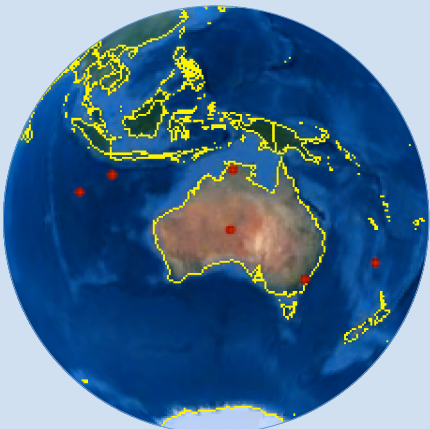




NPA *Bulletin*

Volume 52 Number 1 March 2015

National Parks Association of the Australian Capital Territory Inc



**'National'
national parks**



**Murumbung
Yurung Murra**



**Prince Regent
National Park**

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

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From the President

Due to the lead time required for this column, I started writing my president's report on Australia Day. My initial thoughts were not coming together easily after the festive season but this quickly changed with the news of the death of Tom Uren. Here was a person who, as the Federal Labor Minister for Territories and Local Government, significantly changed the face of the ACT through the creation of Namadgi National Park. It was 1983 and, as described in the 40th anniversary issue of the *Bulletin*, Tom Uren was at Glendale ranger station with NPA ACT members to hear about the NPA ACT's proposal for a national park for the national capital. After listening closely, 'he turned to his departmental head, John Enfield, and said "John, can you arrange that?". In the following year Namadgi National Park was gazetted.

Tom Uren led a full and colourful life with many achievements but, for the ACT, those five words were particularly important. Vale Tom Uren.

Feral horse management

NPA ACT members have been particularly busy recently on the management of feral horses in Kosciuszko National Park (KNP). The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) has been conducting public consultation into the management of the feral horse population in KNP. However, even before the results of this public consultation have been published, the NSW Environment Minister has ruled out aerial culling as a management practice. This is despite endorsement

of aerial culling by the RSPCA and strong acceptance of the appropriateness of this control measure by the majority of independent participants at a community forum arranged by the NPWS to gauge public attitudes to feral horse management.

Feral-horse control requires a range of management practices but the removal of one of the most humane and effective techniques will reduce the ability of the NPWS to reduce the damage by feral horses to fragile alpine ecosystems, already under significant pressure. Any argument that feral horses are part of Australia's heritage and should be maintained in KNP is a slap in the face of Australia's threatened natural heritage.

Audit of Lower Cotter catchment

The ACT Auditor-General is currently conducting an audit on the management of the Lower Cotter catchment and, in particular, that area covered by the Lower Cotter Catchment Strategic Management Plan. This area and the land to the north-west were severely affected by the 2003 bushfires and while some impressive results have occurred in the rehabilitation of these areas there is still much to be done in the foreseeable

(continued next page)



Inspiring younger generations

International Union for the Conservation of Nature: World Parks Congress, Sydney 12–19 November 2014

The NPA ACT made a significant contribution to spreading the word about the 2014 World Parks Congress. It provided a generous sponsorship of \$500 to the Young People's Media Coalition (YPMC), a group of young professionals who produced media content about the congress during and after the eight-day event. Thank you NPA!

The aim of the congress was to share knowledge and develop policy to influence the international agenda for Protected Areas (PAs) and landscape biodiversity conservation for the next decade. The congress theme was 'Parks, people, planet: inspiring solutions', and one of the outcomes of the congress was 'The Promise of Sydney', the collective vision, policy recommendations and commitments of congress participants.

More than 6000 people attended the congress from more than 170 countries.

The NPA's sponsorship helped the YPMC to produce blog posts, videos, photography and social media posts focused on stories about young people at the Congress. The YPMC, led by Canadian Tomasz Wiercioch, produced, filmed, and edited a short video for the 'Inspiring a New Generation' congress stream that was shown during the closing ceremony. The YPMC is also producing a documentary for the IUCN World Commission on Environment Law that explores, through interviews with 33 environmental law and conservation professionals, why environmental law is important. The YPMC is currently editing the footage to develop a story about passionate environmental lawyers who are dedicated to their vocation and through which they are trying to make a difference. The IUCN Environmental Law Centre will post the footage online.

Hanna Jaireth

NPA member Hanna Jaireth is an environmental lawyer who attended the IUCN World Parks Congress in her capacity as IUCN Focal Point for the World Commission on Environment Law (WCEL) for Oceania.

She co-wrote an overview of the law-related sessions of the congress with Lydia Slobodian, a lawyer with the IUCN Environmental Law Centre, and Emeritus Professor Ben Boer, Deputy Chair of WCEL. You can read the rest of the paper on NPA ACT's website:

www.npaact.org.au

To see what the Young People's Media Coalition achieved, log on to <http://vimeo.com/user35444511>.

Exhibition at Namadgi Visitor Centre

The NPA's exhibition at the Namadgi Visitor Centre

'Loving Namadgi to Life'

records NPA ACT's involvement in the 30 years of Namadgi National Park's existence.

Seen here at the launch of the exhibition on 10 December 2014 are (left to right) Rod Griffiths, NPA ACT President; Fiona MacDonald Brand, NPA ACT Foundation and Life Member; Brett McNamara, Regional Manager, ACT Parks and Conservation Service; Sonja Lenz, NPA ACT Secretary and Life Member.

Photo by Esther Gallant.



Editor's note

Three articles in this edition of the *Bulletin* are devoted to members' experiences in National Parks in WA, Qld, and NSW. They show the beauty and diversity of our national parks and how precious they are at a time when their value is being questioned. They also demonstrate the threats from feral animals and from mining. A fourth

article looks at the concept of "National" in our national parks.

On another note, we are rotating editors for the *Bulletin* as Max Lawrence enjoys his well-earned retirement. We have our skilled, steadfast team of Ed Highley, Sub-editor, and Adrienne Nicholson for layout and presentation. If any of our members with an interest in

conservation, writing, and editing would like to join our rotating team (where they will receive all the support they need), please contact the NPA ACT office

Phone (02) 6229 3201

or email admin@npaact.org.au.

Judy Kelly, Editor in transit

From the president *(continued from previous page)*

future. The NPA ACT welcomes this audit and hopes that key issues like ongoing resourcing, bushfire threat management and public consultation

over the management of this key area in the ACT can be fully examined. It is certainly an area in which NPA ACT is interested and several work parties have

been conducted there. The audit's findings are scheduled for release in the second half of 2015.

Rod Griffiths

'National' national parks; Parks Australia

NPA members will be aware that Australia's 750 or so national parks are mostly managed by state and territory governments — the ACT's Namadgi National Park is our local example.

'National' is something of a misnomer for these reserves, because it describes a specific category of protected area rather than one of particular significance or management responsibility. Those less familiar with Australia's network of protected areas would probably be more confused than readers of the *NPA Bulletin*!

The national government has nevertheless played a role in protected areas for much of its history — initially through responsibilities (pre self-government) for the ACT and the Northern Territory (NT) and, since 1975, under specific nature conservation legislation, first the *National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1975*, and later the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

Commonwealth responsibilities

Seven terrestrial reserves and 59 marine reserves are declared and managed under the EPBC Act. Commonwealth marine reserves cover vast areas of Australia's remote ocean territory and are mostly little visited (the high profile Great Barrier Reef Marine Park has its own legislation and management arrangements). More accessible are our six national parks:

- Kakadu National Park and Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park in the NT
- Booderee National Park in the Jervis Bay Territory
- Christmas Island National Park and Norfolk Island National Park in the external territories in the Indian and the South Pacific oceans, respectively
- remote Pulu Keeling National Park, which covers North Keeling Island and surrounding waters in the Territory of Cocos (Keeling) Islands in the Indian Ocean.

The other Commonwealth terrestrial reserve is Canberra's Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG), which was declared under Commonwealth legislation in 1991 (despite having been officially opened in 1970).

Administrative arrangements

Administratively, Commonwealth reserves are vested in a statutory position called the Director of National Parks — currently Ms Sally Barnes, who took up

the position in February 2014. The director is supported in managing those reserves by Parks Australia, a division of the Commonwealth Department of the Environment. Until the EPBC Act came into effect in June 2000, Commonwealth reserves were managed by a stand-alone agency, the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service (later known as the Australian Nature Conservation Agency). As part of the administrative changes arising from adoption of the EPBC Act, reserve management functions were absorbed into the Environment Department.

The location and extent of the Commonwealth protected area estate is a reflection of Commonwealth Government responsibilities under the Australian Constitution. Without specific mention of environment or land management, the Commonwealth has legislative authority to establish reserves only in areas under its direct control — essentially the territories and Australia's marine waters beyond the three nautical mile state limit. Of course, Commonwealth powers have been used to influence management of other protected areas in a number of high-profile cases but those powers fall short of enabling establishment of a comprehensive management regime outside Commonwealth jurisdiction.

Parks Australia national parks

While they are few, Commonwealth national parks are high profile and diverse, and together represent an important part of the nation's protected area estate. Kakadu and Uluru–Kata Tjuta are two of the country's best known national parks and both are listed under the World Heritage Convention for their universally outstanding natural and cultural values; Kakadu is also Australia's largest national park, covering almost 20000 square kilometres. Booderee at Jervis Bay (well-known to Canberrans due to its long-standing connections to the ACT) is set in a biologically diverse zone of overlapping subtropical and temperate environments, and includes the very popular Green Patch camping area. The three island national parks protect unique oceanic island ecosystems, including their endemic (and often highly threatened) flora and fauna.

Our management programs are as diverse as our estate. Besides providing for our many visitors



Doug Brown with a robber crab, Christmas Island. (Photo from author.)

(Kakadu and Uluru–Kata Tjuta are important to the NT's tourism sector, while Booderee receives some 400000 visitors annually), our 300 or so staff are involved in activities ranging from marine reserve patrols, feral animal and weed control, fire management and biodiversity monitoring to education and conservation of rock art and other culturally important sites. Captive management of threatened species and translocation to predator-free environments feature increasingly, as pressures on native biodiversity increase. As well as playing an important tourism and education role and boasting a living collection of one-third of Australia's plant species, the ANBG is a major national research facility via the Centre for Australian National Biodiversity Research, a collaborative venture with CSIRO.

Joint management of national parks was pioneered by the Commonwealth and remains a highlight. Kakadu, Uluru–Kata Tjuta and Booderee are each jointly managed through boards of management on which traditional owners are in the majority. Application of traditional knowledge is a key component of management, and all three parks are also important as sources of employment and income for Aboriginal people, via tourism and other commercial ventures. Joint management is both challenging and complex, and the management arrangements for these three parks are continuing to evolve to meet the changing aspirations of their traditional owners.

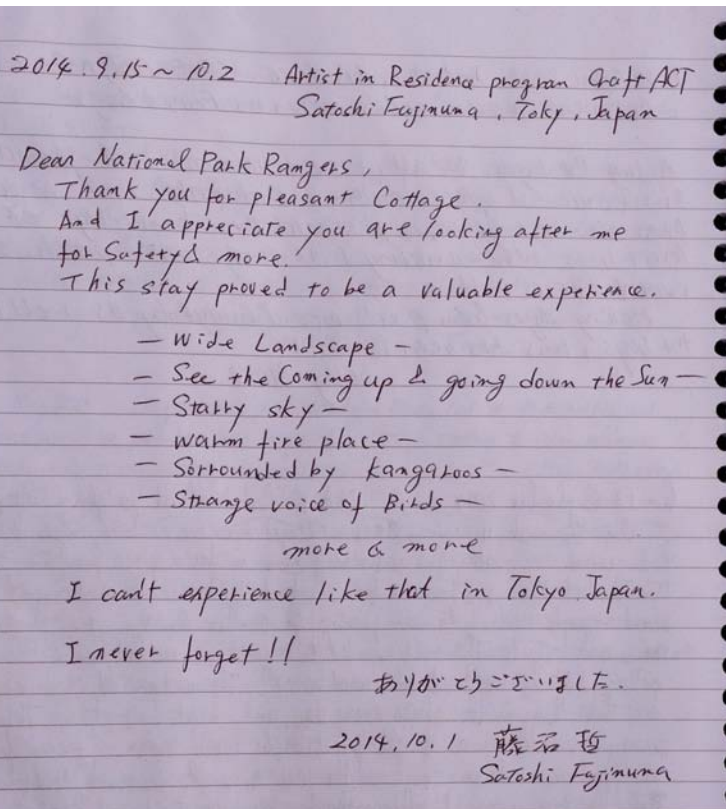
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NPA 2014 Christmas party at Gudgenby Cottage



Max Lawrence photographed members enjoying the Christmas party at Gudgenby Cottage. We were entertained by Martin Chalk's band Casa de Locos (see photo page 8).

Japanese wood artist at Gudgenby Cottage



After the NPA ACT Christmas party on 14 December 2014 at Gudgenby Cottage, several of us relaxed while perusing the Visitors Book. We found an entry from Satoshi Fujinuma expressing — simply, succinctly and eloquently — his appreciation of Gudgenby Cottage and its surroundings, surely testimony to Namadgi National Park's capacity to inspire across cultural boundaries.

Sabrina Sonntag wrote a short item in the December 2014 issue of *FronDS*, the bulletin of Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG) which gives background information on Satoshi Fujinuma. An internationally acclaimed Japanese wood artist, he spent 10 days with researchers at the ANBG seed bank, learning about the ecological aspects of bogs and fens, the theme for his project, before embarking on 18 days as artist-in-residence at Gudgenby Cottage.

During his residency, part of his experience was to become acquainted with aspects of the environmental protection of endangered bogs and fens, which are home to unique plant species and provide breeding habitat for the endangered Corroboree Frog. The experience enabled Satoshi to interpret the world of bogs and fens through his sensitive carvings in wood.

You will be able to see work by Satoshi and two fellow artists in a 'Bogs and Fens' artists-in-residence exhibition at Craft ACT between 9 April and 16 May 2015. A simultaneous exhibition of the artists' research and preparatory work will be held at the ANBG. You can also have a sneak preview at www.craftact.org.au/projects/2014artistinresidence/

Judy Kelly

'National' national parks; Parks Australia *(continued from previous page)*

As well as managing Commonwealth reserves, Parks Australia undertakes several related environmental programs including the Australian Biological Resources Study (based at the ANBG) and, until recently, the National Reserve System Program.

More information on our role and activities is available in the annual report

of the Director of National Parks:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/topics/national-parks/parks-australia/publications>

For detailed information about visiting our parks and the many camping and recreational opportunities available, visit:

<http://www.parksaustralia.gov.au/index.html>

Doug Brown
Parks Australia

Doug Brown has worked in the federal environment department (in its many incarnations) since 1979 and is an original member of GBRG, the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group.

Prince Regent National Park

At the November NPA general meeting, Esther Gallant, well known for her adventurous ways, talked about a 15-day trip into the Prince Regent National Park (PRNP) in the Kimberley region of WA, in June 2014. The other members of the party were Mary Hoffmann (organiser), Ray Franzi, Jan and Philip Gatenby, Jan Moore, Mike Smith, and me, Annette Smith.

... nominated as a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve in 1978

The PRNP consists of over 6000 square kilometres of the Prince Regent River catchment. It was first protected as an 'A' Class Nature Reserve in 1964 and was nominated as a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve in 1978. The area became PRNP in 2011 and was again open for bushwalking.

Mary arranged a permit to walk in the upper (southern) part of the Prince Regent River. The Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) required a walk plan to ensure that we would not be entering areas considered sensitive by the Aboriginal custodians, the Worora people. Potential bushwalkers have to fit in with the CALM burning schedule, making it essential to have permission to be in the park. A prescribed burn had been carried out near our landing area shortly before we arrived, and sometimes we walked over still smouldering logs but were in no danger from active fires.

... we took a 40-minute helicopter flight to a side-creek

The party met in Kununurra, and drove by 4WD to Mitchell Falls National Park via the Gibb River Road and Drysdale River Station. There is no vehicular access into PRNP so from Mitchell Falls we took a 40-minute (110km) helicopter flight to a side-creek of the Prince Regent River. The side-creek provided delightful clean flat rock slabs for camping next to a cascading stream flanked by green grasses and the inevitable pandanus and paperbarks. We spent the afternoon exploring a dazzling waterfall a short walk away and climbing a ridge for a view along the Prince Regent River. The sandstone was too hard to bury the food cache for the second half of the trip

so we covered it with rocks to protect it from the heat, birds and foraging animals.

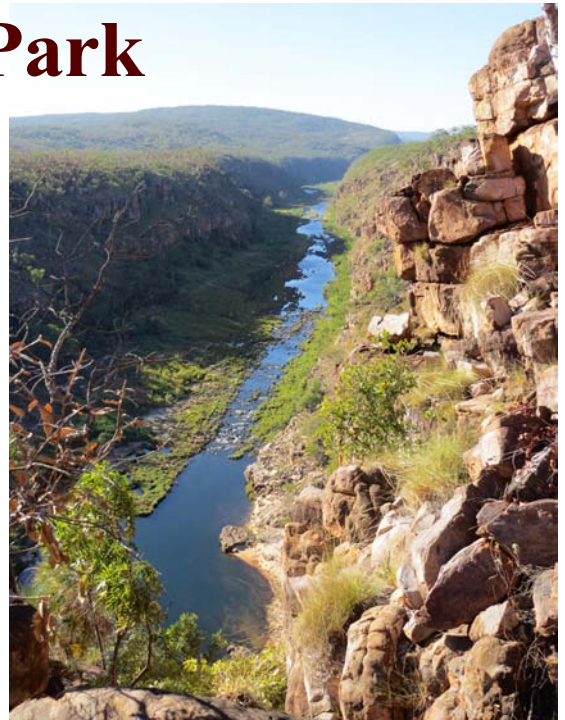
Our walk involved clambering along large stones, rock ledges, through pandanus and cane-grass up to two metres high along the river, with frequent wades from one side of the river to the other when the cliffs met the river.

Our journey was often interrupted for birdwatching, swimming in the pools along the river or just sitting back enjoying the scenery. Sometimes green ants threatened our idyllic wandering through the trees along the river. Both the burnt areas and the feral cattle tracks proved a mixed blessing and detracted from the scenic beauty of the area. However, while it was easier to walk in the burnt areas, the clouds of ash clung to bodies and clothes, and the cattle tracks and some potential camping areas were littered with droppings.

Camp sites varied from sandy river beaches to rock slabs, sometimes hardly wide enough even for a single tent, but with dream views along the river. In the evenings we cooked dinner by small fires as we couldn't bring in fuel in the helicopter.

All along the trip there were Aboriginal art galleries ...

All along the trip there were Aboriginal art galleries, some small, some extensive. They included inspiring examples of Wandjinas, Gwion Gwion figures, animals and abstract shapes. At one large site we found rock grooves used to grind the ochres, and perfectly rounded



Overlooking the Prince Regent River.

Photo by Annette Smith.

grinding stones stored on the rock shelves above.

There was time to admire red-tailed skinks, boab trees, the startling Kimberley Rose, the flights of birds, and the tiny croaking frogs. We basked in the glorious sunsets against the red cliffs, marveled at the reflections in the pools by which we camped, and revived in the cool pools in which we swam or by which we lazed.

The last campsite was all anyone could ever dream of; red cliffs, wide flat rock slabs for the tents, pools, waterfalls in both directions, and a wealth of Aboriginal rock art around the corner. This was a very special place.

With no soap for the whole 15 days, a deep crust of soot and dirt was glued to everyone's clothes and bodies by spinifex resin that no amount of clean

water could remedy — soap could, and Esther wore those same clothes, sparkling clean, for her presentation. Well done Esther.

Thank you Esther for sharing the memories during this presentation, and in your poem, published in the September 2014 *Bulletin*.

Annette Smith

Camp on rock ledge above Youwanjela Creek.

Photo by Esther Gallant.



Murumbung Yurung Murra cultural tour

In recognition of NPA's efforts in the creation of Namadgi National Park and to celebrate the ACT Parks and Conservation Service's 30th anniversary, the ACT Aboriginal Rangers invited NPA members and their families to a free Murumbung Yurung Murra guided walk and talk at Tidbinbilla on 13 December 2014. Those able to attend were Pam Darwin, Mike and Christine Bremers, Debbie Cameron, Jeanne Klodahl, Esther Gallant, Timothy Walsh and Janet Thompson, Judith Deland and Jennifer Morton, Graham and Helen Scully, and Bronwen Scully and her two children Tulley and Freya Lewis.

ACT Parks Ngunnawal Ranger and Senior Cultural Advisor Adrian Brown welcomed us to Country at the kurrajong tree just outside the entrance to the Tidbinbilla Visitor Centre. The uses of this tree are amazing: water from cuts in the bark, and bark used for rope and shields; seeds, after removal of dangerous spines, are ground and made into dampers; and the tubers of young trees are cooked and eaten.

We then drove to the track to Hanging Rock shelter where we were introduced to Aboriginal Rangers Kie Barratt and Dean Freeman who assisted with the tour. Jackson Taylor-Grant, another ACT Parks Aboriginal Ranger, also joined in to assist with the activities a little later on.

On the way to the shelter we were shown the black-stemmed wattle whose leaves produced soapy suds used as hand wash and antiseptic, and also for stunning fish. The wattle's seeds provide food, and the stem is used for axe and club handles. Other plant uses include treating jumping jack ant bites with bracken root sap; native geranium leaves and tubers, native raspberries, and yam daisies, are food sources; while the dianella leaf base becomes a whistle to imitate an injured bird to attract snakes.

Cassinia or cauliflower bush is used in smoking ceremonies and to put the spirit of Country on visitors. This led to an explanation of songlines, a mental map giving directions between places, the Ngunnawal people and neighbouring nations, of trade and war and a little of the rangers' family histories.

The midpoint of our walk was at the very impressive overhanging boulder 'Hanging Rock'. Use of shelters such as this in Tidbinbilla/Namadgi has



been dated to at least 25000 years ago. Adrian pointed out that this period is during the last ice age cycle when temperatures were about 10°C colder than at present. Very hardy people indeed.

We returned to the amphitheatre for morning tea and demonstrations of the making and uses of tools: axe grinding, handle attachment, heavy clubs or nulla nullas, rope making, boomerangs, spears and shields.

The tour ended with an outline of Aboriginal fire management and the rangers' hope for the creation of a Council of Elders to better represent to government and parks management Aboriginal views and aspirations about working and Caring for Country.

It was a thought-provoking tour summarised well by comments from one of the participants:

First of all we were impressed by the very fact the tour took place. We have waited a long time for such a program in the ACT. All the rangers were professional, confident and relaxed. They play a difficult role.

First, as employees of an ACT Government authority but also as members of local and nearby clans. They balanced this feature well. They also complemented each other's different interests and skills. For example, bush tucker, identification of plants and their traditional uses, present-day firefighting and a wish to adopt traditional means of land management such as patchwork burning.

We were also impressed by the willingness of the rangers to explain what can be difficult cultural differences between Aboriginal people and Europeans. Adrian gave the example of where we in the West have been taught to look people we are addressing in the eye. In traditional Indigenous culture it is rude to look directly at people, especially strangers. This is an adjustment the rangers have made in their communication with non-Indigenous people.

All in all, this tour enriched our appreciation of our Australian bush. We hope for more shared experiences with the ACT Parks Aboriginal Ranger group Murumbung Yurung Murra in 2015.

Graham Scully

Photos by Esther Gallant.

Top. Ranger Adrian Brown explains to participants the significance to Aboriginal people of shelters such as Tidbinbilla's Hanging Rock.

Left. Ranger Kie Barratt demonstrates Aboriginal axe-grinding to the author's two grandchildren.



Past year a big one for NPA work parties

The NPA volunteer work party members had, yet again, a busy but successful year in 2014. We conducted 15 individual work parties for a total of 26 days in the field. These comprised five work parties (a total of 15 days) for NSW PWS at Dananbilla Nature Reserve and 10 work parties (a total of 11 days) for ACT PCS. Work party members drove 8617km in their vehicles.

In the ACT, the usual suspects commanded our attention, such as wilding pine control in the lower Cotter and three High Country arboreta (Piccadilly, Stockyard and Pryor's), as well as the annual broom sweep (sorry, couldn't resist) in the Brayshaw's Hut area. The broom in this area showed somewhat of a resurgence, which reversed the generally good trend of previous years.

The ACT work parties also included some 'firsts':

- a survey of the Grassy Creek Valley (west of the Boboyan Road) for historical fence lines in preparation for a planned hazard-reduction burn. The NPA members were able to dig into collective memory to find some hitherto 'lost' fences that, along with others, were entered into the Parks and Conservation Service GIS database.
- pine control on the steep ridges south east of Mt MacDonald, adjacent to Stoney Creek Nature Reserve. This activity also led to the admission by our president to some 'after hours' solo

work along similar lines. Thanks Rod for your quiet and significant contribution.

- a combined work party with the Canberra Bushwalking Club (CBC) searching for pine wildings around Pryor's Arboretum and Snowy Flat. We had 10 members from each organisation in attendance and covered sufficient area to take this site off the list (at least for a while). The CBC has indicated a willingness to continue combined activities.

Our second year working in Dananbilla Nature Reserve (between Young and Cowra) saw the removal of still more fencing (some 15 km removed and about one kilometre left to go), as well as tree planting and erosion control. We also spent a day in Illunie Nature Reserve (about four kilometres east of Dananbilla). The Illunie work party was unsettling for some, as it involved removal of thickets of cypress pine with the use of brush cutters. However, once members saw the tendency of cypress to invade an area and form a monoculture, the task of selective thinning was viewed with less concern.

In the November Dananbilla work party we made contact with the Young District Landcare group. They were impressed with our dedication and willingness to travel so far and indicated an interest in participating in future activities.

I thank all of those who have helped make this program the success that it is. The fact that park staff in both the ACT and NSW view us as a constant and reliable group of people reflects well on us and on the NPA ACT in general.

Martin Chalk
Volunteer Coordinator



*Rupert Barnett and Martin Chalk tackling fence removal at Dananbilla.
Photo by Adrienne Nicholson.*

Wild Medley

Waking slowly. Fuzzy. Discomfort. Tubes everywhere. But through the haze I somehow know. Yes I am alive. I have come back. And every day since 4th June 2003 I roll out of bed and go out into the world.

four thousand
beautiful mornings –
still counting

Escape from cardiac rehab. Climb Mt Orroral (1450 m). My first walk since bypass surgery. It's ash, desolate after the 2003 bushfires. But the ecstatic joy of that summit yell. "Yeeeh!"

the dance pulsates
scarred heart opens
closes ... opens

Ten years. Up Mt Orroral again with the Wednesday walkers. Silver dead gums, fallen timber, black stumps. Granite tors and boulders. Golden wattle blooms in the regrowth. Slow going today, we don't reach the summit. But so happy to be in the really wild. And to keep up on rough ground with my peer group, fit retirees.

wild medley ...
tangled regrowth
and the lyrebird's song.

Gerry Jacobson



*NPA ACT members were entertained by Martin Chalk's band Casa de Locos at the 2014 Christmas party at Gudgenby Cottage.
Photo by Max Lawrence.*

Reports from our members



Mouse-ear Hawkweed infestation in Kosciuszko National Park

On Margaret Power's walk to Watsons Crags on 18 January, we passed a sign at Charlotte Pass drawing attention to an infestation of Mouse-ear Hawkweed (*Hieracium pilosella*) at Strzelecki Creek. From Watsons Crags we could see many hi-vis-vested workers rooting

the stuff out in the valley between there and The Sentinel, where Strzelecki Creek descends. A good camping spot has consequently been closed.

Most of us have only previously heard of the Orange Hawkweed (*Hieracium aurantiacum*) infestation. From the

internet I found that Mouse-ear Hawkweed has a yellow flower similar to a dandelion so it could get well established before being noticed. Perhaps we are fortunate that the bush-fire threat is low at present and Kosciuszko National Park has resources available to hammer the infestation.

Brian Slee



Left. Mouse-ear Hawkweed photo by Jenny Rolland.



Right. Orange Hawkweed photo by Neville Walsh

Photographs from

<http://invasives.org.au/blog/hawkweeds-a-recent-discovery-in-victorias-alps-and-a-taxonomic-name-change/>

Conservation Council ACT Region's Cat Containment seminar

'BORN TO STRAY' read the tattoo on the cat pictured drinking at the bar in a cartoon at the Cat Containment seminar held by the Conservation Council ACT Region on 22 January.

Did you realize that a quarter of Canberra households have a cat (or two) which makes 56000 cats, plus an estimated 25000 strays plus one feral cat per five square kilometres in our bushland? Only 11 per cent of cats that end up at the RSPCA are reclaimed.

Cat food. Seventy per cent of birds and 90 per cent of reptiles are caught by cats during the day, and 62 per cent of mammals are caught at night. Ten

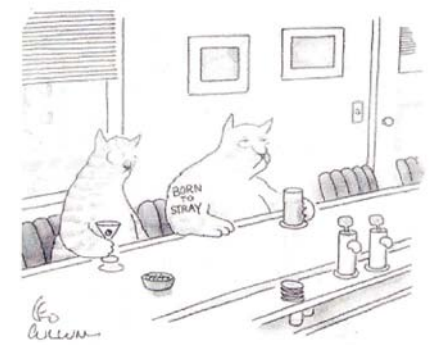
thousand Crimson Rosellas and 20000 Silvereyes are caught by cats each year. Birds can be scared to death or their fecundity lowered by cats, possibly leading to extinctions. Cats can roam almost one kilometre at night — three quarters of the bush surrounding Canberra is therefore within reach of cats.

All new suburbs should be declared cat containment areas.

For more details, log on to <http://conservationcouncil.org.au/>

or <http://conservationcouncil.org.au/publications/environment-exchange/>

Cynthia Breheny



Cartoon courtesy of the Conservation Council.



At 9:00 am on 9 November last year, the temperature in the Kama Reserve carpark was already about 20°C. The sky was clear and the wind calm. Max Lawrence and I were the only people there so the NPA walk scheduled did not officially happen. We two agreed, however, that it was a fine day for a short walk and, with the promise of young eagles to be seen, we headed off through the reserve. The path was newly mown and the scent of freshly cut grass filled the air. A few bulbine lilies were in

Renewing acquaintance with Kama Nature Reserve and the Molonglo River eagles

bloom. The hills across the Molonglo, which had been bright green a week ago, were now rapidly turning golden brown. Once out of the reserve we turned west along the access road past a bright pink briar rose. After a couple of kilometres we headed down slope toward the river.

We settled on a rocky outcrop for morning tea, with cameras and binoculars focused on the nest across the river. Two young eagles were perched on the nest gazing taciturnly down river. Their nearly adult plumage glistened in the bright sunlight. The parents appeared briefly, making lazy circles high above.

There are four eagle nests on this stretch of the Molonglo River. Three different nests have been occupied during the past six years, presumably by this pair of eagles. It is apparently common for eagles to have multiple nests within their territory. This is at least the second time

during this period that the pair have raised two young, undoubtedly aided by the local abundance of rabbits.

Splashing in the river below attracted our attention. Investigation revealed numerous large carp swimming and thrashing in the rocky shallows along the edge of the river. The casuarinas along the river bank provided welcome cool shade. We were now closer to the nest and looking up at the young eagles perched on branches slightly above the rim of their nest.

After about an hour of enjoyment of the river valley and its inhabitants, we faced the inevitable return walk up the slope, with the temperatures now nearing 30°C. A leisurely pace brought us to the cars just after noon, having walked 8.6km. It had been three hours well spent.

Esther Gallant

NPA NSW award to Di Thompson

Di Thompson, long-time member of NPA ACT, was presented with the 2014 Prudence Tucker State Conservation Award by the NPA NSW at its Annual General Meeting. The award was given 'For substantial contributions to significant state-wide conservation outcomes, benefitting both the NPA [NSW] and the wider community'.

Di has organised NPA NSW field trips to Kosciuszko National Park (KNP), has participated in Orange Hawkweed work parties, koala searches, huts maintenance, advocacy relating to high impact and inappropriate use of natural areas, and feral horse control. She has also represented the NPA and Nature Conservation Council on several bodies: the Southern Ranges Region Advisory Committee, the Cooma Monaro Bushfire Management Committee, the Perisher Range Resorts Environmental Management System Committee and the Murrumbidgee Environment and Water Advisory Group.

The ACT connection

Although the award is from NPA NSW and focuses on that state, much of Di's effort is also relevant to NPA ACT.

Di has been an active member of NPA ACT for more than 30 years. During the 1990s she was Vice President, to Bev Hammond's Presidency, with Len Haskew as Secretary. At other times she was the Outings Convenor. Her NPA ACT initiation was on the first work party to Orroral Homestead in the early 1980s,



and she continued this commitment to Orroral later with Len Haskew as organiser. Many work parties covering rabbit burrow identification, wilding pines, and the Rendezvous Creek track rehabilitation after the 1983 fires all helped to ensure her commitment. During the 1990s she organised many teams from NPA ACT for regular 'heavy duty' track maintenance in the Budawangs. I was puzzled for a while at her chatter about 'cheeses'*. She says 'OH&S wasn't a major consideration then ... we were all so much younger and stronger'.

From early days Di embraced bushwalking, joining and leading many day trips, pack walks and car camps, often in Namadgi National Park. Now she mostly leads week-long interstate car camps and pack walks, often to her beloved KNP. This history of walking

with those she now refers to as 'my elders' taught her much about the environment and of the ongoing need to protect it. A significant injury made her drop out of serious bushwalking. This coincided with her appointment to a NSW Government committee as the environmental representative which is largely how she works today. Di was also the Conservation Council and NPA ACT representative on the Interim Namadgi Advisory Board.

NPA ACT members extend their congratulations to Di on her award.

Graham Scully

[* 'cheeses' were the wooden blocks used in track repair. Editor]

Vale Shirley Lewis, 1926–2014

Shirley and her husband Glyn joined NPA ACT when they came to Canberra in 1968. Both became actively involved with the association and contributed greatly over many years.

As Student Activities Sub-committee Convenor in the 1970s, Shirley was heavily involved in poster and essay competitions for primary and infant grade school children. She devoted time and effort to make these a great success. A petrol strike one year prevented an official prize-giving, so Shirley personally delivered all prizes to the schools around Canberra and Queanbeyan!

NPA mounted various exhibitions and information displays around Canberra, and regularly participated in

Heritage Week, World Environment Day, and Conservation Week. In the 1980s, Shirley led NPA day walks for these special occasions. Her thoughtful planning included inviting a member of the Geological Society when she led a Heritage Week walk to Gibraltar Rocks. She led 'Life Be In It' rambles around Canberra urban bushland during that government health campaign. Shirley also led regular NPA weekend and Wednesday day walks: Gibraltar Rocks, Kambah Pool to Red Rocks Gorge, Gibraltar Peak, Nursery Swamp, Booroomba Rocks and Honeysuckle Creek, Orroral Rocks, Glendale to Brandy Flat Hut — these are all places which over the years would have seen Shirley passing by with a gaggle of NPA



followers. The Lewises were regular participants in the NPA's Glendale Tree Planting project, and Shirley included inspections of its progress in some of the walks that she led in the area.

(continued next page)

Laurie Adams, 1929–2014

Botanical sleuth and taxonomist

On 7 November 2014, NPA ACT lost one of its valued long-time members, Laurie Adams, CSIRO botanist and taxonomist, who had served on the Committee in 1971. Early *NPA Bulletin* indicate he led outings to Smokers Flat, Green Patch and Black Mountain Reserve. His trademarks were his early brown VW beetle, his Bedfordshire accent, and his dedication to taxonomic botany.

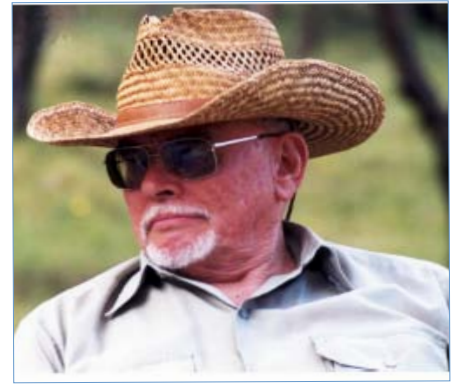
Laurie contributed an article ‘Rewards from botanical sleuthing in the family Gentianaceae’ to NPA ACT’s 50th anniversary *Bulletin* (March 2010) recounting when he found a gentian seedling at Jerangle, near Bredbo, with foliage bearing a striking resemblance to gentians he’d known in England. Laurie’s investigations between 1967 and 1992 led to his chance discovery in Orroral Valley of *Gentiana baeuerlenii*, which he named in honour of the amateur, Wilhelm Baeuerlen, who had collected the type specimen from a swamp near Bombala in 1887. The plant

hadn’t been seen for 100 years and there it was in Orroral Valley. Unfortunately, of the original 20 plants counted at the Orroral site the colony gradually shrank ‘probably from the long drawn-out drought’ until ‘none at all have been recorded for nearly 10 years’.

Laurie also co-authored the NPA ACT *Field Guide to the Native Trees of the ACT*.

NPA member Jean Geue writes of Laurie’s involvement in the traditional Black Mountain spring rambles: ‘Laurie was the major backstop for the spring wildflower rambles from about 1968, when Nancy Burbidge [NPA ACT founder] handed leadership to George Chippendale, through to 2012’. It was a good combination because ‘both were passionate botanists. George led and inspired while Laurie showed people just how to look for the differences’. Jean also acknowledges that Laurie was ‘one of the few people in Australia who could write a botanical specification for a new species in Latin — part of the formal procedures until recently’.

Laurie was also a longstanding member of Friends of Grasslands. In *News of Friends of Grasslands* (Jan–Feb 2015, p. 7) Paul Cheeseman tells



us that Laurie produced many scientific publications, including ‘Trees and shrubs of Black Mountain, Mt Ainslie and Mt Majura. A key based on vegetative characteristics’. Paul writes that Laurie was ‘always ready to go “botanizing” or attend a seminar or workshop’. He also acknowledges Laurie’s help and role as botanical mentor: ‘He assisted many, including myself, in floristic surveys, both formal and informal, throughout our region. He was generous with his knowledge and time and happiest when passing his knowledge on to others’. Vale Laurie and thank you for sharing your botanical knowledge so enthusiastically.

A walk from Mt Ginini to Mt Gingera will be held on Sunday 12 April 2015 as a farewell to Laurie. For details contact Judy Kelly on 6253 1859.

Judy Kelly, with many thanks to Jean Geue and Paul Cheeseman for their contributions.



*Laurie Adams with Isobel Crawford, Peter Ormay and Jean Geue in 2012, preparing for the annual Burbidge–Chippendale spring flower walk on Black Mountain.
Photo by Lucinda Royston.*

Vale Shirley Lewis, 1926–2014 *(continued from previous page)*

Shirley joined other NPA members in April 1989 to ‘see what was going on’ at a conservationists’ camp at Reedy Creek, whose participants were pleading for the protection of the Coolangubra and Tantawangalo forest. The group reported back to NPA on these protest activities.

Shirley was a member of the Society for Growing Australian Plants (SGAP), and of the Friends of the Botanic Gardens (a Growing Friend). She contributed to the *NPA Bulletin* with tales of SGAP (and other) trips, such as one to the Grampians in 1988. She contributed

a wonderful article to the 50th anniversary *NPA Bulletin* (March 2010) about the involvement she and Glyn had with many aspects of NPA’s role in education, promoting the environment and environmental issues.

The Lewis’s phone number was the contact number for NPA for several years, and Shirley recalled fielding various outlandish enquiries, some with no obvious relevance to NPA and its activities!

Shirley also inspired NPA members with another of her loves: weaving plant

fibres (basketry) with great skill. In this, she loved using Australian native plants, producing beautiful pieces for exhibition as well as useful articles such as the cherry-pickers’ baskets with which she supplied her son’s farm at Wyndham.

Shirley and Glyn had one daughter and three sons, and raised them all with a love of activity and the outdoors. Trevor still lives in Canberra and carries on the Lewis NPA involvement very actively.

Adrienne Nicholson

Lady Musgrave: a treasure of the Great Barrier Reef

After a rough journey of seasickness on the catamaran from the township of 1770 on the Queensland coast to Lady Musgrave Island, I was very glad to wade ashore with our rucksacks, camping gear and water, alongside Dave. Located at the southern end of the Great Barrier Reef in the Capricornia Cays National Park, Lady Musgrave is a small coral cay with a large lagoon. We had landed on a bleak, windy and drizzly day in late August last year. Not promising. As soon as I entered the pisonia forest, which looked like Jack's giant beanstalks, it seemed a light-green haven offering shelter. A sour smell quickly tempered that impression: Black Noddy Terns (*Anous minutus*) roosted in the branches, producing a noisy racket and fertilising the ground with their frequent droppings.



A wind-sculpted pandanus palm on the edge of the lagoon.

Noddies and pisonia: a striking example of interdependence

It is a striking example of interdependence, because if the Noddies, which nest in the pisonia, get caught in the sticky fruits and die, they ultimately provide the soil with more nutrients, which benefits the pisonias. In Australia, the trees grow mainly on a few of the Great Barrier Reef's tropical islands.

Pisonia trees provide habitat for 75 per cent of the GBR's nesting sea birds

The value of the pisonia trees is that they provide habitat for 75 per cent of the nesting sea birds in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. They also stabilise the cays, which are breeding grounds for endangered sea turtles and the Wedge-tailed Shearwater (*Puffinus*

pacificus) or muttonbird. With their greenery, they give a luxuriant look to the cays, which helps tourism.

The pisonia forests are vulnerable because they are localised and subject to scale-insect attack. The scale proliferates when populations of its natural predators — native ladybirds and parasitic wasps — decrease dramatically, and the trees can die, as has happened on Tryon Island. A path winds through the forest until it reaches the westerly side of the island, which is remarkably sheltered. We picked a camping spot that had been hollowed out from the forest, pitching our tent as far from overhanging branches and their messy occupants as possible.

Five other campers occupied their discreet campsites. All of us had used the

commercial operator who runs day tours to Lady Musgrave. The feeling of peace and quiet was very welcome. With five days on a small coral cay that you can walk around in half an hour, and no communications, what on earth will you do?

We sat on the clean beach near the coastal casuarinas, gazing at the waves and nearby Fairfax Islands. In calmer weather, we watched the blurred shapes of sea turtles swimming under water, contrasting with the slim fins of dolphins. Further out we saw the spouts and flukes of whales cruising along the coast.

You could walk around the island, examining the bleached remnants of dead, intricately patterned coral that storms had probably broken from the reef. A sea eagle soared above us at intervals. Where was its mate? The Black Noddy Terns seemed predominant but in bushes near the shoreline, we saw Silvereyes bigger than their mainland counterparts. Sooty Oystercatchers (*Haematopus fuliginosus*) walked stiffly on the wet sand, stabbing away for something to eat.

The weather finally settled enough for us to try snorkelling in the lagoon. Novices, we were rewarded with the combined shock of cold and seeing the amazing life below: long sea slugs, looking like discarded piping; purple sea stars; psychedelically coloured fish,

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Our Musgrave Island home.

Lady Musgrave: a treasure of the Great Barrier Reef *(continued)*

flashes of yellow and black stripes, miniature darting fish, like semi-transparent rainbows. Small stingrays vacuumed the lagoon floor; we kept a wary distance from the larger ones. Layers of coral grew from the rock wall sides, creating a hanging garden effect with brown coral plates and pink and purple branches. Well camouflaged crabs moved surreptitiously over their domain.

When we reluctantly left Lady Musgrave Island on a perfect day, we joined the catamaran at its pontoon from where we snorkelled in deeper water, seeing even more than before.

The area is culturally significant to four traditional owner groups

The human history of Lady Musgrave is restricted because written records of visitors to the island are available only from 1853 onwards. The Aboriginal history relates to the present and says that the area is culturally significant to four traditional owner groups: 'The waters and fringing reefs around the Capricorn Bunker islands are part of the cultural landscape and are still the focus for traditional access and use of available resources'.

European history is partly about extracting resources, and partly exotic. Lady Musgrave Island was the scene of guano extraction; miners released goats on the island for shipwrecked sailors but the destructive animals were ultimately removed. On North West Island, sea



Pisonia (Pisonia grandis) forest. Pisonias are flowering trees in the bougainvillea family.

turtles were slaughtered for turtle soup. Fortunately, the soup didn't win many enthusiasts and the industry lapsed in 1923. For three years from 1939 Stan and Dorothy Bell ran a tourist lodge on Lady Musgrave, which hosted the American multimillionaire, George Vanderbilt and the author Zane Gray. No traces of the lodge remain.

Big challenges: climate change, invasive species and coal

Managing Lady Musgrave Island and the Capricornia Cays National Park provides

many challenges against the background of climate change, rising sea temperatures and introduced species like the sparrow, which has just been observed on the island. If the

delicate balance between the naturally occurring scale insect and its natural predators is upset and the scale population explodes, the ant population increases simultaneously to feast on the sugar the scale secretes. Ants, including the introduced African big-head ant, spread the scale which, if it can't be contained, will kill the pisonia trees and affect the seabirds that nest and breed in the pisonias or below them.

Dredging for coal ports on the Queensland coast will almost certainly have a negative impact on the Barrier Reef and its cays. Exhausting as it is, we have to strongly defend such places and do all we can to make our politicians realise that they are accountable to their electorates, and that science and protection of the natural environment are essential concerns. Could the International Union for the Conservation of Nature help?

Judy Kelly



A Black Noddy Tern perched in a casuarina.

Photos by Dave Kelly.

Members' survey information

Thankyou to those readers who completed the recent NPA ACT members' survey. We had a good response rate and the valuable information gathered by the survey will help in the NPA ACT's future decision-making.

Results will be published in the *Bulletin* once the Management Committee has analysed the data.



Aerial culling of feral horses off the table

Timing the announcement just after the World Parks Congress

A lengthy, expensive and contentious public consultation is underway as part of the Review of Feral Horse Numbers in Kosciuszko National Park (KNP).

On 19 December 2014 the member for the marginal Nationals NSW Party seat of Monaro, John Barilaro, announced (together with the state Minister for the Environment, Rob Stokes) that aerial culling as one of the tools available for the control of feral horses had been ruled out.

Mr Barilaro's press release attempted to justify his stand, stating that he is 'a strong advocate for the brumby, [and] has fought passionately to ensure they are protected. I have always strongly opposed aerial culling as a means of wild horse population control'.

The timing is opportunistic, and the press releases hypocritical, coming just weeks after the NSW Government, with much flamboyance and rhetoric about its environmental credentials, hosted the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Parks Congress in Sydney in November.

Removing aerial culling from the feral horse management toolkit demonstrates that the NSW Government is more concerned about attempting to preserve Mr John Barilaro's seat than allowing the Review to reach a conclusion.

About six months ago, the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH), engaged a communications company, Straight Talk, at considerable expense to the taxpayer to undertake research into public opinion and attitudes to the problem of feral horses in KNP. Straight Talk undertook a lengthy online 'Conversation', on the website [https://](https://engage.environment.nsw.gov.au/protect-snowies)

engage.environment.nsw.gov.au/protect-snowies. This closed on 15 December.

On 29 November, Straight Talk conducted another major element of its public consultation, a '21st Century Town Hall meeting' in Queanbeyan with a stratified, randomly selected group of 72 participants from NSW urban and rural areas of the local Monaro Region.

Early perceptions of the public Town Hall Meeting

At the Queanbeyan meeting, participants voted on what methods they thought would be both acceptable and effective for reducing feral horse numbers in KNP. Such ineffectual methods as fencing, brumby running and fertility control rated lowly, whereas the more effective methods of aerial and ground shooting, and aerial mustering, were widely accepted.

The pro-feral horse groups

NPWS has been consulting with the pro-feral horse groups for almost 15 years. The first 18 months of the review was not with environmental groups but primarily with the pro-feral horse advocacy groups which:

1. mostly refuse to acknowledge that feral horses seriously damage the alpine environment even after NPWS gave them a tour of some affected areas
2. have actively blocked any effective methods for managing the increase in feral horse numbers since 2000 (excepting The Big Boggy and the actual Alpine Area where they helped to lead out feral horses that had been passively trapped by NPWS)
3. following the 2003 fires when feral horse numbers had been reduced,

refused to take any further horses out, even though they were encouraged to use any means possible, including brumby running

4. before the 2003 fires, were selective in which horses they did take out, to ensure the breeding stock remained.

In an attempt to silence opposition, the Snowy Brumby Support Group and the Kosciuszko Brumby and Horse Camp Conservationists groups are trolling NPA NPA members and Dr Graeme Worboys of the IUCN on their websites.

Excepting perhaps the re-homing groups, the local pro-feral horse groups have a much broader agenda. They want:

1. feral horses to be listed under legislation similar to the US *Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971*. What a terrible indictment on NSW if this were to occur, when the Aboriginal people, who were dispossessed by horse-riding settlers, are not recognised in the Australian Constitution
2. passive trapping of feral horses, an ineffectual and inefficient method, to remain as the only control method
3. aerial culling to be disallowed
4. greater access for horseriding in KNP — they are predominantly horseriders.

Further waste of taxpayers' money

In late January, NPWS and Taronga Zoo staff released a number of individuals of the endangered Northern Corroborree Frog from their captive breeding program into the Brindabella National Park. Remnant populations of the Northern Corroborree Frog are also in the adjacent northern KNP, but they and the sphagnum bogs where they live are

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Bushwalk

Yerrabi Pond, Gungahlin

Date: Sunday 21 December 2014

Participants: Brian Slee (Leader), Peter, Marilyn, Bronnie and Chrissie Anderson-Smith, Rupert Barnett, Martin Chalk, Brian Christensen, Esther Gallant, Steve Hill, Max Lawrence, Michaela Popham, Margaret Power

Weather: Sunny, warm, a breeze (with lulls)

Leader's comments: Devising extended walks in Gungahlin can be a problem. Gold Creek and Gungahlin Lakes Golf Courses occupy central sites that frustrate passage, particularly in the south and near Gungahlin Pond. More northerly Yerrabi Pond, however, is freely accessible. Walks 2, 3 and 4 in Graeme Barrow's *Walking Canberra* formed the nucleus of this excursion, with detours into adjacent suburbs.

The end of Nellie Hamilton Avenue, overlooking Yerrabi and its mass of water birds, was an ideal meeting place. After welcoming four non-members, we set out at 8:30am heading east under Horse Park Drive and into the Lyall Gillespie Corridor extension of the lake in Forde. Water from Ginninderra Creek is retained here in several reedy basins.

Halfway along we turned north onto Pahlam Street bike path where magnificent old box eucalypts parade up and over the hill. After brief shenanigans at the hilltop playground, we circled past Burgmann School and found Old Gundaroo Road (converted to a path) running through Heritage Park. Plaques detail early occupants. A flock of Superb Parrots gathered on cue, squawking and



Part of the group at Soroptimist Point, Yerrabi Pond. Photo by Steve Hill.

squabbling. Quite a moment for those from Superb-deprived areas.

We returned to Yerrabi and followed its landscaped western shore in Amaroo. The lakeside pelican sculptures near Bizant Street were complemented by a pair of real life specimens. Swans floated by. On a rise above the lake we visited the reconstructed Palmer trig, originally built by surveyors in 1878. Ferreting our way through back streets, we then found the Corringe Crescent eucalypt that is of such enormous height and girth that it has a park to itself. Looks lonely.

We headed west, walking parallel to Mirrabai Drive into Crinigan Park to have a look at the hut ruin (ACT Conservation Council booklet *Gungahlin's Treasures* has details). We soon retreated to shade for Christmas cake.

It was time for a lofty view so we passed under Mirrabai and climbed into Hill Reserve, Ngunnawal. As Rupert observed, Gungahlin lacks imposing hills

Yerrabi Pond pelican sculptures from the 'other side'. Photo by Steve Hill



but even its modest ridges provide grand panoramas of the whole Canberra basin. It was warming up so we retraced our steps quickly to the lake and completed the circuit at 11:30am, pausing on the way at the curious Soroptimist Point.

Too late for brunch but almost everyone stayed for coffee/lunch — Da Nunzio served excellent fare. The 9 km outing was NPA's first in suburban Gungahlin. Outsiders rarely visit. You would wonder why after seeing the place.

Brian Slee

Aerial culling of feral horses off the table *(continued from previous page)*

trampled by feral horses. Why spend the money and effort to protect this and other emblematic native species when feral horse damage and numbers continue to threaten their existence?

The future

The analyses by Straight Talk, the communications consultants, and the Independent Technical Reference Group would be seriously compromised if aerial culling, with its demonstrated popular support, were not considered in their reports and advice. The Straight Talk consultation would become another

extravagant waste of taxpayers' money raising false expectations that a meaningful consultation was being conducted.

The NSW and federal governments have legislative and moral obligations to manage the national park estate. Our parks should not become recreational horse paddocks. The review should be allowed to consider the full suite of methods for the removal of feral horses, including aerial and ground shooting, and aerial mustering.

The *'Caring for our Australian Alps Catchment'* by the Federal Department

of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency (2011) states that the loss of water from alpine catchments was worth \$9.6 billion in 2006 terms to downstream irrigators, farmers and townspeople.

Finally, as Keith Muir of the Colong Foundation said: 'There are more feral horses in Australia than in any other nation on the planet. These damned nags are not in any way rare or unique, but rather degrade the unique natural heritage of Kosciuszko National Park'.

Di Thompson

Bushwalks

A watery return to the Big Hole



The Shoalhaven River crossing point on the track to the Big Hole.

When it happened, it happened quickly. One moment I was carefully picking my way across the Shoalhaven River, next I was flat on my back, clothing saturated. But camera, money and notebook were safe in a bag slung around my neck.

Fortunately, I was able to grasp a clump of vegetation wedged near the bank and hoist myself up. I'd also kept hold of my stick. No injuries, except to my ego, resulted from this misadventure, caused by my stick sinking into sand and throwing me off balance.

My ducking came on my return from a walk to the Big Hole, in the Deua National Park, outside Braidwood. I made the walk during a bout of nostalgia having first seen this limestone marvel in 1976 when it was on private property and you had to get permission to visit it. These days the walk occupies 3.75 km (return) and starts at the Berlang campground where there's a foot-track leading down to the Shoalhaven.

The river was flowing strongly when I made the walk in late December 2014 and, as I discovered, was just over knee height. Forging it took care, but I was heartened by a bloke standing in the middle of the river who encouraged me to continue while warning of debris blocking the exit on the opposite bank. I took his advice and easily skirted this cluster of vegetation in deeper water — only to come to grief at this exact spot on my return.

If you are wise you will make the crossing in footwear, not bare

feet, which do not give a reliable purchase on sand and rock that can sometimes be jagged.

Once over the river, you'll find that the track winds through silent eucalypt forest. It climbs almost all the way, although there are some flat bits. A fenced platform can be seen after 40 minutes or so and then

you reach a sign announcing that the Big Hole is 100 metres distant and that you should approach it with caution.

The platform enables you to gaze down to the very floor of the Big Hole where there are soft tree ferns, two metres high. The rocky sides of the cavity are cracked, and here and there vegetation clings to the sides. According to a noticeboard, welcome swallows nest in clefts. This sign has been vandalised with the plastic cover cracked and splintered. It should be replaced or repaired.



When I wrote about the Big Hole in 1977 I quoted scientists as having determined that its maximum depth from the highest part of the crater is 114 metres. Near the bottom, there's a large recess some 18 metres deep and 24 metres high.

Among early Europeans to visit the Big Hole was the NSW Surveyor-General Thomas Mitchell who saw it in 1832 and later wrote:

A part of the surface of that elevated country had subsided, carrying trees along with it to the depth of about 400 yards, and left a yawning opening about 300 yards wide resembling a gigantic quarry, at the bottom of which the sunken trees continued to grow. In the eastern side of the bottom of this subsidence a large opening extended under the rock and seemed to lead to a subterraneous cavity of great dimensions.

Thirty years later, in 1862, the *Golden Age*, the forerunner of the *Queanbeyan Age*, reported a descent into the Big Hole by an adventurous person called Boxall, no other identification given. Mates slowly lowered him into the chasm by means of a rope with a small piece of wood acting as a seat. When the intrepid Boxall reached a ledge he was obliged to kill a snake after which he was lowered to 'another resting place' before touching down on the floor of the hole. Boxall walked around for a while on the rocky surface before being hauled back to the top 'amidst such shouts as made the welkin [sky] ring'. The adventurer brought with him the dead snake as proof of its existence, but how it got to the ledge was a mystery.

Maybe other people have descended into the Big Hole and, if so, it would be stimulating to hear or read their accounts.

If inclined, you can extend the outing beyond the Big Hole, as the track will also take you to another fine natural feature, Marble Arch, a walk of 12 km return. The track is shown on the NSW Department of Lands' 1:25 000 map, Kain 8826-4S, third edition.

Graeme Barrow

Looking down into the 100 m deep Big Hole. Photos by Graeme Barrow.

Walking the Westmoreland Way 2014

The Westmoreland Way in England is a 156 kilometre route from Appleby in the north-west of Cumbria to Arnside on Morecombe Bay. The county of Westmoreland no longer exists but its name remains to describe the area it once covered. A mate and I decided to do the walk in 9 days through the booking and baggage transfer company Mickledore, based in Keswick.

The Lake District

In Neolithic times the area was important for the supply of stone axes. The Romans came for lead, silver and copper. Sheep farming has occurred since Roman times and is still important to the economy of the area and to preserving the traditional landscape, especially the dry stone walls.

The mining of copper, lead, silver, slate and graphite (for the pencil industry) has been important at various times. Woodlands have been coppiced for charcoal. They are still coppiced on National Trust land.

Tourism is now the main economic activity. This did not start off well. In 1724 Daniel Defoe wrote about Westmoreland as 'the wildest, most barren and frightful of any that I have passed through in England, or even Wales itself; the west side bordering on Cumberland, is indeed bounded by a chain of almost unpassable mountains which, in the language of the country, are called fells'. However, in 1773 Father Thomas Brown wrote *A Guide to the Lakes*, which is generally considered to have started the tourist industry. This was followed in 1819 by William Wordsworth's hugely influential *Guide to the Lakes* which ran into many editions and greatly popularised the region. Something he came to regret in old age!

The list of literary and artistic people who have visited or lived in the Lake District is long. Some of the better known are Wordsworth, Coleridge and other poets of their circle, Thomas and Matthew Arnold, John Ruskin, Sir Walter Scott, Thomas Carlyle, Lord Tennyson, Hugh Walpole, Beatrix Potter (of Peter Rabbit fame), Arthur Ransome (*Swallows and Amazons*), Melvyn Bragg, Ken Russell and Richard Adams (*Watership Down*).

The Lake District is now the most popular tourism destination in the UK. It has 16 million visitors a year. This has of course benefited the local economy enormously but also brought problems including traffic congestion and footpath

erosion. We went in September and, except for the popular towns of Grasmere, Ambleside and Kendal, places were not crowded.

The Lake District National Park

The Lake District National Park was established in 1951, the second in the UK after the Peak District. In common with all other national parks in England, there is no restriction on entry to, or movement within, the park along public routes, but access to cultivated land is usually restricted to public footpaths, bridleways and byways. Much of the uncultivated land has statutory open access rights — which cover around 50 per cent of the park.

The park is about 51 kilometres from east to west and 64 kilometres from north to south. It was established to protect the Lake District from excessive commercial and industrial exploitation, preserving the reason visitors come to see the area.

Most of this walk was within the national park. British national parks are of course very different from what Australians and North Americans understand by the term. British national parks are not owned by the state but are usually a mixture of privately owned land (often farmed), large and often ancient landed estates, land owned by charities such as the National Trust and by water utilities, forestry, local councils and industries such as quarrying. Overlaying this is a complex and very old network of public rights of way and rights of access granted under the *Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000*, which came into force in 2005. To complicate matters even more, for Australians anyway, there are 'rights of commoners'. These rights allow certain designated persons to graze animals (usually sheep, cattle and ponies) on private land, as well as cut bracken and collect stone and wood. There are 300 to 400 commoners in the Lake District. Common land is important for its traditional cultural value and its continuing ecological importance, especially as it often makes up land on the famous Lake District mountains.



Dry stone wall with stile. Photo by Tim Walsh.

Common lands are also important in the Lake District as 58 per cent has been designated as sites of specific scientific interest while 11 per cent of all scheduled ancient monuments are associated with commons. It can be seen, therefore, that the management of the Lake District is a highly complicated matter involving the balancing of any number of competing interests.

The Lake District National Park Authority (the Authority)

The Authority is the main planning body for the area, with a duty to limit building and other development. It only owns about 3.8 per cent of the park area (8737 ha). About 60 per cent of the national park is in private ownership. The balancing act between ecological and agricultural management is challenging. Conflict between landowners and land users occurs. The balance between nature and farming is difficult. The largest land owner in the Lake District is the National Trust, which owns 46000 hectares (21 per cent) including many of the highest peaks; Scarfell Pike, at 3210 feet is the highest peak in England. This is largely due to the work and generosity of such people as the naturalist, conservationist and author, Beatrix Potter.

Timothy Walsh

(To be continued in the June Bulletin)

News from the Friends of Glenburn

Much has happened since my last report in the September 2014 *Bulletin*.

Meetings with Parks Service staff

The main outcomes have been the erection of a protective fence at Coppins homestead ruins and the settling of a preferred route for a walking trail of 13 kilometers through the Glenburn/Burbong historic precinct.

Contractors erected the fence in early February 2015. The Friends contributed to its cost from donations, including from descendants of John and Sarah Coppin who built the Homestead in 1891.

The Friends will be busy on work associated with the track over the next couple of years.

More interpretive signs

The Friends erected one replacement sign (at the Colverwell graves) and four new signs (at the Glenburn Shearing Shed complex and the sites of the Kowen School, the Charcoal Kilns and Curleys Homestead ruins and orchard) in November 2014.

Many thanks to the National Parks Association who met most of the cost of manufacturing the new signs.

There are now nine interpretive signs in the historic precinct.

New information on the web

An updated map of the location of the historic sites and the texts of all nine interpretive signs were placed on the NPA website www.npaact.org.au under The Friends of Glenburn. This is a fine addition to all the material on the precinct on the NPA website. Thanks Chris Emery.



The team of The Friends volunteers and ranger Nick after erecting the replacement sign at the Colverwell graves.

Correspondence with the ACT Government

I wrote to the former Chief Minister requesting a small special increase in funding for the Parks Service. Minister Rattenbury replied but no additional money was forthcoming.

I requested that he reconsider the matter.

Guided tours of the historic precinct

The Friends of Glenburn program continues.

Another tour for U3A members is scheduled for Wednesday 29 April 2015

and one for NPA members on Sunday 3 May 2015. All welcome.

The quinces at Colliers may be ripe for the two tours — indications are for a good crop.

Minister Rattenbury to visit

The Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Shane Rattenbury, has accepted an invitation from the Parks Service to revisit the Glenburn/Burbong historic precinct on 20 March 2015.

The visit's main purpose will be to show the Minister the major work that has been carried out at Colliers Homestead ruins and orchard since his last visit in October 2012: the new interpretive signs, and the fence at Coppins Homestead ruins that provides protection from rabbits and stray livestock.

We will have the opportunity to explain future work to the Minister, including the development of a walking trail through the precinct from the Kings Highway.

Col McAlister



Ink and ink wash sketch of Colliers Homestead ruins by Gary Thompson, 2014. The mortar capping laid by ranger Dean Darcy and members of The Friends, can be seen clearly on the tops of the walls,

PARKWATCH

Edited extracts from recent journals and newsletters

People, dogs and beaches

We take it for granted that our beaches are free and open to all. But, if you take your dog, you might be challenged by signs saying No dogs or Dogs must be on a leash. Dogs have become a vexed and polarising issue for coastal communities and coastal management.

The problems cited are intrusive and aggressive behaviour, dog faeces and threats to wildlife. Dog bad behaviour is as inexcusable as human bad behaviour, wherever it occurs. It is harder to make the case that dog faeces, while deplorable in any public place, are a major danger to human health or the environment. There are many other, more serious potential pollutants in urban run-off.

NSW South Coast councils cover varied population sizes and length of coastline and their beaches are likely to have a disproportionate number of summer visitors, often with dogs. They all have to manage competing uses of the beaches, and do this by zoning them for different purposes. Eurobodalla Shire Council has established a 600 m dog-free area north of Lakesea Caravan Park to the Durras Lake entrance. Neighbouring Murrumbidgee National Park is one of the few coastal national parks where the boundary now goes to the low-water mark. Councils need to work to satisfy the demands for both off-leash and dog-free areas, and to consider the potential environmental impact of their decisions.

However, most of the discontent with dogs on beaches isn't about threats to wildlife. It's a cultural issue. We all (with our dogs) feel fully entitled to go to the beach for fun, exercise, relaxation and a nature fix. We need to change this attitude and respect the rights of other users. When the public space is also a dynamic natural environment, we also need to respect that we're not the only species inhabiting it. Our aim should be to act as stewards, being sensitive to the threats we and our animals may cause, along with the many other factors affecting the coast.

*Nature NSW,
Vol. 58, No. 4 (Summer 2014)*

New national park for NSW

The National Parks Association of NSW has welcomed the announcement by the NSW Minister for the Environment, the Hon. Rob Stokes MP,

of the establishment of the Everlasting Swamp National Park.

Kevin Evans, CEO of NPA NSW said:

This is an exciting and significant addition to the national park estate. Everlasting Swamp NP will ensure the protection of this internationally critical wetland area and the many threatened species that rely on it – including iconic species like the Jabiru and Brolga. We commend the government for persevering with the negotiations necessary to secure this fragile wetland. In addition to the new park the Minister announced notable extensions to several other protected areas: an additional 3,200 ha added to the Ramsar-listed Gwydir Wetlands State Conservation Area, increasing the size of the park by 40 per cent and protecting species such as the Australasian Bittern; a 209 ha addition to Doodle Corner Swamp Nature Reserve, which will result in protection of 50 per cent of this important Ramsar wetland area; 1,000 ha added to a series of national parks, including World Heritage Dorrigo NP, New England NP and the Morton NP.

Additions to coastal protected areas including Glen Rock State Conservation Area, which protects the last surviving pocket of coastal rainforest in the region, archaeologically rich Jervis Bay NP, and Arakoon NP on the NSW mid north coast.

*Nature NSW,
Vol. 58, No. 4 (Summer 2014)*

Wollongong City Council support for The Grand Escarpment Walk

At a recent meeting of Wollongong City Council strong support was obtained for the establishment of a multi-agency working party, to be facilitated by Council, to pursue the completion of the long-awaited Illawarra Escarpment Walking Track. Illawarra Branch congratulates Cr George Takacs for his initiative in bringing this project to the attention of fellow councillors and his success in obtaining bipartisan support for the establishment of the working party.

We believe this walk can become one of the best in NSW and it very much fits with the present promotion by the NSW Government and their 5-year plan to establish Great Walks for NSW. The key for our walk is to seek a specific funding commitment from government and now is the perfect time to do so, we suggest. We also believe that the idea of a Great Walk for the Illawarra is an important opportunity for the promotion and public education of the concept of connectivity conservation in the region by raising

public awareness of the wonderful biodiversity and importance of the escarpments and nearby bushland green corridor.

*Nature NSW,
Vol. 58, No. 4 (Summer 2014)*

Port Campbell: developments on a fragile coast

Port Campbell's limestone cliffs are being promoted as a world-class tourist destination and a place for development, but planners seem to lack understanding and consideration of the limestone environment's fragility and risks. Nor does there appear to be a long-term vision to protect the landscape and so ensure the coast remains an attractive tourism destination into the future.

The new Shipwreck Coast Master Plan seeks to gain a higher tourism 'yield' and proposed private development within the national park. This appears unnecessary, as a recent C30 amendment opened up 10 large sites (over 1,000 ha on 28 km of coast) for tourism development on private land adjoining the national park. The plan also proposed a private tourism development – now reported to be a geothermal spa resort – on an ecologically fragile piece of Commonwealth land surrounded by national park. This development should not be allowed when an adjoining C30 site is available. The plan suggests some interesting and dramatic concepts, but does not seem to reasonably consider the geotechnical risks or how the wild, untouched scenic landscape values and biodiversity of this environmentally sensitive landscape will be protected.

A large, cantilevered viewing platform is proposed at the Twelve Apostles. One would think the problems of bedding such a large structure into an area known to have caverns and a recent major cliff collapse, would be a major concern. As well, it is proposed to carve another set of steps into the 60 m high cliffs near the existing Gibson Steps. The current steps are in an area of high water drainage with sinkhole features nearby. It would seem a high risk to encourage more people to walk on the beach at the base of these unstable cliffs. While the current stairs to the beach at Loch Ard Gorge may need some improvement, the large, stepped ramp proposed appears grossly over scale. A shelter proposed at the top of the gorge is a visual intrusion on the landscape and seems unnecessary; visitors spend only a few minutes at this lookout, which does not warrant a shelter.

(continued on page 20)

The plan consultants acknowledge that climate change and ocean acidification might accelerate erosion of the coast. This needs more investigation before government funding is committed to infrastructure, as many of the plans may not be feasible or realistic in the short or long term. More experienced geotechnical advice is required, so that planners can better understand the risks of development near these fragile cliffs. Better planning is also needed to stop the visual intrusion of developments on the nationally listed and state-listed heritage landscape.

Park Watch (Vic. NPA),
No. 259 (December 2014)

Time to fix park targets

While we can never know for sure, an extraordinary number of animals and plants are threatened with extinction: up to a third of all mammals and over a tenth of all birds. And the problem is getting worse. At the same time, we have more land and sea than ever in protected areas (parks). There are more than 200,000 protected areas, covering about 15 per cent of the world's land area and 3 per cent of the oceans. So why are protected areas making so little difference?

One reason is that protected areas are only one of our tools, and will never do the job alone. Another reason is that protected areas tend to be in the wrong places. The majority of protected areas are residual leftover areas of the world pushed to the margins where they least interfere with extractive activities such as agriculture, mining or forestry. On land, protected areas are mainly remote or high, cold, arid, steep and infertile. Similar patterns are emerging in the sea. Residual protected areas, by definition, make the least difference to conservation.

Meanwhile, biodiversity continues to be lost in landscapes and seascapes suitable for clearing, logging, grazing, fishing, and extraction of minerals, oil and gas. Residual protection also gives the false appearance of progress because many people equate the number of protected areas and their extent with success. These figures are only 'good news' if they tell us about the difference these parks make to conservation. They don't. The most rigorous estimates of the difference made by protected areas are small. By 2008, only 7 per cent of Costa Rica's much-lauded protected-area system would have been deforested in the absence of protection. Globally, in 2005, the loss of native vegetation prevented by protected areas was just 3 per cent of their extent. These numbers get to the very purpose of protected

areas. They are small because protected areas are mainly residual.

Protected areas that make little or no difference should be a major concern for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The targets of its Convention on Biological Diversity are meant to guide decisions on protected areas to 2020. It aspires to 17 per cent of land and 10 per cent of the seas under formal protection. The result has been a rush to proclaim large, remote protected areas where they are easiest to establish and make least difference. The story is familiar in conservation and beyond: provide a simplistic measure that implies success, and it will be manipulated to achieve high scores.

Here are four ways for the ICUN to lead the way to parks that make a bigger difference:

- Stop using targets that give the illusion of conservation progress. At best they will obscure the real signal; at worst they will be used perversely to dress-up residual protection.
- Measure success as the difference protected areas make relative to no protection. If saving species is important, evaluating the impact of protected areas is essential.
- Establish an IUCN taskforce to develop ways for evaluating the impact of protected areas. Assess the impact of current protected areas to provide lessons for management and future planning. And test approaches to setting priorities.
- Develop targets for the impact of protected areas: how much threat should be averted and how much loss should be avoided?

Real conservation – the kind that makes a difference – depends on IUCN's leadership. Every year of delay means irreversible, avoidable loss of biodiversity.

Extract from an article in The Conversation 11/11/2014 by Prof. Bob Pressey (James Cook University) and Euan Ritchie (Deakin University).

Reprinted in *Park Watch* (Vic. NPA),
No. 259 (December 2014)

Angry cattlemen consider poll challenge

Mountain cattlemen, who massed at their annual rally in Victoria's High Country at the weekend, are considering fielding their own political candidates to counter moves to stamp out alpine grazing. The anger stems from the Victorian Labor Government's decision to cancel a controversial trial of alpine grazing approved by the previous Coalition government that would have allowed

cattle to return to the mountains.

The Victorian Government said the trial was scientifically flawed and its cancellation was in line with longstanding ALP policy to end alpine grazing. President of the Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria, Charlie Lovick, said the crowd of 4,000 at the Mountain Cattlemen's Annual Get Together at Mitta Mitta in north-eastern Victoria was angry about the cancellation of the trial, which was to have begun this month. The vexed question of grazing cattle in the high country is an environmental, cultural, and political issue, with passion strong on both sides of the debate.

'We are prepared to talk to the government and it wouldn't matter who is in power, but we won't be fobbed off', said Mr Lovick, adding that the association didn't want confrontation but was prepared to stage an event in Melbourne.

The trial was to have allowed 300 cattle to graze on state land in the Wonnangatta Valley in the Victorian High Country. Victorian National Parks Association executive director Matt Ruchel said the trial was flawed from the start and no credible scientist had put their name to it. Victorian Environmental Minister Lisa Neville said she was willing to meet the cattlemen to discuss the issue but the government policy to end alpine grazing would still stand.

'Significant scientific reviews of the 2003 and 2006 alpine fires were unequivocal. Grazing did not reduce the impact of fire and, in some cases, can increase fire risk', she said. 'The Coalition's study had no scientific rigour, with not one scientist overseeing the trial.'

The Australian,
Tuesday, 13 January 2015

Great Barrier Reef 2050 Plan

The Australian and Queensland governments have released their draft *Sustainability Plan for the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area*. The plan is an important indicator of both the issues of concern about the reef's future as a national icon, as well as the increasing threats that will continue to plague the reef. The plan identifies the reef as a mixed usage area with the likelihood of greater development, more tourism, mining expansion coupled with increasing mineral transport through the reef, and the ongoing challenge of climate change. The approach appears to suggest that while the northern one-third of the reef is in good condition, the

(continued next page)

PARKWATCH (continued)

southern two-thirds may bear the brunt of future economic development, population movement, farming, mining and ocean acidification.

The plan suggests that industries and the community have played their part in ameliorating impacts on the reef through, for example, the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan. This tool has driven improved land management practices by farmers and graziers, which have been instrumental in slowing the long-term increases in sediment, nutrients and pesticides entering the reef.

The plan promises action to protect the reef for future generations through greater coordination, efficiency and effectiveness by bringing all levels of government, non-government organisations, and industry and community groups together. A reef-wide integrated monitoring program is being developed to review the success of the plan and inform adaptive management. Importantly, the Australian Government has committed \$40 million to the Reef Trust to combat major threats.

A major issue is the increasing pressure for expanded coal-loading ports, with an associated increase in the pollution of reef waters with coal dust and ballast water disposal, and the dredging required of shipping lanes through the reef for larger and larger bulk carriers. The development of vast coal mines in the Galilee Basin will inevitably bring increased traffic through these shipping lanes and around identified priority shipping ports – Abbot Point, Gladstone, Hay Point, Mackay and Townsville.

The Australian Academy of Science has released a critique of the plan: 'The draft 2050 Plan represents a business-as-usual approach. The Reef has suffered greatly from the pressures of climate change, poor water quality from run-off, fishing and coastal development'. The academy warns that the plan is overly concerned with appeasing UNESCO, which is threatening to place the reef on its 'In Danger' list, rather than meeting the long-term challenges of restoring the reef.

NPA News (Qld),

Vol. 84, Issue 11 (December 2014)

Review: Alpine Weeds Project

The Alpine Weeds project started some years ago with a bequest from Kenneth Milburn to Landcare Australia. \$60,000 of this went to Greening Australia, which then created the project in conjunction with NSW National Parks.

In 1954 there were 44 exotic weed species recorded in Kosciuszko National Park; in 2005 there were 175. Climate change and greater recreational use are

some of the reasons for the increase. Weeds can be introduced by vehicles as well as people, and vehicle wash-down and boot cleaning is important to help reduce the spread of weeds. Some weeds like Sorrel, Browntop Bent and Cocksfoot have been in the park for a long time. Some of the grasses, including Browntop Bent, were actually introduced to stabilise erodible areas. These types of weeds have reached equilibrium, are not considered a significant threat to alpine ecology and are not part of the project.

The project is focused on mapping and treating new and emerging weeds in high-use areas. Data have been collected over the past 2 years and so far about 30 weed species have been identified. The methodology for surveying weeds consists of recording the type of weed, the location and extent of its infestation, its accessibility, and an assessment of whether or not it is treatable.

NSW Parks is determining which weeds and infestations have the highest priority for treatment. It will continue to need volunteers to progress the project.

In addition to assistance from intern staff, volunteers have been used for the survey work and will possibly be used for weed treatment in the future. In these tasks collaboration will continue between the Canberra Bushwalking Club and Greening Australia.

*it: Canberra Bushwalking Club
Newsletter, November 2014*

More plans to exploit parks

In early December the NSW Natural Resources Commission released the final version of its report recommending commercial logging and grazing in state conservation areas north of Coonabarabran. These recommendations include:

- commercial logging of cypress trees to recover costs of so-called ecological thinning in selected state conservation areas
- changing key reserve management legislation to allow for commercial logging and grazing
- changing the Federal Renewable Energy target regulation to allow for a taxpayer subsidy of logging reserves when used to generate wood burnt for so-called green electricity.

If the NSW Government adopts these taxpayer-subsidised plans it will damage its green credentials. Fencing to contain stock and using chainsaws and heavy logging machinery will cause serious environmental disturbance to these reserves. The Natural Resources Commission euphemistically describes this damage as increasing ecosystem heterogeneity, but this is just 'PR spin' to

justify commercial logging of protected areas.

*Colong Bulletin,
No. 257 (December 2014)*

Combining wilderness and World Heritage

Because of Australia's important role in the founding of the national parks movement and the protection of the Antarctic wilderness, the holding of the Sixth World Parks Congress at Sydney's Olympic Park in November offered a wonderful opportunity to showcase, advance and combine both causes. Incredibly, in spite of there being 1,007 sites on the World Heritage List, no part of Antarctica is listed and there is no site on the list to commemorate the 19th century beginnings of the national parks movement.

Antarctica, the earth's fifth-largest continent, has spectacular ice landscapes and wildlife, and is the world's largest wilderness. It is protected by the Antarctica Treaty and the Madrid Protocol to the Treaty, against all military and minerals activity. Listing the continent would provide recognition by all parties to the World Heritage Convention of these inspirational examples of international environmental cooperation and thereby provide an additional level of protection. The Australian Antarctic Territory covers 42 per cent of the continent and, given that Australia played a leading role in the negotiations leading up to the Antarctic Treaty and Madrid Protocol, it is well placed to lead the next big step of gaining World Heritage recognition.

One of the most significant places in relation to the early phase in the history of the national parks movement is Royal National Park (RNP) near Sydney, the first area in the world to be reserved for the purpose of a national park. In the history of RNP we can see how the national park concept evolved and how it spawned other conservation developments. In Antarctica the cross-cutting themes of wilderness and World Heritage are combined like no other place on earth and RNP played a major role in the development of the wilderness area movement in Australia. This matter was believed to be of particular relevance to the 2014 Congress because the Australian Government had recently announced its interest in pursuing both these nominations. A more detailed case for World Heritage listing was presented to the congress.

*Colong Bulletin,
No. 257 (December 2014)*

Compiled by Hazel Rath

NPA notices

National Parks Association Calendar

	Mar	April	May	June
Public holidays	Mon 9	Fri 3 – Mon 6 Sat 25	—	Mon 8
General meetings	Thurs 19	Thurs 16	Thurs 21	Thurs 18
Committee meetings	Tues 3	Tues 7	Tues 5	Tues 2
Gudgeny Bush Regeneration ¹	Sat 14	Sat 12	Sat 9	Sat 13

Further details: 1. GBRG. Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre 9:15am, or Yankee Hat car park 10:00am.

New members of the association



The NPA ACT welcomes the following new members:

Isobel Crawford
Bob Morison
Liz Boulton
Margaret Roseby.

We look forward to seeing everyone at NPA activities.



Are you interested in NPA ACT's history?

This year, 2015, marks our association's 55th anniversary. Congratulations NPA ACT, you're still going strong with members getting out on bushwalks and other outings; lobbying government to put resources into the conservation of our native fauna and flora in Namadgi National Park and the ACT's nature reserves as well as the management of historical sites; and helping maintain the natural environment and historical sites through work parties.

Another important aspect of the association's work is to educate the public about the natural environment of the ACT, through exhibitions and the publication of field guides, reports, symposium proceedings as well as the unique Namadgi book with wonderful members' photographs capturing the different moods of the national park.

In the last several years, NPA has built up considerable holdings of our organisation's historical documents and files in the ACT Heritage Library. An agreement with the library allows members of the public to access these resources, so you too can go and have a look at the minutes of the founding meeting at the Institute of Anatomy (now the National Film and Sound Archive) on 1 March 1960; or peruse the considerable reports and documentation that went into several NPA submissions over more than two decades for 'A National Park for the National Capital'. Another very interesting undertaking in the 1990s was the NPA Oral History Project with reminiscences of several early members and office-holders; and you can actually look at the earliest editions of our newsletter, the *NPA Bulletin*. And there's lots more in addition to that.

The NPA holdings are archived under the call number: HMSS 0176. A listing can be obtained from our NPA

website <http://www.npaact.org.au/> under 'Useful Links'.

Help needed

As your secretary I have been trying to put together all the minutes of NPA meetings over the years so that there is a clear and succinct record of what the NPA has undertaken and achieved over its lifetime. Unfortunately, there are some gaps in the minutes of the general meetings in the periods from September 1984 to August 1995 and August 1999 to June 2005. If any of you happen to have copies of general meeting minutes of those years, could you please get in touch with me on 6251 1291 or email sonjalenz67@gmail.com.

And you might even have some other old NPA 'treasures' that would complement what we have already archived in the Heritage Library. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sonja Lenz

Honorary Life Membership

The committee is calling for nominations for Honorary Life Membership. If you think that a member has done something very special for our association and is worthy of this recognition, please send a confidential nomination to the secretary Sonja Lenz by mid-April (signed by yourself and another member who seconds the nomination). Further information on what to put into the nomination can be found on the NPA website or by contacting Kevin McCue on 6251 1291 or email mccue.kevin@gmail.com.

This *Bulletin* was prepared by:
Editor, Judy Kelly with help from Sonja Lenz and the *Bulletin* team
Sub-editor, Ed Highley
Presentation, Adrienne Nicholson

Cover photographs

Front cover

Main photo. Snow gum against mossy rock, Mt Gudgenby, November 2014
Photo by Judy Kelly.

Insets. Left. Australia's National national parks (article page 4).
Google Earth map by Kevin McCue.

Centre. Ranger Kie Barratt demonstrates Aboriginal axe-grinding to Graham Scully's two grandchildren (article page 7).
Photo by Esther Gallant.

Right. One of many river crossings in Prince Regent National Park (article page 6).
Photo by Esther Gallant.

Back cover

Main photo. NPA ACT group walking towards The Sentinel, Kosciuszko National Park, January 2015.
Photo by Esther Gallant.

General Meetings

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



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, ACTPCS has commenced a project documenting the history of nature conservation in the ACT. This will include times when agency and community have worked towards common ends, and times when they have diverged.

Thursday 16 April

Threatened species, Australia and the ACT

Gregory Andrews

Threatened Species Commissioner
Department of the Environment

Gregory will give brief personal and career details and background details on the creation of his position within the federal government. Following a review of his role he will talk about projects such as feral cat eradication at Christmas Island and possible future projects. He will conclude by commenting on the ACT situation and how the NPA and ACT might play a role in the threatened species program.

Thursday 21 May

Bhiamie Eckford Williamson

NPA-sponsored Honours student, ANU

Bhiamie's presentation opens with a brief personal history, including a painting by his father of the creation story of the Narran Lakes, near Brewarrina. Bhiamie's Honours thesis centres on the roles and responsibilities of young people in Aboriginal environmental ranger programs. In the ACT, the establishment of the Murumbung Yurung Murra Rangers has given the opportunity for traditional owners to make their contribution to the ongoing management of our national park and nature reserves. He reflects on the success of these ranger programs and looks to the future, asking: *What can we do better?*

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 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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Subscription rates (1 July to 30 June)

Household membership	\$44	Single members	\$38.50
Corporate membership	\$33	<i>Bulletin</i> only	\$33

Full-time student/Pensioner \$22

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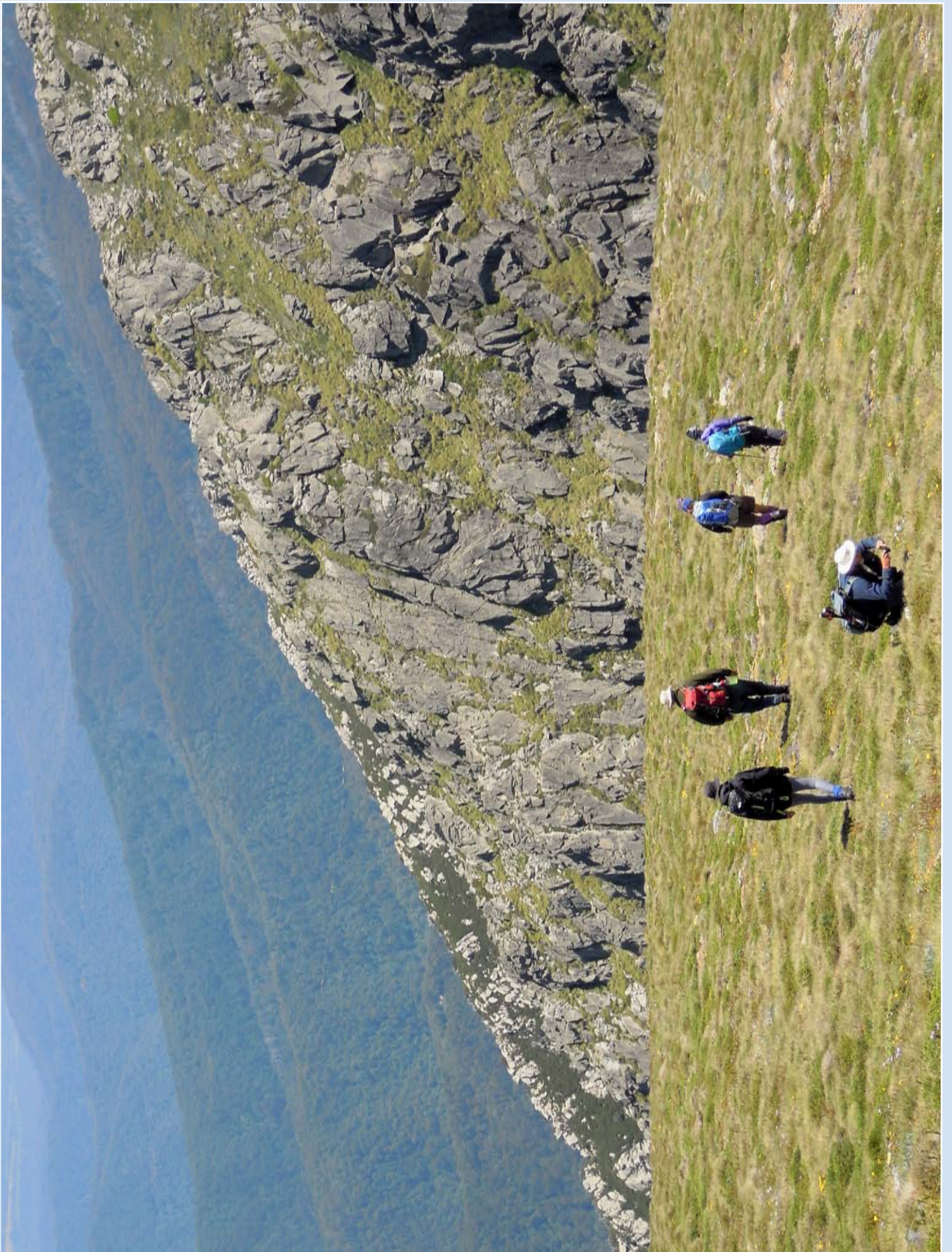
NPA Bulletin

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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