

National Parks Association of the Australian Capital Territory Inc.



NPA Bulletin



- NPA ACT turns 60 in March 2020
- Natural and built heritage lost in gigantic summer fires
- ACT parliamentarians inspect feral horse damage in NSW
- Namadgi dingoes feature in Attenborough documentary

conservation education protection

March 2020 – Volume 57 – Number 1

Contents

From the President	3
<i>Esther Gallant</i>	
Congratulations to Adrienne	3
<i>Brian Slee</i>	
VIP trip to Tantangara area of KNP to observe feral horses	4
<i>Di Thompson and Esther Gallant</i>	
60 th anniversary – National Parks Association of the ACT: reporting another decade of progress	5
<i>Kevin McCue, Sonja Lenz and Esther Gallant</i>	
60 th Anniversary activities	7
<i>Cynthia Burton</i>	
New committee member: Debbie Worner	7
<i>Esther Gallant</i>	
Dr Graeme Leonard Worboys, AM	7
<i>Brian Slee (with input from Penny Figgis)</i>	
Environment Subcommittee	8
<i>Rod Griffiths</i>	
Beacons of hope after fire	9
<i>Brett McNamara</i>	
Bushfires: planning for the future	10
<i>Rod Griffiths</i>	
Fires in the Upper Murray	11
<i>Mike Bremers</i>	
Four Mile Hut (1937–2020)	12
<i>Klaus Hueneke</i>	
The dingoes of Gudgenby Valley	13
<i>Michaela Popham</i>	
Urban protection – nature conservation: twin goals of good urban planning	14
<i>Ginninderra Falls Association</i>	
NPA outings program, March – June 2020	15-18
Storming Mount Majura with Suzi	19
<i>Kevin McCue</i>	
Bushwalk report: 15 Mile Ridge, Round and Black Jack mountains	20
<i>Brian Slee</i>	
Bushwalk report: The Pimple	22
<i>Philip Gatenby</i>	
Five days canoeing on the Snowy River to McKillops Bridge	24
<i>Mike Bremers</i>	
Elegy	25
<i>Ailsa Brown</i>	
Bushwalk report: Sassafras Mountain, Budawangs, near Nerriga	26
<i>Barrie Ridgway</i>	
On New Year's Day, 2020	27
<i>Gerry Jacobson</i>	
Heritage lost as Snowy huts burn	28
<i>Matthew Higgins</i>	
PARKWATCH	29
<i>Compiled by Hazel Rath</i>	
NPA notices	30
Meetings and speaker information	31
NPA information and contacts	31

Contributions for the NPA Bulletin:

Contributions of articles, letters, poems, drawings and photographs are always welcome. If possible keep contributions to no more than 1,000 words. 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, email admin@npaact.org.au, or to the NPA ACT postal address (see below).

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Back (top): Jagungal from Linesmans Huts on 15 Mile Ridge, taken 4 November 2019. By Brian Slee

Back (bottom): Jagungal from Round Mt, taken 4 November 2019. By Barry Reville

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Disclaimer:

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

From the President

A very busy quarter for your committee with plans for the 60th anniversary celebration on 2 March reaching completion. RSVPs from members and invited guests were quickly received and the Wesley Centre, Forrest, will be at capacity. We are looking forward to a grand evening after a rather grim summer. Plans are also underway for a young photographers competition later in the year (see p. 7) as part of the celebrations.



*Rupert Barnett and Martin Chalk at Christmas party.
Photo by Max Lawrence*

A major initiative for NPA ACT has been tours to inform our politicians on the threat of feral horses to our water supply. Our second and latest tour is described on p. 4. Di Thompson proposed the tours and was the main organiser for both. The recent KNP trip would absolutely not have been possible without Di's contacts and knowledge from her decades on various NSW advisory committees as well as her experience from walking in KNP. Di and I met many times over coffee with Brett McNamara of ACT Parks to develop plans for this trip. He made the inspired



Adrienne Nicholson receiving the President's Award

suggestion of a helicopter for the politicians as well as other ideas. It was my pleasure and privilege to work with both of them on this important and successful event.



The annual December Christmas party was held at a favourite location, Gudgenby Cottage which, at the time of writing, has apparently survived the fires. Good news! About 40 members attended the party. Those who came early to walk to Peppermint Hill regeneration site were appalled by the barren, dry landscape. About 20 took advantage of the chance to purchase a Corroboree Frog buff (circular neck scarf), an initiative of the Canberra Bushwalking Club to raise funds for the Reclaim Kosci campaign. A highlight of the day was the presentation of the second President's Award to life member Adrienne Nicholson recognising her many decades of dedication to the goals and activities of NPA ACT (see below). The certificate, designed by Sabine Friedrich, featured two of Adrienne's outstanding plant photographs illustrating that Adrienne contributes to nearly everything that NPA ACT does.

Our attention from late December continuing into February has been consumed by the bushfires and our concerns for their spread to important urban areas and precious natural reserves. Many thanks to Don Fletcher for keeping us informed on their spread and toll. Our special gratitude and thanks to the Rural Fire Service and ACT Parks staff for their tireless efforts and many sacrifices on the then seemingly ever-expanding fire lines. Thank you for your work to keep us safe.

Esther Gallant

Congratulations to Adrienne

As can be seen in the photo, the President's Award caught Adrienne Nicholson by surprise. But NPA members would not have been surprised: they recognise her signature in so many things that are the NPA. Search the *Bulletin* and apart from the very fabric of its presentation you will find her flair for words and photography, often flowing from an expansive talk at a general meeting. On a walk, at a work party, Adrienne will find things – orchids, bird's nests, tiny critters – and make them interesting, expand your world. Her enthusiasm has driven Art Week and her art has been a highlight at subsequent public exhibitions. She promotes the NPA and its publications. If you want help, Adrienne will reliably provide it. Adrienne, well done!

Brian Slee

VIP trip to Tantangara area of KNP to observe feral horses



*Esther Gallant, on behalf of NPA, welcoming helicopter passengers (Elizabeth Lee, Tara Cheyne, Brett McNamara, Mick Gentleman) to KNP.
Photo by Di Thompson*

Following on from the successful NPA ACT–ACT Parks VIP trip to the ACT’s internationally recognised Ginini Ramsar Wetlands in 2018 (*NPA Bulletin* December 2018, p. 3), on 29 November 2019 a large group participated in the NPA ACT tour of the Long Plain–Tantangara area of Kosciuszko National Park (KNP). This area is heavily affected by the presence of thousands of feral horses and is adjacent to the ACT Cotter water catchment. The objective was to show ACT MLAs and other decision makers the reality of the threat of feral horse incursion into the Cotter Catchment.

Planning of the trip had occurred over the previous twelve months. We met frequently with Brett McNamara, Regional Manager, Namadgi National Park, as plans for this trip evolved and dates changed. The outcome was much enhanced by his suggestions and assistance. It has been a privilege to work with him on this important and challenging project which ultimately involved 30 people, a bus and a helicopter.

Bus

The bus was filled with supportive and happy people with much conversation and networking among participants on the long drive. *Underfrog*, the movie, and Reclaim Kosci short videos were screened while the bus navigated the mountain roads. The passengers included Frank Inwersen, Deputy Chair, Southern Ranges Region Advisory Committee, who was generous with his knowledge and time. Also Greens MLA Caroline Le Couteur who was impressed by the damage she saw. There were several MLA staffers, EPSDD bureaucrats, rangers and scientists and representatives from Icon Water.

Mick Pettit, Southern Ranges Regional Manager, NSW NPWS, joined the bus at the Long Plain Hut morning tea stop and accompanied us on the Spicers–Starvation Creek walk. He genuinely appreciated our efforts and told the group how important it was for us to succeed, and to help them succeed.

Helicopter

The helicopter first landed at Ginini Wetlands for a close look at a healthy wetland then dropped over the Brindabellas into horse infested KNP to meet the bus group for lunch. This meant that the politicians (Mick Gentleman, Environment Minister, Tara Cheyne, Environment Committee chair and Elizabeth Lee, shadow environment spokesperson, accompanied by Brett) had a good view of the mobs of feral horses. Mick Gentlemen was especially shocked and said that as they came over the border they saw “thousands of horses” in Tantangara. All MLAs were impressed by the reality and immediacy of the threat to ACT water. Tara Cheyne later reported that she was speechless for most of the rest of the day due to the shock of what she saw. Mission accomplished!

NPA ACT team effort

Many thanks to those members who made the trip both possible and successful: Cynthia Burton (organisation), Isobel Crawford, John Brickhill, Linda Groom, Peter Conroy (on-the-ground setup), Deidre Shaw (baked goods), Mike and Annette Smith (social media observers and advisors on CB radios), Geoff Hope (scientific commentary) and our donors (funds for transport hire). The personal name tags, tea/coffee arrangements, slices and fruit were appreciated by all, especially the bus driver, Reece.

Shortly after the trip the official Australian Alps Liaison aerial survey results were released, reporting that in the Australian Alps survey area estimated numbers of feral horse rose from 9,190 in 2014 to 25,318 in 2019, an increase of 23% per annum. In the Long Plain–Tantangara section, the annual rate of population increase was 37% with an estimated 15,687 horses in the area in 2019.

*Di Thompson and Esther Gallant
Trip Organisers*

60th Anniversary

National Parks Association of the ACT: reporting another decade of progress



NPA ACT is celebrating its 60th anniversary in 2020. The association was formed in March 1960 to lobby for a national park for the National Capital, an objective achieved in 1984. By 2000, enthusiasm was waning but the association was soon reinvigorated in face of the bushfires that attacked the ACT in 2003. Visionaries have led the organisation from the beginning and continue to do so. Through constant change and external threats, the NPA has, in accordance with its motto, kept the dream of Conservation, Education and Protection of our natural areas alive. The Golden Anniversary edition of the *NPA Bulletin* (March 2010) sets out in detail the first 50 years of the history of the NPA. Following is a summary of NPA's activities over the subsequent decade.

NPA's leaders

Christine Goonrey served a very productive 5-year term as president ending in 2010. Followed by Rod Griffiths, he also left an amazing legacy with 5 years in the position before moving across to head the Conservation Council of the ACT. A formal replacement was not found until Esther Gallant accepted nomination in 2017. In between (mid-2015 to mid-2017), Rod and Christine shared the role. Rod introduced a change in membership fees which has made the NPA financially secure. Esther has valiantly carried on where Christine and Rod dared to lead, the three of them inspirational leaders and willing workers.



Kevin McCue, Kathy Saw, Michaela Popham, about to tackle the broom infestation south of Brayshaws Hut on an NPA work party. Photo by Brian Slee

Throughout this period Sonja Lenz quietly and diligently worked as secretary with willing office helpers Clive Hurlstone, Annette Smith, Kathy Saw, Debbie Cameron, Jan Gatenby, Rupert Barnett and others.

Chris Emery took over from Rod Griffiths and stamped his authority on the treasurer's position, fine-tuning *Mind Your Own Business* (MYOB financial and administrative software) for the task. In addition, Chris and Sabine Friedrich revamped the website and moved it to a new platform. Somehow Chris also found time to look after NPA's office computing needs, writing new reports from the database and upgrading hardware and software.

A recent committee addition, Cynthia Burton, serves as vice president with energy and enthusiasm and has established a strong online social media presence for NPA.

The Environment Subcommittee is ably led by Rod Griffiths with a small enthusiastic team including Clive Hurlstone and John Brickhill. This very productive group keeps the association up-to-date on environmental issues and writes NPA's submissions to governments.

The Publications Subcommittee, led by Kevin McCue, successfully developed plans for the new-look website and *Bulletin*. The former *Bulletin* editor, Max Lawrence, with Sabine's help, managed the transition to full colour and a new design in 2008 using *RagTime* software which is being further updated to *Pages* with this *Bulletin*. The group also oversaw revision and reprint of NPA's popular *Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT*, *Field Guide to the Native Trees of the ACT* and *Reptiles & Frogs of the Australian Capital Territory*.

The Outings Subcommittee consists of dedicated bushwalk leaders who, at the start of the period, met regularly at convenor Mike Smith's residence to suss out new and popular day walks and longer pack walks for the Outings Program. Steven Forst later took over and the program continues, with walk reports often appearing in the *Bulletin*. A subgroup, led by Martin Chalk, organised work parties in Namadgi National Park and some NSW reserves. Of particular note are the series of multi-day work parties, begun in 2013, to assist rangers in Dananbilla, Koorawatha and Illunie nature reserves north of Boorowa. Activities of the subgroup include weeding, planting, fence removal, enclosure construction, erosion control and rabbit and plant surveys.

The Promotion and Outreach Subcommittee has been recently invigorated by convenor Allan Sharp with completion of a new promotional brochure and plans for new display materials.

Since NPA's 50th anniversary, nine members have been awarded life membership for their outstanding contributions; Kevin McCue and Sonja Lenz (2010), Mike and Annette Smith (2011), Christine Goonrey (2012), Judy Kelly (2013), Max Lawrence (2015), Martin Chalk (2017), Chris Emery (2018). The citation for each recipient can be found in the relevant September *Bulletin*.

Highlights

The 2017 NPA ACT Bushfire Symposium, with support from the Conservation Council, was a magnum opus, coordinated and led by Christine Goonrey who had been, since 2008, a member of the ACT Bushfire Council. It was an acclaimed seminal gathering with many positive on-going outcomes.

Publication of NPA's stunning book *Namadgi – A National Park for the National Capital* in 2011, is another of Christine Goonrey's legacies; all photos and articles were NPA's own work, with the assistance of an ACT Government grant. In 2016 NPA published the *Field Guide to the Butterflies of the Australian Capital Territory* by NPA member and lead author, Suzi Bond – a beautiful and popular book.

In 2017 NPA established a project to study the Rosenberg's Goanna in southern Namadgi, a 'citizen science' effort to learn more about the ACT's largest lizard. The goal is to ensure an adequate management plan can be instituted to guarantee its survival. Two ACT Environment grants were awarded for the study under leader and NPA member, Dr Don Fletcher. The project has attracted the interest of the media and young volunteers.

Since 2009, NPA has organised Art Week at Gudgenby Cottage through the ACT Parks Service, an initiative of Christine Goonrey and Adrienne Nicholson. NPA



Fiona MacDonald Brand, founding member of the NPA and life member.

members celebrate Namadgi through the creation of artworks in the cottage's peaceful setting, works that incorporate weaving, fabric, collage, tapestry, photography, painting, drawing, sculpture and poetry. In recent years two Art Weeks have been organised annually by Adrienne Nicholson and Hazel Rath.

In support of science education, an NPA scholarship scheme was announced in 2012. Since then six scholarships have been awarded to honours students in environmental science at ANU and UC. Recipients were:

2013: Amy Macris (ANU) studied genetic diversity of alpine tree frogs in Australia.

2014: Bhiemie Eckford-Williamson (ANU) studied the roles and responsibilities of young people in Aboriginal environmental ranger programs.

2015: April Suen (ANU) studied the reintroduction of Eastern Bettongs.

2016: Joseph Stapleton (ANU) studied the effect of coarse woody debris on browsing inside woodland reserves.

2017: Emily Stringer (ANU, UC) studied Earless Dragons.

2019: Shoshana Rapley (ANU): research details not yet available.

Allied organisations

To publicise the threat posed to Namadgi and Kosciuszko national parks by the rapidly rising feral horse population in the latter, NPA joined a coalition of environmental groups to launch a Reclaim Kosci campaign calling for a major reduction in horse numbers. Other coalition members are the Invasive Species Council, NPA NSW, Nature Conservation Council NSW and the Colong Foundation for Wilderness. NPA members Esther Gallant, Di Thompson and Annette Smith have been actively involved in the campaign. Di and Esther arranged two field trips to inform ACT Government decision-makers of the extreme hazard posed by feral horses (see p. 4). Protest activities started off with a Save Kosci walk (Sydney to Kosciuszko summit) in late 2018, organised by Canberra Bushwalking Club and ably led by Linda Groom. The campaign is ongoing and has become even more urgent as a result of the recent bushfires.

NPA members form the core of the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group whose primary task is regenerating the area formerly occupied by Boboian pine plantation in southern Namadgi National Park. The group has removed thousands of pine wildings and replanted the area with locally sourced trees and shrubs. They are still going strong and are preparing to be involved in rehabilitation work once the area becomes accessible after the bushfires.

NPA ACT joined with other state NPAs to form an umbrella group, the National Parks Australia Council (NPAC) in 1975 to coordinate and represent the views of state and territory non-government organisations concerned with protecting the natural environment and fostering national parks. NPAC meets annually, providing a forum for regular communication between member associations and acting as a united voice in support of conservation of the national reserve system. Christine Goonrey served as President for 3 years during which time she revamped the organisation with her energy and ideas. Rod Griffiths was Vice President of NPAC during his presidency of NPA ACT. NPA ACT hosted the NPAC annual meeting in 2019.

*Kevin McCue, Sonja Lenz
and Esther Gallant*

60th Anniversary activities

We have a wide range of fun activities planned for the NPA ACT anniversary year. We kicked off with a butterfly spotting walk in January led by local expert, Suzi Bond. Other nature walks in coming months will focus on trees, birds, plants and more!

Our invitation-only celebratory function on 2 March is heavily subscribed. We are looking forward to seeing you there for what promises to be an enjoyable evening, with guest speaker Professor David Lindenmayer from ANU.

The young amateur photographers competition, announced in the December 2019 issue of the *Bulletin*, has been postponed due to the bushfires. It was scheduled to open on 1 January with winners to be announced on 5 June, World Environment Day. The competition is now expected to be held in the second half of this year. Dates have yet to be decided. It is hoped that the situation will have improved enough within coming months to enable young photographers to return to the fire-devastated areas and record the regeneration and resilience of our unique environment.

We are also planning an overnight family camping experience in Namadgi, a joint walk with the ACT Parks and Conservation Service, and other events. The timing and location of these will be finalised after the Orroral Valley fire has been extinguished.

Please check out the 60th anniversary calendar on our website for further details:

<https://www.npaact.org.au/index.php/npa-s-60th/anniversary-events>

You can also email: npa60thinfo@gmail.com

Cynthia Burton

New Committee member: Debbie Worner



Debbie Worner has lived in the ACT for 30 years, working for environment agencies in the Commonwealth and ACT governments. Before her recent retirement she was a member of the ACT Government's Conservation Planning Team, developing management plans for the ACT conservation estate.

She is a keen bushwalker and has led day walks and adventurous pack walks. In the hope of improving her vegetable production, she has

joined Canberra City Farm. She recently returned from 15 months living and travelling in Europe. A highlight of her year was walking in Greenland. And most importantly for the NPA, she has taken on the role of minutes secretary for the committee.

Esther Gallant

Dr Graeme Leonard Worboys, AM

In the Australia Day honours list, Dr Graeme Worboys was awarded membership of the Order of Australia (AM) "For significant service to conservation and the environment, and to the community".

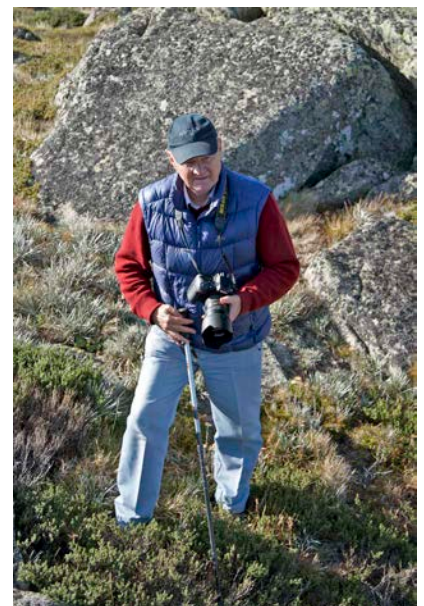
Graeme is a good friend and supporter of the NPA. Many members will recall having attended the Kosciuszko Science Conference, of which he was a chief organiser, at the Shine Dome on 8 November 2018. The conference adopted an Accord detailing the impact of feral horses on Kosciuszko National Park and issued a powerful call for countervailing action by the NSW Government.

Dr Worboys is a highly respected protected area professional and is acknowledged internationally as a leading authority on World Heritage. His contribution was recognised at the International Union for the Conservation of Nature World Congress in 2014 when he received the Fred M Packard International Parks Merit Award for his contributions to protected areas and conservation. In recent years, while dealing with some difficult health issues, he has remained an active leading figure in defending his beloved Kosciuszko National Park.

Congratulations, Graeme.

Brian Slee (with input from Penny Figgis)

*Graeme Worboys in KNP
(Photo by Ian Pulsford)*



Environment Subcommittee

Even the choking smoke of December did not stop the Environment Subcommittee from preparing two submissions before Christmas.

The subcommittee was very pleased to have a chance to comment on the Canberra Nature Park (CNP) draft plan of management. It has been more than 20 years since the current plan for CNP was issued, so a revised version was certainly overdue. During that time the area under management in CNP has grown significantly and the challenges such as urban pressure and climate change are placing greater strain on the CNP's ecosystems. So it was with relief that the subcommittee found the majority of the content of the draft plan to be of a high standard while reflecting the changed circumstances facing CNP.

What the subcommittee did note was that the draft plan:

- identifies many activities that are needed to satisfactorily protect CNP and that the implementation of these will require adequate funding over the long term. This is one of the key threats to the draft plan's implementation and it is imperative that new funding models be identified and implemented for the protection of the ACT's environment.
- recognises that CNP has a significant urban interface. This is another key risk to CNP's long-term viability. The introduction of zoning for management purposes is a key step in identifying areas of high conservation values and for regulating the permissible activities within each of the zones.
- recognises that another key requirement for the long-term sustainability of CNP's reserves is connectivity with other natural areas. The draft plan importantly includes a goal that the CNP reserves 'are well-connected across the landscape'.
- makes reference to the development of a recreation and tourism strategy by the parks service. This is an initiative that the NPA ACT has long been lobbying for. Such a strategy must be driven by the primary management objective for the ACT's national park and nature reserves – the conservation of nature, and should grasp recreation and nature-based tourism opportunities across the whole of the ACT and not just within conservation reserves.



Black Mountain section of Canberra Nature Park. Photo by Max Lawrence



The other submission made was in relation to the review of the *Tree Protection Act 2005*. The NPA ACT believes that the urban forest is an important contributor to a well-functioning city and made the following comments in respect to updating the act:

- It congratulated the ACT Government on setting a target of 30 per cent canopy cover by 2045 in the Climate Change Strategy and the Living Infrastructure Plan, and recognised that the proposed changes to the tree protection act were a key measure required to reach that target. However, the scope of the revised act needed to include public and greenfield development sites which were missing from the proposed changes.
- It applauded the program of planting 17,000 trees on public land from 2019 to 2023. However, given the potential effects of climate change, it recognised that the choice of trees to be planted and their ongoing care would be critical to success. It was also recognised that the plantings were a potential tool in achieving connectivity between reserves.
- The NPA ACT supported the introduction of offsets for the removal of trees covered under the revised act, as well as the idea that there are equivalents to tree canopy cover for improving green amenity in the city, such as wetlands, dense shrub plantings, roof gardens and green walls.

The texts of both submissions can be found on the NPA ACT's website.

The Environment Subcommittee is dismayed at the extent of destruction of habitat during this year's fire season: the NPA ACT will be working with the ACT Government to help rehabilitate our fire-damaged parks. In supporting this action, the NPA ACT will also be producing a series of statements on the environment and the pressures on ecosystems, the first of these being on climate change. As always, the subcommittee welcomes members' views. Please do not hesitate to contact me on 0410 875 731 if you wish to contribute.

Rod Griffiths, Convener

Beacons of hope after fire

Having returned from northern Kosciuszko on fire deployment, it was a relaxing day. After all, we had just subdued a troublesome fire that was knocking on our door. It was a public holiday, a cherished day off. Then the mobile rang. A column of smoke had been spotted. It was growing in the heart of Namadgi National Park, a fire-prone and tinder dry landscape. At that moment I sensed that our world, the mountains as we knew them, would be transformed. Consumed by fire.

The next 2 weeks blurred. Days became nights. Life, property and the environment became our guiding ethos. Everyone who started their shift would go home safely. We became fixated on this simple message. Crew safety and physical and emotional wellbeing our highest priority.

We had prepared for this event, dating back to the ashes of 2003. We were ready. Our heritage huts were prepared, crews well trained and our resourcing capabilities unparalleled. Regardless of the cause of its ignition, fire in these mountains was inevitable this summer.

To experience the mountains burn once in a career was indeed challenging. To bear witness to the park burning twice, with such unprecedented ferocity, has been confronting. Fire is a creature of habit. Driven by terrain and influenced by local topography, fire shadows its historical pathways. The insights gained from our collective past informed our future.

As the winds swirled across the Tidbinbilla Range there was a real sense of déjà vu. A fire monster was engulfing Fishing Gap, cascading into the valley. I had seen this before, and it was a life experience that did not end well. All these years later the Tidbinbilla Valley I once called home was again under threat.

Working in unison with ground crews, the unrelenting aerial bombardment, the countless helicopter water drops and the precision by which strategic retardant lines painted the valley pink was quite simply extraordinary. That afternoon we quelled a monster.

Among the devastation across the ravaged mountains of Namadgi, there are beacons of hope. As fire fronts advanced, crews stood ready, steering the looming fire flanks around our treasured jewels. Historic huts, cherished campgrounds, pockets of environmental refuge all salvaged from the consuming flames.

As we start our post-fire journey along the green shoots of recovery, these beacons of hope will illuminate our pathway. They will represent the pivot points by which we as a community can once again reconnect with our beloved mountains. The 'Bush Capital' is indeed resilient.

*Brett McNamara
ACT Parks and Conservation Service*

*All photos by ACT PCS. From top to bottom:
Aerial bombardment.
Frank and Jacks Hut.
Horse Gully Hut. Photo by Ollie Orgill
Hospital Creek Hut.
Water bladders, Brayshaws Hut.*





Bushfires: planning for the future

Fire crossing road near Rendezvous Creek. Photo by ACT PCS

At the time of writing, almost all of Namadgi National Park has been burnt, as well as significant areas of the rest of Australia. With many weeks of the fire season still to come, the extent of the damage has shocked the Australian community and raised concerns about Australia's climate-change response. It has rightly generated numerous articles and appeals to support affected communities and wildlife, and has seen swift rejections of calls for increased broad-brush hazard-reduction burns.

In light of the usual blaming of national parks for bushfires it has been heartening to see the ACT Emergency Services Agency Commissioner standing with park rangers and expressing concern about the impact of the fires on the natural environment.

The extent of the fires has invigorated discussions on Australia's changing climate and the responses needed as altered weather patterns change the underlying nature of the Australian bush. It has been reported regularly in this fire season that so many areas of long unburnt bush have experienced fire damage. It is expected an increased frequency and intensity of fires, now and into the future, will radically alter the natural environment and lead to the extinction of species.

With reduced windows for hazard-reduction burning, what are the options for lowering fire risk into the future? The answer to this lies in the evolving science of fire management which has seen a risk-focused approach to hazard reduction, with activities more tightly targeted on the protection of lives and assets, and the greater engagement of the owner of the assets in their protection. Such an approach reduces

the number of widespread reduction burns required and introduces opportunities for less frequent and smaller burns in areas away from the assets being protected. Such an approach is reflected in the ACT's current Strategic Bushfire Management Plan. The NPA ACT has been a strong supporter of this approach and has actively funded research in this area.

Adoption of the traditional fire practices of our Indigenous peoples is regularly cited as a way of improving fire management and reducing fire impacts. The traditional custodians of Australia used knowledge built up over millennia to use fire to sculpt the environment to improve food production and to reduce fire hazards. This was a subtle process relying on intricate knowledge of the landscape. This knowledge included an awareness that parts of the country were not safe at certain times of the year. Unfortunately, this knowledge has been disregarded as part of the adoption of post-1788 land-use practices.

However, before Indigenous fire practices can be fully implemented, they will need to take into account changes in vegetation profiles and climactic conditions due to climate change and other factors, such as weed infestation. Therefore, research is required, involving traditional custodians, on the extent that Indigenous management practices can now be applied or modified for changed landscapes. Such practices can also have significant environmental benefits.

Similar to the aftermath of the 2003 ACT bushfires, there will be opportunities to help in Namadgi's recovery, once it is safe to do so. The NPA ACT is

working (with other concerned groups) to identify opportunities for volunteers to actively assist through citizen science projects like the Rosenberg's Monitor survey, regrowth tracking and wetlands rehabilitation. Keep an eye on our website, facebook page and other social media sites for news on opportunities for you to become involved.

The NPA ACT has been a strong supporter of measures to reduce carbon emissions. To further clarify its stance on this issue, which has exacerbated the current fire crisis, a position statement will be produced as the first of a series of policy statements.

Rod Griffiths

Demanding Hut ruin. Photo by ACT PCS



Fires in the Upper Murray

We have all been dismayed at the devastation of the bushfires over the spring–summer fire season of 2019–20. Many of us will be mourning the loss of our favourite places. Our experience of the 2003 Canberra fires is that the landscape and nature will eventually recover over time; but perhaps not fully in our own lifetimes.



*Top: Upper Murray, downstream of Round Mountain in Victoria
Bottom: Paddling the Upper Murray. Both photos by Mike Bremers*



One of my favourite places is a stretch of the upper Murray River generally around the Tin Mine Creek confluence upstream of Tom Groggin. This stretch of river is in a very remote part of Kosciuszko National Park and I have had the privilege to visit it twice; once on a hiking trip in 2013 (*NPA Bulletin* December 2013, p. 14) and then on a paddling trip in 2017 (*NPA Bulletin* March 2018, p. 18). I had been due to visit this area again in December 2019 but water levels too low for paddling caused the trip to be postponed.

During late December, a lightning strike started a fire in the Walwa area in Victoria and burnt rapidly, generally southwards and parallel to the upper Murray River, through Corryong and almost as far as Cowombat Flat – a distance of over 100 km.

At that time, I was keenly studying the fire maps to see what areas had been burnt. In some places, such as the Murray Gates downstream of Tom Groggin and the area below Cowombat Flat, the fire burnt both sides of the river. But what about my favourite stretch of river around Tin Mine Creek? As of the time of writing it appears that this area may have been lucky to escape the worst of the fires. While the fires seem to have burnt close to the river in part of this area they did so on only one side or the other.

At the time of writing (January) the fires are still burning, but some wet weather and cooler temperatures have slowed their progress. Only time will tell and I am keen to revisit the area when it is safe to do so. It is easy to get depressed when we see the devastation of the fires, so it is good to focus on the beautiful parts unaffected by the fires. I certainly have my fingers crossed.

Mike Bremers

Four Mile Hut (1937–2020)

Refuge, Inspiration, Companion, Symbol, Museum, Quiet Place

*Dear 4 Mile,
We are mourning your loss.
You have always been open, welcoming and free.
You have warmed our hearts, bottoms, fingers and toes.
You have taken us back to harder, quieter, simpler times.
You have passed on the spirit of Bob Hughes – miner, skier,
hut builder, gentleman.
You have kept alive important old tools, tales and traditions.
You have inspired us to wax lyrical, sing you a song and
record your life.
You have sheltered birds, mice, lizards, wombats and people of all ages, sizes and creeds.
You have given us a quiet space to contemplate and clarify the road ahead.
You have seen, felt and heard everything but kept your silence and asked for only a few repairs in return.*



Interior, 2019. Photo by Klaus Hueneke

Four Mile Hut was on Four Mile Creek, four miles from Kiandra, a township also obliterated by recent fires. It was built by Bob Hughes in about 1937, in part with slabs from the Elaine Mine. It was smaller than Henry Thoreau's famous hut at Walden in the USA, about the size of a small master bedroom with one four pane window, a wood floor, a very tall iron chimney and many artefacts and wooden boxes preserved from the past. Its unique, almost iconic feature, was hundreds of rusty strips of galvanised iron fastened with flat head nails and leather washers over cracks in the vertical slabs.

After the end of grazing it was used by bushwalkers, ski tourers and occasional horse riders. In recent years it was sought out by people walking from Walhalla, Victoria, to Tharwa, ACT, on the 655 km Australian Alps Walking Track.

The Nordic Ski Club looked after it during its final 30 years after I and others did the first restorations in 1978 and 1981. The club rebuilt the chimney twice, replaced some slabs, restored several posts, kept it spick and span and restocked the wood supply. One of their members, Bob Guy, wrote a superb song about Bob Hughes, and a girl called Lilian wrote an evocative poem about the hut. I transcribed it from the hut log book; it began

*Four Mile Hut throbs
with the gentleness of man.
The hut pulls hot minds and cold toes
towards its quiet mouth
as strongly as the branches of alpine gum
outstretch their fingers to touch the clear air.*

And concluded:

*The stove rearranges its wood
so that men's shadows ebb and flow
to the rhythm of their thoughts.
Every night the stars open their eyes and watch
the snow jewels under man's foot
and the tenacious friendship between hut and man.*

People have scattered sacred ashes at the hut. It survived the big blazes of 1939 and 2003 and many small blazes in between but could not quite dodge the fierce blast of 2020.

The hut has featured in books by Pauline Downing, Matthew Higgins, Harry Hill and others including me with *Huts of the High Country* (1982; pp. 100-103). It has featured in a Kosciuszko Huts Association film and in many short videos. I have almost finished a 50,000-word hut life story and now have the difficult emotional task of writing about its fiery end. I felt an urgent call to visit the hut and did so on 15 December 2019 and was glad I did. The mountains were cool and green!

Many people would like to see it eventually rebuilt and restored as authentically as possible.

Klaus Hueneke



2018. Photo by Mike Bremers



2013. Photo by Di Thompson



... farewell Four Mile. Photo by Brian Slee



Seven Worlds, One Planet grab.
Courtesy of the BBC

Seven Worlds, One Planet – Australia (BBC documentary narrated by Sir David Attenborough)

The dingoes of Gudgenby Valley

Having heard quite a while ago about a BBC crew filming wildlife in Australia, but having no idea in which documentary it would appear, I periodically searched the internet for its name and when it might be screened. However, it was not until I saw a trailer for *Seven Worlds, One Planet*, which included a small clip filmed in what looked like Namadgi, that I realised that this was the documentary.

It is unusual to see our little part of the world play such a prominent role in a large-scale BBC wildlife documentary. As its name suggests, *Seven Worlds, One Planet* is a seven-part series with each hour-long episode devoted to a different continent; Australia was allocated an hour, 5½ minutes of which was filmed in Namadgi, predominantly in Gudgenby Valley.

The segment has some beautiful footage of Gudgenby's grasslands, bush and the surrounding mountains. Filmed both from the ground and in the air, Crimson Rosellas and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos make an appearance and a floundering Kangaroo demonstrates how unsuited it is to living above the snowline. However, it is the Dingoes (and three cute Dingo pups) which live in the area and their prey, Eastern Grey Kangaroos, that star. *Australia* appeared as first in the series on the Nine Network on 20 November 2019.

Described as the most ambitious shoot of the Australia episode, the crew, led by Emma Napper, spent eight weeks during the Spring of 2017 filming in Namadgi (headquartered at Gudgenby Cottage) with the aim of obtaining footage of the Dingoes successfully hunting Kangaroos. Along with help from Namadgi rangers (Ben O'Brien makes a cameo in the 'On Location' segment), the BBC Natural History Unit set out with one film crew on the ground but expanded to two crews equipped with drones and eventually a helicopter, all to try to capture the chase. It should be noted that even in the few years since the episode was filmed, drones have become considerably lighter and more agile.

Obviously the BBC was successful – those 5½ minutes are spectacular! The land, the Kangaroos, the Dingoes and even the few birds that are included are all beautifully filmed and look amazing. It is fantastic to see an area that we all love and enjoy showcased in a BBC documentary narrated by none other than Sir David. And to see the wildlife, and especially something as extraordinary and rarely observed as Dingoes hunting Kangaroos captured on film, makes it even more wondrous. Alas, a young Kangaroo dies.

Michaela Popham

Urban protection – nature conservation: twin goals of good urban planning

On 13 January 2020, the ACT Rural Fire Service chief officer, Joe Murphy, was quoted in the *Canberra Times* as saying: 'If there were active fires in the ACT, authorities' priorities would be preserving life, property and the environment – in that order'. This is understandable but suggests that conservation values could be ignored in the battle to save human lives and property. In that instance, the location of urban development needs to be carefully thought out so that houses are not placed where saving them will result in significant environmental damage.

A pertinent example of such a possibility is the Ginninderry cross-border development, especially in the NSW section of Parkwood. This unsolicited proposal by Riverview Pty Ltd for urban development, covering parts of both the ACT and NSW, was accepted first by the ACT Government which became a 60 per cent joint partner.

Development of ACT land west of Belconnen commenced in 2016 and a conservation corridor, managed by a trust, has now been established. On 23 October 2019, Yass Valley Council approved the Gateway Agreement to rezone much of the land in Parkwood NSW from environmental management and primary production to general residential. A narrow conservation corridor was also rezoned.

The Ginninderra Falls Association (GFA) was formed in 2012 to encourage the creation of a national park, or other conservation area, along both sides of Ginninderra Creek and the Murrumbidgee River, extending from Ginninderra Falls to Woodstock Nature Reserve. This area has an impressive landscape of gorges and waterfalls. The steep slopes of the gorge areas have protected the natural biodiversity by discouraging land clearance and cattle grazing.

In order to protect and improve the ecological values, to preserve the aesthetics and sight-lines, and to respect Aboriginal and European heritage, GFA proposed a nature park extending 300 metres from both sides of the river and creek to comply with the principles of good reserve design. This would facilitate connectivity across the reserve and create a smooth boundary to reduce incursion from the urban area and to minimise management costs.

The designated conservation corridor covers only the south-eastern half of the park area envisioned by GFA. It is largely confined to the steeper slopes unsuited for building and has, therefore, a very long, irregular and convoluted border following the landform. This border will increase adverse urban effects on the corridor and make bushfire protection of any nearby urban area more difficult.

The effects of 30,000 residents on the scenic values and natural biodiversity are a major concern. Further, a Special Activities zoning for land within 250 metres of the Upper Ginninderra Falls needs tighter restriction of activities to minimise damage.

GFA is also concerned that there could be increased pressure from residents to manage bushfire fuel once they realise they live near a fire-sensitive ecosystem associated

with dry sclerophyll and Black Cypress Pine forest. The range of threatened species such as Rosenberg's Goanna, Pink-tailed Worm-lizard and Pale Pomaderris would be considered less important than residents' safety.

Since the increase in dynamic fires from 2003, much research has occurred into this extreme form of bushfire that can become coupled with the atmosphere and create violent thunderstorm clouds (pyrocumulonimbus). Such fires tend to spread sideways once reaching the top of a slope, making them more difficult to contain, in contrast to ordinary grassfires.

The Parkwood location, in particular, has features that contribute to the development of catastrophic bushfires when the conditions are right. Firstly, it is exposed to the prevailing north-westerly winds blowing from the Brindabella Range where lightning strikes start bushfires.

Secondly, large areas have very steep slopes that cause the approaching fire to burn uphill so ferociously that when reaching the top of the slope, the fire becomes airborne and carries embers for distances of up to 1,000 metres from the fire, e.g. the 2016 Yarloop–Waroona WA fire.¹ Modelling for the Ginninderry development area revealed it had a predicted ember load of 13 to 115 times the maximum ember load modelled for the 2015 Hastings bushfire on the Mornington Peninsula where 32 properties were damaged as a result of embers.²

The main techniques for constraining fires are controlled burns before the fire season and back-burning during fires. These are not perfect tools, especially for dynamic fires. Identifying the areas to burn so as to reduce the chance of such fires developing is problematic as it varies depending on where a fire might start and from which direction the wind blows. In addition, the safe period for conducting such burns is becoming shorter and the possibility of such burns getting out of control and becoming larger, dynamic fires is increasing. Even back-burns have resulted in the worsening of fires they were intended to control.

GFA believes that, in the 21st century, biodiversity loss, ecosystem disruptions and climate change-related issues require a renewed social contract for communities at large and for future generations. Society will be the loser if the conservation corridor, or any nature reserve, has to be sacrificed for preservation of human life and property in adjacent areas because of poor urban planning.

Ginninderra Falls Association

¹A/Prof Jason J. Sharples, UNSW, 5 April 2019, personal communication.

²<https://www.mssanz.org.au/modsim2017/H10/roberts.pdf>

NPA outings program

March – June 2020



Bushwalk grading guide

Distance grading (per day)

- 1 up to 10 km
- 2 10 km to 15 km
- 3 15 km to 20 km
- 4 above 20 km

Terrain grading

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| A Road, fire trail or track | E Rock scrambling |
| B Open forest | F Exploratory |
| C Light scrub | |
| D Patches of thick scrub, regrowth | |

Day walks

Carry lunch and snacks, drinks, protective clothing, a first aid kit and any required medication.

Pack walks

Two or more days. Carry all food and camping requirements. CONTACT LEADER EARLY.

Car camps

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

Work parties

Carry items as for day walks plus work gloves and any tools required. Work party details and location sometimes change, check NPA website, www.npaact.org.au, for any last minute changes.

Other activities include ski trips, canoe trips, nature rambles and environment or field guide studies.

Wednesday walks (WW) Medium or somewhat harder walks arranged on a joint NPA, BBC (*Brindabella Bushwalking Club*) and CBC (*Canberra Bushwalking Club*) basis for fit and experienced club walkers. Notification and details are only emailed to members registered for WW. Only NPA-hosted WW are shown in this program. For WW email registration, contact the *Outings Convener*, outings@npaact.org.au.

Transport

The NPA suggests a passenger contribution to transport costs of **40 cents per kilometre** for the distance driven divided by the number of occupants of the car including the driver, rounded to the nearest dollar. The amount may be varied at the discretion of the leader. Drive and walk distances shown in the program are approximate for return journeys.

NPA ACT members undertaking walks or other activities in this program are advised they should have **PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE** or, at least, **AMBULANCE COVER** in case of an accident requiring evacuation by ambulance or helicopter.

Points to note:

Please help keep our outings program alive by volunteering to lead outings. New leaders are welcome. The *Outings Convener* is happy to suggest locations suitable for a walk if you do not have something in mind. Feel free to send in suggestions for outings with a suggested date to the Outings Convener by email to outings@npaact.org.au.

All persons joining an outing of the *National Parks Association of the ACT* do so as volunteers in all respects and as such accept responsibility for any injury howsoever incurred and the National Parks Association of the ACT, its office bearers and appointed leaders, are absolved from any liability in respect of injury or damage suffered whilst engaged in any such outing.

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

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

Children under 18 years of age are welcome to come on NPA ACT activities provided they are accompanied by a parent, guardian or close relative who will be required to sign a specific Risk Waiver for a Child form.

Leaders to note:

Please send copies of completed *Attendance Record and Risk Waiver Forms* to *Brian Slee*, contact 6281 0719 or brianslee@iprimus.com.au

NPA has a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) available to leaders. The PLB can be obtained from *Steven Forst*, contact 0428 195 236 or steven.forst@iinet.net.au

NPA outings program March – June 2020 (page 2 of 4)

Note: Due to the bushfires, a number of activities in this program may be subject to change because of restrictions on access. If in doubt contact leader early.

9 March Monday Holiday Walk	Planned walk was in fire-affected area. Check NPA website for possible substitute a few days prior to this date.	
14 March Saturday Work Party	Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group Whether work party proceeds and the activity to be undertaken will be determined in conjunction with park staff. Contact leader in week before for details.	Leader: Doug Brown Contact: 6247 0239 or kambalda@tpg.com.au
21 March Saturday Walk	Planned walk was in fire-affected area. Check NPA website for possible substitute a few days prior to this date.	
25 March Wednesday Walk	Joint NPA / BBC / CBC Activity <i>Details are emailed to those on Wednesday Walks email list. Otherwise contact leader.</i>	Leader: Mike S Contact: 0412 179 907
26-30 March Pack Walk	Snowy Mountains Walk may change in case of fire damage. Clear mountain streams and great views. Walk will go from Guthega power station to Schlink Hilton Hut (camp), Mawsons Hut (camp), Kerries Ridge, Schlink Pass, Whites River Hut (camp) to start. Dates might be pushed back a day or two to accommodate weather. Limit of 8. Book by 21 March.	Drive: 445 km, \$180 per car Maps: Geehi, Jagungal, 1:25,000 Grading: 4A/C/D/F Leader: Barrie R Contact: 0437 023 140 or brdr001@bigpond.net.au
28 March Saturday Work Party	Piccadilly Arboretum NPA last visited site in May 2014. This work party will continue removing pine wildings. Some tools will be provided but suggest you bring work gloves, loppers, bush saw. Work party will be subject to weather. Meet at Dillon Close, Weston, at 8:15 am.	Drive: 78 km, \$32 per car Leader: Brian Slee Contact: 6281 0719 or brianslee@iprimus.com.au
29 March Sunday, 60th Anniversary Short Nature Walk	Terrific trees at ANU ANU campus has over 10,000 trees and is, in effect, another arboretum in Canberra. This gentle, family-friendly walk will provide an opportunity to see mature specimens of several species growing on campus. About 2 hours, mainly on paths. Leader is a guide at the National Arboretum. A simple morning tea will be provided at finish. Meet 10 am at Sullivans Creek Road car park, about 50 m from corner with Daley Road. Places limited, bookings required.	Leader: Jan Morgan Contact: npa60thinfo@gmail.com



Lenticular cloud over Gudgenby Valley. Photo by Kevin McCue

NPA outings program March – June 2020 (page 3 of 4)

4 April Saturday Walk	Planned walk was in fire-affected area. Check NPA website for possible substitute a few days prior to this date.	
11 April Saturday Work Party	Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group Whether work party proceeds and the activity to be undertaken will be determined in conjunction with park staff. Contact leader in week before for details.	Leader: Doug Brown Contact: 6247 0239 or kambalda@tpg.com.au
18 April Saturday Walk	Planned walk was in fire-affected area. Check NPA website for possible substitute a few days prior to this date.	
19 April Sunday Walk	Glenburn precinct loop Meet 9 am at Canberra Rwy Station, Kingston. Drive to Charcoal Kiln Road via Kings Hwy, Burbong (alternative meeting place: 9:30 am). Follow trail to Atkinson Trig and Colliers ruins. Continue to Coppins ruins and Glenburn Homestead for lunch. Return via Colverwell Graves. Historic area. 12 km. Afternoon tea Queanbeyan. Advise leader by Saturday whether joining group at Kingston or Burbong.	Drive: 50 km, \$20 per car Map: Glenburn Precinct Heritage Trails, ACT Government (available online) Grading: 2A Leader: Brian Slee Contact: 6281 0719 or brianslee@iprimus.com.au
22 April Wednesday Walk	Joint NPA / BBC / CBC Activity <i>Details are emailed to those on Wednesday Walks email list. Otherwise contact leader.</i>	Leader: Philip Gatenby Contact: 0401 415 446 or philip.gatenby@gmail.com
25 April Saturday Work Party	Stockyard Arboretum NPA last visited site in May 2017. This work party will continue removing pine wildings and juniper. Some tools provided but suggest you bring work gloves, loppers, bush saw. Approx. 60 min walk to work site. Work party will be subject to weather. Meet at Dillon Close, Weston, at 8:15 am. As work party is in a potentially fire-affected area, contact leader by Friday.	Drive: 126km, \$50 per car Leader: Brian Slee Contact: 6281 0719 or brianslee@iprimus.com.au
25–27 April Pack Walk	Planned walk was in fire-affected area. Check NPA website for possible substitute a few days prior to this date.	
29 April Wednesday Walk	Joint NPA / BBC / CBC Activity <i>Details are emailed to those on Wednesday Walks email list. Otherwise contact leader.</i>	Leader: Barrie R Contact: 0437 023 140
2 May Saturday Walk	Planned walk was in fire-affected area. Check NPA website for possible substitute a few days prior to this date.	
3 MAY Sunday, 60th Anniversary Short Nature Walk	Birdspotting at McQuoids Hill Join us on a family-friendly excursion (1.5–2 hours of gentle walking) to look for some of the ACT's wonderful birds. McQuoids Hill is known as a good spot to find them. A simple morning tea will be provided at finish. Leader is a highly knowledgeable 'birder.' Meet 9 am. See website for location. Places limited, bookings required.	Leader: Michael Robbins Contact: npa60thinfo@gmail.com
9 May Saturday Work Party	Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group Whether work party proceeds and the activity to be undertaken will be determined in conjunction with park staff. Contact leader in week before for details.	Leader: Doug Brown Contact: 6247 0239 or kambalda@tpg.com.au

NPA outings program March – June 2020 (page 4 of 4)

<p>10 May Sunday Walk</p>	<p>Gulwan, South Tinderry Range Walk may change in case of fire damage. From Tinderry Road we climb through scrub and boulders to Gulwan peak. Continue north along the ridge before turning east and dropping to Round Flat Fire Trail, which is followed south to cars. Mostly off track. Some thick scrub and rock scrambling. About 400 m climb. Short car shuffle. Contact leader by Thursday for meeting place and time.</p>	<p>Drive: 116 km, \$48 per car Map: Tinderry 1:25,000 Grading: 2A/D/E Leader: Philip Gatenby Contact: 0401 415 446 or philip.gatenby@gmail.com</p>
<p>17 May Sunday Morning Walk</p>	<p>Parliamentary Triangle: Art/Sculptures Meet at National Library car park 9:15 am. A gentle stroll to view some of the wonderful art/sculpture in the area. We will also visit PM's Office and Cabinet Room in Old Parliament House. Bring lunch or have it at National Gallery or National Library.</p>	<p>Grading: 1A Leader: Col McAlister Contact: 6288 4171 or cvmac@grapevine.com.au</p>
<p>23 May Saturday Work Party</p>	<p>Blundells Flat – poplar control NPA commenced work on this site in March 2017. Area has heritage-listed exotics but weeds include plenty of wilding exotics. Some tools provided but a bush saw and/or loppers and gloves would be handy. Meet at Dillon Close, Weston, at 8:15 am.</p>	<p>Drive: 45km, \$18 per car Leader: Brian Slee Contact: 6281 0719 or brianslee@iprimus.com.au</p>
<p>27 May Wednesday Walk</p>	<p>Joint NPA / BBC / CBC Activity <i>Details are emailed to those on Wednesday Walks email list. Otherwise contact leader.</i></p>	<p>Leader: Mike S Contact: 0412 179 907</p>
<p>30 May Saturday Walk</p>	<p>Planned walk was in fire-affected area. Check NPA website for possible substitute a few days prior to this date.</p>	
<p>7 June Sunday Morning Walk</p>	<p>Red Hill circuit Meet 9 am at 'Redbrick', cnr Carruthers and Theodore Sts, Curtin (UBD map 68, D6), for coffee. Head east along Hughes Ridge and then north to golf club road. Climb to Davidson Trig (749 m) for great views. Follow paths south before returning north to "Coffee N Beans" on Red Hill for brunch. Return to Curtin on parallel paths. About 9 km.</p>	<p>Map: Canberra 1:25,000 or <i>UBD Street Directory</i> Grading: 1A/B Leader: Brian Slee Contact: 6281 0719 or brianslee@iprimus.com.au</p>
<p>13 June Saturday Work Party</p>	<p>Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group Whether work party proceeds and the activity to be undertaken will be determined in conjunction with park staff. Contact leader in week before for details.</p>	<p>Leader: Doug Brown Contact: 6247 0239 or kambalda@tpg.com.au</p>



Cesjacks Hut. Photo by Mike Bremers

Storming Mount Majura with Suzi

NPA 60th Anniversary nature walk report

It was hot on Sunday, 19 January, even at 10 am when we gathered at the start of the walk, the first of NPA's 60th anniversary nature walks. Suzi Bond (lead author of NPA's *Field Guide to the Butterflies of the Australian Capital Territory*) had offered a butterfly walk up Mount Majura and ten dedicated walkers/climbers set off with a three year old who had cleverly brought along his parents. Along the way a five year old with parents joined us. With the heat and drought and the dry, dusty walking track, it did not look promising but the five year old spotted our first Lepidoptera as we were nearing the summit, a white triangular moth, a Long-nosed *Epidesmia*.

The party included Esther Gallant, Cynthia Burton, Sonja Lenz, Adrienne Nicholson (who works on the CSIRO insect collection) and Mike Bremers.

Suzi was hopeful of seeing hill-topping butterflies at the summit where we planned to have lunch. We were not disappointed, with Dainty Swallowtails, Bronze Flats and Common Browns wafting back and forth along the track: they occasionally stopped for photographic sessions or performed dutiful helical vertical rotations. Other less obliging butterflies were noted by Suzi but, for the author, no photo equates to no show.

All those 'eyes' picked out an overflying Wedge-tailed Eagle, a pair of Cunningham Skinks, an Echidna, a Grey Butcherbird and a mixed flock of thornbills including a Grey Fantail. We chose to have lunch in the sparse shade of a drought-affected Kurrajong, a food plant sought after by the Bronze Flat. Adrienne found various insects to pass around. We got back to the cars before the greatest heat of the day.

We are very grateful to Suzi for not cancelling this outing in the face of dire bushfire threats, an impending storm and a hot January day. I hope the remaining Anniversary nature walks will be as successful, interesting and varied.

Kevin McCue



Bronze Flat. Photo by Kevin McCue



Male Common Brown. Photo by Mike Bremers



Climbing Mount Majura. Photo by Mike Bremers



Cunningham's Skink. Photo by Kevin McCue

Bushwalk report

15 Mile Ridge, Round and Black Jack mountains

Date: Monday, Tuesday, 4–5 November 2019.

Participants: Brian Slee (leader), Mike Bremers, Margaret Power, Barry Reville, Max Smith.

Weather: Windy, cold, hail first day; snow overnight; low cloud partly clearing on day two.



Black Jack from Round Mountain. Photo by Barry Reville



Max, Brian, Margaret climbing Round Mountain. Photo by Barry Reville



Bradley and O'Briens Hut, outside and interior Photos by Mike Bremers

In April 2017, Mike, Max and I car-camped at Bradley and O'Briens Hut after visiting Linesmans Huts on 15 Mile Ridge (*NPA Bulletin* June 2017, p. 23). Next day we walked via Deep Creek to the wreck of the *Southern Cloud*. Why were we back? Personally, I wanted to have a go at the higher (1,755 m) of KNP's two Round Mountains and, for Max, another sortie along the Ridge would assist the development of his poetic homage to electrical power infrastructure (see Hueneke's *Huts of the High Country*, p. 138). Black Jack (1,600 m) was the other attraction, a prominent peak on Toolong Range, 900 m above Deep Creek.

Last time we were favoured with early season snow, this time I was hoping the good winter fall had persisted into spring. Alas, it had been mostly rained away but light snow was to cover out tents overnight. Could we repeat our luck in having the roadside hut to ourselves? Cup Day was chosen and that worked.

When we parked at Happy Jacks Road at 10:30 am on the Monday morning, however, things seemed about to go awry. We had departed Canberra at 7 am in Mike's Prado and Max's Outback and had a good breakfast at PD Murphy in Cooma. The sky looked benign. But in gloom, hail was now flickering across the Prado's windscreen as we shuffled off to Round Mt car park for the 15 Mile Ridge walk; there, hail started beating down.

A swallow darted above the door into the loo to feed a gaping chick. A fisherman stopped to chat. Having taunted us, the gods then relented and left us to enjoy the wildflowers and scenery on our climb to the pair of spooky white (and immaculately maintained) huts with fabulous views of Jagungal. Following a cosy lunch within, we descended north to the Outback and reshuffled ourselves, goods and chattels to Bradley and O'Briens.





Fifteen Mile Ridge. Photo by Barry Reville

Come mid-afternoon, we left Mike to defend our encampment against bikie gangs while we headed for Round Mt. Max cautioned against the highpoint on the road so we parked short, at an open area, beyond the car park. All approaches to the summit have entanglements but we stitched together clear patches for 40 minutes until we scaled the final slope to the windy trig. Gaspworthy views of Jagungal and Black Jack featured below a ceiling of long, dark clouds. We walked the rocky surface from end to end; sun broke thru. Down in 30 minutes and back 'home'.

With Luci lights glowing and bundles of wood from Canberra (eucalypt, pine and palings), we had a lovely fire that night while sipping fine wine. Plan was to rise at dawn and be on Manjar Trail by 8 am but we did better, setting off from Emu Plain at 7:40 am.

The 7 km walk to the summit of Black Jack began in beautiful bleakness, like crossing an English moor, before a contrasting descent thru mountain ash forests, full of birds, to Shortridge Creek (name honours pilot of *Southern Cloud*). The trail then meandered before presenting a steep foggy climb to Black Jack Trail. Here tall, flowering bushes bordered the locked path to the locked fire tower and locked observer's hut. It was 10 am, a time by which clouds should be tearing apart to reveal deep valleys and fresh snow on Round Mountain, but all we got were tantalising glimpses as more cloud blew in from the west. Next time.



Black Jack hut. Photo by Brian Slee

We returned the same way, omitting Manjar peak, and arrived at the cars at 12:30 pm. First stop was Cabramurra's Bistro 1488 (town elevation), Snowy Hydro's spacious employee canteen, for a filling lunch. Afternoon tea was at Kuma Pies in Cooma and we were back in Canberra at 5 pm. As a non-driver, particular thanks to all those who did.

The Trails add to the potential for further exploring this area, especially in late November when the wildflowers would be at their best. Manjar is only marginally 4WD and the warning not to use it following rain appears ultra-cautious. It links to Black Jack, which continues north for a further 24 km to Elliott Way. Perhaps it could be cycled. We will return.

Note: Bradley and O'Briens Hut and both Linesmans Huts were destroyed by fire in January 2020, as were parts of Cabramurra. Maybe even those once mighty power poles which once marched along the ridge, later felled and lying on the ground, were consumed by the flames.

Brian Slee

Flowering bushes on Black Jack Mountain. Photos by Mike Bremers



Bushwalk report

The Pimple

Date: Saturday, 14 September 2019.

Participants: Philip Gatenby (leader), Jan Gatenby, Rod Griffiths, Terrylea Reynolds, Barrie Ridgway, Diana Terry.

Weather: Cool and sunny, light wind.

From Canberra's southern suburbs this morning the Tidbinbilla Range looked paler than usual. Once across Paddys River on Tidbinbilla Road the reason for the paleness was revealed. The top half of the range had a yellow blush from a bountiful display of wattle blossom.

The Pimple from Tidbinbilla Ridge. Photo by Philip Gatenby

Many years had passed since I'd been to The Pimple and I didn't know how thick the post-2003 bushfire scrub would be on the kilometre-long ridge which joins this outcrop to the main ridge of Tidbinbilla Range. In case the scrub bordered on impenetrable an early start was called for. We were walking by 7:40 on a cool, sparkling morning. The spur to the ridge above, accessible from the nature reserve's Lyrebird Trail, has a footpad which is becoming more obvious with use. It eases the climb through the forest,



which in places is thick. The spur is steep and as height is gained the rocks change from granite to slate. Where the slope is steep a feature of slate is scree (visible, for example, from Canberra on the side of Mt Domain). About two-thirds of the way up a bench has been installed, a good place to pause, catch ones breath and admire the view. Beyond here wattle regrowth (possibly *Acacia obliquinervia*, Mountain Hickory Wattle) dominates the vegetation. To our good fortune the wattle was in full bloom. Closer to its top the spur steepens.

The pad continues on the ridge, marked by a combination of tape and small rock cairns, goes through a small clearing called Snowy Corner, over a couple of rock outcrops and on to the quartzite-capped top of Tidbinbilla Mountain. Time for morning tea and to appreciate the stunning views in all directions. Southwards was Mt Bimberi and, in between, Corin Dam, looking surprisingly empty for coming out of winter.

Our route lay to the north through open woodland. A westerly ridge, leading to The Pimple, leaving the main ridge at a right angle from the first knoll ahead of us, stood out clearly. To get from one ridge to the other I cut the corner, a route which proved to be quite scrubby, yet by late morning we were standing on The Pimple. It's one of the few places in the ACT where Tingiringi Gum is found and quite a few specimens were on the outcrop's rocky flanks. This type of eucalypt is also found on outcrops east of the Cotter, in the Tinderrys and, of course, Mt Tingiringi in Victoria. By sticking to The Pimple ridge, the route back to the knoll on the main ridge was much less scrubby. Objective achieved and not yet lunchtime.



Tingiringi Gum. Photo by Philip Gatenby

Further along the main ridge our lunch spot offered views of The Pimple, highlighting its ruggedness and the magnificent display of blooming wattle (more Mountain Hickory). Continuing north we crossed the rather flat Tidbinbilla Peak with its broken trig scattered about. From here the patchy ridgeline footpad becomes more like a track and crosses Johns Peak (with a scrambly bit on the northern approaches) on its way to rendezvous with Camels Hump Fire Trail. Before the tracks meet, in the vicinity of a disused and rusty communication tower, we dropped off the ridge to join the fire trail then followed it down to the car park for a coffee and to munch on delicious brownies kindly prepared by Barrie.

Other than Barrie's brownies, geocaching was also on the day's menu. Diana, the geocacher in the party, found several. Other members of the party helped her at times, especially Terrylea who found one within an ammo box while negotiating a short scramble on the final climb to the summit of The Pimple.

All in all a great day. A walk to The Pimple is well worth the effort. Going there in spring had the added benefit of a spectacular display of wattles in full flower.

Philip Gatenby

Terrylea with geocache. Photo by Barrie Ridgway



View NW from The Pimple. Photo by Barrie Ridgway



Five days canoeing on the Snowy River to McKillops Bridge

Date: 17–21 November 2019.

The Snowy River starts just south of Mt Kosciuszko and flows for about 450 km to the sea at Marlo in Victoria, descending 2,100 m along the way. Downstream of Jindabyne the river flows in a large U shape, first east past Dalgety, then south and west before heading south again through Kosciuszko National Park's Byadbo and Pilot wilderness areas, then into Victoria's Alpine and Snowy River national parks.

In 1937 Arthur Hunt and Stanley Hanson paddled a pine canoe down the Snowy from Jindabyne to Marlo in a gruelling 2-month journey through some of the roughest and most remote country in Australia. Prior to the journey, Hunt consulted a Monaro bushman about his plans 'Don't be an adjectival [euphemism for 'bloody'] fool, Arthur; if you go down there, you'll never come back'. Before entering Tulloch Ard Gorge downstream of

McKillops Bridge in Victoria, they consulted another bushman who described it as 'a complicated form of suicide'. Despite these dire warnings, the desire to see what's around the next bend kept Hunt and Hanson going. They arrived in Marlo to a hero's welcome as news of their progress had preceded them. The trip was rough on both bodies and canoe. The canoe was beyond repair, with many cracks and timbers that were worn thin from being dragged over rocks innumerable times. Full details of their journey, published in four parts in the *Sydney Mail*, can be found in references at the end of this article.

Thanks to the pioneering efforts of Hunt and Hanson and those who followed, a journey down parts of the Snowy River can now be done in relative safety. The dangerous rapids have been mapped, modern equipment is safer and more robust, and experienced guides are available with Alpine River Adventures. In an earlier *NPA Bulletin* (December 2018, p. 12), I described my 6-day trip with Alpine River Adventures on the Snowy River from just upstream of Snowy River Falls to Halfway Campground on Barry Way. In November 2019, I and five other paddlers continued the journey with Alpine River Adventures for the 60 km down to McKillops Bridge over a period of 5 days. Our guides were Richard Swain (Swainy), Chris Cahill and Minka, a 16-year-old work experience student from Tathra.

Our 5 days followed a similar routine to the 2018 trip. We met at Dalgety on 17 November and were transferred to Halfway Campground on Barry Way beside the Snowy south of Jindabyne. We had a relatively short paddle in inflatable kayaks through some exciting rapids and camped just past the Pinch River confluence and just upstream of Pinch Gorge. Swainy found a flat area above our campsite scattered with rock artefacts. He explained that the erosion caused by years of sheep grazing followed by feral horses and goats had left the stone artefacts exposed. As a result, the age of the artefacts, whether they be 200 or 20,000 years old, cannot be determined. The artefacts consisted of river stones and fragments well above river level and different from the surrounding rock. The area also had a high concentration of scar trees.

On the second day we passed through Pinch Gorge where the river is confined on both sides by rock walls. The main



Top: Minka & Chris examine the start of Pinch Gorge.
Bottom: Chris checks that Angela makes it safely through a rapid.
Photos by Mike Bremers





Stone tool.



Last camp in Victorian part of the Snowy. Both photos by Mike Bremers

obstacle here was a waterfall through which the kayaks were 'lined', i.e. lowered by rope. Shortly downstream was a grade 3-4 rapid through which our some of our guides paddled all the kayaks. We were now past the most difficult part of the trip. What followed were 3 days of leisurely paddling on calm pools interspersed with enjoyable rapids. Several times a day we would stop to look at a culturally significant site. These ranged from Indigenous sites to European sites such as Cairn 5 of the Black-Allan Line (NSW/Vic. border) beside the river. At one of the Indigenous sites, Chris found a beautiful stone tool which, after examination, was left on site. Wildlife observed included a dingo that came within metres of us – we were downwind of it but the dingo scampered away as soon as it smelt our 3-day-old scent! The birdlife was prolific and the morning chorus had us enjoying our wakeup call

(by the birds). We saw a few feral horses but they were in better condition than the starving ones we saw a year earlier. However, whenever we stopped, we noted that there always was horse dung. We visited one of the exclusion plots which clearly showed that grass grows when feral horses and deer are excluded. The ground outside the plots was devoid of grass. At lunchtime on day 5 we arrived at McKillops Bridge to be met by Alison and Jim for our transfer back to Dalgety.

This was another great trip with Alpine River Adventures through a spectacular part of our country. Highlights included the Indigenous culture and native wildlife. As an added bonus everyone really enjoyed Minka's company and she proved to be very capable in dealing with all aspects of the journey.

References:

Sydney Mail, 1937:

21 July, p. 24, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article160496506>

28 July, p. 14, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article160497159>

4 August, p. 16, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article160497902>

11 August, p. 33, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article160498312>

Mike Bremers

Elegy

*It was there, in a summer of sand and crystal waves
 it was there, mirrored in rock pools
 of necklace seaweed, anemones and tiny fish
 and again in a summer dress, or
 the touch of sheet rippling under a window breeze.
 There it was again in the High Country
 wildflowers above the tree line,
 a sweep of the world at a glance from the Main Range,
 the ripple of blue hills merging with sky.
 And elsewhere in bush, the crunch of bark underfoot,
 aromas of damp earth and eucalypt,
 echoes of lyrebirds, bowerbirds, cockatoos
 and kookaburras calling.*

*My feelings now are loss, despair.
 Loss of freedom to seek out these places
 now raged by fire, disappeared.
 Despair, part of me has gone.
 And I look for little chinks in the sky around for blue, or,
 grass and bush around me for green
 then swim like a mouse in a wheel back and forth, in the town pool,
 but only when the air is fit to breathe.
 And, wanting to escape this town, nudging our country capital
 and the cloister I call home. An escape
 to paddle the sea shore in that cooling dress
 or boots, to walk me across the far hills.
 To feel restored, whole, once again, by what I am missing.
 Nature, such a simple gift.*

Ailsa Brown

Bushwalk report

Sassafras Mountain, Budawangs, near Nerriga

Date: Wednesday, 27 November 2019.

Participants: Barrie R (leader), Philip and Jan G, Leigh H, Trevor L, Jan M.

Weather: Perfect.

Six of us met at Queanbeyan at 7:20 am and were soon on our way for the 90-minute drive. The plan was to ascend the huge, cliff-lined Sassafras Mountain by a narrow slot called Maxwells Ladder after Max S. It was a beautiful morning, clear air, sunny, almost chilly. We strode off in great spirits along the Red Ground Track, accompanied by many bird calls. Unfortunately there were almost no wildflowers and the bush showed the ravages of drought. We soon came to 'the once mighty Endrick River', now very low and barely flowing.

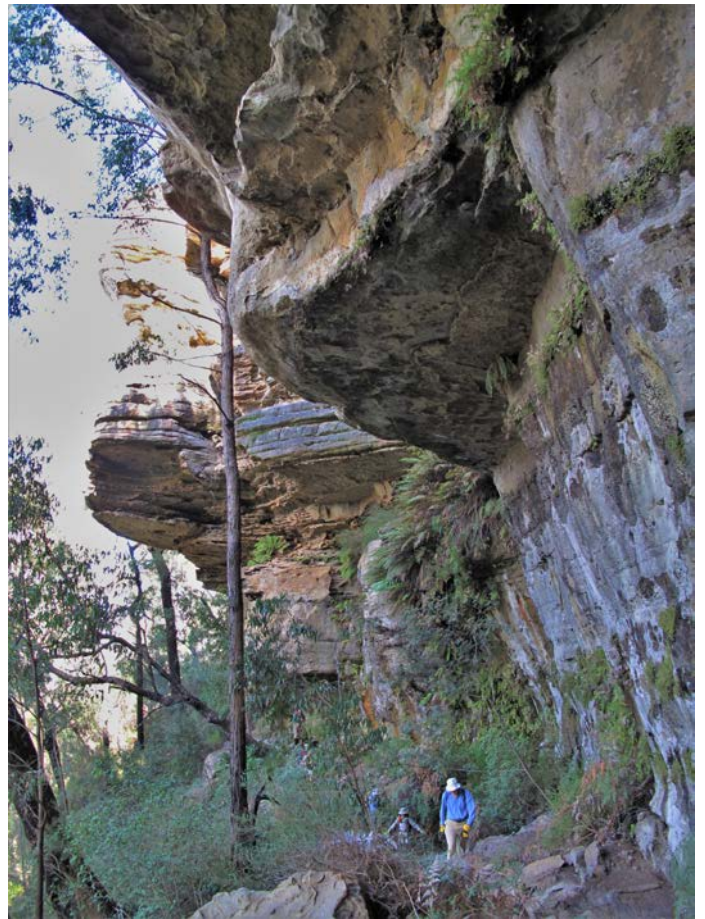


Ascending Maxwells Ladder. Photo by Barrie Ridgway

After about an hour we were just short of the 90° change in direction of the track, and stopped for morning tea, at about 56H 241638, 6108062. Behind us loomed the high, vertical cliffs. From here we went off-track, climbing to the base of the cliffs and finding only light scrub.



*From summit overlooking Gilberts Gap.
Photo by Barrie Ridgway*



*Looking back, under the cliffs to Maxwells Ladder.
Photo by Barrie Ridgway*

At the cliffs we turned right, often under huge overhangs, at other times having to drop back into the vegetation. It was along here that Philip, ahead as usual, disturbed an owl which some of us were sure we could see, perched in a tree. Gradually the line of the cliffs swung to the north, taking us into a massive and impressive cut-back into the mountain and to the gully leading upwards to Maxwells Ladder, a delightful, narrow passage with some minor rock scrambling to the summit plateau.

One climbs off the top of the ladder onto a massive sandstone slab giving great views to the cliffs on the other side of the cut-back. From here it is a brief walk up the ridge to the plateau and with care one can avoid heavy scrub.

Our route then took us northwards across a narrow saddle to a high point with a cairn where we stopped for lunch. Dense scrub can be avoided, while the slabs provide good leads, but the terrain is rough and broken. For speed I used coordinates for the last 20 metres to the cairn through the maze of banksias and sandstone slabs, only to find Philip already there! It was now getting warm and the flies came out in their millions as we ate lunch.

After lunch it was only a few minutes through light scrub directly to the top of the pass overlooking Gilberts Gap. Just to the south of the pass, on the edge of the cliffs, there are wonderful views across Gilberts Gap and also south to Round Mountain. The pass is spectacular – a twisting, narrow slot between high walls.

Again, I was struck by how dry everything was. At the bottom of the pass, on the right, is a massive cave, and here we had a drink stop. From there we continued to descend an easy slope into the Gap, in forest with an understorey of mainly bracken, now mostly dead. Once clear of the pass we headed south-west, and then south, heading straight to Red Ground Track. This route was easy, shady and scrubless. Not that the party appreciated it! Nearly back at the track the party, feeling less dependent on the leader, came to a gentle, slow incline of 10 m. How dare I take them up another hill. Then, when I tried to defend myself, I was told that, by not following the hypotenuse, I had made the walk longer than necessary. 300 metres! I ask you! In return for shade and no scrub! Lots of laughs.

It was an easy stroll back to the cars for tea and coffee and brownies. We reached it at about 3:45 pm. However, crossing the Endrick called for some exploration. How deep was that pool? It was all too much. We went in, and by walking out into the middle we found it was deep enough to sit in! Walk distance: 12.5 km, elevation gain 429 m.



Under the cliffs to Maxwells Ladder. Photo by Barrie Ridgway

It is sad to report that, only a few weeks later, much of this area was severely burned by bushfire. Will it regenerate in time for me to see it again?

Barrie Ridgway

On New Year's Day, 2020

do we say 'no'
to this present moment
pretending
that all is well
and always shall be

I am reluctant to leave the old year, step into the new. I delay starting a 2020 journal, do not write a 'new year' tanka, do not make resolutions about getting fitter. Is it that I do not want to enter this new world of endless bushfires? My history, sixty years of bushwalking, of bush loving, has gone up in smoke. All those magical places. I cling to family: the embrace of grandchildren; convivial meals in their Marrickville backyard. At twilight we watch the black shapes of fruit bats flying over.

fireworks
on the harbour bridge ...
ten thousand
people trapped
on the beaches

days of wrath
hellfire and ashes ...
our hometown
the most polluted city
on this planet

cool change ...
a southerly buster
brings the smoke
that masks the screams
of dying koalas

Gerry Jacobson

Heritage lost as Snowy huts burn



Delaneys Hut ruin.



Kiandra Courthouse ruin.



Sawyers Hut ruin. Above three photos all by NSW NPWS



Pattinsons Hut 2018. Photo by Mike Bremers

The massive bushfires that are burning vast areas of our coastline are leaving a black swathe in the High Country. Kosciuszko National Park has been hit by the two big fires that swept into the park from the west, and there have been fires started by lightning within the park.

South-east Australia's wildlife and native flora have been dealt a major blow by the fires. Some species may have real difficulty recovering. This is true for the High Country. Alpine Ash, for example, is killed by severe fire and has to grow again from seed. The new trees need 20 years before they reach seed-bearing age.

The ability to fight the fires in Kosciuszko has been gravely hampered by successive state governments repeatedly cutting National Parks and Wildlife staffing. Will federal failures to deal with climate change, emissions and renewables now be reversed in the fires' wake?

The Kosciuszko fires have had a major impact on the mountains' cultural heritage. In 2003 large numbers of historic huts were lost throughout the Alps and in the ACT the biggest mountain heritage loss was Mt Franklin Chalet. This time there have been more big losses. The historic gold-mining and skiing precinct of Kiandra was devastated. First established in 1859-60, the town saw gold mining over many decades and was the birthplace of Australian skiing.

But the latest fires have taken all of the remaining buildings. The stone-walled courthouse dating from the late 19th century, later turning into a ski lodge by Wally Reed in the 1940s and then expanded into an hotel run by Harvey Palfrey, was the major building left in the town. The courthouse is now gone. Also gone is Wolgal Ski Lodge dating from 1960. Further up Pollocks Gully stood Pattinsons Cottage. Now Pattinsons is ashes too. Meanwhile, the successor to Kiandra's ski story, nearby Mt Selwyn Resort, was hard hit by the fires and the buildings destroyed. Cabramurra lost half its buildings and Snowy Hydro workers have suffered great loss.

Just how many huts have been lost will only be known once the conflagration is past and parks staff can make proper assessments. We know that the lovely little Four Mile Hut south of Kiandra, built in 1937 by miner Bob Hughes, has gone. Many walkers and skiers cherished a stop there. Volunteer caretakers spent countless hours looking after that hut over many years. The rebuilding program that followed the 2003 conflagration might well be activated again.

After the ashes, the places of the High Country can live on. Some will live only in memory and photographs, but some will live again as structures in the landscape. The mountains, are, and will remain, a storied landscape.

Matthew Higgins

Canberra Times 18 January 2020

PARKWATCH

Bushfire and ferals a recipe for disaster

Efforts to save Australian wildlife from the impacts of catastrophic bushfires will fail unless the control of foxes, feral cats, horses and deer is a major part of wildlife disaster recovery plans, the Invasive Species Council warned today. 'Fire-denuded landscapes suit feral cats and foxes, which pick off injured and recovering small mammals seeking food and shelter in the fire zone', Invasive Species Council CEO Andrew Cox said. 'Native wildlife will be at much greater risk of attack because the fires are forcing them further afield to find food, and there is not enough vegetation to hide them from foxes and cats. Deer will be among the first animals to find and devour new green shoots, taking out new sources of wildlife food before our native animals can get to them and impeding vegetation regrowth.'

The Invasive Species Council is calling for any wildlife disaster recovery plans to include a comprehensive list of actions that will quickly reduce numbers of feral animals and weeds. 'The presence of environmental weeds and hard-hoofed animals like feral deer, horses and pigs in the burnt landscape will be a major obstacle to environmental recovery efforts', Mr Cox said. 'Restoring damaged and lost habitat is critical but will be painfully slow and in many cases impossible if we don't hit pest animals like feral horses and deer hard as part of recovery plans.'

The Invasive Species Council is calling on federal and state governments to urgently roll out a three-point wildlife recovery program:

- Feral cat and fox control: Fast-track feral cat trapping and fox baiting at threatened mammal sites.
- Hard-hoofed pest animal control: Accelerate trapping, ground and aerial shooting of feral deer, horses and pigs.
- Weed control: Target urban areas and disturbed sites susceptible to weed incursions.

'Already in Kosciuszko National Park thousands of feral horses are freely roaming the fire grounds,



Max and Berts Hut. Photo by Brett McNamara

feeding on vegetation that should provide food and shelter for native mammals, small lizards and other ground-dwelling wildlife', Mr Cox said. 'No humane feral animal measure should be off the table.'

The months after a bushfire are among the best times to control feral animals, which congregate in areas where scant feed is available. The open landscape makes it easy to locate feral animals and to use humane control methods such as aerial shooting to quickly reduce their numbers. Grazing animals like feral horses and deer will also impact the recovery process for rare alpine vegetation and mountain wetlands through grazing and trampling. This threat must be addressed by quickly reducing feral animal numbers in sensitive areas.

Environmental weeds are another serious threat that will hamper environmental recovery and restoration efforts. Major weeds such as Coolatai grass and lantana are known to benefit from fires by spreading into burnt areas.

*Andrew Cox, CEO, Invasive Species Council
14 January 2020 media release*

Huts update

Kosciuszko National Park

As at 28 January, NSW NPWS had confirmed with Kosciuszko Huts Association that the following huts and buildings were lost in recent bushfires:

- Fifteen Mile Ridge Hut
- Linesmans No. 3 Hut (co-located with Fifteen Mile Ridge Hut)
- Delaneys Hut
- Happy Jacks Hut
- Brooks Hut (still standing but badly burnt)
- Bradley and O'Briens Hut
- Four Mile Hut
- Vickerys Hut
- Sawyers Hill Rest House
- Round Mountain Hut
- Wolgal Lodge
- Kiandra Court House
- Pattinsons Hut
- Matthews Cottage

*KHA Monthly Bulletin
(February 2020)*

Namadgi National Park

- Demanding Hut
- Max and Berts Hut

*ACT Parks and Conservation Service
facebook page*

*Burning Issues, NPA's monthly e-newsletter,
lists links to important websites relevant to
national parks and environmental issues.
In the current rapidly evolving situation,
keep abreast by following the links.*

Compiled by Hazel Rath

NPA notices

National Parks Association of the ACT calendar

	March	April	May
Public holidays	Mon 9 th Canberra Day	10 th - 13 th Easter, Mon 27 th ANZAC	-
General meetings	Thurs 19 th	Thurs 16 th	Thurs 21 st
Committee meetings	Tues 3 rd	Tues 7 th	Tues 5 th
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration*	Sat 14 th	Sat 11 th	Sat 9 th

Daylight saving ends Sunday, 5 April.

* See Outings Program for details.



Glossy Black Cockatoos, Jervis Bay.
Photo by Steve Gustus

World Environment Day Dinner: Regenerating our Earth

6:30 to 10:30 pm, 6 June 2020, National Museum of Australia

Guest speaker: Costa Georgiadis, presenter of ABC's *Gardening Australia*, and powerful advocate for sustainable practices in agriculture and across society. The event will also feature live music. For latest, visit <https://conservationcouncil.org.au/wedd2020/>

NPA ACT welcomes the following new members

- Eleanor and Kathleen Cotterell
 - Melinda Brouwer
 - Girts Ozols
 - Meghan Bergamin
- We look forward to seeing you at NPA activities.

Volunteers needed

New volunteers are always needed to take over from members who have volunteered for a long time and need a break. Please consider putting your name forward for any jobs you think you can spend some time on for the good of NPA. It can be to help organise events for the 60th anniversary, setting up the meeting room or the supper for general meetings, selling NPA books at public events or helping with office work.

Please email admin@npaact.org.au or leave a message on office phone (02) 6229 3201.

Nominations for Life Membership now open

The committee is again calling for nominations for Honorary Life Membership. If a member has done something very special for NPA ACT and is worthy of this recognition, please send a confidential nomination to Secretary Sonja Lenz by mid-April (signed by yourself and another member who seconds the nomination).

Further information on what to put into the written nomination can be found on the NPA website or by contacting Kevin McCue on 6251 1291 or email mccue.kevin@gmail.com

New Conservation Council booklet

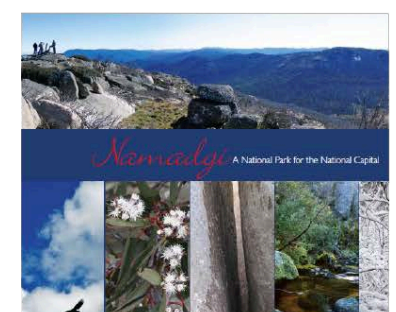
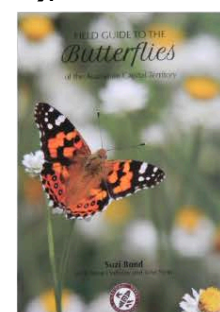
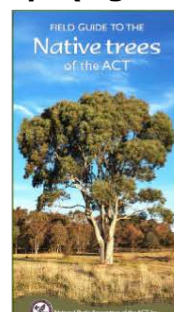
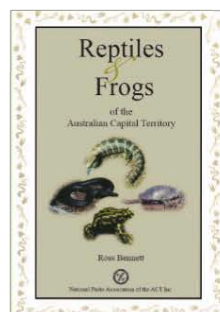
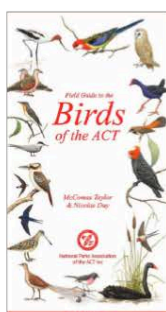
On 6 February 2020, the Conservation Council of the ACT published a sixth booklet in the series *Treasures of the ACT Region*. Titled *Ginninderry Treasures*, it concerns the Aboriginal and European cultural heritage and natural features of the area on the north-western ACT border. For information: <https://conservationcouncil.org.au/>

For details of other titles in the series, see *NPA Bulletin*, June 2019, p. 22.

Art Week

Adrienne Nicholson is hoping to organise an Art Week at Gudgenby Cottage for May if possible and when things have returned to normal after the bushfires in Namadgi. Please stay tuned.

NPA books are available from some bookshops (e.g. ANBG), or contact the association office.



General Meetings

conservation education protection

Third Thursday of the month,
8.00 pm, Uniting Church hall, 56 Scrivener Street, O'Connor

Thursday 19 March

**Reopening
Namadgi National Park**

Peter Cotsell

*Regional Manager
Southern Parks ACT*

Peter will outline plans and procedures for post-fire recovery in Namadgi National Park and other parks and reserves impacted by bushfire in the ACT.

Thursday 16 April

Flinders Ranges and back

Chris Emery

NPA life member

Chris will talk about the journey to and from the Flinders Ranges, South Australia. His talk will be augmented by a slide show with lots of photos.

Thursday 21 May

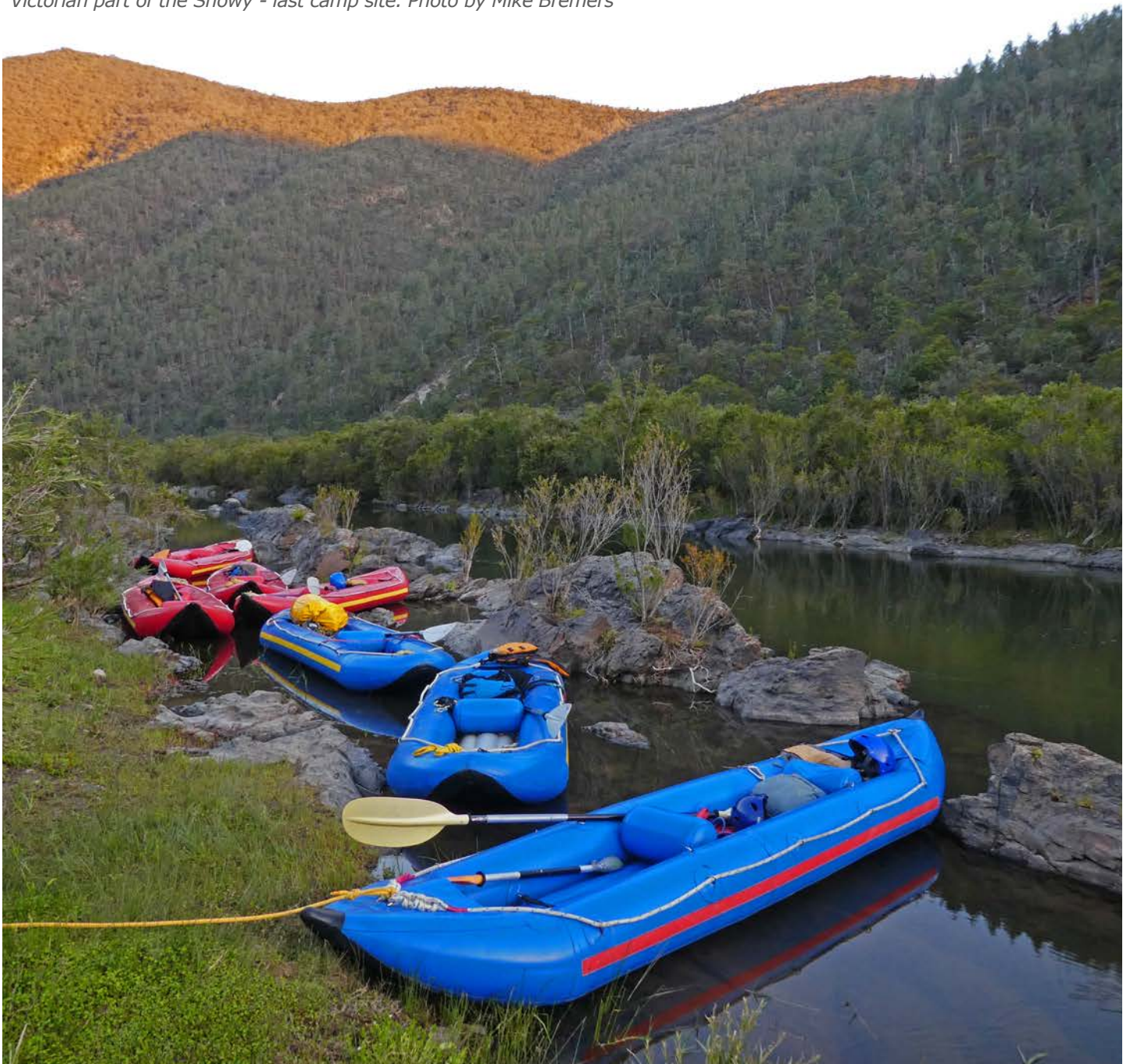
**The impact of recent bushfires
on Namadgi National Park**

Brett McNamara

*Area Manager
Namadgi National Park*

Brett will give an overview of damage in Namadgi National Park and the impact of the bushfires on the natural and cultural heritage of the park.

Victorian part of the Snowy - last camp site. Photo by Mike Bremers





For information on NPA ACT activities, please visit our

website: <http://www.npaact.org.au> and follow us:

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/npa_act/

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Lovenature321>

Facebook: www.facebook.com/NationalParksAssociationOfTheACT

