
Then I fell through a hole in the snow and we trod more warily. The left bank had better going but not everyone could cross the fast-running stream. We were now two groups of three, with no more crossing points, but the way forward on

the right bank was problematic. It was too late to reconvene. So the left-bankers continued down Old Farm Creek and crossed the bridge by which we had come. The right-bankers climbed 50 metres into New Farm Creek and crossed Blue Cow Creek bridge. Both groups reached Guthega shortly before 3 pm. The raddled 'leader' was much relieved. Distance about 9 km.

No more dramas after that and we were back at Calwell shops at 6.15 pm, 11 hours after we had left in fog, then cloud, with a forecast more negative than reality provided.

A memorable outing. A heartfelt thank you to all participants, not just for surviving but thriving. Alas, however, I think we may never see Pretty Point.

Brian Slee



From left: The intrepid leader. Snow melt cascades. Max, Michaela, Margaret, Brian, Mike and Peter at Paralyser trig. Photos by Mike Bremers



PARKWATCH

Edited extracts from recent journals and newsletters

National parks a national priority

In NSW the National Party is pushing hard to abolish laws that restrict clearing of native vegetation and to open our national parks to logging. Our Environment Minister, Rob Stokes, will soon decide whether to allow commercial logging in the beautiful Brigalow State Conservation Area, a decision that would establish a terrible precedent across the country.

If approved, this aggressive act of environmental vandalism will make it even harder for the 1,000 threatened species in the NSW forests to survive. But if destroying old-growth native forests for woodchips and timber is not unconscionable enough, native-tree forestry continues to be a loss-making industry, with revenue falling by \$11 million last year, despite a 36 per cent increase in logging. An alternative, visionary public policy would be for Australia to end native forestry and protect these forest assets in national parks, reserves and carbon farming. This is a vision we need so badly today.

Not only is the policy direction of our state and federal governments wrong, it is not in the national interest. Our campaign must convince the Abbott and Baird governments of the extraordinary biological, social and economic values we derive from our native forests, national parks and marine reserves. We will work to convince our governments of the need to protect more of our natural heritage for present and future generations.

Nature NSW, Vol. 58, No. 3
(Spring 2014)

Inquiry into environmental protection legislation

NPA welcomes a NSW Upper House inquiry into the performance of NSW's Environment Protection Authority (EPA), its independence and its effectiveness in monitoring and prosecuting environmental breaches. The EPA in recent years has systematically failed to regulate, prosecute and stop environmental breaches such as the illegal logging at Royal Camp in northern NSW, coal dust pollution in the Hunter, and contamination at Port Botany.

Nature NSW, Vol. 58, No. 3
(Spring 2014)

What next with price on carbon pollution axed?

Australia now must renew its commitments to a safe climate since the carbon price was abolished. Big polluters can now return to pumping unlimited greenhouse pollution into the atmosphere, for free. The multinational coal industry continues to resist a clean energy future for Australia. The alternative direct action plan to replace the carbon tax requires taxpayers to subsidise polluters to reduce their greenhouse emissions. Federal Environment Minister Greg Hunt has granted approval for gigantic coal mines in the Galilee Basin in Queensland, which will produce massive emissions. World leading climate change thinker Bill McKibben has argued that if we want to continue life on this planet, as we know it, 80 per cent of the known fossil fuel reserves must remain in the ground. Australia is one of the worst per-person polluters in the world.

Nature NSW, Vol. 58, No. 3
(Spring 2014)

Murky future for Victoria's rivers

As millions of people in 60 countries across the world today celebrate World Rivers Day, the Napthine government is preparing to reissue thousands of licences allowing cattle to pollute rivers and damage public riverbanks along 30,000 kilometres of rivers across Victoria.

A 5-year renewal of Crown water frontage licences in Victoria will go ahead without any significant change in government policy, despite mounting evidence and advice from experts, including the Department of Health, that cattle pollute waterways and damage riverbanks.

The Napthine government has a 1 in 5 year opportunity to make a significant step in restoring public riverside land and improving water quality across thousands of kilometres of rivers and creeks. Instead, it has no plan for the environment and will simply rubber stamp up to 10,000 licences, allowing further damage to Victoria's waterways.

In 2010, the Coalition promised a Victorian Environmental Assessment Council investigation into freshwater ecosystems across Victoria — one of the few environmental policies announced before the 2010 election. This promise was broken last year when the government walked away from it.

The Victorian Government continues to ignore the health of Victoria's precious rivers. We now desperately need strong policies to turn around decades of decline. This is public land, not farmland.

This month the Victorian Auditor-General found that despite huge government investment into catchment management authorities, the condition of the state's environment is getting worse.

Both sides of Victorian politics have consistently failed to take decisive action on removing cattle from rivers and streams for decades. Under current program funding levels it will take more than 85 years to remove cattle from public riparian land across Victoria. 'The case for good public policy has never been stronger', the A-G said.

The VNPA is calling on relevant government ministers and the state Labor Opposition to provide a clear plan and resources for river restoration and funding of \$20 million to accelerate works and help landholders take positive steps to repair, restore and protect riparian lands.

At vnpa.org.au, accessed 28/9/2014

Threatened species in Victoria

Some of Australia's most endangered plants and animals live on Melbourne's doorstep, yet conservation plans finalised just before the federal election could lead to local extinctions of the Growling Grass Frog, Striped Legless Lizard and Australian Grayling. For the past 4 years both federal and Victorian governments have been assessing future environmental impacts of urban development in the north, west and south-east growth corridors. The work is part of a joint state and federal government assessment to develop a biodiversity strategy covering Melbourne's growth areas. Plans for the north, west and Sunbury/Diggers Rest areas were signed-off on the day before the federal election. Australia's new environment minister, Greg Hunt, has yet to sign-off on a strategy for the south-east growth corridors, as well as plans aimed at protecting the Southern Brown Bandicoot.

The VNPA is one of a number of conservation groups that provided detailed comment on the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy, advising that it does not ensure adequate protection for all species listed under federal national environmental laws.

Chief among our concerns are that:

- there was a 42% reduction in prime

(continued on page 20)

PARKWATCH *(continued from page 19)*

Growling Grass Frog habitat between the draft plan and final approved strategy

- critically endangered ecological communities Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain, Grassy Eucalypt Woodland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain and Seasonal Herbaceous Wetlands (freshwater) of the Temperate Lowland Plains are not adequately protected.

The current strategy would see the majority of grasslands and seasonal herbaceous wetlands within Melbourne's growth areas cleared and 'offset' through the protection of 15,000 ha of grasslands to the west of Tarneit and south of Melton, called the Western Grassland Reserves.

This offset comprises mainly very poor quality grassland, while other patches of high-quality grassland and key wetlands will be cleared. An estimated 48 per cent of the proposed grassland reserves do not contain native grasslands and will need extensive restoration, if this is at all achievable.

At vnpa.org.au, accessed 28/9/2014

Feral horses starving in Kosciuszko National Park

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service is reviewing its 2008 Wild Horse Management Plan for Kosciuszko NP and a new draft feral horse management plan will be released for comment mid-2015. Please get involved with this process by posting support for effective and humane control of feral horses on the NPWS blog at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/protectsnowies. Oppose any suggestions of a managed herd of feral horses.

Deputy Premier and leader of the NSW National Party, Andrew Stoner, is the patron of Save the brumbies, an organisation that wants managed herds of feral horses in national parks. Current mustering and passive trapping methods are ineffective. Horse populations in KNP are swelling towards the ecological carrying capacity of the natural environment. As the number of horses grows, so does the aggression of stallions that now menace park visitors they see as intruders into their territory.

Park visitors love the Snowy Mountains but have had their enjoyment diminished. They can no longer drink from mountain streams badly polluted by feral hoses. Visitors are disgusted by the damage they have caused. It is no longer safe to sleep in a tent and even drive to your favourite camp as you may collide

with a horse. KNP needs your help. Aerial shooting of horses is more humane than slow starvation and properly protects native plants and animals, as well as the visitors who come in our national parks to enjoy them.

Colong Bulletin, No. 256
(September 2014)

Demise of the native forest sector

For two decades conservationists have said that Australia's native forest sector is a dying industry. Over that time, politicians have attempted to deliver jobs, profits and conservation outcomes from our public forests. All the while economic tensions from globalisation have pushed prices for wood products down. Log production and woodchip exports have fallen rapidly due to overseas competition. The result is that native forest industry is now in a worse shape than rainforest logging was at the end of the 1970s.

According to economist Ross Gittens, the industry uses the environment as a convenient whipping boy to divert attention from its long-term structural decline. And when you have the general manager of South East Fibre exports (Eden's woodchip company) Peter Mitchell saying of their parent company, the paper giant Nippon, that 'they can buy cheaper, better quality chips somewhere else; if they don't it drags their business down' you know the industry is in trouble.

Plantation woodchip production has increased 350% in a decade, to 5.5 million cubic metres, while in the past 5 years woodchip output from native forests has fallen from 100 million cubic metres to 3.8 million cubic metres. As Mr Gittens observed, the native forest industry sees a solution in blaming conservationists. The industry seeks government handouts, cutbacks in environmental protection and, where they can get away with it, conversion of native forests into plantations through clear felling. Due to the collapse in the price of native woodchips, the industry that destroys 10 trees to access a single sawlog now wants to burn native forests to generate electricity. This is the end game, for if woodchips from native forests are now worth less, then using taxpayer funded 'green energy' subsidies to burn forest for electricity will cost the earth in a currency that all politicians care most about — votes!

Colong Bulletin, No. 256
(September 2014)

No Great White Sharks caught

In our last issue, HSI reported on the newly introduced WA policy to kill sharks to reduce attacks on humans. We've maintained considerable focus on shark control programs, as they have major impact on harmless marine life and yet can't show any proven reduction in the risk to ocean users.

In 2003, HSI successfully obtained the joint listing of the NSW shark meshing program as a 'key threatening process' under the *NSW Fisheries Management Act 1995*, and the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*. This was official and scientific recognition that shark nets were a major threat to marine life, but governments have done little to take this issue seriously. Recently, sharks and shark-control programs have become a focus point. From the letters sent to Environment Minister Greg Hunt and the WA Government, much of the Australian public and the world oppose the killing and are not looking favourably on WA. Of the 180 animals caught on drumlines, 172 were sharks, seven were stingrays and one Northwest Blowfish. Sadly, a breakdown reveals that 163 were Tiger Sharks, one a Bull Shark, one Spinner, one undetermined species and five federally protected Mako Sharks. Sixty-seven were killed or found dead and 18 (27%) of these were smaller than the targeted 3+ metres, but not a single individual of the targeted Great White Sharks was caught. It is proposed that the drumlines be used from 15 November – 30 April for another 3 years.

Their proposal is under assessment, and HSI has sought clarification of the federal government's national/international obligations in great white conservation and how the WA, NSW and Queensland shark control programs impact on these. We will continue to oppose all shark control programs and draw the world's attention to Australia's failure to conserve its marine life.

Humane Society International Newsletter,
Vol. 20, No. 2 (July 2014)

Ed: Drumlines will not be deployed off WA beaches next summer thanks to advice from the WA EPA (12 September).

Northern Australia updates

Our beautiful north has clearly struck a chord ... in August over 7,700 ACF supporters fired submissions into the federal government's taskforce preparing a White paper on the Development of
(continued next page)

PARKWATCH *(continued)*

Northern Australia. Backing up this strong collective voice, ACF provided the taskforce with a detailed 38-page submission setting out our vision for a better future for people and nature in the north. ACF will continue to strongly advocate our pathway to a better future to policymakers in Canberra, and with our partners across northern Australia.

In June, after 7 long years of campaigning, the federal government's plan to dump Australia's radioactive waste to NT's Muckaty was finally abandoned during a Federal Court action brought about by Aboriginal Traditional Owners. However, like the waste itself, the issue is far from dead. ACF is urging Minister Macfarlane to adopt a more responsible approach to radioactive waste management based on science, transparency and informed community consent.

In July, the Yawuru people in the Kimberley voted to oppose the plans of Buru Energy to drill exploratory wells and undertake fracking for shale gas on their country. Meantime, following up the request of thousands of ACF supporters to the WA Government, we keep pressing for a full and independent environmental assessment of long-term impacts of shale gas fracking.

In August, 38,070 ha of land was returned to the Thaypan people in central Cape York. This included the creation of the new 8,550 ha Payrrape Nature Refuge that protects high conservation value wetlands and sandstone escarpments around the Morehead River — critical habitat for threatened species such as Ghost Bats, Cape York Rock Wallabies and Northern Quolls.

Habitat, Vol. 42, No. 4 (October 2014)

NPAQ news

To date, there has been no announcement from the Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing (NPSR) about the recommendations stemming from the Protected Area Review. This review covers all national park gazettals since 2002, or about 1.2 million ha of Queensland. It also includes consideration of the future status of 12 national reserve system (NRS) properties purchased by the state between June 2010 and June 2012.

One of the dilemmas for the state government is where to find the resources to manage an additional 400,000 ha of national park. Some of the NRS properties are contiguous with other QPWS managed lands, and could be largely managed with currently available resources. Most of the other 10

have no such locational advantage, and some would definitely require an on-site presence to restore the land from past grazing impacts and to establish visitor and interpretive services.

The traditional approach is simply to increase operational funding for the QWPS in line with park expansion. Note some of the preliminary findings of the research project that NPAQ has supported into the costs and drivers of national park management:

... as budgets shrink managers are forced to choose between management activities and they cannot decrease visitor related activities due to safety issues and complaints from the public, so instead management of natural values declines sharply.

The gap between current levels of funding and the funding required to manage the parks well is very large. Another approach is to use offsets to create funding sources for both protected area acquisitions and management. A third would be to investigate and make changes to internal sources of park-generated revenue, such as a modest increase in the camping fees. It seems that all options are on the table and NPAQ will keep members informed of what transpires.

NPA News (Qld), Vol. 84, Issue 9
(October 2014)

Editorial TNPA news

A TNPA member walked the Overland Track in May this year. Among the few other walkers on the Track at the end of the booking season was a young couple from Belgium. Tasmania was the first leg of their overseas trip, but it was also top of their 'must visit' list — because of our State's famed wilderness areas and national parks. They were horrified to learn that our state government would like to 'open up' Tasmania's wilderness areas to more tourist facilities. They instructed the TNPA member to 'Tell your government that we came here from Europe especially to experience these wild unspoiled places and they must keep them that way. Tell them that people come here from countries so that they can get away from hotels, cable cars etc.'

This was a reminder that we strive to preserve and protect these places we love, not just for ourselves, not just for future generations but also for the rest of the world. They are indeed world heritage. The push by our current state government to allow tourism developers into our national parks and World Heritage Areas is one of the major issues

facing the TNPA at this moment and highlights the crucial role played by the organisation.

TNPA News, No. 19 (Winter 2014)

The changing origins of our overseas visitors

In the 20th century it was rare to see a non-Caucasian face in a Tasmanian national park but now it is common (consistent with media reports of record numbers of visitors from China and other parts of Asia). This is a welcome development but it also raises new issues for both tourism operators and natural area managers because the expectations of these visitors may be very different from what we have come to expect.

For example, in the domestic Chinese white-water rafting industry, the clients, up to 10,000 per day at the most popular sites, sit in small oval rafts and are flushed down the watercourse with no paddles and no control. If they fall out they are rescued by lifeguards stationed along the banks. In many ways, the activity is less like an active adventure sport and more like a fairground ride. The best estimate is that around 80 million young Chinese have already experienced this.

This implies that there is a giant pool of potential clients for natural area tourism in Australia but also that what these visitors expect may be very different from what we currently offer. If they visit a natural area in Australia they will be expected to have a much more active involvement and take much greater responsibility for their own personal safety. And it is possible that this is only one aspect of the cultural differences. If visitors have no concept of wilderness as a natural area to be respected and preserved, who knows what facilities they may expect to find there.

If, as seems likely, many of our Asian visitors have expectations quite different to those of our traditional visitors, will Tasmanian tourist operators respond by giving these visitors what they think they want (modifying the local environment to provide an easy, sanitised, no-risk experience) or by educating them as to what wilderness is really all about?

TNPA News, No. 19 (Winter 2014)

Compiled by Hazel Rath

NPA notices

National Parks Association Calendar				
	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Public holidays	Thurs 24 - Fri 25	Thurs 1, Mon 26	—	—
General meetings	—	—	Thurs 19	Thurs 19
Committee meetings	Tues 2	—	Tues 3	Tues 3
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration ¹	Sat 13 *	—	Sat 14	Sat 14
NPA Christmas party	Sun 14 ²	—	—	—

Further details: 1. GBRG. Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre 9:15am, or Yankee Hat car park 10:00am.
 * December half day work followed by Christmas lunch.
 2. Gudgenby Cottage (Ready-cut) from 11:30am

New members of the association



The NPA ACT welcomes the following new members:
 Stephen Boothroyd
 Tom Spencer
 Brian & Genevieve Palm
 Megan Shirlow & Bob Vickery

We look forward to seeing everyone at NPA activities.

Any great photos? If you have high resolution photos you would like to see in the *Bulletin*, or on its covers, contact the Editor.

Beyond Sams Creek
 by Rupert Barnett



Don't forget that this year, Namadgi's 30th anniversary, the NPA's beautiful book

Namadgi
A National Park for the National Capital

is only \$15 for members.



NPA Christmas Party

Sunday, 14 December
 from 11:30am



Contact: Judy Kelly or other NPA committee members
 This year's NPA Christmas Party will be at Gudgenby Cottage, Namadgi National Park. Turn to the right at NPA sign on the road to Yankee Hat carpark.
 All the usual features; bring your picnic lunch and Christmas cheer — nibbles, Christmas cake and some drinks will be provided.
 Check the website or *Burning Issues* for further details.

This *Bulletin* was prepared by:
 Editors, Kevin McCue and Sonja Lenz;
 Sub-editor, Ed Highley;
 Presentation, Adrienne Nicholson and Sonja Lenz

Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group
Christmas party on Saturday, 13 December

Join the work party in the morning and then enjoy a convivial lunch at Frank and Jack's Hut. After lunch we will drive to Hospital Creek Hut to assess the success of previous weeding there.

Meet at the Namadgi Visitor Centre at 9.15 am.
 Please 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. Judy, David, Esther and Stephen heading for Gudgenby Gap (see page 13).
 Photo Rupert Barnett

Insets. Left. *Grevillea lanigera*, Mt Gudgenby walk (see page 13).
 Photo Rupert Barnett

Centre. Bush Stone-curlew, Mulligans Flat (page 11).
 Photo Kevin McCue

Right. Young participant at the Honeysuckle nature ramble (see page 14).
 Photo Graham Scully

Back cover

Main photo. Scabby Range tarn (see page 13).
 Photo Rupert Barnett

General Meetings

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



Thursday 19 February

NPWS review of feral horse management

Rob Gibbs

Senior Project Officer

NPWS NSW

Feral horse management is one of the most challenging issues for the National Parks and Wildlife Service to address. There are a wide range of strong but differing opinions within the community as to the impact of horses on the environment, whether or not horses should be managed and how they should be managed. Hear about the process so far leading to a draft plan due for release and comment in mid 2015.

Thursday 19 March

History of nature conservation in the ACT

Mark Butz

Consultant, facilitator, writer

Marking the 30th anniversary of Namadgi National Park, and of the ACT Parks and Conservation Service (ACTPCS) in 2014, a project to document the history of nature conservation in the ACT was commenced by ACTPCS. This will include times when agency and community have worked towards common ends, and times when they have diverged.

Thursday 16 April

A new role and many challenges

Gregory Andrews

Commissioner for Threatened Species
Department of the Environment

The Commissioner will talk about his new role and the challenges he faces. His good news story is that Christmas Island will become cat-free after the community decided to have all pet cats registered and desexed and to let no new cats on to the island. In addition to this community initiative, the Federal Government is resourcing the eradication of feral cats there.

National Parks Association of the ACT Incorporated

Inaugurated 1960

Aims and objectives of the Association

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

Office-bearers

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The NPA ACT office is in Unit 14 / 26 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.

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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.

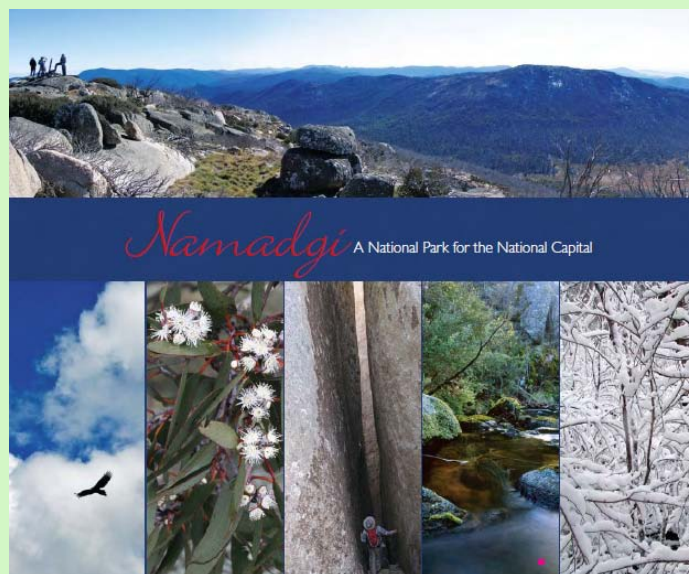
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30 years of Namadgi National Park



The great range of NPA field guides and a beautiful book about Namadgi National Park are available from the NPA office and some bookstores. Note that the Namadgi book is available to members at the special discount price of \$15 during this anniversary year.

For information on NPA ACT activities, please visit our website <http://www.npaact.org.au>