



National Parks Association of the ACT Inc.
1960-2010
50 years of conservation, nature protection and education

Centenary Trail Submission

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the ACT Centenary Trail Proposal (“the Trail”). As you may know, the National Parks Association of the ACT (“NPA ACT”) is a community-based conservation organisation with a fifty year history of working to protect our natural environment through an active outings and workparty program; participation in Parkcare activities; an extensive publication program; public meetings and conferences and engagement with government policies and programs. The NPA ACT has a particular interest in how the ACT’s conservation reserves are managed and the impact of recreation on conservation reserves.

While the NPA ACT gives in-principle support to the development of the Trail there are a number of issues it believes must be addressed. These include:

- Opposition to any extension of the equestrian trail network in current units of Canberra Nature Park or the Murrumbidgee River corridor, as a result of the development of the Trail. The NPA ACT believes there is potential for the expansion of the equestrian trail network outside of these areas where conservation values would not be threatened. For example, the proximity of the National Bicentennial Trail to the National Arboretum provides an opportunity to facilitate additional equestrian access in that area.
- Opposition to the use of the Trail for large scale cycling events within conservation reserve sections of the Trail. The NPA ACT would oppose large scale walking or other foot events within the conservation reserve sections of the Trail unless it can be clearly demonstrated that such events would not compromise the environmental values of these areas.

The NPA ACT believes that benefits can accrue from the development of the Trail and these tend to revolve around opportunities.

There is the opportunity for public exposure to the wonderful variety and biodiversity of Canberra Nature Park and the Murrumbidgee River Corridor. The Trail would be expected to enhance the opportunities for passive recreation opportunity and could highlight the activities of Parkcare groups, providing opportunities for the recruitment of more volunteers. In addition, the

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Trail could create an opportunity for the production of a comprehensive guide to what walkers and riders can see and experience throughout their journey along it.

Other issues

- The disappearance from the Trail proposal of the separation of walkers and cyclists on new track in areas of medium to high risk of collision and the previously proposed links between management roads. Have they disappeared due to cost or time constraints? This is a clear issue of public safety for all users.
- The NPA ACT is concerned that the 1.2 metres width of the Trail in high use mixed traffic areas would lead to difficulties for two cyclists to pass or cyclists and pedestrians to pass without stopping or without leaving the track. Is there an example of a similar high use two direction mixed traffic trail as narrow as being proposed in some sections of the Trail?
- The NPA ACT foresees conflict between different classes of users such as walkers/families or cyclists on popular sections of 1.2m track. Tracks on level ground in high use areas have a strong potential to become braided as cyclists seek to pass walkers or other cyclists. There will be a need to maintain 1.2metre track sections to a standard suitable for families with young children and occasional cyclists
- The proposal for the Trail contains implicit expectations about how much Parkcare volunteers are prepared to be involved in track maintenance. Concentrating Parkcare resources on track maintenance limits the achievement of broader conservation objectives.
- The NPA ACT would also be concerned about the potential for the spread of weeds along new connecting tracks and existing tracks.

Comments on the proposed route of the Trail

Section 1 - Parliament House to Federal Highway

The NPA ACT supports separation of the walking track and cycling track on the east face of Mt Ainslie.

The NPA ACT has concerns about sections of steep cycling track including those on previously closed roads – the speed differential between cyclists coming down and going up these sections, especially on 1.2m track, would be a safety issue.

The current preferred route may open up tracks which for conservation reasons it would better for these to remain closed to cyclists (e.g. the ridge behind Hackett) where alternative vehicle tracks exist.

Section 2 Federal Highway to Mulligans Flat Road

This section includes the largest amount of new track along the ACT border through Goorooyarroo and Mulligans Flat Reserves. The creation of the new track would increase the potential for weed incursion along these 1.2m wide sections. The NPA ACT believes that it would be better to run the Trail along existing management roads within these reserves.

It is important that the Trail does not have any impact on the Sanctuary in Mulligans Flat. In particular, night use of the Trail by walkers or cyclists using high intensity lights may need to be managed.

Section 3 Mulligans Flat Road to Hall

Where sections of new multipurpose trail contour around hillsides, attention should be given to the placement of drainage lines and site lines.

Section 4 Hall to Cork Oak Plantation

There is a need for the Trail to be rerouted to avoid orchid sites on proposed route above Frith Road.

The NPA ACT supports the proposed separation of walkers and cyclists on Black Mountain.

Section 5 Cork Oak Plantation to Stromlo Forest Park

The Trail, from the Molonglo crossing point to the Uriarra Road, passes through some important habitat. The NPA ACT strongly believes that no trails should be constructed until management plans for these important conservation areas are in place. Until this occurs it would be possible to use an existing river crossing near old Weston sewage works connecting to the bicycle path in that region.

Section 6 Stromlo Forest Park to the Tuggeranong Wall

The Trail proposal suggests that the Murrumbidgee walking trail from Kambah Pool to Tuggeranong Wall would be upgraded to multi use. This is one of the most scenic and popular walks in the Murrumbidgee River Corridor and passes through an area of high conservation value. The NPA ACT believes that any track work in this area should be designed to have minimum impact (removal) on native trees and shrubs. In addition it is imperative that this section be designed to facilitate the safety of all walkers (especially children).

Section 7 Tuggeranong Wall to Isaacs Ridge

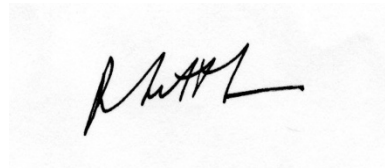
The NPA ACT has no comments on this section of the Trail.

Section 8 Isaacs Ridge to Parliament House

The proposed new multi-purpose track on Red Hill which will pass through the habitat of the threatened button wrinkle-wort is unacceptable. Alternatives, routing the Trail around the base of Red Hill above the Federal Golf Club, past Deakin and then onto Melbourne Avenue must be developed.

The NPA ACT would be happy to discuss any of the issues raised within its submission, either in writing to our office address or through email (noting that the NPA ACT office is manned by volunteers and a daily presence is not able to be maintained). Alternatively, I or Clive Hurlstone can be contacted on 0410 875 731 or 0407 783 422, respectively.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rod Griffiths', is centered on a light-colored rectangular background.

Rod Griffiths
President

16 February 2012