

National Parks Association of the Australian Capital Territory Inc.



NPA Bulletin



Kosciuszko's 80th anniversary celebration
Volunteers battle Barrington Tops broom invasion
Relentless degradation of the ACT's environment
Nunnock Swamp - great spot for a car camp

conservation education protection

June 2024 – Volume 61 – Number 2

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We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land
on which we live, learn and work, and pay our respects to the
First Nations peoples and their Elders, past, present and emerging

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The **NPA Bulletin** is published quarterly in print and an extended online version to provide members with news on environmental and heritage conservation, education and protection, particularly as bearing on the ACT and adjacent regions.

Its aim is to report on NPA Committee and subcommittee deliberations and decisions; NPA events; provide a forum for members and invited guests on matters of interest and concern to NPA ACT; and fulfil an educational role on conservation and outdoor recreation issues. We accept paid advertising, where appropriate.

Contributions of articles up to 750 words, letters, poems, drawings and photos are welcome. Longer articles will be considered. Photos should be free of embedded information. The editor retains the right of final decision on content and presentation.

Send all items to the *Bulletin* team, email admin@npaact.org.au.

Contact the NPA office for information and rates for advertisements.

Deadline for contributions to the next issue is **1 August 2024**.

Disclaimer:
Articles by contributors
may not necessarily reflect
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Front cover: *Mount Townsend*. By Philip Gatenby (see p. 4)

Back cover: Top: *Mont Blanc from Chamonix*. By Philip Gatenby. Bottom: *The Matterhorn*. By Jan Gatenby (see pp. 27–30)

From the President

Greetings everyone

I'm writing this on a cold blustery day in May with reports of snowfalls in the alps – good news for those of us who are skiers, snowboarders or just enjoy the winter landscapes.

It's been a busy few months for the committee, and huge thanks to them and our other volunteers for their efforts in keeping all our activities going. Philip Gatenby and the *Bulletin* team have, I'm sure you'll agree, produced another great issue. As always, Mike Bremers and the walks leaders have organised another full outings program for the next 3 months.

Plans are underway to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the gazettal of Namadgi National Park in October. We've met with ACT Parks, and a subcommittee is working on various events, including an exhibition at the Namadgi Visitor Centre, walks and talks, and a birthday barbecue. We plan to publish a special issue of the *Bulletin* in September, with stories and photos from Namadgi past and present. Keep an eye out in *Burning Issues* and on our social media and website for updates and details of events.

Other recent activities include meetings between our treasurer Jenny Barnes and me with ACT Environment Minister Rebecca Vassarotti and Labor's new Environment and Land Management spokesperson Suzanne Orr. We briefed them on our current and future activities, and both were supportive of our work and plans for Namadgi celebrations. With the ACT elections being held on 19 October, we have invited them to address our monthly meeting so you can have an opportunity to hear and question them on ACT environment issues. Ms Vassarotti will be speaking in June and Suzanne Orr in July, as will Nicole Lawder, the Liberal spokesperson on Environment

and Water (see p. 35). So please come along, and with questions too.

Many thanks to those who attended the monthly meeting in May and voted to increase our membership fees. The new fees from 1 July are shown on p. 35 of the *Bulletin*. This is the first significant increase in fees since 2008 and will ensure we can continue our conservation activities.

I'm pleased to report that we've been successful in another grant through the Australian Government's Volunteer Grants program. This funding will be used for activities to attract new volunteers, and to continue the upgrade of our membership database, including making it easier for people to join online.

We will start to roll out the new membership database from mid June, so you will be able to renew your membership and update your personal details online. More information will be provided soon, through a special edition of *Burning Issues* and will include times when Craig Watson, our office manager, will be available to assist with inquiries.

And finally, a plea for donations as tax time approaches! As highlighted in the information about membership fee increases, we can no longer offer a lower membership fee linked to a donation. Despite this, we hope the generous support from donations we have received in the past will continue. The easiest place to donate is through our website. We'll be running donations campaigns on our social media and through *Burning Issues* in June, so please share the messages and donate if you can.

Rosemary Hollow



Notice of Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held on Thursday 15 August 2024 at 7:30 pm at the Weston Creek Uniting Church hall, 16 Parkinson Street, Weston.

Please come along and hear about our activities over the past year and plans for the year ahead. Following the AGM there'll



be a talk on the conservation and taxonomy of orchids by Dr Heidi Zimmer, then a sumptuous supper.

Agenda for the AGM is as follows:

- Minutes of AGM 2023
- President's report
- Financial report and appointment of auditor
- Election of office-bearers and committee
- Any other business

Would you like to become involved in the committee or in a support role in the year ahead? If so, please contact Rosemary our president at <rosemary@npaact.org.au> to discuss.

All office-bearer and committee positions become vacant at the AGM. There'll be a link to the nomination form in the August *Burning Issues*, or contact our friendly office team at <admin@npaact.org.au> and they'll email you one.

Bower of Satin
Bowerbird,
Honeysuckle
Creek. Photo by
Mike Bremers

Scarlet Greenhood.
Photo by
Philip Gatenby





Kosciuszko's 80th anniversary celebration

Main Range from Rams Head Range. Photo by Jan Gatenby

An event held in the Thredbo Alpine Hotel on 18 April 2024 celebrated the date 80 years ago on which the NSW legislature voted to protect the alpine areas of the state by establishing Kosciuszko State Park.

The Organising Committee drew on organisations and individuals long committed to the park: Linda Groom, Coordinator, NPA NSW and ACT; Urszula Lang, Kosciuszko Heritage Inc (KHI); Gary Dunnett, CEO, NPA NSW; Dave Darlington, retired NPWS regional manager; Esther Gallant, NPA ACT.

Expression of thanks to all who have cared for the country now known as Kosciuszko National Park was a continuing theme, with gratitude expressed towards the Indigenous custodians, past and present parks staff and volunteers by MC Samantha Newton of NPA NSW and subsequent speakers. Local elders Aunty Kathy Jones and Aunty Ellen Munday welcomed visitors to Country.

H.E. Maciej Chmieliński, Ambassador of Poland, detailed the historical significance of both Kosciuszko the soldier and Strzelecki the explorer and namer of the mountain. Three young dancers in bright, traditional Polish costumes delighted attendees and helped the organisers at the door. Other presenters included historian Deirdre Slattery and Dave Darlington, former KNP Regional Manager.

Mingling between different groups during the tea and lunch breaks reinforced the perception of breadth and diversity of support. As just one example, the President and Treasurer of Cooma Rotary met members of the local Polish community for the first time.

The room was wonderfully decorated with native greenery by KHI volunteer Mrs Barbara Dabrowa. NPWS provided a large banner 'Celebrating 80 years'. There was a large attention-getting display of 'Happy Birthday Kosciuszko' cards – some in Polish – created by primary school children in Sydney and Jindabyne.

Other highlights included a silent slide show of Kosciuszko scenery produced by Linda Groom, a video of Kosciuszko landscapes and animals by Dave Gallan and Stuart Cohen, and brief comments by Patrick Condon and Esther Gallant, 80-year-olds with long association with the KNP.

This successful invitation-only event would not have happened without generous sponsor support. Representatives of all sponsors attended: Kosciuszko Heritage Inc., the Public Service Association of NSW, Bushwalking NSW, and the National Parks Associations of NSW and the ACT. This level of support allowed accommodation of approximately



80-year-olds with a long association with KNP with the cake – Chris Roper, Esther Gallant, Meg McKone (NPA ACT) and Patrick Condon (KHI). Photo by Cynthia Burton



The assemblage – view from back of the room with historian Deirdre Slattery at the podium. Photo by Chris Malek

100 guests at the Thredbo Alpine Hotel. Guests were provided with morning tea and lunch and enjoyed a variety of informative talks. Both the range and quality of the catering were impressive, and a number of guests expressed their appreciation.

Linda Groom and Esther Gallant

Top of the Range

*an orchid
peeping at me
beside the track
the shy subalpine smile
of Caladenia*

*long winter
of deep-frozen love ...
flowers
under a snowdrift ...
alpine marsh marigold*

*top of the range ...
candle heath in flower
and the scent
of alpine mint bush ...*

*I wander in wonder
over the Ramsheads
I walk in flowers
snow daisies ...
eyebright ... billy buttons
as far as eye can see*

*deep night
in silent mountains ...
waking
to gentle sunlight
on branches of a snow gum*

Gerry Jacobson



Namadgi turns 40

In the heart of Namadgi. Photo by Philip Gatenby

Kosciuszko National Park (see p. 4) is not the only reserve with a significant birthday in 2024. On 3 October 1984, Namadgi National Park was gazetted by the federal government (the ACT didn't have self-government in those days). At that time, the park protected 91,000 hectares: its current size is 106,095 hectares of mostly mountainous country.

The NPA ACT, founded in 1960, played a key role over 24 years in lobbying for Namadgi.

As part of proposed activities to mark the park's 40th anniversary there will be a special issue of the *Bulletin* in September. The committee is also planning other events.

State of the Environment Report

Every 4 years the ACT's Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment prepares a report on the state of the territory's environment. The *2023 State of the Environment Report* was released in late March. It outlines the condition of the environment and progress made towards sustainability.

Consistent with previous reports, the latest one assesses a set of indicators for seven environmental themes – climate change, human settlements, air, land, biodiversity, water and fire. The report's findings, unfortunately, detail the continued, relentless degradation of our natural environment. Particularly affected are natural grasslands and Box-Gum Woodlands, the ACT's two most threatened ecological communities. These high-conservation-value communities are required to be protected under existing federal and ACT environment laws, yet they 'continue to be lost or fragmented through ongoing urban expansion within these ostensible protections' (p. 88).

The report includes a call for an expansion to the area of reserved land in the territory, along with 30 recommendations 'for the purpose of assisting the ACT Government to make strategic management decisions to improve environmental outcomes' (p. 17), covering both environmental and administrative aspects. The first, and arguably the most significant, of these recommendations is that the government 'Legislate an urban growth boundary to contain urban expansion and achieve a compact, liveable and efficiently designed Canberra' (p. 18). It's hard to believe that, given the reliance of the territory's coffers on land sales, any ACT administration would support this recommendation and introduce the appropriate legislation.

The report is accessible [here](#) for interested readers.

The pressure on Bluetts Block. Photo by Philip Gatenby



A community perspective on urban development

As noted above, the effect of urban development on the natural environment is a major theme of the just-released *2023 State of the Environment Report*. The community response to the report's urban development component includes a story written by NPA member Trevor Costa. Trevor shares his perspective on the negative effects of urban development on his favourite local spot. In his article titled 'I Call It My Church: a community perspective on urban encroachment', Trevor highlights the increasing pressure of Canberra's expanding urban footprint on nearby parks and reserves. This is a problem that he believes stems to some extent from increased visits to these areas that in turn is partly due to the way new suburbs are being constructed – big houses on small blocks and poorly planned green spaces. He summarised this 'as a stark increase in urban residents seeking respite from their barren suburbs'. The new suburb of Taylor exemplifies this in Trevor's story.

To read Trevor's story click [here](#).

Philip Gatenby

The view from One Tree Hill. Photo by Trevor Costa

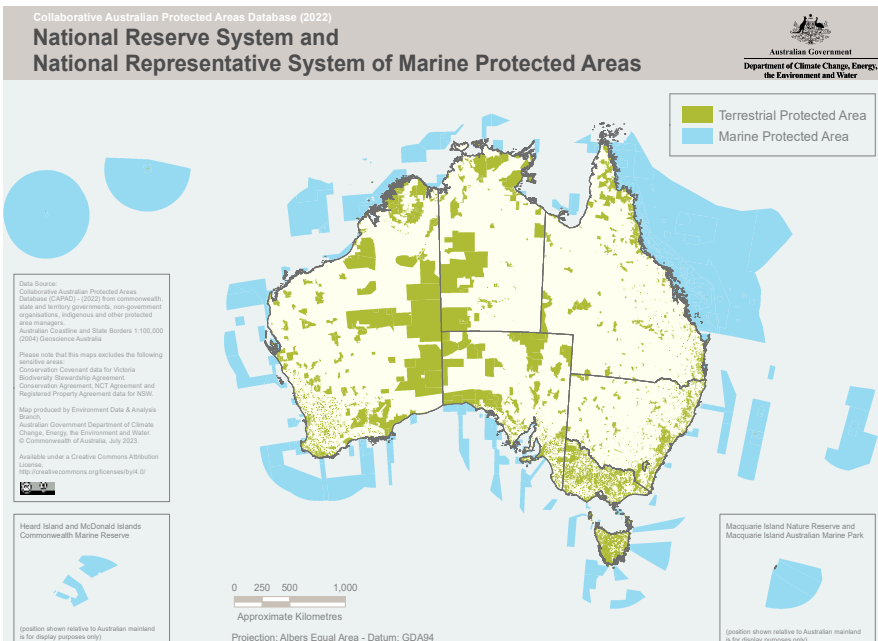


30 by 30: a pipe dream?

In December 2022, Australia joined 195 other nations in signing on to the UN Convention on Global Biodiversity to address the world's biodiversity crisis. Each nation agreed to set a goal of '30 x 30' – protecting at least 30 per cent of land, freshwater and marine ecosystems by 2030.

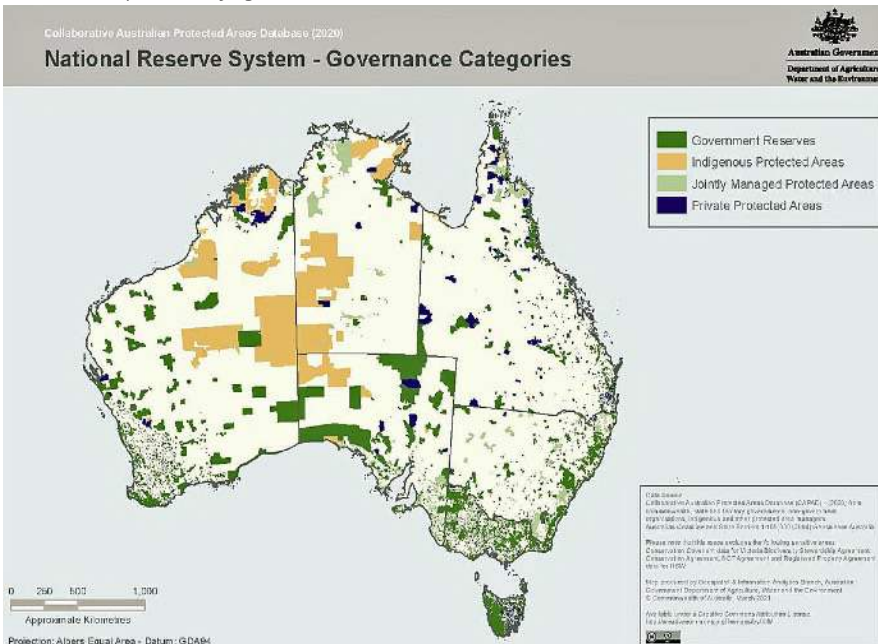
Australia has steadily increased its protected areas using a science-based approach and a combination of public, private and Indigenous protected areas. Just under 50 per cent of our oceans have some form of protected area but only a small proportion is highly protected (see *NPA Bulletin June 2023* issue on the Macquarie Island Marine Park). The situation on land isn't so rosy. In the mid 1990s, only 7 per cent of Australia's land was protected for conservation, and organisations like the National Parks Australia Council, of which NPA ACT is a member, urged Australian governments to use more targeted efforts under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

You'd have to ask whether the goal is doable, especially as there are two federal elections in the interim. The present government needs to get cracking, and protecting 30 per cent isn't simply about protecting any 30 per cent, it's about protecting the right representative areas, which is where the science comes in.



Top: Australian terrestrial and marine protected areas, 2022, Collaborative Australian Protected Areas Database, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

Below: Governance of the national reserve system, 2020, Collaborative Australian Protected Areas Database, Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment



The area of land under conservation has more than tripled to 22 per cent today. Between 1996 and 2013, the government's National Reserve System Program channeled funds to state governments and land trusts to buy tracts of land to protect some of our most endangered and least-protected ecosystems, such as native grasslands and wetlands. In the ACT, the project to save the Northern Corroboree Frog seems to be progressing well, thanks to efforts to protect its wetland habitat. The system does work.

Under fund-matching provisions, the program led to new state government and philanthropic money invested in conservation, but more is required. Two-thirds of the growth in Australia's protected lands has come from expansion of 84 Indigenous Protected Areas that now cover over 87 million hectares and account for fully half of all of the conservation estate on land across the Kimberley, Arnhem Land, Cape York and the deserts of central Australia.

Arguably what is needed is expansion of conservation covenants on private land and higher conversion of public forests to national parks. This begs the question of where the money is for management, management of climate change and of feral animals and, especially, the prosecution of humans responsible for illegal land clearance and other acts of environmental vandalism. The government's Environment and Water Minister Tanya Plibersek introduced the Nature Repair Market Bill to parliament and hopes this will pave the way to achieve the 30 x 30 goal.

Another issue, perhaps an inevitable consequence of a federal system, is obtaining publicly available data on the movements towards and achievement or otherwise of 30 x 30. There's a paucity of up-to-date nationally consistent information on how much of the country and its territorial waters is protected, the governance arrangements of this protection and whether the areas that are protected are the ones that should be protected.

Furthermore, even if the 30 x 30 goal is achieved, what does this mean for significantly slowing the rate of extinction of individual Australian flora and fauna species, a rate which ranks as one of the world's worst?

To close on a more optimistic note, the recent announcement of the purchase of Vergemont Station by the Queensland Government and Nature Conservancy may help save the Night Parrot, one of the top 10 most vulnerable animals in Australia (see *Parkwatch*, p.31, for more on this announcement).

Kevin McCue and Philip Gatenby



Overview of Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. Photo by Jan Gatenby

Tidbinbilla – my spiritual home

Recently retired Tidbinbilla ranger and manager **John McRae** reflects on his time at the reserve and the tortuous path that got him there.

The autumn equinox was my last day of work at Tidbinbilla. After 17 years with the ACT Parks Service, five as manager of that magnificent reserve, it was time.

My journey to Tidbinbilla took me everywhere else first. Down every career dead end and into every foul kind of labour. Milking, lugging, shovelling, carting, driving, selling, welding, counting, soldiering and teaching. I tried them all and many more. At my lowest ebb, I even became a computer-bloody-programmer, staring at screens for 10 lost years. Nothing fitted. There was never a single moment when I felt like I was doing what I was destined to do.

Then, at 42, I got a job as a ranger and everything fell into place. I think on all those years of searching for a career, when I should have been listening for a calling. Maybe I had to wait until the call was a scream. Maybe I just had to live those other lives first.

'Rangerland' was good to me and rich with opportunities. For the most part, I stayed west of the 'Bidgee' and learnt my trade from old hands. I worked the length and breadth of the Brindabellas in all weathers, doing the jobs that must be done so visitors can reach a car park, find a sign, use a toilet, go for a walk and get back safe. And making wild places accessible, while ever mindful of the conservation imperative.

Rangers are ultimately in the perpetuity business. Whether cleaning dunnies, building tracks or searching remote places for rare things, it's all about the long term. Even the most menial job in 'Rangerland' is connected to the grandest of visions. For me it was always a great honour to wear the Gang-gang badge and to do the quiet work of conservation.

My career included a 3-year stint as manager of the Australian Alps Program, working across state lines with the passionate guardians of the High Country, discovering an incredible community of champions – scientists, land managers, volunteers, advocates and artists – who have dedicated their lives to protecting that priceless landscape, all of them needed in this time of barbarians.

There is something special about that valley of wraiths and rainbows.

I was so pleased to get the job as manager of Tidbinbilla in 2019. It felt like destiny to finally be in that valley where the call of the mountains was loudest. What followed was five challenging and deeply rewarding years. The time began with unbreathable air from the East Coast armageddon. Then came fire and flood and Covid. Then more floods and more Covid. The bureaucracy was its own self-generating shambles machine. That

didn't help. It felt overwhelming at times but we kept going, one shemozzle at a time, undaunted. The threatened species program emerged from every setback stronger than ever. The rangers and field officers cracked on, delivered projects and Tidbinbilla thrived. The tougher the times we faced the stronger the team grew.

I spent my last day in the job with the best team ever and they gave me the best farewell ever.

There is something special about that valley of wraiths and rainbows. Everyone can sense it. The air is rich with potions and the light can be astonishing. It casts spells that heal and replenish what this mad world depletes. It is infinitely generous to heart and soul. I am forever grateful that I heard the call of those mountains, and they will always be my spiritual home.



On the Tidbinbilla Ridge. Photo supplied by John McRae

I spent my last day in the job with the best team ever and they gave me the best farewell ever. There were gifts and food and little adventures. We laughed and reminisced. Recounting those shemozzles like soldiers talking about battles fought and won. The best of times we called them. One final memory to treasure. A gift as precious to me as Tidbinbilla itself.



Robert on Apollo Rock. Photo by Jan Gatenby

Vale Robert Walters

(1951 to 2024)

We are sad to report the death, on 12 March 2024, of NPA ACT member Robert Walters. Robert, who joined a number of club walks over the past 12 months, was a keen bushwalker and excellent photographer, known for his kindness and calmness. Robert died unexpectedly on Mount Anne in Tasmania's south-west, doing what he enjoyed in a place he loved.

Nunnock Swamp

Nunnock Swamp, or Nanook, about 10 km south-west of the village of Bemboka, is in the South East Forest National Park, on the edge of the coastal escarpment. The area is important to the Maneroo Aboriginal People and has been for many years. More recent European heritage reflects exploration, grazing and timber-getting. The swamp formed in a shallow depression and in wet times includes about 100 hectares of subalpine bog. The area protects a number of ecological communities – grassland, grassy woodland, dry forest and tall wet forest.

Last February, NPA members Isobel Crawford and John Brickhill ran a car camp for participants to explore and appreciate the area. It also allowed botanist Tim Collins to search for Swamp Everlasting paper daisies.

Nunnock Swamp car camp, 2–4 February 2024

Leaders: John Brickhill and Isobel Crawford

Participants: Christine Bremers, Mike Bremers, Tim Collins, Marlene Eggert, Sonja Lenz, Andrew Lyne, Kevin McCue, Craig Watson

Weather: (mostly) hot, clear skies except for sea mist and cloud on Saturday night.

We met at the Elephant Bakery in Nimmitabel for a cafe stop on Friday afternoon. Andrew renewed acquaintance with Deidre Shaw and



Around the firepit. Photo by Kevin McCue

Nunnock Swamp. Photos by Mike Bremers unless indicated otherwise



Old fences



Local map

Di and Gary Thompson, met via KHA 30 years ago. Deidre subsequently rolled her van on New Line Road, so she and Di and Gary returned to Cooma for the night. Deidre was not badly hurt, nor was her trusty van.

On Saturday, the somewhat depleted group walked the Keys and Wilkinsons tracks, mainly on basalt and through patches of good quality grassland, woodland and tall wet forest. That afternoon, Gabrielle and Kim Taysom and June Wilkinson spent a couple of hours with us explaining the 40-year history of the South East Forest National Park, and the role of June and Bob Wilkinson who had bought the Alexander's Hut block in the 1980s to stop it being logged. They are all still actively involved in the Great Southern Forest campaign of the Far South Coast branch of NPA NSW.



Later, some of us ventured further down New Line Road to the headwaters of Dragon Swamp Creek, to look at a population of the Small-leaved Gum *Eucalyptus parvula*, a beautiful small mallee endemic to High Country swamps from Countegany to Kybeyan.

On Sunday, we walked the upper circuit of Nunnock Swamp Track, on basalt and granite. Many photos of plants and animals have been added to NatureMapr. We recorded 37 bird species. Tim collected from many populations of the yellow paper daisy *Xerochrysum andrewiae*, one of his PhD species.

We are planning a return trip in late spring this year.

Isobel Crawford



Left top: Tim Collins with *Xerochrysum andrewiae*

Right: *Xerochrysum display*. Photo by Tim Collins

Left: Paper Daisy *Xerochrysum andrewiae* flowerhead

On the trail of Swamp Everlastings *Xerochrysum palustre* and *X. andrewiae*

Golden Everlasting paper daisies and other species of *Xerochrysum* are among Australia's best known and loved native wildflowers and occur in every state and mainland territory. They were a favourite of Napoléon Bonaparte and the Empress Joséphine and have been grown in Europe as ornamentals for over 200 years. Also, hybridisation of *X. bracteatum* with the Western Australian species *X. macranthum* in Germany in the 1860s has led to the development of dozens of cultivars with white, orange, red and pink papery bracts. They are available around the world and in most of Canberra's nurseries.

Earlier on, I spent 3 years researching the species diversity of these native plants and they have continued to be a passion for me. Hot weather in early February was a perfectly sweaty time for a group of us to go looking for these eye-catching plants.

There are a number of morphological features that separate the species, but the easiest discriminator is the texture of the outer surface of the papery bracts (Figures 1 and 2).

In and around Nunnock Swamp, about 10 km south-west of Bemboka, I found a species I named in 2022, *X. andrewiae*. This was pleasing, but I really was hoping to also find *X. palustre*, as this is a nationally vulnerable species. There is only one spot in NSW I know of where *X. palustre* occurs naturally. In Victoria, *X. palustre* is found in several lowland swamps below 500 m altitude, and a recovery plan and seed banking is being run by the Royal Botanic Gardens

Victoria. In Melbourne, *X. palustre* is being cultivated to use in stormwater retention dams and for rewilding stormwater drains.

The camping and walking at Nunnock was enhanced by the different strands of knowledge and conversations shared by all who attended. I learnt so much about the different birds and the history of the local area.

There are 12 new species of *Xerochrysum* that I published from around Australia. You can access the article for free [here](#).

For more information on Napoléon Bonaparte and the Empress Joséphine and their love of Golden Everlastings listen to the ABC Science Friction podcast parts 1 and 2:

ABC podcast, *Love and Exile: an everlasting mystery* [Part 1](#).

ABC podcast, *Love and Exile: an everlasting mystery* [Part 2](#).

Tim Collins



Far left: Figure 1 – Smooth papery bracts on a specimen of *Xerochrysum palustre*. *Xerochrysum palustre* was originally included under the name of *X. subundulatum* the Alpine Everlasting, but *X. palustre* has smooth surfaces on the outer bracts and is not an alpine species but usually in swamps below 500 m in altitude

Left: Figure 2 – *Xerochrysum andrewiae* has a dense covering of tiny bumps on the outer bracts. This species was until 2022 included in either *X. palustre* or sometimes *X. subundulatum* but it is both genetically and morphologically different to both of these species

The fight for Tallaganda

On the ACT's doorstep, 40 km south-east of Queanbeyan, lie the magnificent Tallaganda National Park and Tallaganda State Conservation Area. Many NPA members have taken in their delights, they are part of the many wonderful protected areas that ring the capital region. The Tallaganda reserves embrace 21,880 hectares of rare moist and dry forest including Swamp Gum, Black Gum and Black Sallee grassy woodland communities that are poorly represented elsewhere in the New South Wales reserve system. Along with the Tinderry forests, they once hosted a number of eucalyptus oil distilleries. And they are home to an array of unique Aboriginal heritage sites and rare fauna including velvet worms, flatworms, funnel-web spiders and springtails. Because of these and other scarce features, the reserves were created in 2001 as part of the Southern Regional Forest Agreement. They were carved out of the 58,000 hectares Tallaganda State Forest that had originally been gazetted in 1917. Some 11,564 hectares of national park and state conservation area was excised from the north of the state forest, east of Hoskinstown, and a further 10,315 hectares of national park was carved out of the south, south-east of Captains Flat. This left about 36,000 hectares of state forest connecting the reserves. Logging of this area by the NSW Forestry Corporation has continued.



Pink granite, Tallaganda. Photo by Philip Gatenby

Among their rare fauna and flora, Tallaganda National Park and State Conservation Area are home to a number of arboreal animals including Sugar Gliders, Brushtail Possums, Pygmy Possums, Spotted-tailed Quolls and Greater Gliders (the largest gliding marsupial in Australia). The Greater Glider has recently thrust the area into the political spotlight. In August 2023, a dead Greater Glider was discovered near forestry operations in the Tallaganda State Forest so a stop work order was issued by the NSW Environment Protection Agency (EPA) because the Forestry Corporation is required to conduct thorough surveys of threatened species before logging.

Southern Greater Gliders were designated an endangered species in 2022 after previously being classified as vulnerable. They shelter in tree cavities known as 'den' trees. The Forestry Corporation is required to identify such den trees, and enforce a 50 m exclusion zone around them before logging starts. The Tallaganda area is home to one of the largest populations of Greater Gliders in Australia. A spokesperson for the EPA said there were up to 400 Greater Gliders in the Tallaganda State Forest but the Forestry Corporation had identified only one den tree. 'We are not confident the habitat surveys have been adequately conducted to ensure all den trees



Trig, Mount Palerang. Photo by Jan Gatenby

are identified', EPA said. Conservation groups allege that the Forestry Corporation does not survey at night when the gliders are moving around and surveys only from roads that are invariably well away from den trees. The stop work order was amended in September 2023 then extended in October, November and December the same year. In January this year, the Forestry Corporation ceased operations in Tallaganda State Forest.

The furore has reignited a debate about ending native forest logging across the country. Victoria announced in 2023 that it would bring forward from 2030 to January this year its permanent halt to native forest logging. Western Australia also ended logging in January. This leaves New South Wales and Tasmania as the laggard states still wedded to a practice fast being overtaken by market demands for sustainably grown timber (i.e. plantation timber) that doesn't result in destruction of large long-term carbon stores. A Liberal government was recently re-elected in Tasmania (albeit in minority). Previous Liberal governments there have not supported strong protection of native forests and the endangered flora and fauna that relies on them.

The Greater Glider controversy has also sparked calls for a permanent end to logging in the Tallaganda and the addition of the state forest to the national park, which would more than double its area. The World Wide Fund for Nature, South East Forest Rescue, Wilderness Australia (the rebadged Colong Foundation) and The Greens have been particularly vocal in calling for a permanent end to logging in the area. Bob Debus, Chair of Wilderness Australia, and a former NSW environment minister, said 'as a publicly owned body, the Forestry Corporation should be attempting to minimise environmental damage during logging operations. Instead they appear to be deliberately targeting the areas of highest conservation value within the state forest for destruction'.

Wilderness Australia has also said that 'Although the Forestry Corporation have not committed to staying out of Tallaganda for good, we believe this [the January cessation of operations] is a solid reprieve, and hope that it will be a major stepping stone along the path to permanent protection'. In May, however, the Corporation signalled a likely resumption of operations in Tallaganda. Despite this, let's hope that we soon see an expanded Tallaganda National Park along with a permanent sunset on native forest logging throughout the country.

Greg Buckman

Open forest near Mulloon Creek. Photo by Greg Buckman





Careys Peak from Corker Mountain, Barrington Tops National Park. Photo by Jan Gatenby

Fighting Scotch Broom on the Barrington Tops

Many national parks have a dominant weed in their environment. In Barrington Tops National Park, in the Hunter Region of NSW, Scotch Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) is the prime invader. There are 10,000 hectares of broom in the park and on nearby state forest and private land.

The story goes that Scotch Broom escaped after having been brought to the area as a pot plant around 1800. Scotch Broom thrives in cool, wet climates and the Barrington Plateau offers the ideal weather for it to flourish. The broom can grow to 6 metres tall, but a height of 1–2 m is more common. The broom forms thickets that crowd out other native vegetation. Eucalyptus seedlings are not found in among the broom. Scotch Broom ensures its survival by putting out lots of seed, with the seed surviving in the soil for up to 80 years. Germination is triggered by soil disturbance and fire.

When the Barrington Tops National Park was established in 1969 there were already many hectares of broom established within its boundaries. Since then, many environmentally engaged citizens and scientists have tried to get the political will established to effectively deal with the problem. The battle to eradicate or at least control Scotch Broom involves a heady mix of science and politics, as funding was sought to research methods of control and then to deploy them.

In 1987, a Scotch Broom Council was established to study broom and provide advice on its management. The council collected data on broom distribution and campaigned to foster public awareness. In November 1987, when the broom flowering was at its peak, Broom Council members managed to get NSW premier Neville Wran on a helicopter to show him the extent of the invasion. This resulted in funds being committed over several years to find a method of biological control.



Team briefing. Photo by Boyd Carney

So far, four biological control agents have been tried: a twig-mining moth, a broom sap sucking insect (psyllid), a seed-eating beetle and a gall-forming mite. None of them have proven successful. The only biocontrol that has shown promise is the gall mite. It has persisted on the Barrington Plateau since its release in 2013, with some limited effect. There has been success with the mite at other broom infestations across the state and one transfer of the mite from a nature reserve in Bathurst to Barrington Tops was undertaken in 2020. Unfortunately, since then there have been a number of wet La Niña years. With these wet years there has been a significant decrease in gall mite populations across all the known sites. Populations have fallen so much that there are no potential opportunities to harvest from other sites for release in Barrington.

Meanwhile Scotch Broom has continued to spread. In 2007, a scientific committee, established under the NSW *Threatened Species Conservation Act* listed the invasion and establishment of Scotch Broom as a key threatening process.

Reasons for the listing are that Scotch Broom adversely affects species, populations or ecological communities to such a degree that it could cause those not yet threatened to become threatened.

Enter the 2020 Black Summer fires. More than 4,000 hectares of the Gondwana Rainforests World Heritage Area were burned. The Carters Road Wildfire burned the southern end of the Barrington Plateau, stimulating broom seed germination with broom outcompeting precious native plants in some areas.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) intervened by supplementing its annual broom control program, with funding to run volunteer working bees coming from the Saving our Species program, Hunter Local Land Services and the Commonwealth Bushfire Recovery grants.

Volunteers cut Scotch Broom stems just above the ground, to stop it from photosynthesising,



Cutting broom. Photo by Marlene Eggert

flowering and setting seed. NPWS treated 700 hectares of mature Scotch Broom in 2020 and another 700 hectares in 2021. This will help create space for native plants to regrow, providing expanded, healthy habitat for native fauna, like the Broad-toothed Rat and the Spotted-tailed Quoll.

Every year, NPWS runs a number of volunteer working bees of several days length at different locations in the park. Volunteers stay for whatever time they want to give, between 1 and 4 days. In February this

year I stayed for a working bee at Poleblue Swamp for 3 days, camping at the site. Camping is free, but apart from that it is BYO everything, including your water.

For the job NPWS provides terrific tools and protective equipment for cutting the broom stems: electric secateurs and, for volunteers with the appropriate licence, electric pole saws. I was also given a volunteer work shirt that has since inspired envy at NPA ACT work parties.

The working bee was organised and hosted by Boyd Carney, NPWS Bush Regeneration and Volunteer Officer, who made sure we all knew what we were doing and were safe and comfortable with the job. He was indefatigable in looking after his volunteers.

I really enjoyed my time cutting broom at Poleblue Swamp. The workday started at 9 am, the group walking the short distance to the work site. Cutting broom is somewhat physically demanding: wrestling the plant to the ground to expose the stem, then cutting the stem as low to the ground as possible, making sure no side shoots are left. Don't be spooked by the odd leech slinging its way across your gloves or secateur. There is a morning tea break, memorable in its many offerings, a 1-hour lunch break, and the work day is over at 3 pm.

Work breaks are compulsory. Boyd would constantly remind us not to burn ourselves out and that enough broom was left for cutting the next day anyway. I wish that in my work life I had had employers with the same attitude!

Boyd said I should bring my bushwalking friends to Barrington Tops in 2025 to cut broom at one of the working bees. If we get a few people together, I will definitely join the Canberra contingent and travel to Barrington Tops again. The Scotch Broom program gets published on the NPWS site probably some time mid-year.

[Here](#) is the link to the volunteer program.

The most recent working bees were scheduled for November 2023 and February 2024.

If you are interested in a trip to Barrington Tops National Park to cut broom, you can contact me on marleneeggert@bigpond.com. I'll keep track of people keen to go and organise the group to travel if there is enough interest.

Marlene Eggert

See links below for more information about Scotch broom:

- Broom management – [PDF](#)
- An introduction to the biogeography and ecology of broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) in Australia – [PDF](#)
- Scotch Broom control at Barrington Tops – [NPWS website](#)
- Invasion and establishment of Scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) - key threatening process listing – [NSW Environment and Heritage website](#)



Volunteers remove cut broom. Photo by NPWS

Rosehip jelly – fruit from the briar

So you have cut down and dabbled a large briar rose bush and collected the fruit – now what?

Consensus seems to be to double bag them and put them into the landfill waste bin, but there is another option – eat them.

Here is a recipe for rosehip jelly provided by a thoughtful Christina, NatureMap moderator.

Wash the hips and toss them in a pot, then add just enough water to cover them. Boil until soft (they will smell wonderful). Let them cool a bit, squish them with a potato masher, and then push the mash through a sieve with some muslin on it (to strain out the irritating seeds). Return to a pot, and add about 50 per cent sugar and simmer. To quicken the process, add some pectin (Jamsetta works great). Simmer until a spoonful sets (looks like jelly and can be pushed with a finger and forms wrinkles) on a cold plate. Pour into sterilised jars. (To sterilise, fill jar with water and bring to boil in microwave oven – pour out over lid.)

Kevin McCue





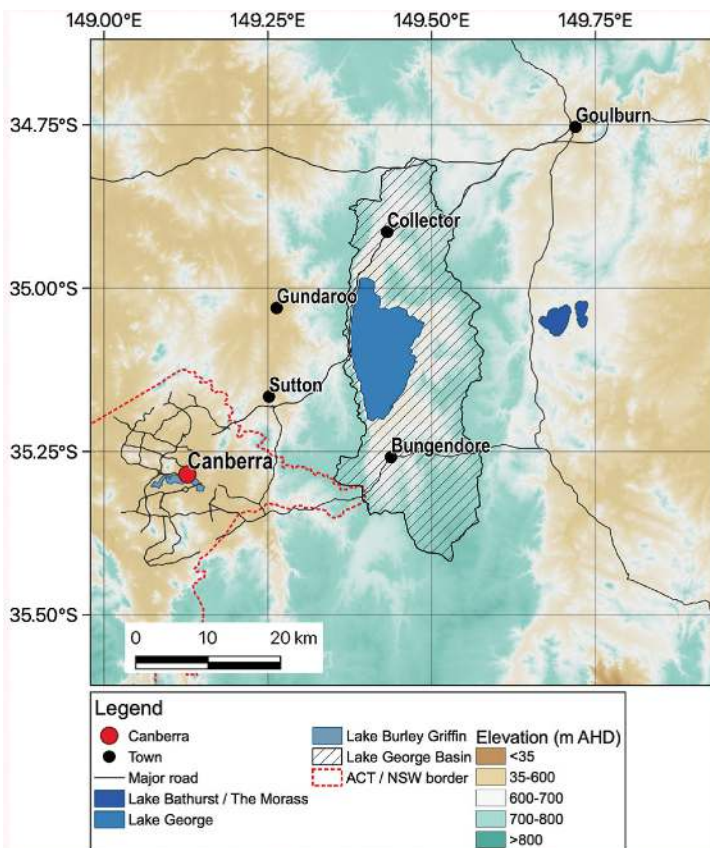
The fall and rise of Lake George

Lake George panorama, October 2022. Photo by Philip Gatenby

At NPA's monthly meeting in March Dr Brad Opdyke from the Research School of Earth Sciences, ANU, who has extensive research experience in palaeoceanography, gave a very interesting talk on Lake George (traditionally, Weereewa or Ngungara). Dr Opdyke is involved in a 10-year Lake George sedimentology and stratigraphy project.

His talk focused on recent research examining Lake George's unique physiography and hydrology, including previous rises and falls in the level of the lake and what this may mean for the lake's future in the context of the effects of a changing climate on the local weather. Lake George is a shallow, closed or endorheic lake that occupies a relatively small basin, so the level of the lake is almost exclusively dependent on evaporation and local rainfall. The lake is believed to have formed over a million years ago with the rise of the Lake George Escarpment. The lowest point on the rim of the basin is Gearys Gap, which is about a metre lower than the lowest point at the Collector end of the lake.

Dr Opdyke also explained that, as part of the sedimentology and stratigraphy project, core samples from below the surface of the basin are being examined. This analysis makes it possible to see what the Lake George basin was like in the Pliocene era (5.4 to 2.4 million years ago), before the lake formed. South-eastern Australia at that time was much wetter than now, so vegetation in the basin supported Southern Beech (*Nothofagus sp.*) and other temperate rainforest species. Core samples also show that the level of the lake in the past has been higher than any of the levels recorded since the 1820s.



The water level of the lake has been recorded since 1820. This is the longest record of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere. The lake's recent hydrographic history has been characterised by periods of flood and drought, which correspond with the prevailing climate conditions of south-eastern Australia. The historic record (of the past 200 years) indicates that when the lake fills it does so quickly then empties marginally more slowly (see

Future levels of Lake George will be influenced by climate change. Dr Opdyke noted that atmospheric CO₂ levels (currently around 420 ppm) are now similar to the levels 2–5 million years ago. Weather systems are absorbing huge amounts of energy because of the greenhouse effect. Weather extremes are increasing, resulting in heavier storms that, for periods during this weather pattern, lead to an increase in mean annual rainfall. Lake George's current mean annual rainfall is about 650 mm. This amount, if consistent, is enough to keep the lake at about its current level. With an increase to 700 mm annually the lake will rise and rise. An increase in the current 3 m depth to 7 m (as it was in the 1820s and 1870s) floods the Federal Highway. By 15 m Bungendore is threatened and at 37 m the lake spills over Gearys Gap, presumably to flow down the Yass River. This is not good news for the residents of Bungendore, nor for the plans for significant residential development in the town, but as was noted, rises are likely to be in the range of 1–2 m annually – giving a deal of time for leaving!

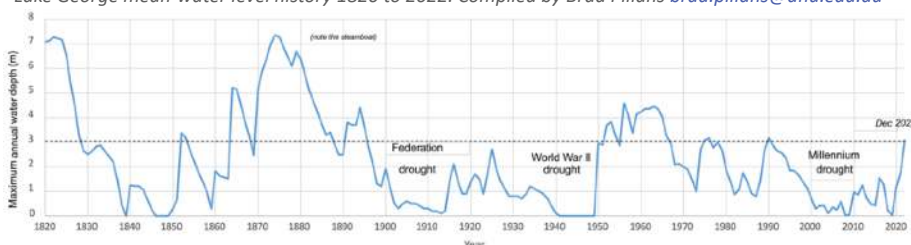
Chart: Site location map of Lake George. From Short et al. 2021

chart). These records show that the fullest the lake has been in the past 200 years was in the 1820s and 1870s, when its maximum depth was just over 7 m. The lake's maximum depth at present, after being almost dry in 2019, is just over 3 m, following 3 years of above-average rainfall.

Needless to say, Dr Opdyke's talk provoked numerous questions and lively discussion.

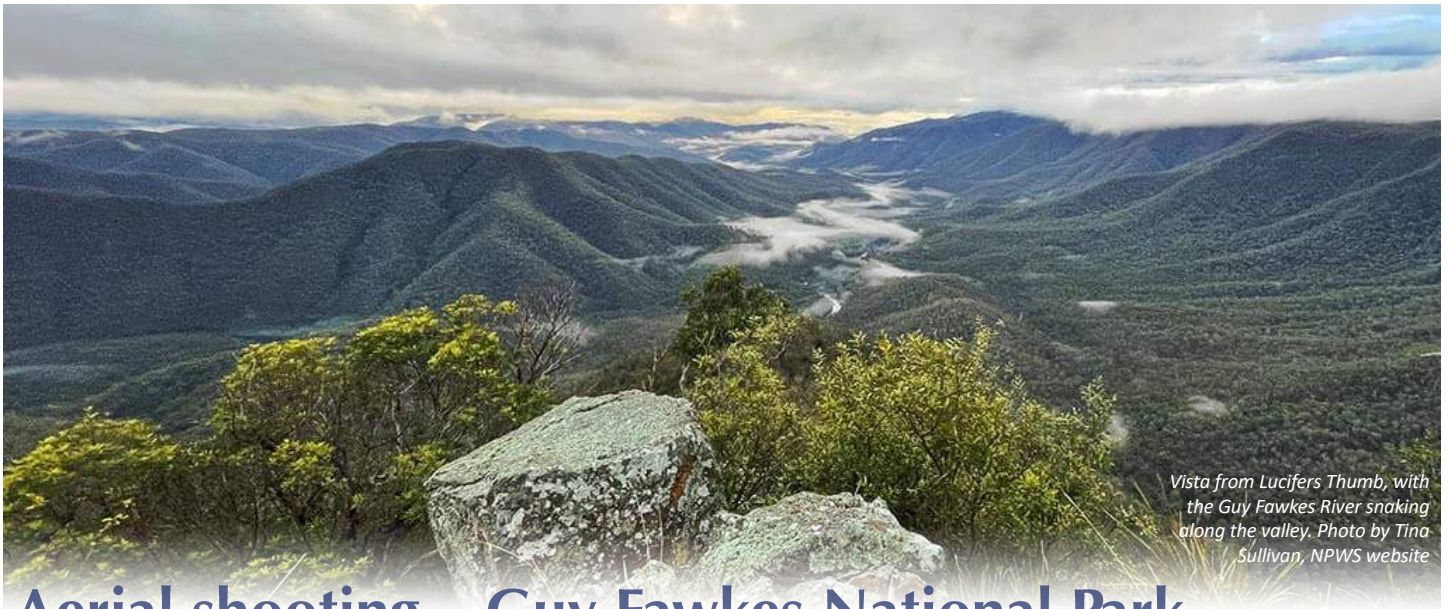
Philip Gatenby

Lake George mean-water level history 1820 to 2022. Compiled by Brad Pillans brad.pillans@anu.edu.au



References:

M.A. Short, R.S. Norman, B. Pillans, P. De Deckker, R. Usback, B.N. Opdyke, T.R. Ransley, S. Gray & D.C. McPhail (2021). Two centuries of water-level records at Lake George, NSW. *Australian Journal of Earth Sciences*, 68:4, 453–472, DOI: 10.1080/08120099.2020.1821247. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08120099.2020.1821247> Published online: 30 September 2020.



Vista from Lucifers Thumb, with the Guy Fawkes River snaking along the valley. Photo by Tina Sullivan, NPWS website

Aerial shooting – Guy Fawkes National Park

Aerial shooting of horses has been contentious in NSW for over two decades since it was carried out in Guy Fawkes River National Park (GFRNP) in 2000. That event was regarded by some as the inhumane treatment of horses. A widespread view was that many horses were not killed quickly enough, and that wounded individuals were left to die. The reality of Guy Fawkes is somewhat different.

Following the NSW Government's decision to commence aerial shooting of feral horses in Kosciuszko National Park, an inquiry into the proposed aerial shooting of brumbies in Kosciuszko National Park was established on 28 August 2023 by the Animal Welfare Committee of the NSW Legislative Council.

I drafted a submission to the inquiry for NPA ACT. I had been at the large GFRNP bushfire that immediately preceded the horse cull. While at the fire, I became aware that feral horses were being observed from helicopters working at the fire, and that options for their culling were discussed.

One of the terms of reference to the current inquiry is 'the impact of previous aerial shooting operations (such as Guy Fawkes National Park) in New South Wales'. NPA's submission to the inquiry addressed this question. An abridged extract from NPA ACT's submission follows.

The fire in GFRNP in late 2000 resulted in NPWS staff becoming aware of a large horse population in the lower parts of the park, as the removal of vegetation by the fire made the horses more visible. The horses were in poor condition due to the drought preceding the fire and were in danger of starving (some had already died) because the fire had removed nearly all available feed.

An aerial shooting program was hastily planned after the fire. This resulted in a lack of consultation with the park's neighbours, who were the only people likely to have seen the results of the shooting operations in such a remote part of the park. Moreover, there was no consultation with the wider public about the environmental impact of these horses or their poor condition.

The operation at GFRNP was the first where a large number of horses was targeted for removal in a NSW national park. When neighbours contacted the media there was immediate concern and intense objection from certain parts of the media, especially some radio 'shock jocks' who may have had additional reasons to attack a Labor government minister.

There may have been other reasons why neighbours had alerted the media: concern that their illegal cattle grazing in the park had been noticed during fire operations, the loss of wild horses that could be caught and used on farms, and that the fire in GFRNP had escaped to burn their properties.

Unfortunately, media pressure was so intense that Minister Debus banned aerial shooting of horses. This decision has impeded feral horse management in NSW national parks ever since.

Following the cull, the Minister and the RSPCA requested separate inquiries. Of the 606 horses killed, two veterinarians inspected 106 carcasses (considered a satisfactory sample) and found 'no evidence to support a claim that the horses had not been killed humanely, or of indiscriminate targeting away from the killing zone'. One horse was found that had survived two bullets in the killing zone (the heart-lung area) because the projectiles had behaved 'in a quite bizarre way',

and this had shown that several shots were required to ensure a kill.

The conclusions directly related to humane operations were that the use of aerial shooting in GFRNP was an appropriate technique under the circumstances, the shooting was carried out in a humane way, under approved protocols designed to kill the horses as quickly as possible, and the culling was planned and carried out in a most professional manner on the part of all personnel involved.

A further conclusion was that other methods of horse removal that had been previously attempted, such as roping, mustering, trapping and darting, had major animal welfare problems and were a risk to staff.

Despite this report being available soon after the event, there was little interest from the media and the general public in the scientific findings. The intensity of the media objections to aerial shooting has been confounded with the actual operation. The media 'frenzy' around the aerial shooting operation at GFRNP served to create a myth in some small parts of the community that aerial shooting inherently has major welfare problems.

Education, however, can overcome this concern. During the preparation of the 2016 draft Kosciuszko Wild Horse Management Plan, public meetings showed that, once presented with all the facts, the public accepted aerial shooting as an appropriate method of control. The requirement for a public education program about the realities of aerial shooting has been pointed out to the NSW Government for years but is now even more urgent.

NPA's full submission can be seen [here](#) on our website.

John Brickhill

NPA outings program

Bushwalk grading guide **June – September 2024**



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 equipment. 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.
Short notice walks	To volunteer to lead a short notice walk, or to have your name added to the short notice/weekly walks alert list, email outings@npaact.org.au .
Wednesday walks (WW)	Walks arranged jointly by NPA, BBC (Brindabella Bushwalking Club) and CBC (Canberra Bushwalking Club) for club members. Notification and details are emailed to those registered for WW. Only NPA-hosted WW are shown in this program. For WW email registration, contact the <i>Outings Convener</i> , outings@npaact.org.au .
Transport	NPA suggests a passenger contribution to transport costs of 45 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.

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 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.

Anyone joining an NPA outing does so as a volunteer and therefore accepts responsibility for any injury howsoever incurred. The NPA, its office bearers and appointed leaders are absolved from any liability for injury or damage suffered while engaged in any such outing.

In voluntarily participating in NPA activities, you should be aware that you 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 elsewhere, risks associated with crossing rivers, 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 of the activity.

To minimise these risks you should endeavour to ensure that the activity is within your capabilities and that you are carrying food, water, equipment, clothing and footwear appropriate to the activity. You should advise the leader of any physical or other limitation that might affect your participation or any medication that could require attention during the activity. You should make every effort to remain with the rest of the party and accept the leader's instructions. By signing the *Attendance Record and Risk Waiver Form* you agree that you understand these requirements and have considered the risks before signing and waive any claim for damages arising from the activity that you might have against the association, the leader or any other participants.

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

Check-in/Emergency contact:

Leaders can borrow the NPA's Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) from Brian Slee, 6281 0719, brianslee@iprimus.com.au. In the event that an outing party returns late, the first point of contact for concerned family is NPA's Check-in/Emergency Contact Officer, not the police or parks service. To check the status of an overdue walk, contact Mike Bremers, 0428 923 408, outings@npaact.org.au or Brian Slee.

For outings in remote areas, leaders should check-in by contacting the Check-in Officer (Mike Bremers) by sms or email (as above) at completion of the outing. For all outings, leaders should email their signed *Attendance Record and Risk Waiver Form* to Brian, contact as above.

COVID-19 arrangements:

There are currently no COVID-19 public health restrictions in the ACT but **COVID-smart behaviours** are encouraged. If you have had flu-like symptoms, such as a fever with a cough, sore throat or shortness of breath, within 2 weeks of an activity you should not attend. While on an activity, social distancing and good hygiene are encouraged, as is mask wearing when car-pooling.

NPA outings program June – September 2024 (page 2 of 4)

<p>1 June Saturday walk and work party survey</p>	<p>Orroral Valley ramble and fence survey Meet 8:30 am at Kambah Village shops. Easy walk along Orroral Valley from tracking station site to Fishlock Yards via site of Rowleys Hut. At Yards we will survey exact location and condition of the stock fence that crosses the valley at this point. Register online by 30 May.</p>	<p>Map: Corin Dam 1:25,000 Grading: 2A Drive: 86 km, \$38 per car Leader: Martin Chalk Enquiries: 0411 161 056</p>
<p>2 June Sunday walk</p> 	<p>Queanbeyan River Walk starts at suspension bridge in Queanbeyan. Follow river upstream to Ellerton Drive bridge, cross and walk downstream passing Queen Elizabeth Park (toilets), old Queanbeyan cemetery and into Oaks Estate. Return via Queanbeyan Railway Station. Optional coffee at Byrnes Mill. Distance 13.7 km, ascent 250 m. Max 10. Home for late lunch. Register online by 31 May for details.</p>	<p>Map: Queanbeyan 1:25,000 Grading: 2A Leader: Marlene Enquiries: marleneeggert@bigpond.com</p>
<p>2 June Sunday morning walk</p>	<p>Reconciliation Week: Aboriginal culture at Jerrabomberra Wetlands Gain understanding of Aboriginal culture with Aaron Chatfield at Jerrabomberra Wetlands. Aaron is a Kamilaroi man who operates Dreamtime Connections, connecting schools and communities to culture. On leisurely stroll through the reserve Aaron will talk about native plants and bushfoods. Max 25. Register online by 30 May.</p>	<p>Leader: Rosemary Hollow Enquiries: 0413 977 708 rosemary@npaact.org.au</p>
<p>8 June Saturday work party</p>	<p>Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group Meet 9 am at Namadgi Visitor Centre. Activity in Gudgenby Valley to be determined closer to the date. Car-pooling available for journey there and tools will be provided. Contact leader by Thursday 6 June to register.</p>	<p>Leader: Kevin McCue Enquiries: 6251 1291</p>
<p>10 June Monday holiday walk</p> 	<p>Lake Burley Griffin: eastern circuit Meet 9:30 am at National Carillon car park. Follow path east under Kings Avenue Bridge and proceed via Hospice, Duntroon Dairy and Molonglo River to Jerrabomberra Wetlands. Sit down lunch at Kingston Foreshore. Return via Kings Avenue Bridge. Register online by 8 June.</p>	<p>Map: UBD Canberra street directory Grading: 1A Leader: Brian Slee Enquiries: 6281 0719 or brianslee@iprimus.com.au</p>
<p>15 June Saturday morning walk</p> 	<p>Molonglo Gorge trail Walk follows Molonglo Gorge on established footpad to Blue Tiles picnic area, returning by same route. A little rock scrambling. Early start to avoid things getting busy. Limit of 10. Register online by 5 pm 14 June.</p>	<p>Map: Bungendore 1:25,000 Grading: 1A Leader: Marlene Enquiries: marleneeggert@bigpond.com</p>
<p>16 June Sunday walk</p> 	<p>Gibraltar Creek hills Meet 8:30 am at Kambah Village shops. As you drive up Corin Dam Road there is a rugged little range on your left across Gibraltar Creek. Our object is to walk along that range, taking in three prominent peaks. Distance not great but this is a physically challenging walk with climbs totalling 700 m, steep grades and rock scrambling. Good views. Suitable for fit walkers with good boots and gear. Register online by midday Saturday 15 June.</p>	<p>Map: Tidbinbilla 1:25,000 Grading: 2C/E Drive 60 km, \$28 per car Leader: Rod Griffiths Enquiries: 0410 875 731</p>
<p>22 June Saturday work party</p>	<p>Orroral Valley fence removal Meet 8:30 am at Kambah Village shops. This is a continuation of the removal of barbed wire in Orroral Valley. Exact location will be advised on the day. All tools provided, just bring gloves. Register online by 20 June.</p>	<p>Drive: 86 km, \$38 per car Leader: Michaela Popham Enquiries: 0413 537 333</p>
<p>22 June Saturday walk</p> 	<p>Mount Tennent and Bushfold Flats Climb Mount Tennent with a loop out to Bushfold Flats. 18 km, 900 m ascent, all on track. Register online by 5 pm Thursday 20 June.</p>	<p>Map: Williamsdale 1:25,000 Grading: 3A Drive: 40 km, \$18 per car Leader: Trevor Lewis Enquiries: 6288 1495 or 0435 714 430 or glyndwrlewis@gmail.com</p>
<p>23 June Sunday morning walk</p> 	<p>Anzac Parade sculptures Leisurely walk along both sides of Anzac Parade to view war memorial sculptures. An introduction to the landscape, artists, events and people they commemorate. Will conclude with conversations at nearby café. Max 20. Register online by 20 June.</p>	<p>Leader: Rosemary Hollow Enquiries: 0413 977 708 or rosemary@npaact.org.au</p>
<p>29 June Saturday walk</p> 	<p>Bullen Range traverse Meet 7:30 am at Dillon Close, Weston. South to north full traverse of Bullen Range. On fire trail for a long day, starting at travelling stock reserve on Tidbinbilla Road and ending at Cotter Reserve. Route is very undulating with approximately 800 m of ascent. Great views east over the Murrumbidgee and west to Tidbinbilla. Car shuffle required. Register online by midday Friday 28 June.</p>	<p>Maps: Tuggeranong, Tidbinbilla, Cotter Dam 1:25,000 Grading: 3A Drive 90 km, \$40 per car Leader: Rod Griffiths Enquiries: 0410 875 731</p>
<p>7 July Sunday morning guided walk</p>	<p>North Canberra wetlands (NPA/Field Naturalists) From Dickson Pond walk west to Lyneham Wetland, continue to Banksia Street and return via O'Connor Pond. Lunch at Stepping Stone Cafe. Limit of 20. Register online by Friday evening.</p>	<p>Grading: 1A Leader: Isobel Crawford Enquiries: 0429 798 887 orru@iinet.net.au</p>
<p>7 July Sunday morning walk</p>	<p>NAIDOC Week: Aboriginal culture at Mulligans Flat Introduction to Aboriginal culture with Aaron Chatfield at Mulligans Flat. Aaron is a Kamilaroi man who operates Dreamtime Connections, connecting schools and communities to culture. Aaron will talk about local native plants and bushfoods on a leisurely stroll through the reserve. Max 25. Register online by 4 July.</p>	<p>Leader: Rosemary Hollow Enquiries: 0413 977 708 rosemary@npaact.org.au</p>

NPA outings program June – September 2024 (page 3 of 4)

<p>13 July Saturday work party</p>	<p>Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group Meet 9 am at Namadgi Visitor Centre. Activity in Gudgenby Valley to be determined closer to the date. Car-pooling available for journey there and tools will be provided. Contact leader by Thursday 11 July to register.</p>	<p>Leader: Doug Brown Enquiries: 6247 0239 or kambalda@tpg.com.au</p>
<p>14 July Sunday MTB ride</p> 	<p>Southern Namadgi bike ride Meet 8:30 am at Tharwa Bridge (car park near toilets). Return ride on management trails from Yankee Hat car park along Old Boboyan Road to Naas Creek, then to Mount Clear campground (lunch), return same way, about 35 km (total). Couple of steep climbs in first few km, gentle gradients over remainder, easy in Boboyan Valley. Ride is suitable for mountain bikes, hybrids (with front suspension and suitable tyres), gravel bikes (experienced riders). E-bikes welcome (fully charged). Bikes must be in good condition, with necessary spares (e.g. tubes). Ride time including morning tea and lunch about 5.5 hrs. Limit of 8. Register online by 11 July.</p>	<p>Maps: Namadgi NP map; Rooftop Namadgi–ACT South Grading: 4A Drive: 64 km, \$29 per car Leader: Kevin Frawley Enquiries: 0427 005 411 or kfrawley@inet.net.au</p>
<p>20 July Saturday walk</p> 	<p>Queanbeyan River–Burra Creek From London Bridge car park, cross Burra Creek, walk past London Bridge Homestead, cross into Burra Creek Nature Reserve, head down into Queanbeyan River valley to confluence with Burra Creek. Return via London Bridge. 12 km, total climb 374 m. Requires climbing over two gates. Limit of 10. Register online by 5 pm 19 July.</p>	<p>Map: Captains Flat 1:25,000 Grading: 2A Drive: 46 km, \$21 per car Leader: Marlene Enquiries: marleneeggert@bigpond.com</p>
<p>21 July Sunday walk</p> 	<p>Tidbinbilla Peak, Johns Peak Walk in Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve from Mountain Creek car park, linking Camelback fire trail, 'cherry tree spur', Tidbinbilla Peak, Johns Peak, and back down fire trail to car park. Footpad and fire trail, 12.5 km with total climb of 800 m, suitable for fit walkers. Limit 8. Register online by 5 pm Friday 19 July.</p>	<p>Map: Tidbinbilla 1:25,000 Grading: 2A/B/D Drive: 50 km, \$22 per car Leader: Trevor Lewis Enquiries: 6288 1495 or 0435 714 430 or tglyndwrlewis@gmail.com</p>
<p>24 July Wednesday walks</p>	<p>Joint NPA / BBC / CBC activity <i>Details are emailed to those on the Wednesday Walks and NPA Weekly Outings email lists. Otherwise contact leader.</i></p>	<p>Medium/hard Leader: Garry B Contact: garry102@gmail.com Easy/medium Leader: Mike S Contact: 0412 179 907</p>
<p>27 July Saturday work party</p>	<p>Glendale 'home paddock' fence removal Meet 8:30 am at Kambah Village shops. 'Home paddock' is new location, east of Boboyan Road, opposite Glendale picnic area, which is enclosed by redundant stock fencing. All tools provided, just bring gloves. Register online by 25 July.</p>	<p>Drive: 86 km, \$38 per car Leader: Brian Slee Enquiries: 6281 0719 or brianslee@iprimus.com.au</p>
<p>28 July Sunday walk</p> 	<p>Mulligans Flat ramble (NPA/CBC) Enjoy geological features, European sites and expansive views from hill tops in Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve. A loop mainly on easy tracks with a few off-track sections. POI include Gungahlin Quartz Ridge, Inglewood and Dungarvon Homestead sites, ACT border markers, Gooroo, Old Joe and Sammys Hills. Around 15 km and 400 m of climbs. Coffee at Wildbark. Limit of 6. Register online by 24 July.</p>	<p>Map: Hall 1:25,000 Grading: 3A/B Leader: John Evans Enquiries: 0417 436 877 or jevansact@gmail.com</p>
<p>31 July Wednesday walk</p> 	<p>Kosciuszko National Park (snowshoeing for beginners) Destination will depend on snow depth and conditions. Date may change (forward or back) depending on weather. Participants should be in possession of snowshoes and poles before departure. Register online between 10–27 July for weather check, departure point and time, and transport arrangements (chains may be required). Limit of 8</p>	<p>Maps: Perisher Valley, Geehi Dam 1:25,000 Grading: 1B Drive: 400 km, \$180 per car + Park entry fee Leader: Mike Bremers Enquiries: mcbremers@gmail.com</p>
<p>3 August Saturday walk</p> 	<p>The Onion Walk starts from Tinderry Road and follows Round Flat Trail for a couple of km before a steep climb to a rocky outcrop. We then walk south-west through large boulders and scrub, thick in places, before a rock scramble to top of The Onion. Return to trail by different route, reaching it about a km from cars. Horizontal distance roughly 12 km, total climb about 600 m. For fit off-track walkers; gaiters and scrub gloves recommended. Parking places at start are limited. Contact leader for details. Register online by 1 August. Limit of 12.</p>	<p>Map: Tinderry 1:25,000 Grading: 2A/C/D/E Drive: 112 km, \$50 per car Leader: Philip Gatenby Enquiries: 0401 415 446 or philip.gatenby@gmail.com</p>
<p>4 August Sunday morning walk</p>	<p>Jerrabomberra (Stringy Bark) Reserve Walk primarily on tracks, with discretely placed, entertaining artefacts along the way. Cross Barracks Creek on wooden bridges, see familiar peaks from somewhere different and climb to a knoll via disused track for morning tea. Estimated 4 hour walk getting back to cars by lunch. 10 km with total climb of 300 m. Maximum of 8. Register online by 6 pm 3 August for details.</p>	<p>Map: Tuggeranong 1:25,000 Grading: 1A/B Leader: Marie Santsingh Enquiries: marie.santsingh@gmail.com</p>
<p>10 August Saturday work party</p>	<p>Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group Meet 9 am at Namadgi Visitor Centre. Activity in Gudgenby Valley to be determined closer to the date. Car-pooling available for journey there and tools will be provided. Contact leader by Thursday 8 August to register.</p>	<p>Leader: Doug Brown Enquiries: 6247 0239 or kambalda@tpg.com.au</p>

NPA outings program June – September 2024 (page 4 of 4)

<p>11 August Sunday MTB ride</p> 	<p>Googong MTB ride Suitable for fit cyclists on mountain bikes or similar. Starting from Tin Hut car park the ride will comprise two parts on management trails. First ride is to London Bridge via shearing shed and homestead (9 km return, 170 m climb). Second ride will head north along Western Foreshores Fire Trail with short walk up a hill for great views of reservoir (ride about 12 km return, 350 m climb). Expect a few short steep inclines where you might need to walk your bike. Early afternoon finish but bring lunch just in case. Limit of 8. Register online by Friday evening, 9 August.</p>	<p>Map: Googong Foreshores Map and Guide Grading: 4A Leader: Mike Bremers Enquiries: mcbremers@gmail.com</p>
<p>14 August Wednesday walk</p> 	<p>Guthrie Ridge (snowshoe) Depart 6:15 am. Drive to Guthega car park. Follow tracks to Illawong and continue south over Spencer Creek bridge. Climb Guthrie Ridge part way before returning to Guthega. Afternoon tea Jindabyne. Date may change (forward or back) depending on conditions. Chains may be required. Participants hiring snowshoes should be in possession of them before departure. Limit of 8. Register online by 5 pm Saturday 10 August.</p>	<p>Map: Perisher Valley 1:25,000 Grading: 2B Drive: 400 km, \$180 per car + Park entry fee Leader: Mike Bremers Enquiries: mcbremers@gmail.com</p>
<p>18 August Sunday walk</p>	<p>Gungahlin by light rail Light rail carried 16.5 million passengers in its first 5 years. Join us for a ride from the city and ponder the popularity of 'obsolete technology'. Coffee at Wildbark followed by easy walk over quartz ridge and lunch; contact leader for details. Register online by 16 August.</p>	<p>Map: UBD Canberra street directory, maps 29, 30 Grading: 1A/B Leader: Brian Slee Enquiries: brianslee@iprimus.com.au</p>
<p>24 August Saturday work party</p>	<p>Piccadilly Arboretum pine control Meet 8:15 am at Dillon Close, Weston. We last visited this site in 2020. This work party will continue task of removing pine wildings. All tools provided, just bring work gloves. Register online by 22 August.</p>	<p>Drive: 78 km, \$35 per car Leader: Martin Chalk Enquiries: 0411 161 056</p>
<p>25 August Sunday morning walk</p>	<p>Mount Jerrabomberra Relatively easy 10 km ramble around Mount Jerrabomberra with steepish climb on foot pad at start followed by undulating tracks. Walk encompasses attractive bush, with views of Queanbeyan and surrounding peaks. Climb of 320 m. Estimated 3 hour walk getting back to cars by lunch. Register online by 6 pm 24 August for details.</p>	<p>Map: Tuggeranong 1:25,000 Grading: 1A/B Leader: Marie Santsingh Enquiries: marie.santsingh@gmail.com</p>
<p>27–29 August Snowshoe pack walk</p> 	<p>Horse Camp Hut (snowshoe) 3-day snowshoeing trip and snow camping at Horse Camp Hut. From Guthega Power Station (Munyang), follow trail and set up camp at Horse Camp Hut; 5 km and 325 m ascent. Day 2 is round trip to the Rolling Ground and Whites River Hut, 11–14 km and 400–550 m ascent. Day 3 return to Munyang via Aqueduct and Schlink trails, 5 km. Suitable for participants new to snowshoeing or snow camping. Participants hiring snowshoes should be in possession of them before departure. Date may change (forward or back) depending on conditions. Limit of 6. Register online or expressions of interest required by 20 August.</p>	<p>Map: Geehi Dam 1:25,000 Grading: 3A/B Drive: 400 km, \$180 per car + Park entry fee Leader: Stephen Marchant Enquiries: 0401 094 606 or smarchant151@bigpond.com</p>
<p>31 August Saturday walk</p> 	<p>Historic sites of Kowen Visit a number of European heritage sites in the south of Kowen. An undulating walk almost all on fire trail that includes an ascent of Atkinson Trig, some of the old mining sites, Colliers Homestead and the expansive Glenburn heritage precinct. Mostly in open country so don't forget to be sunsmart. Bring morning tea and lunch for a walk of approximately 15 km. Meet by 8 am at Spotlight car park, Queanbeyan (SW cnr of car park near the Bungendore and Yass Roads roundabout). Register by Friday 30 August.</p>	<p>Map: Bungendore 1:25,000 Grading: 2/3A Drive: 20 km, \$9 per car Leader: Rod Griffiths Enquiries: 0410 875 731</p>
<p>1 September Sunday walk</p> 	<p>Mount Tennent (NPA/CBC) Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre. Classic walk featuring beautiful bush and great views. We will go up to summit, have morning tea, then return. 14 km, all on track, but with strenuous 800 m climb (suitable for fit people). Optional coffee or lunch at Lanyon Homestead afterwards. Limit of 8. Register online by 5 pm 30 August.</p>	<p>Map: Williamsdale 1:25,000 Grading: 2A Leader: Cynthia Burton Enquiries: cynthia.burton69@bigpond.com</p>
<p>8 September Sunday MTB ride</p> 	<p>Namadgi huts MTB ride Suitable for fit cyclists on mountain bikes or gravel bikes. Meet at Tharwa and drive to start point at locked gate on Old Boboyan Road. Ride 10 km to Waterhole Hut, then 2 km to Westermans Homestead. Return same route. Total distance around 24 km. Expect a few short steep inclines where you might need to walk your bike. Bring lunch. Ride will finish by mid-afternoon. Limit of 8. Register online by 5 pm Friday.</p>	<p>Maps: Namadgi NP map; Rooftop Namadgi–ACT South Grading: 4A Leader: Trevor Costa Enquiries: littoralzone@outlook.com</p>
<p>14 September Saturday work party</p>	<p>Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group Meet 9 am at Namadgi Visitor Centre. Cutting and dabbing woody weeds at a site in Gudgenby Valley to be determined closer to the date. Car-pooling available for journey there and tools will be provided. Contact leader by Thursday to register.</p>	<p>Leader: Doug Brown Enquiries: 6247 0239 or kambalda@tpg.com.au</p>
<p>21 September Saturday walk</p> 	<p>ACT – south This is the last in the series of walks visiting the cardinal points on the ACT's border. Start from the Boboyan Road and go through the beautiful forests and creek flats of Namadgi National Park with our goal being the blazed tree on the ACT's southernmost border. All on fire trails but does include a number of steady climbs and descents. Meet by 8 am at the Lanyon Shopping Centre car park (in the corner nearest the roundabout on Tharwa Drive), Conder. Register by Friday 20 September.</p>	<p>Map: Bredbo 1:25,000 Grading: 3A Drive: 120 km, \$54 per car Leader: Rod Griffiths Enquiries: 0410 875 731</p>

Bushwalk reports



Molonglo's ponds and playgrounds

Date: Sunday 18 February 2024

Participants: Brian Slee (leader), Mike Bremers, Sim Brown, Galia Shy, Bruce Webb, Bronwyn Welch

Weather: Very warm, high cloud clearing, occasional late breeze

Walking through central Molonglo would be a cheerless thought for most Canberrans who regard the area as a mass of bulky apartments, without merit. But outsiders are now using Stromlo Leisure Centre, Ridgeline Park and Ruth Park and appreciating what they find.

This was NPA's first walk connecting Coombs, Denman Prospect and Wright. Canberra UBD maps (56, 57, 66, 67) were merged to mark the route. It began with ponds and playgrounds but diversified wonderfully with parks, public art and poetry.

We departed PCS depot at North Weston at 8 am and after rounding the pond, steered past historic Stromlo Cottage, which has been restored for community use. It was a short walk along Finemore Street to reach Coombs Pond. Once bare and unpromising, the vegetation and waterbirds have flourished. Linger at the bridge across the pond and marvel.

Charles Weston School is just west; a bordering path leads to tree-lined Uriarra Track (Bicentennial Trail). Nearby, Coombs shops are coming to life. Walking for Pleasure waved us a greeting. We steered onto Fairhall Street, ending at Holden Creek Pond and Ruth Park (eye-catching, with pods and tubes). The path north of the pond drew us close to rugged Molonglo Valley. We continued west and passed under John Gorton Drive.

Eclipse



The first of Denman Prospect's artworks appeared in Coaldrake Avenue pond, a shiny steel globe, *Eclipse*, by Michael Snape.

Cormorants perched while a swan, coots, water hens and ducks paraded the oasis. We climbed west around Evelyn Scott School to more reedy ponds and a corten-steel sculpture, *Sphere*, by Jorg Plickat. Nearby were the four yellow "M&Ms" of *Protoplasm* by Phil Price: no wind, so the fascinating rotation was absent.

Another climb on a meandering track through trees brought us to Ben Fasham's planetary *Ahoy* and a group photo under a speckled sky. Our destination, Ridgeline Park on top of the hill, had a busy playground; we settled for the all-round views from the disc lookout. Coffee beckoned so we slipped along the ridge then down to Stromlo Pool from Goldbloom Street via a series of scenic interconnected paths and streets.

Cycling's Mecca, Stromlo Forest Park, with its strangely designed new car park, was first stop on



Protoplasm

Pond on Holden Creek and Ruth Park. Photos by Brian Slee

the return journey. It is adjacent to the next place of interest, the 2003 Bushfire Memorial, which was a revelation, initially because the pretty brook which we followed up through a native forest was truly babbling. Its source, the memorial pond at the top of the rise, was immaculate and truly cared for.

We crossed Swallowtail Road into Wright: Argus Park needs flowers if it is to live up to its butterfly name. The day's delight, however, was just down the hill at Judith Wright Park (corner Steve Irwin Avenue and David Fleay Street) with its long winding path through a well-tended park. At the entrance is an evocative reproduction of her poem *Magpies*, which begins:

*Along the road the magpies walk
with hands in pockets, left and right.
They tilt their heads, and stroll and talk.
In their well-fitted black and white.*

The last series of ponds was at Holder Wetlands. Abundant water has produced enormous growth in the vegetation and breeding among the waterbirds. A fascinating, well-signposted area that has a local care group. After skipping across Cotter Road we were back at the cars at noon, 10 km.

An outing full of surprises. Denman Prospect sculptures will eventually be worth a walk in themselves. We will be back.

Brian Slee

*Bruce, Sim, Mike,
Bronwyn, Galia
and Ahoy*



Stockyard Creek Arboretum – exploratory walk

Date: 11 March 2024

Participants: Martin Chalk (leader), Michael Clisby, Hugh Coppell, Marlene Eggert, Philip Gatenby, Richard Hurley, Nathan Li, Stephen Marchant

The objective of this combined NPA–CBC walk was to investigate the feasibility of an alternative route into the former Stockyard Creek Arboretum for work party access. Located south-east of Mount Ginini the arboretum was the most southerly and remote of the arboreta that once dotted the ranges west of Canberra. NPA has conducted five work parties in the arboretum since 2009, to locate and remove conifers, juniper and assorted deciduous species. Access has previously been along the route indicated by the blue line on the accompanying map, which largely follows an old 4WD drive track. Over the years, however, the alignment of this track has become increasingly difficult to determine due to vegetative growth and fallen timber. For the August 2009 work party, the easy one-way walk lasted only 45 minutes. This time had increased to 60 minutes by the May 2017 work party and in May 2023 the journey took 90 minutes of scrambling over logs atop each other and negotiating thick scrub in places. An easier option was needed.

After some discussion between Michael Bremers, Michaela Popham and the author, the option depicted in yellow on the map was chosen, as 4WD access to the junction of the Mount Franklin Road and the Stockyard Spur walking track was offered by PCS and a relatively clear path down Stockyard Spur to the creek below the arboretum was worth a look. And so we set off from our meeting place in Weston shortly after 8 am.

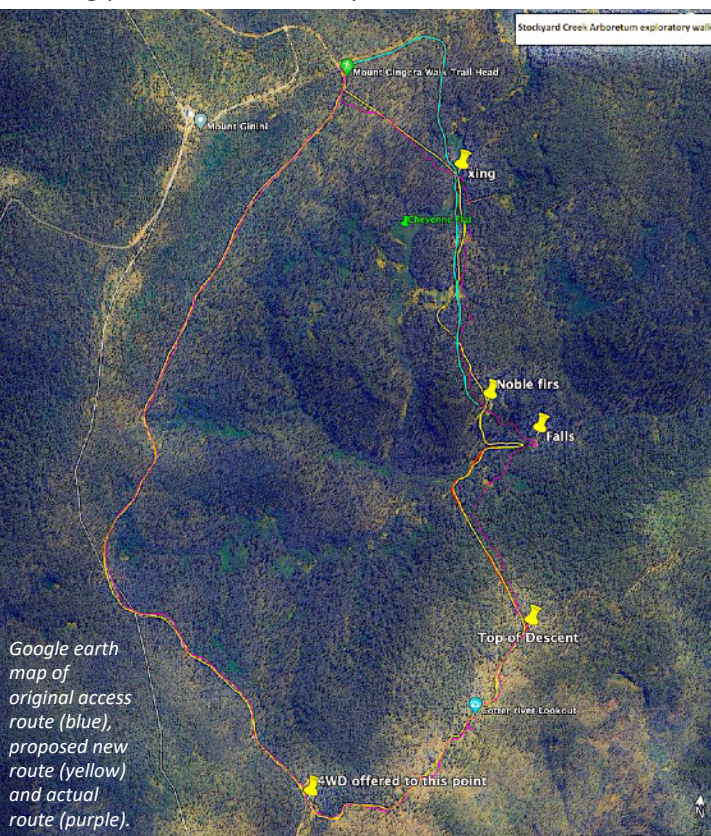


Stockyard Creek Falls. Photo by Philip Gatenby

For the exploratory walk we walked to the Mount Franklin Road – Stockyard Spur track junction, a journey of only 45 minutes. After another 35 minutes on the walking track (including a short diversion to a lookout to the south-east) we arrived at the stepping-off point for the descent. About a third of the way down the slope it became obvious that it was not going to cooperate. As can be seen from the GPS track taken from Philip’s phone (purple line on the map), there was much zig-zagging to avoid fallen trees and scrub. The descent to the falls on Stockyard Creek took some 60 minutes. Had this diversion not been taken, the estimated time to reach the creek below the arboretum would still have been some 45 minutes.

After a short stop at the falls, we moved directly to the west side of the arboretum to the location of two Noble Firs (*Abies procera*) which, for heritage reasons, were spared in the 2002 felling of the arboretum.¹ En route to the firs a number of wilding conifers were cut down and an even larger number of small *procera* were located and hand-pulled from beneath the two mature trees.

After a break at the arboretum, we set off at 2 pm, leaving the firs to their own devices, and made our way to Cheyenne Flat. The first half of this leg was again through fallen timber. Once we reached Cheyenne Flat, the old track was occasionally discernible and an easy few minutes followed until we reached the old 4WD crossing of the creek which feeds the flat. With the end now in sight and with water bottles recharged we commenced the second piece of exploration for the walk – the direct ascent of the lower part of the eastern flank of Mount Ginini to the Mount Franklin Road.



Google earth map of original access route (blue), proposed new route (yellow) and actual route (purple).

At only a little over 600 m distance and a 120 m climb, this should have been an easy part of the day. Alas, the fallen trees mocked us once again. The group became spread out as the younger and fitter members moved ahead while we few mortals at the rear decided that the ‘worth a look’ judgment made over a map was worthless. After 55 minutes, the last three of us made the road, followed by a strong finish to the car park (about 2 minutes away).

After catching breath, the group started the rock and pothole-ridden trip back to Bulls Head, thence to Weston, arriving at 5:50 pm.

Was the alternative route feasible? Certainly not. Indeed, given the 2002 concerns about access to the arboretum and the lived experience of the NPA work teams over the years, our continued attendance at this location is questionable unless the ‘blue line’ access route can be kept open.

Martin Chalk

¹ The arboretum was felled in 2002 because of its perceived risk as a source of wilding conifer spread and maintenance of access. Shirley, J.W. 2012. A history of Australian Capital Territory Arboreta 1928–2003. Chapter 13 in Brett J. Stubbs et al., ed. *Australia’s Ever-changing Forests VI: Proceedings of the Eighth National Conference on Australian Forest History.*



*Hanging Rock from near the Big Hole.
Photos by Jan and Phillip Gatenby, unless indicated otherwise*

Hanging Rock

Date: Saturday, 16 March 2024

Participants: Philip Gatenby (Leader), Monika Binder, Melinda Brouwer, Jan Gatenby, Kirk Hone, Anna Hutchens, Stephen Marchant, Helen Osborn

Weather: Cloudy, a few sunny breaks, cool wind

Stats: Climb 550 m, distance 15 km, time 7.5 hrs

Hanging Rock is in Deua National Park at the southern end of the Bendoura Range, not far to the north of two well-known walking destinations – the Big Hole and Marble Arch. Bendoura is one of the many ranges that make up the coastal escarpment of southern NSW. The rock presents an impressive cliff on its eastern side. This walk was attempted late in December last year but was abandoned because of the flow and depth of the Shoalhaven River where the track to the Big Hole and Marble Arch crosses. On this most recent attempt the Shoalhaven at the crossing, which is near Berlang Campground where the walk starts, was about 30 cm deep and a pleasant wade.

About a hundred metres north of the summit was a break in the cliff which the local animals seem to make use of – so did we. After a short sharp descent, we sidled along the base of the cliff through myriad spectacular rock formations and lush vegetation. Many of the rocks supporting the cliff were covered in orchids, a must for another visit at flowering time. A wombat scampered past. A number of the party attracted



Top of Hanging Rock

leeches. Bull ants stung others. Away from the base of the cliff and lower down the steep slope was an area of shattered trees, many uprooted. It looked like in recent time, a violent storm had ripped a swathe about 300 m wide through the forest. After getting up and over countless fallen trees we eventually got to the valley floor, crossed a creek, and reached, with some relief, an old trail. To the north it seems to head towards Cleatmore Caves but doesn't go all the way according to the map.



Crossing the Shoalhaven River

Not long after crossing the river we left the track, skirted private property to our north and west, through a bit of a swamp, trying to find higher ground in an area that was mostly flat. A gentle spur running north-east took us to the flat wooded top of Hanging Rock, through patches of *Allocasuarina nana* and open unburnt forest. We had lunch at the top with views to the east.



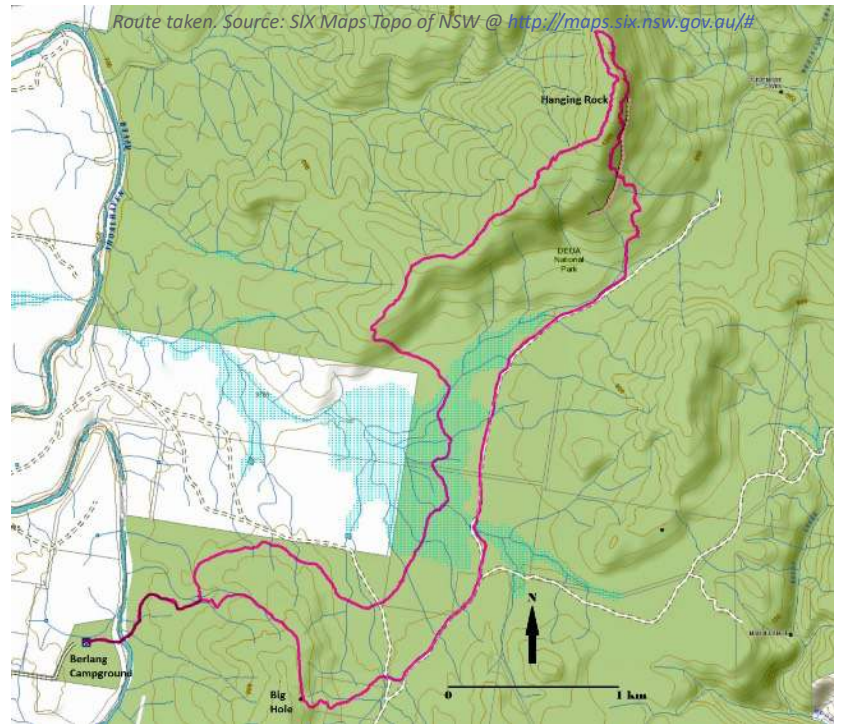
Forest below Hanging Rock



Negotiating the base of the cliff
Photo by Kirk Hone



Shoalhaven reflections



Route taken. Source: SIX Maps Topo of NSW @ <http://maps.six.nsw.gov.au/#>

Three kilometres or so to the south we joined the walking track, well to the east of the morning's departure point, and returned to Berlang via the Big Hole, an impressive feature, formed apparently by the collapse of surface rocks into an underground limestone cavern, but in need of new signage. All that remained of the walk was another pleasant wade of the Shoalhaven.

The accompanying map shows our track. Note that it shows us sidling at the top rather than at the bottom of the cliff suggesting either the gps was struggling in the enclosed terrain or the map marks the cliff slightly to the west of its actual location.

Philip Gatenby



Rock formations at base of cliff



Ros, Tumut River arm.
Photos by Mike Bremers

Talbingo kayak trip

Date: 14–15 February 2024

Participants: Mike Bremers (leader), Malcolm Wares, Ros Webb

Weather: Sunny and windy on the first day, partly cloudy and calm on the second day

Stats: 26 km over 2 days

This is a trip that I have led many times over the years¹ and it always is a joy to return. After a couple late withdrawals there were only three of us for this mid-week combined NPA and CBC outing. After morning tea at Adaminaby Bakery and driving through forest devastated by the 2020 fires, we launched

Just after midday we arrived at our campsite, at a spot maintained by the Tumbarumba Boat and Ski Club. It was clear that there had been some recent work done, as the timber on the picnic tables had been replaced. Fortunately, the water skiers who often can be found here were nowhere to be seen.

After setting up our tents and having lunch, we paddled further down the reservoir to Lobs Hole, which is where the Tumut and Yarrangobilly arms of the reservoir join. With the Snowy 2.0 scheme being constructed several kilometres up the Yarrangobilly arm, the whole arm is now a prohibited area for boating with signs threatening penalties, so we were not expecting to see any of the construction sites. To my dismay, however, there were road works with some large excavations on the north side of Lobs Hole at the base of the spectacular peak Pinbeyan, which towers nearly 700 m above the reservoir. I had heard previously that rock excavated from the tunnels was to be loaded on barges and dumped into Talbingo Reservoir at several locations including Lobs Hole, so we were puzzled at the purpose of these road works.

A few days later, I found a Snowy 2.0 report² that explained concerns had been raised about dumping material into the crystal-clear water of the reservoir, in particular the sediment from the finer material produced by the tunnel-boring machines (TBM). It was decided that it would be much better to go to a hybrid model where coarser drill and blast rock was placed underwater to extend the shoreline up to 200 m into the reservoir and the finer TBM material placed on land (and reclaimed land) above water level. For the Lobs Hole site that we observed (called Ravine Bay in the documents), this would involve clearing 18 hectares to form an emplacement area extending close to 1 km up the lower slopes of Pinbeyan.

It was a pleasant evening, watching the late afternoon light fade on the surrounding hills. Usually at Talbingo, early mornings are calm with mirror-like reflections. As is my usual habit, I went for an early morning paddle and found myself back at Lobs Hole to take in the view of Pinbeyan with the morning sun lighting up its ridgelines. Six large excavators were already at work, growling away on its lower slopes.

Lobs Hole also has a connection with the Kiandra goldfields of the 1860s: it was a shortcut for miners travelling between Victoria and Kiandra via Brandy Mary Spur, which extends to the south-west from Lobs Hole. It would make for an interesting hike on a future visit and I was able to confirm that there is a good landing place at the bottom end of the spur.

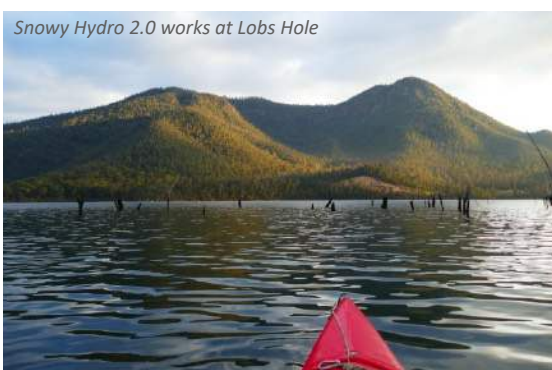
Once back at the campsite, we packed and had breakfast while watching the sun rise over Sheep Station Ridge to our east. All that remained was a leisurely 4 km paddle back to our cars to finish off another very enjoyable visit to this area.

Mike Bremers



Morning view from campsite and distant Pinbeyan

from O'Hares Rest Area in the late morning. The overnight rain had cleared and there was a moderate headwind as we paddled down the Tumut River arm of Talbingo Reservoir.



Snowy Hydro 2.0 works at Lobs Hole

¹ NPA Bulletin June 2006, June 2007, March 2011

² Snowy 2.0 Main Works (SSI 9687), Assessment Report, May 2020



Mountain bike ride, Mulligans Flat

Date: 3 March 2024

Weather: Sunny

We had nine starters for the NPA ACT mountain bike ride at Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve and picked up one latecomer along the way, making it 10. There was a range of mountain biking experience and corresponding bikes, but all were able to tackle the route with some encouragement and lots of stops to catch their breath and to take in the cultural and natural heritage on offer. This was mostly courtesy of an ACT Park Ranger joining the group for most of the ride (what a job). Ranger Aaron was able to provide extra insights into the reserve's history and natural values with in-depth interpretation along the way. He also had keys to the many gates, which was a bonus. Others in the group had some historical experience in the establishment of the reserve as well, and

A ranger with gate keys is handy to have along

Ruins of the Inglewood Homestead



*We could smell the coffee at Wildbark.
Photos by Trevor Costa*

what it nearly became instead – think airport and new housing estate. A welcome breather at the Wildbark café for some refreshments, then a spin along the heritage-listed Old Coach Road, saw us back at the car park after a great day's riding. This was an enjoyable morning spent in a wonderful part of the ACT and in knowledgeable and appreciative company, with the bonus of mountain biking in glorious autumn weather. This type of outing is a first for NPA (at least in recent time) and more mountain bike rides are planned with varying degrees of difficulty to try and capture as many members as possible to sign up for an outing, so keep an eye out for upcoming rides on the program.

*Trevor Costa,
Leader*

Work parties

NPA work party summary – February to April 2024

Month	Activity	Agency	Participants
February	Honeysuckle area: 94 <i>Mahonia</i> , 4 briar, 1 <i>Robina</i> and 1 blackberry treated in the cleared area downhill from the old antenna site for some 50 m.	PCS	8
March	Bullen Range pine control: 39 large pines felled on the ridges surrounding the Cotter Caves mining site.	PCS	8
April	Stoney Creek Nature Reserve fences: remaining 300 m of fencing was removed, save for the last 20 m that was mostly collapsed and enclosed by vegetation.	PCS	9

Martin Chalk

Honeysuckle exotics control

Date: 24 February 2024

Leader: Brian Slee

In 2015, 2016 and 2017, NPA work parties were conducted in bushland surrounding the open area at the former Honeysuckle communications antenna. Garden escapees from the space-era settlement were the main

targets and *Mahonia* (Oregon Grape) was found to be the source of greatest infestation. It continues to be, but with diminishing plant sizes and concentrations.

Eight volunteers were available in fine, warm weather. We worked into the early afternoon, uprooting or cutting and dabbing 94 *Mahonia*, all of which were small to very small and mostly located not far into the bush south of the antenna. Four briars, 1 *Robinia* and 1 blackberry were also treated.

A considerable number of thistles, verbascum and Paterson's curse were dealt with in the open area. A clumpy red-hot poker (*Kniphofia*) had its seed heads bagged and removed. Other escapees, such as *Abelia* and barberry, found on earlier work parties were absent.

Most of the *Mahonia* was located during the first work session so, in obedience to the law of diminishing returns, we had lunch after the second session (concluding at 12:30 pm) and departed for Coffee Guru at Lanyon Marketplace.

Thanks to Jennifer Arthur, Mike Bremers, Sonja Lenz, Kevin McCue, Margaret Mahoney, Quentin Moran and Craig Watson. The area needs to be monitored, but another work party may not be required for several years.

Brian Slee



Far left : *Mahonia*.

Left: Slime Mould, Myxomycete-plasmodium (class).

Photos by Kevin McCue

Stoney Creek Nature Reserve (ACT) – another fence gone

Date: 27 April 2024

Participants: Martin Chalk (leader), Jennifer Arthur, John Brickhill, Isobel Crawford, Marlene Eggert, Sonja Lenz, Kevin McCue, Michaela Popham, Brian Slee

Weather: Sunny and calm, with a cool start and warm later.

This was the second and final visit to this site for fence removal. A work party in August 2020 saw the dispatch of approximately half of the fence: this work party removed the final 300 m. This simple statement, however, does little to convey the nature of the fence.

After removal of a few remnant star pickets from the 2020 work, the team moved down the nose of a steepening ridge to tackle a partially collapsed fence. Its construction was typical of a stock fence: a strand of barbed wire atop mesh, dug into the ground, supported by two strands of plain wire, all of which was suspended on star pickets. But this fence had unique 'qualities'.

The slope of the ridge was initially about 10 degrees steepening to 25 degrees for the last 90 m. The loose ground, which made removing the buried mesh easier than expected, also created very unsure footing. Indeed, the

hand-holds created by the herbaceous growth that had overtaken the fence in parts often provided the only way to remain upright.

The last 20 m of fence entered more herbaceous growth surrounding an unnamed tributary of the Murrumbidgee. As this section posed little threat to wildlife and was hidden from view, we decided to leave it in place and spare the surrounding growth from some severe pruning that would have been needed to gain access.

By midday we had finished the task of removal and had carried the fence material to two locations on the ridge above, accessible by quadbike or similar.

The work party description anticipated a half-day task and offered the option of an afternoon walk back down the Murrumbidgee. However, there was a unanimous view that we didn't need to traverse the slope any more that day. So, with one more fence gone, we declared a dividend.

Footnote: I reported our full removal of the fence to the ranger in charge of this area, only to have my sense of completion dashed when he advised that there is more!

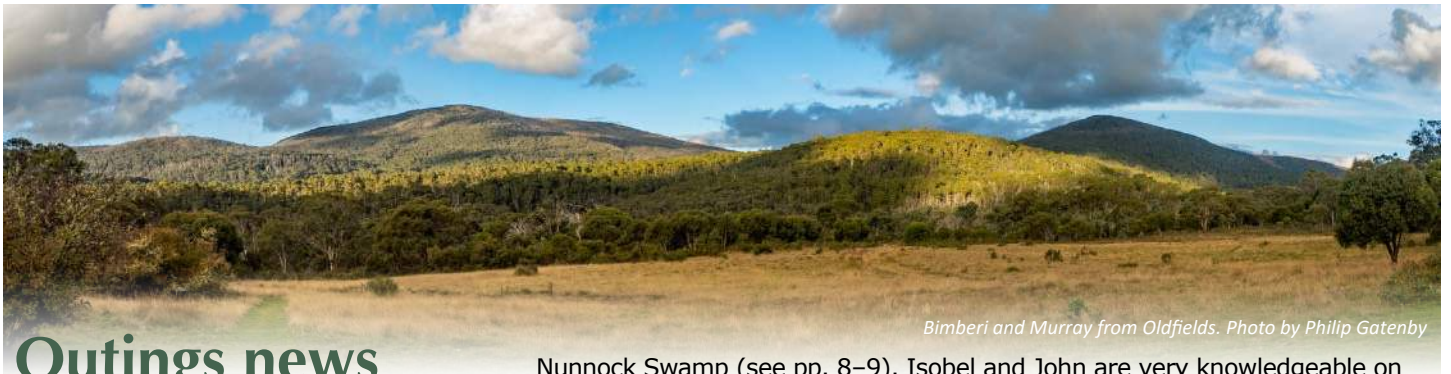
Martin Chalk

All done by lunch. Photo by Kevin McCue



The 25 degree slope. Photo by Martin Chalk





Bimberi and Murray from Oldfields. Photo by Philip Gatenby

Outings news

We have another eventful program coming up for June to September, including walks, bike rides and snowshoeing.

The program has evolved over recent years to include a greater variety of walks of differing degrees of difficulty. They include guided walks, such as Rosemary Hollow's regular cultural heritage walks and Brian Slee's walks around the suburbs and nearby nature reserves. These walks attract new members. Marlene Eggert has developed a popular following with her walks, which range from easy to hard, and we welcome Marie Santsingh who will be leading her first two walks in the coming months. At the other end of the scale, we still have the perennial favourite hard walks on the next program, such as Mt Tennent, the Tidbinbilla Range and the Tinderry Range, thanks to experienced leaders such as Rod Griffiths, Trevor Lewis, Philip Gatenby, Cynthia Burton and John Evans. In February, I had the pleasure of attending a car camp led by Isobel Crawford and John Brickhill at beautiful

Nunnock Swamp (see pp. 8–9). Isobel and John are very knowledgeable on all things flora and fauna so keep an eye out for their outings.

Work parties continue twice a month, with a dedicated bunch attending each time. They contribute many hours to maintaining our parks and reserves, for which Parks ACT is most appreciative. They also attract new members.

A recent addition to the program is mountain-bike riding. These rides are restricted to approved management trails and provide an opportunity for people who prefer riding to get out into the bush. Thanks go to new leader Trevor Costa who led the first ride in early March to Mulligans Flat (see p. 24). During the coming months another three rides are scheduled, including one by another new leader, Kevin Frawley, a life member and past president of NPA ACT. So, if you are into riding at all and have a mountain bike, come along and enjoy and support these events.

Snowshoeing day trips to the mountains have been on the NPA program since 2001, largely thanks to the efforts of Brian Slee. While generally a long day (12 hours return from Canberra), day trips allow flexibility in going only when the weather and snow conditions are good. This year the trips are scheduled for mid-week in order to avoid the weekend traffic and crowds. There are three trips ranging from a beginner level to a 3-day snow camping trip led by Stephen Marchant who has extensive experience in walking in the High Country. Speaking of Stephen, he led his first NPA pack walk in March and helps maintain the events calendar on the website and the weekly email.

If you would like to receive a weekly outings email informing of upcoming events, please contact me at outings@npaact.org.au

Mike Bremers, NPA Outings Convener

Book review

Kowen: Trails and Tales by Peter Komidar, self-published ebook, available on Amazon

For many NPA ACT members, the name Kowen would conjure up images of pine forests on the way to Bungendore or of the magical walk that follows the Molonglo Gorge. In addition, for many years the NPA ACT has also been heavily involved in the preservation of the Glenburn historic precinct nestled in the heart of Kowen.

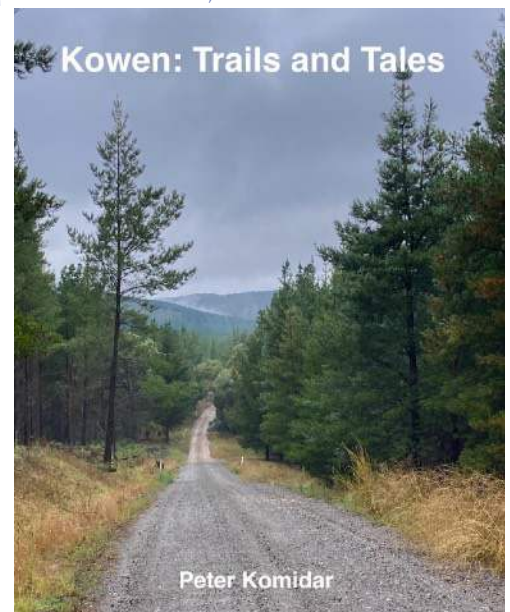
These and many more points of interest are covered in this new book. The author is a Wamboin resident and has spent years exploring the breadth of the 7,700 hectares that make up the District of Kowen. His book shares this knowledge through 13 described routes criss-crossing Kowen.

The description of each route includes a map, a short commentary on what to expect and a detailed turn-by-turn narrative on how to follow the route. Following the description, the key points of interest along the route are described in detail.

The routes primarily follow the major sign-posted trails in Kowen but do also include opportunities to follow the more intimate single tracks that abound there. Overall, the route descriptions are well done and easy to follow, noting that the primary starting point for all 13 routes is from one of two entrances accessed from Wamboin. The author does recognise, however, that many of the routes can be attempted from alternative access points to Kowen and the more obvious of these are also described. The distance covered by each route is included for all of the described accesses.

A final 14th route describes the opportunities for geocaching in Kowen.

The author's keen interest in one of the ACT's lesser-known areas is displayed by the many interesting anecdotes and descriptions that he provides for readers. It is a worthwhile acquisition for anyone looking to visit Kowen.



The book is available only as an ebook (Amazon \$4) but the author is willing to provide his maps in a GPX format that is readable on most sports watches. His email address is pkomidar@gmail.com.

Reviewed by Rod Griffiths



The Walker's Haute Route

A walk along an iconic track in the European Alps

The Walker's Haute (High) Route (WHR) goes east from Chamonix Mont Blanc in France to Zermatt in Switzerland, at the foot of the Matterhorn. All but the first day and a half of this walk, which links two of Europe's most famous mountains, is in Switzerland. An essential companion to anyone doing the walk, especially if unguided, is the very useful Cicerone Guide, *Trekking Chamonix to Zermatt*. It describes the route in 14 main stages (and a number of variants) – a total distance of 220 km in 14 days. The time-poor or speedy may choose to complete the walk in fewer days. Most stages involve steep climbs and a high mountain pass, with the highest (Col de Prafleuri, 2,987 m) on Stage 6. With an overall ascent of 14,000 m, a prerequisite for the walk is a penchant for climbing, a feature of many walks in the European alpine areas. Weather permitting, Mont Blanc dominates the scenery at the beginning of the walk, while the Matterhorn dominates the walk's final day.

It's possible to complete the WHR without taking a tent or a sleeping bag as there are numerous accommodation options ranging from high mountain refuges to hotels in villages. There is also no need to carry food, so pack weights can be limited to 7 or 8 kg. Last August, Jan and I 'took the plunge' and decided to resume international travel (post-COVID-19), heading to Chamonix via London and Geneva.

Before the walk

Before leaving Australia we booked all our accommodation on and either side of the walk. It's possible to get a travel company to make these bookings (or even more, such as moving your luggage between villages) but we found it wasn't difficult (and cheaper) to make the bookings ourselves. There are several stages that end in places with a single accommodation option (such as a mountain refuge) so it's important to lock in bookings at these first. Because of limited availability at one of these locations we ended up having to allow 15 days rather than the 14 suggested in the guidebook, with an enforced rest day at Sankt Niklaus.

Accommodation on the walk isn't cheap (this is Switzerland after all). Dinner, bed and breakfast at a mountain refuge was about \$A150 each, and bed and breakfast at a hotel not much less. But it was a small price to pay for the magnificent scenery we encountered.

Also before our departure, we renewed our membership of the Austrian Alpine Club, something we do whenever organising a mountain trek in Europe. Most European countries with an alpine tradition have alpine clubs and most have reciprocal rights. The benefits of membership include discounts on accommodation (and occasionally food) at some mountain refuges, while the costs of a mountain rescue, including by helicopter, are also covered.

On our way to the start of the walk we mailed the gear we didn't need on the walk to the hotel we'd booked in Zermatt at the end of the walk. We did this from Geneva rather than from Chamonix thereby avoiding international post and the possible complications this may have involved.



The high point, Col de Prafleuri



Swiss village of Trient, night 2

On the walk

The guidebook says the WHR starts at Chamonix's railway station (don't expect a sign) which we found and were then off, after activating our tracking device. At this time this part of Europe was in the grip of a heat wave (Geneva's maximum temperature the previous day was 38 degrees). The first 4 days of the walk were very hot. Rain was then followed by a big snow fall (in August no less). Fine weather returned for the last few days of the walk. It was much cooler and the views were excellent because the atmosphere was much clearer. Fifteen days and over 200 km of walking later we walked into Zermatt. A few of the highlights along the way are described below.

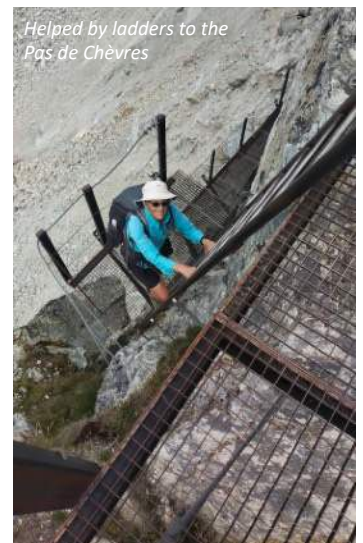
The initial hot weather and altitude made steep climbs seem even steeper. One of our hardest days was Stage 3 from Trient to Champex-Lac with a 1,200 m climb to the Fenêtre d'Arpette (2,665 m). The first 3 days of the WHR coincide with the very popular Tour du Mont Blanc (TMB), a 14-day circuit of the Mont Blanc massif, usually done anticlockwise. Moreover, runners were limbering up for the annual race around the circuit, which is held in the last weekend of August. The combined effect was that most tracks were very crowded and at the Fenêtre d'Arpette there were scores of people. The TMB and WHR diverge at the village of Champex-Lac so by day 4 there were far fewer people on the trail.

Stage 5 also presented a challenge. The preferred mountain refuge for the night of day 5, Cabane de Mont-Fort, was closed for the season for renovations and the alternative, Cabane de Louvie, involved a significant detour and loss of altitude. From the village of La Châble, where we'd spent a sweltering night at the end of stage 4, we caught a cable car (along with most other WHR hikers) to Les Ruinettes, a ski resort over a thousand metres above the village. Starting walking from here meant we were easily able to reach the night's refuge on the

beautiful Lac Louvie below the majestic 4,314 m Grand Combin. A Griffin Vulture soared above the peak, riding thermals from the hot valley below.

Stage 7, from Cabane de Prafleuri (2,667 m, just below Col de Prafleuri) to the village of Arolla, was one of the trek's most interesting days. It included two passes, steel ladders and a walk beside an artificial lake with grassy banks where marmots frolicked. Col de Roux (2,804 m), the first pass, was a straightforward climb up patches of scree followed by a long descent to Lac Dix where the promise of marmots was realised. Pas de Chèvres (2,855m), the second pass, presents a sheer rock face which could be scaled via a series of ladders and ramps followed by another long downhill descent to Arolla. Later we heard that hikers had been advised not to go over the Pas de Chèvres as there had been damage to the path but all we could see was that rocks near the bottom of the first ladder had fallen away and it was quite a large step up onto the ladder.

The weather turned on day 8 and quite a bit of rain fell. The forecast in coming days was for 80 mm more rain so we decided to change our bookings on the night of day 9 from a high mountain refuge (Cabane de Moiry), where there was a strong chance of being stranded because of the weather, to an extra night in the village of Zinal, the planned destination after Cabane de Moiry. So as the rain fell we spent a day using public transport to get from Les Haudères to Zinal, thereby skipping stage 9. The following day the rain turned to





View from hotel, Zinal

snow, which was a spectacular sight from the comfort of our hotel room in Zinal.

The snow presented a considerable challenge to the high passes we had to cross in the next 2 stages. Many hikers avoided these stages by using public transport but we were keen to continue if we could. With another Australian couple



'Track' to Forcletta

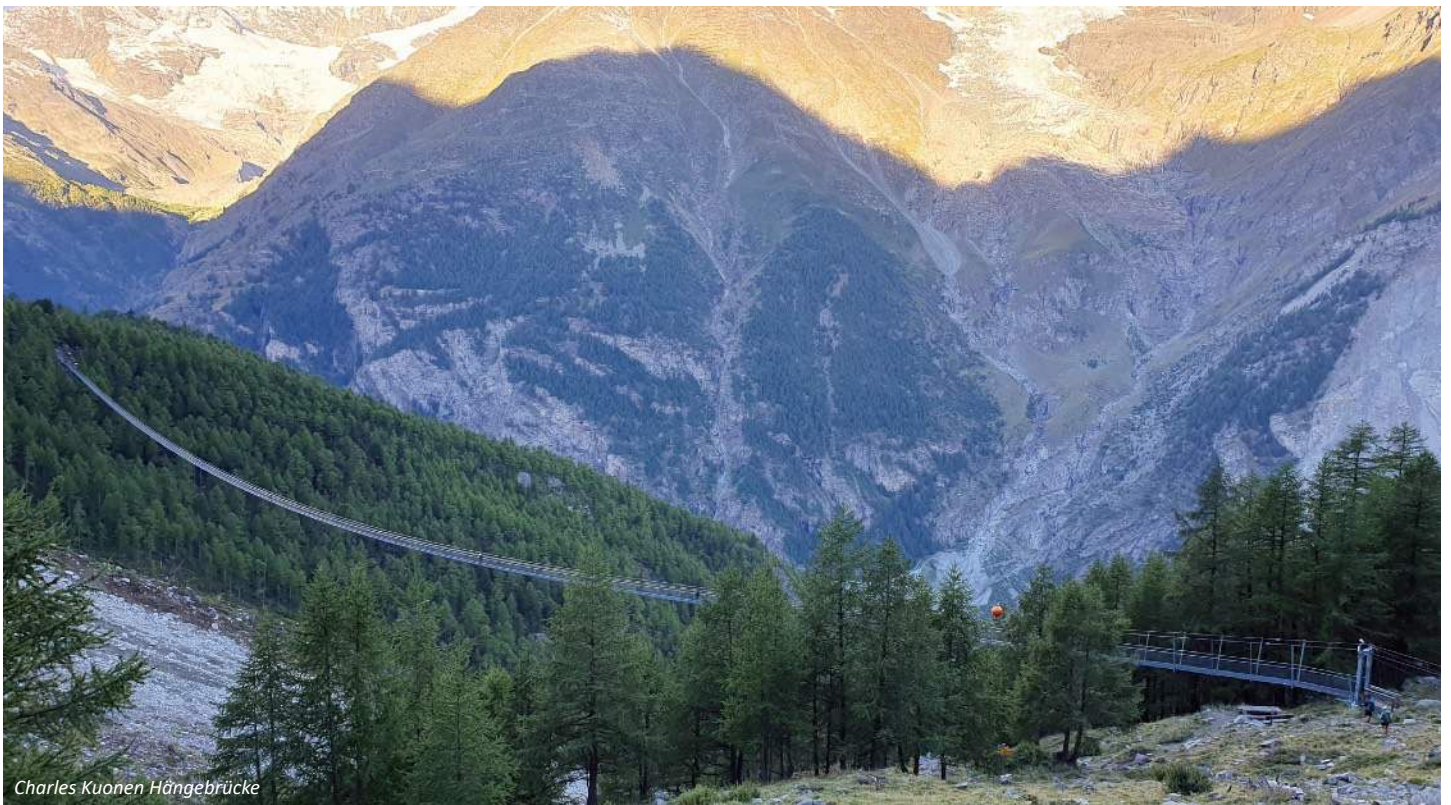
we battled our way through thick snow with little in the way of visible track markers. Boulders hidden beneath the snow made walking treacherous. The first pass after leaving Zinal (Forcletta, 2,874 m) took us from the French-speaking area of Switzerland to the German-speaking area. Pathways



Europahütte

were now referred to as 'wegs' rather than 'sentiers' and 'guten morgen' (often shortened to 'morgen') replaced 'bonjour' as the typical greeting from other hikers met en route. The next day ended after a very long descent from the second of the snow-covered passes (Augstbordpass, 2,892 m) at the village of Sankt Niklaus in the Mattertal. We passed several Ibex on the way down.

Two stages to go and now on the home stretch. The Mattertal is a deep valley bordered on each side by snow-capped peaks with Zermatt and the Matterhorn at its southern end. Beyond Sankt Niklaus, a nice village with a Bosch factory and an onion domed church, the WHR coincides with another popular but much shorter walk known as the Europaweg which goes from Grachen to Zermatt via Europahütte, our penultimate day's destination. The hut must be in one of the most spectacular locations along the entire WHR. Perched 800 m above the floor of the Mattertal with a commanding view of nearby peaks, dominated by a glistening Weisshorn (4,506 m) directly across the valley. From the hut there is also a view of the incredible Charles Kuonen Hängebrücke. When opened in 2017, it was, at almost 500 m long, the world's longest pedestrian suspension bridge. From the hut's deck we watched large boulders rolling down the scree slope below the bridge, cracking and rumbling in their descent but fortunately nowhere near the bridge. An earlier lower bridge was not so lucky.



Charles Kuonen Hängebrücke



First glimpse of the Matterhorn, day 15

Next day after a splendid 'Weisshorn sunrise' we crossed the bridge. It was more stable than it looked. An hour or so from the hut we had our first glimpse of the Matterhorn, with its very top peeking over the side of a closer mountain. The track was damaged in places with washed away bridges, testament to the wild weather of a few days ago. As we approached Zermatt more and more of the Matterhorn was revealed and it soon dominated the view, a fitting end to a magnificent walk.

Our complete track between Chamonix and Zermatt is shown (the solid line) on the accompanying map. It includes the short section taken by cable car between La Châble and Les Ruinettes to begin our fifth day. The day of public transport (day 9, from Les Haudères to Zinal) is the somewhat circuitous route via Sion and Siere in the Rhône Valley (the broken line on the map), involving a combination of bus and train.

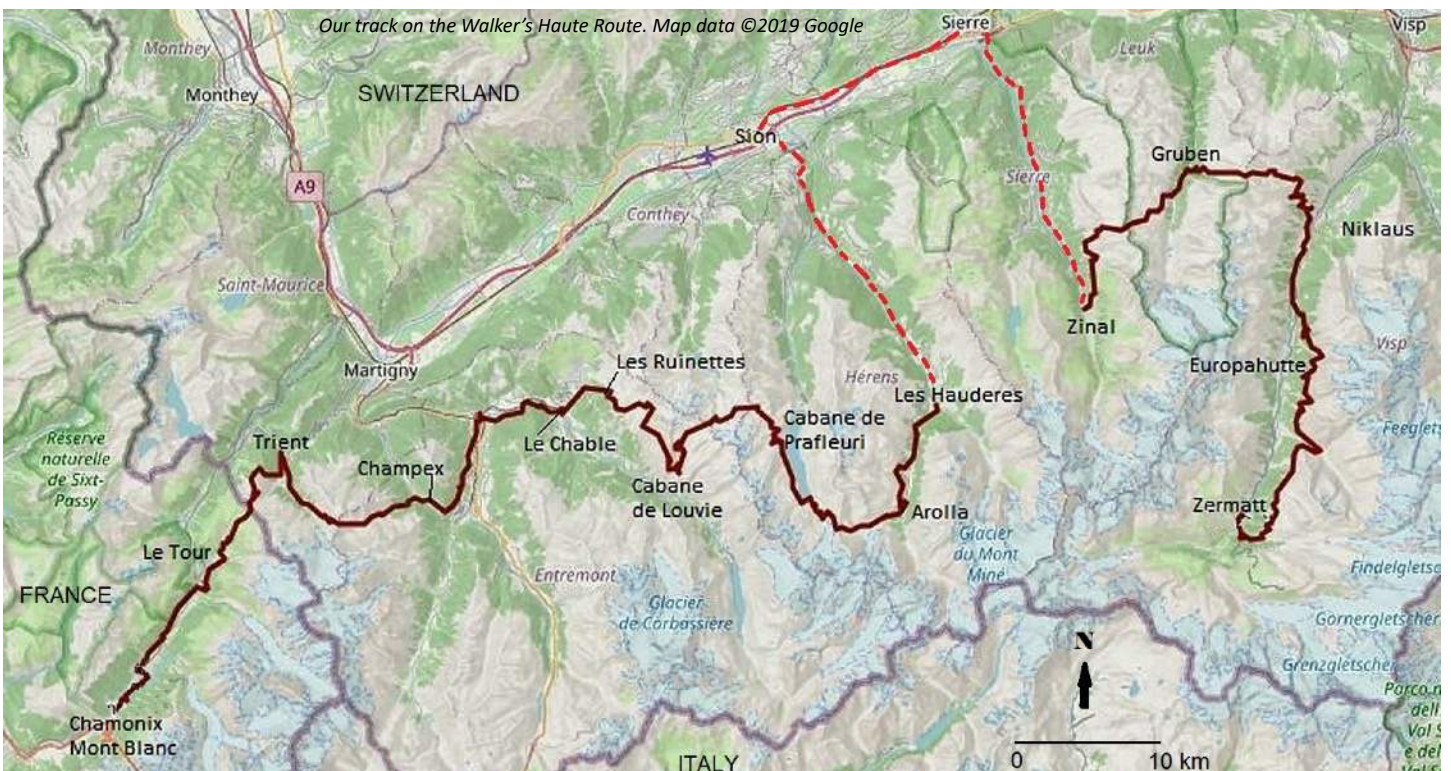


Weisshorn sunrise

Useful information

The Cicerone guide is a must for anyone contemplating the WHR, while Andrew McCluggage's book *The Walker's Haute Route: Chamonix to Zermatt* contains a lot of useful materials. Also, there are a number of websites which provide, among other things, information on accommodation.

Philip Gatenby



Queenslanders want more national parks: poll

An overwhelming majority of Queenslanders support the creation of more national parks in the state. Polling released by the Protect Beautiful Queensland alliance reveals:

- 77 per cent of Queenslanders want to see the creation of more national parks
- 71 per cent want to see the Queensland Government double the number of protected areas by 2030, with 64 per cent supporting achieving this by 2032
- 94 per cent say they support national parks' role in protecting Queensland's native animals and plants, while 94 per cent also say national parks are important for recreation and our way of life.

The release of polling coincides with the launch of the Protect Beautiful Queensland alliance – a new initiative of conservation organisations, the nature-based tourism industry, and the outdoor recreation sector.

Noosa Today

Vic government 'lagging' on national park development

The Victorian Government is taking far too long to create promised new national parks, says the Victorian National Parks Association.

'It has been an extraordinary 32 months since the state government accepted the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council recommendations for the central west national parks,' VNPA executive director Matt Ruchel said. 'This is between two to three times longer than it took for the Box-Ironbark, Red Gum and Great Otway national parks to progress from government responses to final reports to creation.'

'Even accounting for all manner of bureaucracy and paper shuffling, the Andrews/Allan Government is appallingly slow in legislating new national parks.'

VNPA – Park Watch

Company withdraws Toondah Harbour project

The company behind a \$1.4 billion bid to build a major commercial project in a protected wetland in Moreton Bay withdrew its application in April after federal environment minister Tanya Plibersek indicated she would not approve the development.

The controversial Toondah Harbour development included 3,000 apartments, a 400-berth marina and a hotel.

Ms Plibersek released an interim decision early in April that found removing 58.7 hectares from the internationally protected wetland was an 'unacceptable impact' that would also affect threatened and migratory animals, including loggerhead and green turtles, dugongs and dolphins. Ms

Plibersek said Walker Corporation's withdrawal meant the project 'will not go ahead'.

ABC News



Mangrove south of Toondah Harbour. Photo by Panthus, Wikimedia Commons

Tas govt 'desperate' to unlock national parks for development

The Tasmanian government's desperation to 'unlock' the state's national parks for development despite widespread public opposition is becoming increasingly apparent, says the Tasmanian National Parks Association.

Comment has now closed on two discussion papers released by the state government in January under the banner of 'Reform' of the Reserve Activity Assessment process used by the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service to assess development proposals on reserved land.

TNPA says the intent of the proposed changes appears to be to remove transparency in decision making and any credible opportunity for public involvement in the assessment of a proposed development on reserved land.

Tasmanian National Parks Association

Former grazing property Qld's newest national park

The Queensland Government has acquired a 352,589-hectare former grazing property, Vergemont Station, near Longreach, describing the purchase as an unprecedented win for western Queensland's threatened species and call to action for nature lovers and adventurers.

'This landmark purchase shows what's achievable when people work together to protect vital, often unrepresented habitat,' said National Parks Association of Queensland CEO Chris Thomas, 'and demonstrates the state government's commitment to meeting environmental sustainability and biodiversity goals and protecting 17 per cent of Queensland's land mass by 2030.'

The property was purchased with the help of the Nature Conservancy and a \$21 million philanthropic donation and expands Queensland's Protected Area Estate to more than 15 million hectares.

QNPA



Vergemont Station. Photo, Qld Government

\$1.43m boost for WA peatlands project

A major university research project into critical peatland ecosystems in Western Australia has been given \$1.43 million by a philanthropic organisation.

The Ian Potter Foundation has underwritten the work of researchers investigating the ecosystems of the 363,000-hectare Walpole Wilderness in the state's south-west. The study is being undertaken by Edith Cowan University, the University of Western Australia, the Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions, and the WA Museum.

The aim of the 5-year Protecting Peatland Ecosystems and Addressing Threats in Southwestern Australia is to help improve the management of the peatlands. The diverse peatlands, about 430 km south of Perth, contain rare species, including the Sunset Frog and the Albany Pitcher Plant.

ABC News

NPA NSW calls for tougher penalties for Snowy 2.0 breaches

The National Parks Association of NSW is calling on the NSW Government to apply increased penalties to Snowy Hydro Limited and its contractors for repeated pollution incidents in Kosciuszko National Park.

Despite more than a dozen warnings, enforceable undertakings, cautions and fines to Snowy Hydro and its contractors over the past 2 years, there is no indication that the pattern of non-compliance is under control,' said NPA CEO Garry Dunnett.

'Small fines aren't going to cut it. The regulators must escalate their actions to the courts if they expect Snowy Hydro's behaviour to improve,' Dunnett said.

NPA NSW

Bush Heritage makes key 'reconnection' purchase

Bush Heritage Australia's recent purchase of a small property, Sanstrom, in central Victoria is part of a broader push by the organisation to connect more bushland in the Kara Kara-Wedderburn landscape where historical land clearing has devastated much of the habitat.

The reserve, 185 km north-west of Melbourne, is made up of largely intact woodlands, which are home to threatened bird species such as Black Chinned Honeyeater and Painted Button Quail. The two reserves on either side of Sanstrom are home to multiple critically endangered orchids.



Long-leaf Box flowers on Sanstrom.
Photo by Rowan Mott

This small property joins up BHA's JC Griffin Reserve and John Douglas blocks, making it a crucial piece in connecting remnant woodlands of the Kara-Kara Wedderburn area, Dja Dja Wurrung Country.

Bush Heritage Australia

New sightings of Corroboree Frogs in Namadgi

For the first time in five years, ACT government ecologists have spotted Northern Corroboree frogs in Namadgi National Park. The species is listed as critically endangered, and the government has been attempting to restore their population in Namadgi for more than a decade.

Ecologists have been releasing frogs and eggs into the park as part of a breeding program, but they had not been spotted in the wild since 2019. This year, 16 male frogs were identified at the Ginini Flats Wetlands site and a further 21 frogs were counted at a lower elevation site in the park.

ABC News

Northern Corroboree Frog.
Photo by ACT Government



Southern Right Whales at Point Ann, Fitzgerald River National Park. Photo by Peter Nicholas/DBCA

Rain speeds park recovery following fires

Carnarvon National Park, in central Queensland is showing signs of recovery after a bushfire, which began last August, burnt for nearly 3 months. Of the roughly 344,000 hectares damaged, 167,000 of those were inside the park. Some surrounding grazing land was also destroyed.

Widespread rain across Queensland earlier this year has helped the recovery, with a rapid return of greenery in some areas, and woody pear trees and cycads also resprouting.

ABC News

Former SA cattle property to become wildlife sanctuary

Nature Foundation has bought a 200-hectare former grazing property that is home to rare animals and birds in South Australia's south-east following a fundraising campaign bolstered by two large donations from professors. Birdwatching academic Hugh Possingham and ecology professor Phill Cassey donated \$100,000 each towards the purchase.

Nature Foundation says it is one of the largest blocks of native vegetation with very high biodiversity values in the region. The foundation and will now prepare a management plan for the area to protect the species that live there.

The property sits adjacent the Mount Scott Conservation Park and is on the traditional lands of the Meintangk people.

ABC News

Platypuses back in the Royal National Park

Platypuses are back in the Royal National Park, south of Sydney, for the first time in 50 years and at least one puggle was born last spring.

Ten platypuses were released into Australia's oldest national park in May 2023, in the first project of its kind in NSW. In March, researchers found proof the platypuses are not only surviving in Royal National Park, but also breeding. Tracking data suggests all 10 animals are probably still alive and have colonised a large section of both the Hacking River and Kangaroo Creek.

Sydney Morning Herald

Comments invited on WA marine park

West Australians have until 16 June to comment on a proposed South Coast marine park. The proposed park will provide important protections to marine species, such as the unique ruby sea dragon. The area is also home to Southern Right Whale nurseries, vast kelp forests, vulnerable seal and sea lion colonies, precious reefs, and important fisheries.

About 75 per cent of the proposed marine park will remain open for commercial and recreational fishing, with recreational beach access unchanged by this proposal.

WA - DBC



Major conservation park expanded

A major conservation park that is home to extensive wildlife habitat will be expanded by hundreds of hectares after the Qld Government bought an adjacent parcel of land south of Brisbane. The newly purchased 213-hectare site will be added to the Daisy Hill Conservation Park. Near the Kimberley Plateau, the land will link the Daisy Hill park with the nearby Venman Bushland National Park.

The existing Daisy Hill park, about 25 km south-east of Brisbane, features mountain bike tracks, walking paths, picnic areas, and trails for horse riding. It also includes extensive habitat for wildlife, such as koalas, and is home to the Daisy Hill Koala Centre.

ABC News

Man fined for illegal path in national park

A Townsville man has been ordered to pay nearly \$145,000 after using a front loader to illegally clear a path through more than two kilometres of protected national park.

Frank Reginald Jones, 74, was charged with 11 counts relating to the destruction of bushland in the Cape Cleveland area of the Bowling Green Bay National Park, south of Townsville. Jones pleaded guilty to all charges in the Townsville Magistrates Court in February.

The park is internationally recognised as a wetland of importance for birdlife.

ABC News

NT Govt considering comments on Central Australia reserves

The NT Government is considering public comments on two joint management plans for Central Australia, Mac Clark (Acacia peuce) Conservation Reserve, and the Kuyunba Conservation Reserve.

Mac Clark, 294 km south of Alice Springs, is well-known for rare plant species, cultural sites and local history. Kuyunba Conservation Reserve, near Alice Springs, is a culturally significant men's sacred site.

Environment, Parks and Water Security

Another ghost net removed from NT national park waters

NT Parks and Wildlife rangers removed another large ghost fishing net –nets that have been abandoned, lost or discarded at sea – from marine waters within Garig Gunak Barlu National Park on the Cobourg Peninsula in March. The floating nets are a major threat for the marine life that inhabit the protected waters surrounding the peninsula. Another was removed in early 2023.

The nets can be kilometres long and weigh up to several tonnes. Rangers at the national park regularly remove them, especially after the wet season's strong north westerly winds that bring in marine debris.

Environment, Parks and Water Security



Removed fishing net. Photo by NT Government

Cultural access permission proposed for Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre

A new management plan proposed for outback Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre by the SA Government suggests banning members of the public from walking, driving or boating on the lakebed without permission from the traditional owners.

The public would be allowed to view the inland lake from the air or from two designated visitor areas — Halligan Bay Point Campground and the southern information bay off the Oodnadatta Track.

Arabana Aboriginal Corporation chairperson Bronwyn Dodd said Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre was connected to one of their most important Ularaka (stories) and a place where their ancestors rest.

Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park is the second largest national park in Australia, covering more than 1.3 million hectares.

ABC News



Kati Thanda – Lake Eyre south. Photo by Wikimedia Commons

Renewed push to halt logging in proposed koala park

Leading businessman and former head of the Australian Conservation Foundation Geoff Cousins has renewed the push to halt logging in the proposed Great Koala National Park on the NSW Mid North Coast.

Loggers are 'ripping to pieces' forests earmarked to become the Great Koala National Park, said Cousins, who has called on the state government to stop allowing logging in native forests as part of a fresh push to establish the boundaries of a koala conservation area. The NSW Forestry Corporation says there has been no increase in the rate of harvesting in the park.

ABC News

Koala. Photo by David Clode on Unsplash



More Eastern Quolls reintroduced into south coast national park

A second group of 19 Eastern Quolls has been reintroduced to Booderee National Park near Jervis Bay on the NSW South Coast. The first 'rewilded' population was destroyed by predators in 2021.

A 4-kilometre fox-proof fence will allow the quolls to hunt, breed and potentially survive. The fence has a floppy umbrella top which ensures quolls are unable to climb out and foxes and cats are unable to climb in. Eastern Quolls are only found in Tasmania and foxes, cats and disease are blamed for their extinction on the mainland.

ABC News

Compiled by Allan Sharp

NPA bulletin board

NPA ACT welcomes the following new members:

Malo Gledhill
David Anderson
Christine & Ron Levers
Annette Fisher
Pamela Wyatt & Richard Sisson
Peter Carden
Cathy Rainsford
Rose Fry
Sandra Teffer
Fleur Horan
Jane Lawson & Nick Hassall
John McRae
Philippa Larkin & Bernadette Murphy
Andras Keszei

*We look forward to seeing you
at NPA activities*

Membership renewal for 2024 – 2025

You will receive an email soon to start the renewal process for memberships that expire on 30 June. The email will provide details of our move to a new membership management system based on TidyHQ and the Stripe payments platform. It will also explain how to set yourself up in the system, the renewal process, and who to contact if you have any problems.

A big advantage of the new system is that it will allow you to manage your own details and membership preferences. You will be able make a secure payment with debit or credit card online or by initiating an invoice for a bank transfer.

We will continue to support members who prefer to use mail or pay by cheque.

We are migrating existing membership data into TidyHQ to support an easy renewal process. As the system relies on correct email addresses, please contact admin@npaact.org.au if you are changing emails.

As 30 June approaches, it is also a good time to consider a tax deductible donation to NPA through our website or using this QR code:



Volunteers needed

We always need new volunteers 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 the environment and NPA. It can be to lead walks or participate in or lead work parties, join the committee or a subcommittee, set up the meeting room for our monthly meetings or sell our books at public events. It all helps to spread the load. If you can help please email admin@npaact.org.au or leave a message on the office phone (02) 6229 3201.



Tisiphone abeona (Varied Sword-grass Brown)

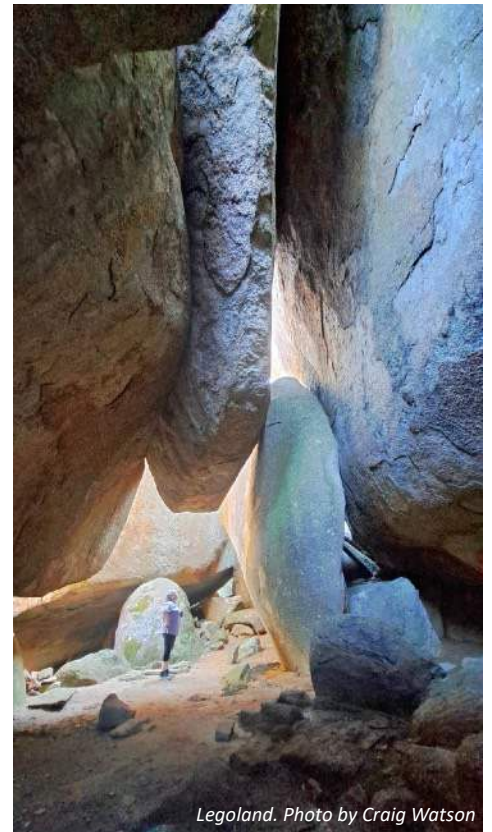


*Marshwort with Hover Fly.
Both photos by Mike Bremers*

Rainbow Lorikeet

I took the adjoining photo of a Rainbow Lorikeet (there are actually two up there but the bashful one is hiding from the camera) in our precinct not so long ago. Despite what the Canberra Ornithologists Group says on its website, Rainbow Lorikeets are now quite common down here in Kambah. From my personal observations I reckon one or two of them first appeared around here maybe 15 years ago and their numbers have steadily increased year on year. I recall that the first time I saw a Rainbow Lorikeet in the wild in Canberra must have been in the late 1990s. The solitary bird was in Marelda Street, Aranda, where it had sought refuge in a eucalypt in a friend's yard. Definitely an aviary escapee, I think.

Ed Highley



Legoland. Photo by Craig Watson

Monthly meetings

conservation education protection

Monthly meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month (except December and January), usually at **Weston Creek Uniting Church hall, 16 Parkinson Street, Weston, at 7:30 pm**

Thursday 20 June

Caring for the Bush Capital

Rebecca Vassarotti MLA

ACT Greens Member for Kurrajong, Minister for the Environment, Parks and Land Management and Minister for Heritage

Rebecca Vassarotti will be discussing the protection of precious areas like Namadgi's alpine bogs and fens, progress on invasive species management and the ambitious vision for habitat conservation and restoration in the ACT.



Thursday 18 July

Two MLAs –

Canberra's environment in the years ahead – talks and question time

Suzanne Orr MLA

Member for Yerrabi, ACT Labor spokesperson for Environment, Parks and Land Management



Nicole Lawder MLA

Member for Brindabella, Shadow Minister for Environment and Water



Thursday 15 August

AGM

followed by

Orchid conservation and taxonomy

Dr Heidi Zimmer

Research Scientist CSIRO

Drawing from her research and work, Heidi will discuss recent research and initiatives that are contributing to our



knowledge of native orchids. Heidi's research focusses on the ecology and conservation of Australia's threatened plants. Her doctoral research was on the Wollemi Pine.

More for your calendar

June

July

August

September

Committee meetings (5:30 pm to 7:00 pm)

Thursday 6th

Thursday 4th

Thursday 1st

Thursday 5th

National Parks Association of the ACT Incorporated (Inaugurated 1960)

Aims and objectives of the Association

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

Office-bearers

President

Rosemary Hollow

Vice President

<vacant>

Secretary

Maisie Walker Stelling

Treasurer

Jenny Barnes

Committee members

Immediate Past President

Esther Gallant

Public Officer

Jennifer Carter

Mike Bremers

Hugh Coppell

Alison Russell-French

Marian Pearson

Steve Perry

Ben Schutte

Allan Sharp

Membership fees* 1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025

Individual membership with email <i>Bulletin</i>	\$35
Individual membership with printed <i>Bulletin</i>	\$50
Concession* membership	\$30
Concession* membership with printed <i>Bulletin</i>	\$40
Household/family membership with email <i>Bulletin</i>	\$65
Household/family membership with printed <i>Bulletin</i>	\$75
Organisation membership	\$100

Conveners

Bulletin Working Group

Allan Sharp

Cultural Subcommittee

Rosemary Hollow

Environment Subcommittee

<vacant>

Outings Subcommittee

Mike Bremers

Publications Subcommittee

Kevin McCue

Promotion & Outreach Subcommittee Allan Sharp

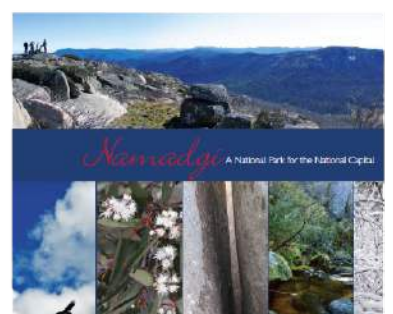
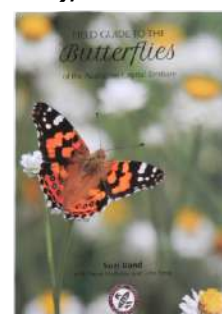
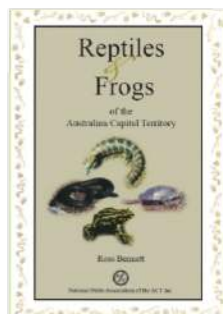
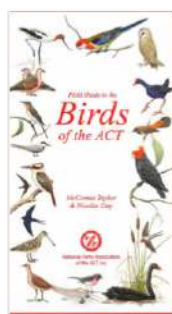
Work Party Co-ordinator

Martin Chalk

* From 1 July, membership will be for 12 months from date of joining.

* Concession membership is available to: individuals who are full-time students; or holders of a pension card issued by a Commonwealth government agency.

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





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/

X (formerly Twitter): <https://twitter.com/Lovenature321>

Facebook: www.facebook.com/NationalParksAssociationOfTheACT

