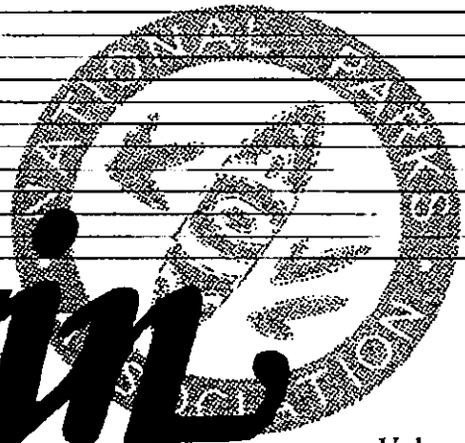


NIPA Bulletin



Volume 43 number 4
December 2006

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF THE ACT INC



Pat's Brindabella jaunt

Mount Franklin update

Protecting our parks

Marine park update

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

National Parks Association of the ACT Incorporated Inaugurated 1960

Aims and objectives of the Association

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

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Cover Photo: Pat Miethke and Barbara Edgar caught at a happy moment overlooking Brindabella National

From the President

The past few months have seen steady progress on a number of fronts. Russell Watkinson, the new Director of the Parks, Conservation and Lands Branch in Territory and Municipal Services, came to our last committee meeting to brief us about the re-structure and his responsibilities. The financial outlook remains grim. We remain convinced that forced savings will make a big hole in the conservation and management of our parks and reserves over the next few years and we will be pursuing this at a political level over the next two years. On a positive note, Russell would like to take advantage of the restructure to simplify and improve the career and pay structures for rangers. He is also keen to finalise the Namadgi Management Plan and make it publicly available.

The proceedings from the NPA *Symposium* in May are being printed as I write and we are planning a launch of the book and a celebration of a job well done by the Publications Committee. Other publications which this committee are working on include a new edition of our *Tree Guide* which we hope to have ready in time for Christmas and a new edition of the *Frog and Reptile* book which is just about out of stock. Next year we will be publishing a new title in our field guide series which we are very excited about: a guide to the orchids in the ACT, presented by David Jones. We are also beginning to plan for a beautiful book

on Namadgi in time for our 50th anniversary and we will be looking to members to make their contribution to this so get out your old photos and journals and start thinking about what you would like to celebrate about our beautiful national park.

Our request for a review of the Mt Franklin development got lost in the system (theirs, not ours) but it is back on track and we are currently in negotiations with the government to see if there is a workable solution to our concerns. The Great Australian Bushwalk worked beautifully with over 160 people enjoying dispersed walks in Namadgi jointly led by park rangers and NPA. We are already working on plans for next year's GAB to continue building the event into a focus on conservation and peaceful enjoyment of the bush.

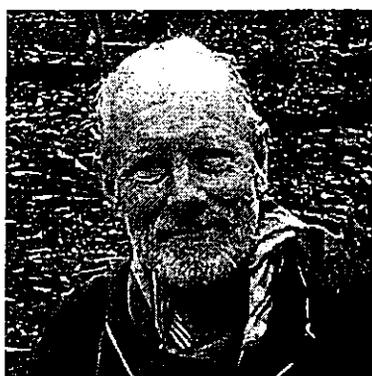
Kevin McCue and Sonja Lenz are preparing to represent NPA ACT at the annual National Parks Australia Council meeting in Melbourne in late October. One of the items on the agenda is the changes being introduced to the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Act* by the Federal Minister for the Environment, Senator Campbell. It appears the changes will make it easier to build, mine or otherwise "develop" environmentally sensitive areas but harder to protect them. What a surprise! Many of us have been firm believers in majority governments in the past and supported a curb on the



powers of the Senate to hold up legislation but the last year has thrown a new light on that. I find myself recalling a recalcitrant Senate with affection and wishing this current government still had to barter and badger such destructive legislative changes through all those long drawn out committee processes which used to seem so archaic.

And for a very weird note to end on I leave you with the Prime Minister's claim that "clean, green nuclear energy" would save us from climate change. I know politicians are forced to say some peculiar things from time to time in order to fit their political agenda into some semblance of reality but what on earth was he really thinking?

Christine Goonrey



Editorial: now is the time for all good men and women to come to the aid of the park

No one in the Canberra community could have failed to get the message that the ACT budget is in the red and government services are being cut back to save money. The school closure argument seems to have taken centre stage in this debate but the axe has also fallen on the former Environment ACT, now known as Parks, Conservation, and Lands. A smaller budget for PCL means fewer environmental services, fewer staff on the ground, smaller park programs for weed and feral animal

control and park infrastructure maintenance.

We highlight in this issue one outcome of this deterioration in services. Vandalism and graffiti are an unfortunate outcome of official neglect and one that brings real costs to services and thus to the community in attempting to repair, rectify, and control this mindless damage.

We are also reviving in this issue one answer to this and other park problems. Our monitoring form gives you a convenient way to report and comment on any park issue, good or bad, as you enjoy, hopefully, your time in our great outdoors this summer. We encourage you to use this resource. Park staff are very supportive of this

initiative and will welcome your comments and help in bringing problems to their attention.

NPA has always had a strong volunteer program of work parties to assist in park maintenance and control programs. With cut-backs in government services our assistance is needed more than ever in ensuring that vital control and restoration work continues. Our outings program has the details; grab your hat and gloves and join a work party. You will learn as well as work, and have a satisfying and enjoyable day!

Neville Esau



Native title unlikely in ACT: Chief Minister

It was unlikely that native title had survived over any ACT land, due to the grant of old NSW titles prior to the establishment of the ACT and grants of leaseholds since that time, the Chief Minister and Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Mr Jon Stanhope, said on September 25.

He was responding to media reports that the Bell family was calling for an urgent meeting with the Government and wanted to pursue a land use agreement, in the wake of a successful Western Australian land title claim over the Perth metropolitan area.

Mr Stanhope said a joint management agreement had been signed by the ACT Government and native title claimants in the ACT in 2001, and the Bell family had declined an invitation to sign that agreement, choosing instead to pursue its own native title claim over the ACT.

The 2001 agreement involved the grant of a special 99-year Aboriginal lease over Namadgi National Park, involving the Ngunnawal land claimants in joint management of the park.

"In January this year the National Native Title Tribunal refused to register an application to register the Bell family's claim," Mr Stanhope said. "While the consequence of this decision is that the claimants have no right under the Native Title Act to be consulted about, or to negotiate about, land grants and developments in the claim area, the decision does not prevent their claim being mediated, and this is precisely what the ACT Government has been doing and continues to do."

Many mediation talks between Government officials and the Bells had occurred over many years. The most recent of these, arranged for July, had been cancelled because of the Bell family's failure to meet deadlines, while a Federal Court directions

hearing set down for August had been cancelled at the family's request.

Mr Stanhope said it may still be possible for the Bells to join as signatories to the existing agreement signed in 2001 by four other native title claimants, but the Government was also happy for the existing court processes to be exhausted, if that was what the Bells desired.

Graeme Wicks

Land Act may curtail NPA right

A quick look at the possible impact of the new Land (Planning and Environment) Act on the consultation process for capital works like roads in Namadgi National Park is enough to set the alarm bells ringing.

There may be a significant loss of the current right NPA has to proposals being made public so that we are able to make input into the environmental impact of developments in Namadgi National Park because the operation of the new legislation may be much more subjective and far less certain.

Current clear and unambiguous provisions for preliminary assessments are to be replaced with much more open-ended criteria.

Currently there is a mandatory requirement for a preliminary assessment in the *Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991*. For example, a preliminary assessment must be undertaken for construction of any new building or major road within the Park. The assessment is available for public inspection and the NPA has the opportunity to comment on the proposal.

But under the new legislation, the mandatory requirement is replaced with an EIS *being required* only where the proposal has the "potential to have a significant impact on the management objectives" for the Park (item 4 of Schedule 4.3 of the *Planning and Development Bill 2006*). It is noted that

there are two management objectives for the park – to conserve the natural environment and to provide for public use of the area for recreation, education and research (item 2 of Schedule 3 of the *Planning and Development Bill 2006*).

Under the new planning legislation, preliminary assessments and public environment reports will be abandoned in favour of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as the sole method of environmental impact.

Should we be making input to the consultation process? Should this be raised at the Interim Namadgi Advisory Board meeting?

Christine Goonrey

NPA responds to proposals to redevelop the Mount Franklin hut site

The NPA has recently written to the ACT Planning and Land Authority to query their decision to approve a new building adjacent to the site of the former hut, which was destroyed in the 2003 fires. This decision was made without an assessment and thus an opportunity for NPA to comment. Members will remember that last issue we reported on NPA's initial reaction to reports that a new building had been approved. The committee has now analysed the decision and concluded that the development approval was invalidly given and that the nature of the proposed development opens up new undefined uses for the site.

NPA considers that there were no grounds to exempt the proposal from a preliminary assessment. The nature of the proposal was to construct a public facility adjacent to the site of the former Mt Franklin Chalet to provide shelter to visitors and officials visiting the site and to reflect on and interpret the heritage values of the former chalet – bushfire replacement. The plans for the building indicate that part is available

Namadgi news *(continued)*

for public access and part is secured and not available.

There are many significant differences between the previous building and the proposed building, the subject of the development application. For example:

- (a) The development application relates to the erection of a separate structure that is not to encroach onto the footprint of the former M Franklin Chalet.
- (b) The new building has a new architectural character to that of the former Mt Franklin Chalet in terms of scale and form.
- (c) The former Chalet was used by the Canberra Ski Club and was not a public facility. The new building is at least in part a public facility and it is understood that the secured area of the building is proposed to be used as a command centre in emergency situations in this area of the Namadgi National Park.

Given these facts it is clear that the proposal should not have been exempt from a mandatory preliminary assessment under the Land Act. The proposal is not for an alteration or addition to the former Mt Franklin Chalet but rather for a new separate structure which causes a significant change in the scale, size or purpose of the existing situation. The views of the ACT Heritage Council support this.

NPA is concerned that the failure to undertake a preliminary assessment has meant that a number of possible issues surrounding the development have not been considered. For example, the provision of a new public shelter may increase pressure on the area, including off-road use, illegal gathering of firewood and increased rubbish. In short, the issue of whether it is an appropriate place for a new recreational area has not been tested.

Rather than fight the issue in court, NPA has proposed to the Planning and Land Authority that conditions be imposed on the development approval to limit the ways the building can be used. Our conditions propose that the facility not be used for overnight residential accommodation, that the public area of the facility be used only for day recreation purposes, and that the part of the facility which is not open to the public be used only by park officials for purposes related to the management



*Mount Burbidge (opposite) and Rotten Swamp (above)
Photos Max Lawrence*

of Namadgi National Park and by the Canberra Ski Club for day activities.

We will keep you posted in progress in this ongoing dispute with the ACT Government to safeguard the natural values of the park.

Neville Esau

Lessons from fire in Namadgi

In the last issue of the *Bulletin* we reported ongoing efforts to reduce the damage being done to Namadgi by widening existing fire trails and grading new ones. We are concerned that the upgrading of existing fire trails is causing substantial tree felling and threatening significant erosion into park waterways. We are even more concerned that the proposed new fire trails, particularly Stockyard Spur and Orroral Ridge, invade precious areas of pristine wilderness for little return in terms of reducing fire risk.

Then, with the hottest, driest spring for a century creating the need (in early October) for the first total fire ban of the season, we heard about a fire outbreak on the southern edge of Namadgi. The fire was burning right where the proposed Grassy Creek and Burnt Hill fire trails would go. It burnt for two weeks and caused considerable damage on both sides of the NSW/ACT border. As a result of the fire, 140 hectares of the park were burnt, many kilometres of grader tracks degraded the area, and the proposed Burnt Hill fire trail was hastily constructed, at least in part.

So, in fairness we have to ask what we can learn from this and are we on the right tack with our current approach to fire management strategies in the park? For a start, the Mt Clear dam worked well in supplying a reliable water supply reasonably close to the fire. It is reassuring to recall that we

supported this dam with a few provisos about making sure the new water source did not increase kangaroo numbers and adequate attention was given to weed suppression and erosion.

Secondly, the fire was started on a property adjoining the park at a time when weather conditions could be expected to push fire northwards. So, rather than the park being a fire threat to its neighbours, the neighbours prove to be a very specific fire risk to the park. Part of our opposition to Grassy Creek fire trail was that a perfectly good fire trail runs

along the other side of the park fence on private property. It appears that we now have to accept that the park needs its own line of defence and cannot rely on good neighbours to reduce the cost of expensive works such as fire trails.

Thirdly, we have learnt – again – that using bulldozers in the bush causes great damage to the area they are meant to be protecting and proves less effective as the terrain becomes more difficult. This would support our view that bulldozers are not appropriate fire fighting tools in rugged areas of the park where we should be using water bombing and remote area strategies. However, we have to acknowledge that the Burnt Hill fire trail appears to have proven its value, so we need to take that on board.

In summary, from what we can learn about the fire in October, we remain convinced that we must continue to resist the reliance on heavy machinery to fight fires in rugged areas and wilderness, which is at the root of our concern about existing and proposed fire trails. This includes an even greater determination to oppose Stockyard Spur and Orroral Ridge fire trails.

My father remembers fighting the 1952 fires on the Bega Valley with a borrowed car, wet sacks from the ice factory and communication via public phone boxes with the switchboard at Bega. Perhaps one day we will look at the current emphasis on heavy machinery in wilderness with the same mixture of anger at such a dangerous lack of appropriate resources and respect for the resolve of the firefighters.

Christine Goonrey

Graffiti invade our hills and rivers

Those of us who puff and pant our way up Mt Taylor or Tuggeranong Hill are rewarded for our exertions with sublime views of the Canberra district stretching to all points of the compass. Away on the horizon are the splendid south-west ranges, often resembling a blue barrier, sometimes smoky, sometimes verging on purple depending on the time of day and the weather.

But the works of man—squalid, utilitarian structures on the two summits, used for the transmission of television signals—detract from these wonderful vistas. Their appearance is made even worse by the work of graffiti “artists” who have left their imbecilic scribbles on walls at both sites and on the transmission pole at Tuggeranong Hill.

Recently when researching the third edition of my book *Walking Canberra's Hills and Rivers* I asked the owner of these buildings, Broadcast Australia Pty Ltd, whether the graffiti could be removed and the look of the buildings improved by having them painted in colours sympathetic to the landscape. I also suggested that the sites be fenced to prevent future vandalism.

The reply I got was that, no, fences could not be erected because Broadcast Australia is restricted to the building footprints, leaving no room for fences. It made the point that graffiti at both sites is cleaned up every 18 months or so and that it “is a never-ending and costly task”. I have no doubt that it is, but maybe negotiations with government could lead to the sites being enlarged to accommodate fences. They would cost money to erect, but over time should pay for themselves through savings on graffiti removal.

Why I suggested painting and fencing is because ActewAGL is engaged in a similar graffiti removal program with its reservoirs, also targeted by spray-can vandals. Most if not all reservoirs are fenced these days with ActewAGL slowly removing graffiti by painting over it with an attractive green “wave” design two metres or so up from the base. There’s a striking illustration of this on Hindmarsh Drive between Fyshwick

and Woden, and another on Gungahlin Hill.

Removing graffiti vandalism on the reservoirs doesn’t come cheap. ActewAGL says it can “cost several thousand dollars to clean up a reservoir”.

Vandalism is a depressing occurrence on numerous hills within the Canberra Nature Park system, of which Mt Taylor and Tuggeranong Hill are but two examples, and also on walking tracks within the Murrumbidgee River Corridor. But perhaps the worst instance of the lot occurred several years ago with the torching of a small shearing shed in the Mulligans Flat reserve in Gungahlin, once such a welcome feature for those walking in the reserve. Little remains of this timber and corrugated iron shed, which I photographed for the second edition of *Walking Canberra's Hills and Rivers* in 1997. Vandals were suspected although I have not read any account of this despicable act nor of anyone being charged.

If you climb to the top of Mt Painter behind Cook (Belconnen) you will see, apart from the splendid views, four imaginative display stands with wide landscape photographs and accompanying text. The trouble is, one has been vandalised beyond recognition and another defaced.

On the historic Tuggeranong stone wall, seen on the Pine Island North/Red Rocks Gorge track, an informative explanatory sign has been vandalised by what could be a political statement—“This is a convict wall” has been scrawled across it.

If you decide to walk into Shepherds Lookout in Belconnen, off Stockdill Drive, you will first have to pick your way across smashed glass that crunches underfoot and have your eyes affronted by spilt oil and graffiti sprayed onto rocks. Once when I was out there, old household furniture and other goods had been dumped in a ditch at the entrance.

Meanwhile, down at the Cotter Caves, reached via the Bullen Loop Track at the Cotter, an information sign on a platform has also been vandalised.

Apart from the stupid acts of the mentally challenged among us, there is another eyesore on the hills and along the rivers—the dated nature of so many rusting signs that could well have been installed back in NCDC days. Many new signs have appeared at the entrance to reserves, however, and the Government is to be congratulated on that development. How much better it would be for the visitor and the resident were the Government to embark on a consistent signage program across its parks and reserves, replacing existing ancient signs and adding new ones. For instance, there is no sign on Stockdill Drive advertising the location of the Shepherds Lookout path and of another track that takes you down to the Molonglo.

A fine example of what could be done with our parks and reserves can be seen along various tracks in the Murrumbidgee River Corridor where marker posts every 200 metres tell walkers how far there is to go and the distance covered. This simple initiative must be welcomed by many who use these trails, especially if they are visitors.

Recently I was in the Molonglo Gorge and was able to assure a group of a dozen bushwalkers from Kiama, that yes, they were at the Blue Tiles picnic area. They thought they were short of their objective, so a sign would have made it obvious. I wonder if the Stanhope Government with its budget cuts hurting our parks and reserves ever thinks about the number of visitors who may come here to walk the territory’s hills and rivers. The Kiama group spent four days in the ACT walking in Namadgi and Tidbinbilla. But their accommodation was in Queanbeyan, not Canberra. What would they have spent on motels, meals, petrol and sundries? \$5000 or more? Peanuts I guess to politicians who deal in millions, but an indicator nevertheless of what the financial returns could be if the Government ensured that our treasured hills and rivers were cared for properly and promoted vigorously.

Graeme Barrow

Your observations can help



How can you help the NPA ACT monitor environmental problems and illegal activities in our national parks and nature reserves?

Don't forget to take a copy of our monitoring form, included with this issue, when you go on your next bush walk.

Rogaining in Namadgi, friend or foe?

Some of our members have been wondering what rogaining is and how it impacts on Namadgi National Park. A big issue for NPA ACT is the fact that rogaining events often have up to 200 participants at a time. In order to find out more about rogaining Christine Goonrey met with Emma Murray from Rogaining ACT who provided the following article to introduce us to rogaining as a sport.



A team has successfully navigated to a control point.

What is rogaining?

Rogaining involves teams of two to five people navigating on foot to control points set throughout an area, usually of native bushland. Traditionally, rogaines are 24 hours in duration, however, there are also shorter events of six and 12 hours. Basically, rogaining is a type of bushwalking. It has minimal environmental impact and travel is entirely on foot, where the only equipment used is a map, compass, and small backpack containing warm clothing, first-aid kit, water, and food.

Rogaining and the environment

Appreciation of the natural environment is a central feature of the sport. Rogaining requires and develops navigation skills. It instils a sense of familiarity and affinity with the natural environment and gives

people confidence when in the bush. Teamwork is also an essential skill, as rogainers must remain with their team for the whole event, and decide which controls they visit and in what order. As a result, different teams choose different routes, and during an event participants become well dispersed over the course area. Also, the range in abilities of different teams means that some will go to more areas of the course than others.

On average, for an event with around 200 teams, each separate control is only visited by 30 teams and it is common when rogaining to see only a few other teams over the whole 24 hour period. As such, the environmental impact of rogainers is no greater than overnight bushwalkers. In fact, in many cases, probably less impact, since rogainers return to the start/finish area to use the port-a-loos provided by the organisers and to have their meals at the catering tent.

In addition, any perceivable impacts are minimised by event organisers' preference of not reusing areas frequently, as over familiarity reduces navigational interest. It is often several years before a particular area is reused for an event. Furthermore, rogaing organisers and participants consider minimising environmental impacts as extremely important for ensuring continued access and permission from land managers to use an area. As such, events are run in accordance with the environmental guidelines set out by the



At the start, teams head off in all directions.

Australian Rogaining Association (available on the ARA's website: http://rogaine.asn.au/ara/docs/Environmental_Guidelines.pdf)

Rogaining is for everyone

Rogaining provides a safe, well controlled, and environmentally sensitive way for the community, young and old, to enjoy and appreciate the bush. By its very nature, rogaining is well suited to the full range of participants' abilities and inclinations, as it is the participants themselves who decide how far and how fast they wish to go. Generally, a large proportion of participants in any event regard it as a leisure pursuit and not as a competitive activity.

Rogaines include people with all levels of fitness, with ages ranging from young children to over 60 years. Family teams, some with young children, regularly participate and the categories for awarding place getters include juniors, families, women, veterans (over 45), and super veterans (over 50).

For more information see the ACT Rogaining Association website: <http://act.rogaine.asn.au/>

Emma Murray



A team planning their route before starting.

All photos from the 12-hour Spring Rogaine, held 12 November 2005 in southern Namadgi National Park.

HighFire project underway

Three years after bushfires swept through the high country, the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre has begun trials to get a better understanding of the effect of wildfire on the environment. The study, known as the HighFire project, aims to provide a scientific base to the land and fire management practices used by high country landholders for more than 150 years and collate data on the effects grazing and mosaic fire burning have on bush and water.

One of the scientists behind the study, Professor Mark Adams of the University of New South Wales, said the project builds on valuable information gathered by landholders, bushfire volunteers and others. In addition to understanding how grazing and mosaic fire burning affect the bush, the study will look at how these affect water yield.

"Water yield from this high country is vitally important for the whole of the

rest of Australia," he said, adding that this was the headwaters of the Murray and the Snowy rivers, and since fire changes the water yield, we "have to worry about what the fire regime is if we are to properly manage the water. Immediately after fire we see an increase in water and then followed by a very long-term and sustained reduction in water yield. That's been well known for some time but up here in these landscapes we have very poor knowledge of how fire and water yield interact."

"This really started when I chaired the inquiry into the 2003 bushfires and we did come to this region and have a look at the Snowy Plains area and the impact on the Kosciuszko National Park adjacent to it," the Federal Member for Eden-Monaro, Mr Gary Nairn, said.

"A lot of the time people think reports sort of gather dust and this is one inquiry personally that I was

determined was not going to gather any dust because it was just too crucial to the future that we learnt from what occurred in 2003."

Professor Adams said the first of the results will be available in three years, but the most significant and valuable data will take 20 years to collate.

Graeme Wicks

River red gum national parks: your help is needed!

Nick Roberts from the Victorian National Parks Association is currently working on the Red Gum Icons Project. The VNPA has been actively campaigning for nature conservation in Victoria since 1952 and now you have the opportunity to become further involved in creating a more sustainable future for us all.

New River Murray national parks are a step closer. The Victorian Environment Assessment Council (VEAC) study into the river red gum along the River Murray and its major tributaries has finally published its long awaited discussion paper. The second round of public consultation has started, this is your chance to have a say on the future conservation and management of our iconic river red gums.

You can write a few lines or a couple of pages, but the more submissions received by VEAC calling for new red gum national parks, the greater chance of ensuring the survival of numerous threatened species dependant on river red gum.

If you have ever camped, fished, walked or boated along the Murray, Goulburn or Ovens Rivers, you will know how special these places are. New national parks will create opportunities for joint-management with Indigenous communities as well as improving the health of the River Murray and its ailing red gum forests.

The key issues are:

- River red gum areas need protecting from timber cutting to protect threatened species like the superb parrot, the squirrel glider and the carpet python to provide large old trees for habitat.
- The Yorta Yorta and other Indigenous Nations along the River Murray have many thousands of years of heritage and connection to their traditional country. There is a need for joint management of new national parks, particularly Barmah-Millewa, the largest river red gum forest in the world.
- Over 95 per cent of red gum timber cut from these forests is firewood, woodchips or garden sleepers, all

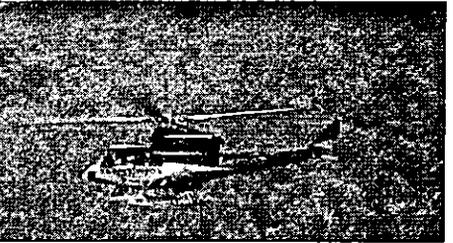
low value and easily replaced through plantation-based timber.

Recent government reports show that 75 per cent of river red gum is stressed, dead or dying. What is left must be protected now! Cattle grazing in wetlands and along rivers pollutes them, spreads weeds and reduces river health and water quality. Tell VEAC that grazing of cattle should be excluded from all river and wetlands in River Red gum areas.

*Submissions close on Monday,
7 December 2006.*

Neville Esau

Pat's Brindabella jaunt, Sunday 1 October 2006



The party: Pat Miethke (leader), Barbara Edgar, Chris Paterson, and Max Lawrence (who took the photos).

On a gorgeous sunny day, four of us assembled for my walk into the Northern Brindabellas, an area I've never walked in before. Max took us in his 4WD and then we walked along the Baldy Range fire trail to a rocky outcrop with a magnificent view of the whole Brindabella National Park. There is a photo of me with a big grin and a map and two strong legs. Then we set off down the ridge to Mountain Creek, chatting happily about the upcoming World Rogaining Champs and how I was going to win the Womens Supervets category.



It was a very long way down (400m), fairly steep and rough, and some of the late wattles were still in bloom. Near the bottom of the ridge I turned suddenly to follow Max traversing across a steep loose slope. It all happened in a flash — I was falling, I felt a wrench in my ankle, and I heard my voice shrieking. So fast. In retrospect, I think my left foot slipped away down the slope, throwing my weight suddenly on my dodgy right knee, which gave way under me, and I sat down with my right leg trapped beneath me.

I pulled my leg free and there was a horrible lump at the front of the ankle and my foot just hung sideways from it. I knew I'd just lost my chance to be a World Rogaine Champion.

Shock set in immediately. I could still think, and I knew what had to be done with my leg and to rescue me, but I was too giddy and nauseous to help and the others' voices seemed to come

from a vast distance away. Barbara bandaged my ankle and foot, and we had lots of fun getting my shoe back on again. Chris harvested saplings, Max went down the ridge and marked out a spot in the creek bed with a bright yellow rain cape for the helicopter crew to see, then the three of them splinted my leg with sticks and rolls of tape. I dragged myself down the rest of the ridge on my backside, determined to get to an open area before I deteriorated even further. Barbara cleared the major branches and rocks out of my way, and surprisingly my leg didn't hurt all that much, but the shock symptoms were extreme, I felt dreadful.

The accident happened about 11:30 am. At noon, Max and Barbara set off back up the ridge to the rocky top to arrange a rescue using Max's CDMA phone, and Chris sat with me and I asked her to tell me her life's story to pass the time. As we chatted I slowly started to feel more normal. I was quite confident they would at least get a medic in to me before nightfall, and hopefully chopper me out, as to stretcher me 3km down Mountain Creek to Doctors Flat Road would take a small army and many hours.

Just before 2.00 pm we heard a helicopter, and then saw it. It circled high around the valley, then went off. The sound died. Oh, they can't get in here. Then we heard the chopper coming back, loud and low, and saw it coming down the creek through the trees, incredibly low. Hovering overhead, it seemed huge. The downdraft whipped up a crazy storm and a dead shrub came down on top of me and I struggled with its branches. The chopper filled the entire air space above us and trees were whipping only metres from the rotor blades. A pause, then two feet appeared, then a medic slid down on a rope. Another pause, two more feet appeared, and a second medic slid down with a massive pack of gear. The chopper moved away to give us some breathing space.

The medics decided I was in good enough condition not to spend time treating me, they would just get me to hospital. They explained the winching procedure, and debated whether or not they could take Chris out as well. The guys were a bit edgy: "There's five tons of metal above our heads and if it

comes down then it's all over for all of us." They radioed the chopper back in, and the incredibly noisy dusty whirlwind of its downdraft returned. They dropped a sling, which went under my arms and between my legs and the medic clipped on alongside me. It was wonderful being winched up into the heavens in the arms of a big, strong, handsome man. Doesn't happen often. But I had to squint against the ferocious downdraft and flying dust. I saw the skids and the bottom of the door frame above our heads and we started to spin, then the medic had a couple of grabs and managed to grasp hold of the door frame and the winch operator dragged me into the chopper and across the floor out of the way. I dragged myself across to the far seat and the medic strapped me in while the second medic was winched up with Chris and all the gear. The pilot was calmly holding the chopper absolutely stationary in its precarious position with trees thrashing just out of reach of the rotors. But I think all four guys were glad when it was time to say "Let's get out of here."

It was a glorious afternoon for the seven-minute flight to Canberra Hospital. We flew up the ridge and passed close to Max and Barbara waving on their rocky hill top, flew over farmland, then Lake Burley Griffin came into sight and I got caught in a time warp and expected for some reason to land at the old Canberra Hospital by the lake and was surprised when we flew to Woden instead. At the hospital I was not able to move my foot at all in any direction, and an X-ray showed three separate breaks in my ankle and leg bones.

My heartfelt thanks go to Barbara and Chris for their wonderful help at the scene, to Max for arranging my rescue (he probably enjoyed the challenge), to the ambulance coordinators who organised the chopper, and most of all to the crew of the Snowy Hydro Southcare helicopter who put their lives and their skills on the line to rescue me incredibly quickly. Thank you all.

Pat Miethke

On behalf of all members, we wish Pat a speedy recovery. (ed)

Batemans Marine Park Draft Zoning Plan on exhibition

In the March Bulletin we brought you information on the NSW Government's proposals for the Batemans Bay Marine Park. Here is an update on progress towards the marine park from the NPA NSW Journal.

Time is running out for the NSW Government to make a difference for future generations, writes Paul Winn, NPA NSW Marine Sanctuaries Campaigner.

The 85,000 hectare Batemans Marine Park was declared in April. This declaration did little in the way of conservation, other than vesting its management in the Marine Parks Authority, a triumvirate agency made up of the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), Department of Primary Industries-Fisheries (DPI), and the Premier's Office.

A Draft Zoning Plan is now on exhibition for public comment that will establish the regulations for the park and sets aside areas for protection from fishing and anchoring in Sanctuary Zones and areas for commercial fishing restrictions in Habitat Protection Zones. The Draft Plan sets aside only 20 per cent of the park as Sanctuary, a poor conservation outcome following in the footsteps of the Draft Zoning Plan for the Port Stephens-Great Lakes Marine Park.



Sanctuary Zones should conserve the many natural marine wonders in the Batemans Marine Park for this and future generations. Instead we fear that the chance for a major step forward in marine conservation is slipping away.

The park itself includes areas of enormous conservation significance such as the Murramarang coast; intermittently open coastal lakes such as Durras, Coila, Brunderee, Tarourga and Brou; the Clyde River and Batemans Bay; Tollgate Islands; Tuross Lake; Wagonga Inlet and Wallaga

Lake; and the waters around Montague Island. Many of the most important areas for marine conservation

have been overlooked for protection due to the noisy clamour of fishermen and the myopia developed by most incumbent governments before elections. One of the most important areas overlooked for protection is Montague Island. The conservation significance of the area speaks for itself:

- Habitat for the critically endangered Grey Nurse Shark
- The most northerly haul-out site in NSW for the vulnerable Australian Fur Seal
- One of the most important seabird breeding islands in NSW
- The second largest Little Penguin breeding site in Australia
- Breeding area for the Sooty Oystercatcher, the Wandering Albatross and the Fleshy-Footed Shearwater.

The waters around the island also harbour a rich marine life with a very high diversity of marine algae as well as sponges, coral, nudibranchs, gorgonians, ascidians, bryozoans and sea tulips brought south by warm northern currents.

This government is suggesting the conservation of only a few dozen hectares around the island. Since the extremely high marine biodiversity around the island includes plentiful fish, it is a popular fishing spot.

Submissions on the draft zoning plan were due by mid-October 2006. Important areas recommended in the NPA [NSW] zoning plan option, such as Montague Is., must be protected in sanctuaries. Add your voice and write to the NPWS asking for further protected zones.

With thanks to Margaret Chidgey, editor NPA NSW Journal.





NPA OUTINGS PROGRAM

December 2006 — March 2007

Outings Guide

Distance grading (per day)

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

Terrain grading

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

Day walks: Carry lunch, drinks and protective clothing.

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

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

Other activities include nature rambles and environmental and field guide studies.

Passenger transport. The committee suggests a donation, to the nearest dollar, of THIRTY SIX cents per kilometre.

This is based on four occupants in the car including the driver. When odd numbers arise, the total contribution is divided by the number of cars. The amount may be varied at the discretion of the leader. Drive and walk distances quoted in the program are approximate distances for return journeys.

Points to note

Please help keep our outings program alive by volunteering to lead outings. New leaders are welcome. The outings convener is happy to suggest locations suitable for a walk if you do not have something in mind yourself. Feel free to send in suggestions for outings to the association's office as soon as you think of them, with a suggested date.

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

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

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

8-10 December Car Camp
Return to Snowy Plain
Joint KHA/NPA activity
Leader: Graham Scully
Contact: 6230 3352 or

scullymobs@netspeed.com.au

This is a repeat of a successful weekend of car camping, walking and exploring shared by members of KHA and NPA in April 2004. Since then, more historical research including site visits by stockman Henry Willis and CSIRO rabbit researchers has gathered more information and the plan is to share this new information with interested members. On Saturday, we will visit sites of significance to the European uses of the Botheram Plain, the CSIRO rabbit research hut and study site on the Gungahlin River.

Sunday will include a walk to Davey's hut featuring morning tea hosted by Pauline Downing and others of the caretaker group followed by a walk led by Phillip Crampton along part of the old track that led from Davey's hut to the Burrungubugee (or Back) River.

This track was revealed by the 2003 fires. The return walk will follow the water race that leads to a "turkey" dam that fed the gold workings of Diggers creek.

Those wanting an easier walk can choose to search with Graham for Campbells hut site on a tributary of Campbells creek. Please send your indicative interest soon with contact details to Graham Scully.

9 December Saturday
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group
Work and Christmas Party

Contact: Syd Comfort 6286 2578,
scomfort@netspeed.com.au
or Clive Hurlstone
0407 783 422,
clive.hurlstone@csiro.au

Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre, Tharwa at 9.15 am or Yankee Hat car park at 10.00am Work in the regeneration area in the morning. Tools will be provided.

Stay on for a Christmas lunch, which will be provided, to be enjoyed in the shade of the regenerating trees (or at Frank and Jack's Hut). The afternoon will conclude with a leisurely check on the progress of some of the recently planted areas.



NPA Christmas Party

Sunday, 10 December

Orroral Valley

from 11.30am



Contact: NPA committee members

This year we plan to hold our Christmas Party at the Orroral Valley Campground.

All the usual features. Bring your picnic lunch and Christmas cheer—nibbles, Christmas cake and some drinks will be on hand.

We will hold a short walk to see the Orroral Homestead and the river. Check *Burning Issues* for details.

17 December Sunday Day Walk
Teddy's Hut

Map: Chimneys Ridge 1:25 000

Grading: 3 A/B

Leader: Brian Slee

Contact: 6281 0719 (h) or

brianslee@iprimus.com.au

Depart 6.45am Wanniasa Shops, Langdon Ave (cnr Rylah Cr, opp. Red Rooster). Drive 5km south of Thredbo to Dead Horse Gap. Follow Australian Alps Walking Track (Cascade Trail) via Crackenback River and Bobs Ridge to Cascade Creek. Lunch among snowgums at the much-loved hut. Feral horse area. A couple of steep climbs in the 17km walk but great views of Chimneys Ridge and Ramshead Range and chance to check recovery after 2003 fires. Afternoon tea in Jindabyne. Drive: 420km, \$150 per car, plus Park entry fee for vehicles without a permit.

14 January 2007 Sunday Walk
Southern Ramshead

Map: Perisher Valley 1:25 000

Grading: 2 A/C

Leader: Brian Slee

Contact: 6281 0719 (h) or

brianslee@iprimus.com.au

Depart Wanniasa Shops, Langdon Ave (cnr Rylah Cr, opp. Red Rooster) 6.30am. Park at Charlotte Pass. Descend to and cross Snowy River, climb Mt Clarke, contour south of Mt Northcote and climb Muellers Peak (latter optional). After break, descend to Lake Albina for lunch. Return via Northcote Pass and Club Lake Creek. Great views, wildflowers. Several steep climbs. Afternoon tea Jindabyne. Book with leader as

weather check essential. Numbers limited. Return distance 420km, cost per car \$150 plus Park entry fee for vehicles without entry permit.

20 January Sunday Day Walk

Brindabella Ramble

Map: ACT 1:100 000

Grading: 3 A

Leader: Steven Forst

Contact: 6251 6817(h)

6219 5236(w) or

steven.forst@acma.gov.au

Meet at the forest car park on Uriarra Rd near the Cotter Road at 8:30am. A walk in the mountain forests along Old Mill Road and Wark's Road in the Brindabella range. Visit the cooler south facing folds of the Brindabella range including areas that escaped significant damage during the fires. Drive 85 km, \$30 per car.

26-29 January Pack Walk

Joint FBI / NPA activity

Yalwal to Quiera via Ettrema

Maps: Yalwal & Touga 1:25 000

Grading: 1/2 C/D/E/F

Leader: Eric and Pat Pickering

Contact: 6286 2128 or

pater@tpg.com.au

An adventurous four days in Morton National Park with the FBI. From the Yarramunmun fire trail between Nerriga and Sassafras, we shall walk to Bundundah Creek (Jenny Atkins selection) via Diggers Flat, Morley Saddle and Atkinson spur for Camp 1. Second day, Twelve Apostles spur, Packhorse Pass, Dog Leg Cave, Cinch Creek, to camp in Ettrema. Third day will be along Ettrema Creek, probably to Transportation Spur, which will be our exit point on day 4. Opportunities for swimming. The walking will be scrubby with rock scrambles and some steep climbs. 4WDs/AWDs required for Yarramunmun fire trail. If possible, we would like to leave Canberra on Thursday evening so we can make an early start on Friday. Transport TBA. Please contact leaders by 19 January. Numbers limited.

31 January Wednesday Walk

Leader: David Large

Contact: 6291 4830 or

egrald@grapevine.com.au

First Wednesday walk for the year. A good opportunity to walk off the Christmas pudding. Those on the list should look out for the Wednesday



NPA ACT ENVIRONMENT MONITORING FORM

How can you help the NPA ACT monitor and prevent environmental problems and illegal activities in our national parks and nature reserves?

By carrying a copy of our 'Monitoring Form' with you when you venture out into the bush you are ready to record any environmental problems or illegal activities you might observe and to help monitor the general well-being of the park environment. The information you record on the form will help the NPA ACT preserve fragile ecosystems and Aboriginal and European cultural heritage sites and provide a safer environment for everyone to enjoy these last refuges for nature. You will also help the NPA ACT's Environment Sub-committee address some serious problems facing our national parks and nature reserves and provide a valuable reference for current and future campaign work.

Environmental problems and illegal activities include:

- **Feral animals** such as horses, pigs, dogs, rabbits, foxes, deer, goats and cats. These feral animals compete with or prey upon native animals, may damage native vegetation and habitats, cause soil erosion, or spread diseases and weeds. By recording sightings of, or damage caused by, feral animals, we can help the Parks Service focus eradication efforts within our national parks and nature reserves.
- **Infestations** of weeds displace native vegetation and animal communities. A weed is any introduced plant, whether exotic or native to another part of Australia, which is not local to the area eg. willows, wild pines, blackberry.
- **Illegal access** by motorised vehicles, bicycles or horses in areas restricted to self-reliant activities such as bushwalking and cross-country skiing.
- **Other illegal activities** such as shooting, trapping and smuggling of wildlife, removal of timber, plants and rocks (which provide habitat for native animals), dumping of rubbish, and lighting of fires during a Total Fire Ban.

After reporting the environmental problem or illegal activity to the authorities, could you please send or fax the completed *Monitoring Form* to the NPA ACT office at PO Box 1940 WODEN ACT 2606, fax (02) 6282 5813, e-mail npaact@bigpond.com.

WARNING: If you observe what you believe to be an illegal activity, you should **not** approach or challenge those observed, but keep a reasonable distance away, or act in an uninterested manner if close eg. passing on a 4WD track. If you have a mobile phone with you contact the parks service and police immediately. A quick call could allow rangers or the police to 'meet' the offenders on the way out. Otherwise, contact the parks service and police as soon as you return home. The authorities are always keen to get information on illegal activities as soon as possible as it greatly increases the chance of apprehending offenders and getting a conviction.

PARKS, CONSERVATION AND LANDS (etc)

Canberra Nature Park: Northside 6207 2113; Southside 6207 2087

Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve: 6205 1233

Namadgi NP: Tharwa 6207 2900; Bendora 6247 8153; Corin 6247 8146

Kosciusko NP: Jindabyne 02 6450 5600; Perisher Valley 02 6457 5214; Tumut 02 6947 7025;
Khancoban 02 6076 9373; Yarrangobilly 02 6454 9597

Brindabella National Park: 6298 0356

ACT Forests: 6207 2498

POLICE PHONE NUMBERS:

Canberra area: 11 444

Monaro area including Adaminaby, Cabramurra, Jindabyne, Perisher and Thredbo: 02 6452 0099

Khancoban: 02 6076 9433

Talbingo: 02 6949 5244

Tumut: 02 6947 7199



NPA ACT ENVIRONMENT MONITORING FORM

For recording environmental problems and illegal activities

Your name and contact information.	
Brief description of environmental problem or illegal activity observed. For illegal vehicular access include registration number (if possible), colour, type and make of vehicle(s).	
Area name where you observed problem or activity. (eg. Sams Creek Fire Trail in Namadgi NP. Include grid reference.)	
Date and time of observation.	
Did you contact the Parks Service or police? Who did you speak with? What was their response?	
Do you have any documentary evidence eg photos? Can you provide us with copies?	
Further comments (attach additional pages if necessary).	

For NPA ACT office use only

Date received and action taken:	
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walks email else check the NPA website closer to the date.

**4 February Sunday Walk
Snowy Mountains – Wildflower
ramble from Charlotte Pass**
Map: Perisher Valley 1:25 000
Grading 2 A/C/E
Leader: Steve Hill
Contact: 6231 9186 or
landshil@webone.com

If we get any rain ... this is a chance for those who missed out last year to see some magnificent wildflower sights. We drive to Charlotte Pass carpark (2½ hours) and will wander around the moraines surrounding Hedley Tarn, and the Blue Lake, pop up to Carruthers Peak for some views as well as more wildflowers, and then down to Club Lake to return along Club Lake creek to the cars. There are over 30 species of wildflower unique to the Snowy Mountains and many can be found in bloom around this area. The walk will require fitness, will be largely off track and will involve regular climbs. It brings with it an early start and late return to Canberra, but the sights are supremely rewarding. Contact Steve Hill by Friday evening to register and for details of the meeting place. This will proceed only if the weather is likely to be clear. Drive 400 kms: \$140 per car

**10 February Saturday work party
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group**
Contact: Syd Comfort 6286 2578,
scomfort@netspeed.com.au
or Clive Hurlstone
0407 783 422,
clive.hurlstone@csiro.au
Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre,
Tharwa at 9:15am or Yankee Hat
carpark at 10:00am. Work for the
rehabilitation of the old Boboyan pine
forest area. Tools will be provided.

**11 February Sunday Walk
The Big Hole and Marble Arch**
Map: Kain 1:25 000
Grading: 3 A
Leader: Steven Forst
Contact: 6251 68178 (h)
6219 5236 (w) or
steven.forst@acma.gov.au
Meet at Canberra Railway station
at 8:00am. After crossing the
Shoalhaven River, a walk on track
mainly through open forest to visit the
large sink hole (over 110m deep)
known as the Big Hole. Continue on

to the Marble Arch a limestone feature
at the entrance to a narrow limestone
gorge. Drive 180 km, \$64 per car.

17–28 February Car Camp
Place: Victorian Alps
Leaders: Adrienne Nicholson
and Di Thompson
Contact: Adrienne 6281 6381
Dianne 6288 6084

Two base camps are proposed.
One on the Wellington River outside
Licola, and the other in the vicinity of
Holmes Plain (on the road to Mt
Howitt). There will be a range of
walks from very easy to hard. This is
the heart of the Victorian gorges and
high plains country to the west of
Lake Tali Karng. The trip is suitable
for 2WD vehicles, but there are a lot
of dirt roads. Advice from Parks
Victoria is that only one camp site will
squeeze in a caravan, so it's tents for
the rest of us. Participants will need to
make their own assessment of the road
conditions. Once there, it's mostly
walking, socialising, swimming and
birding with a number of car shuffles.

Limit of 10 vehicles due to
limited camping space. Contact
leaders early to book.

**18 February Sunday Walk
Snowy Mountains—Two
Ramsheads**
Map: Mt Kosciuszko 1:50 000
Grading: 3 A/C/E
Leader: Steve Hill
Contact: 623 19186 or
landshil@webone.com.au

A day of fabulous views. This
will proceed only if the weather is
likely to be good. We drive to
Thredbo (2½ hours) and catch the
chair to the top of Crackenback. We
trek direct to Ramshead (2190m—
fourth highest "peak") for superb
views south of the Snowys. We stroll
along the main range and climb North
Ramshead for more delightful views.
The walk will require good fitness,
will be off track and will involve some
short steep climbs. It brings with it an
early start and a late return, but the
sights and flowers are absolutely
worth it. Ring Steve Hill by Friday
evening to register and for details of
the meeting place. Drive 400 kms:
\$140 per car.

**24–25 February, Saturday and
Sunday Work Party
Cotter Valley**
Leader: Martin Chalk
Contact: 6292 3502

This work party will be a
reconnaissance for wilding pines in
the vicinity of the old arboretum in the
Cotter Valley. The area is about 3km
square and is within the tree line,
about 1km north of the Cotter House.
Most of the pines are expected to be
large, so removal will be left until a
later date. The work party will extend
over two days, with camping in the
grounds of the Cotter House. For
those who cannot stay overnight,
return transport will be available on
Saturday night—no Sunday-only
option is available. If you have a GPS,
please bring it along. Please confirm
with the leader by 20 February. Meet
at the Namadgi Visitors' Centre at
9:00am. Drive: 86km, \$30 per car.

28 February Wednesday Walk
Leader: Mike Smith
Contact: 6286 2984 or
msmith@netspeed.com.au

Details to be advised by the
midweek walks email or contact the
leader.

**4 March, Sunday Work Party
Naas Creek area**
Leader: Martin Chalk
Contact: 6292 3502

This work party will be a continuation
of the 18 November work party, and is
a part of the NNP task to rid the Naas
Creek of woody weeds. The area of
operation will be down stream of the
Mt Clear campground and will
involve cutting and dabbing of briars
and blackberry. If time permits, we
will also move upstream from the
Boboyan Rd. in a reconnaissance of
the creek banks. All tools and
equipment will be provided, just bring
an appetite for weed control. Meet at
the Namadgi Visitors' Centre at
9:00am.

Drive: 160km, \$56 per car.

**10–12 March Pack Walk
Budawangs
Maps: Endrick and Corang
1:25 000**

Grade: 3 A/D/E

**Leader: Philip Gatenby
Contact: 6254 3094(h) or**

jandp.gatenby@optusnet.com.au

A three day walk in the Budawangs from either the Wog Wog or Nerriga entrance to Morton National Park. The exact location of the walk will depend on the water situation closer to the time. The walk will be partly on tracks but will also involve rock scrambling and negotiating thick scrub. Contact leader no later than Wednesday 7 March. Drive about 250km.

**10 March Saturday work party
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group
Contact: Syd Comfort 6286 2578,
scomfort@netspeed.com.au
or Clive Hurlstone
0407 783 422,
clive.hurlstone@csiro.au**

Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre, Tharwa at 9:15am or Yankee Hat car park at 10:00am. Work for the rehabilitation of the old Boboyan pine forest area. Tools will be provided.

**11 March Sunday Walk
Border basalt and other
geological and historical
sites**

Map: Shannons Flat 1:25 000

Grading: 2 A/B/C/F

Leader: Robert Abel

Contact: 6254 3942 or

jinveen@goldweb.com.au

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.00am. Walk starts at the gate beside Boboyan Road 100m north of the ACT/NSW border. Proceed NW along the border via Wrights Hill to the border basalt for lunch and discussion. In the afternoon continue NW along the border divide to explore for more evidence of border markers, then return to the cars via Grassy Creek fire trail and Westermans Hut. Drive approx 160km, \$56 per car.

**17–19 March long weekend Car
Camp**

Wapengo

Map: Eden State Forests map

Leader: Adrienne Nicholson

Contact: 6281 6381

An outing to a well-loved camping area on private land north of Tathra. Long-term members will remember this as one of the many places the late

Ian Currie favoured. Situated on Wapengo Inlet and next to Mimosa Rocks National Park it is a great area for coastal scenery—walk, swim, fish, canoe, birdwatch, botanise, explore the rocky coast and hinterland, etc. Bush camping with no facilities; participants need to bring water and firewood.

Numbers will be limited, so contact leader early to book and for information and directions.

**17–19 March Canoe Trip and
Walk**

Talbingo Reservoir

Maps: Ravine 1:25 000,

Yarrangobilly 1:25 000 or

Yarrangobilly 1:100 000

Leader: Mike Bremers

Contact: 6292 3408(h),

6283 2052(w) or

mcbremers@optusnet.com.au

A repeat of the trip last March. See article in the June 2006 NPA *Bulletin*. Paddle 4 km from O'Hare's Rest Area (Sue City) to a lovely campsite (accessible only by water) by lunchtime on the Saturday, then an optional afternoon paddle, walk and/or rest. On Sunday there will be an optional walk up a nearby mountain (perhaps Pinbeyan depending on conditions). Expect a 600m steep climb and an 8km walk. Return to cars Monday morning. Suitable for beginners, BYO canoe or hire (try Wetspot in Fyshwick). If interested contact leader by previous Sunday to organise transport and canoes. Limit: 10. Return drive 500km. Transport \$180 per car.

**24–25 March Weekend pack
walk**

Tantangara

Map: Denison, Tantangara

1:25 000

Grading: 2 B/C

Leader: David Large

Contact: 6291 4830 or

egerald@grapevine.com.au

Walk from Tantangara Road over the Blackfellow's and Blanket Hills ridge then drop down to camp on the headwaters of Tantangara Creek. On Sunday, climb Mt Tantangara before following the Monaro Range back to the cars. Area burnt during Jan 2003 fires, so walking should be through open forest and alpine meadows. Drive 300 kms. \$108 per car.

28 March Wednesday Walk

Leader: Philip Gatenby

Contact: 6254 3094(h) or

jandp.gatenby@optusnet.com.au

Details to be advised by the midweek walks email list or contact the leader.

31 March Saturday Walk

Brandy Flat Hut

Map: Michelago 1:25 000

Grading: 1 A

Contact: 6251 68178(h)

6219 5236(w) or

steven.forst@acma.gov.au

A walk to celebrate Frank Clements eightieth year. Meeting at Kambah Village Shops at 9:00am. Drive 90 km. \$32 per car.

Preliminary notice

"Midweek" Pack Walk, probably May
Yerranderie and Kowmung River
Maps: Yerranderie 1:25 000 and
others

Grading: 3 C/D/E/F

Leader: Mike Smith

Contact: 6286 2984 or

msmith@netspeed.com.au

Mike is planning a trip to the Yerranderie area, probably a week in May. He is looking for expressions of interest. Start from Government Town camping area (explore derelict silver mining area, climb Yerranderie peak). Then 4 or 5 day pack walk around the Kowmung River area. Route and final details will be determined closer to the event. Access to Yerranderie is from the Goulburn to Oberon road by 2WD in dry weather but 4WD is recommended.

Biosurvey in Coleambally

The NPA NSW are establishing strong community links through their work in community biodiversity surveys. This article from the NPA NSW Journal describes a community survey recently carried out in the Murrumbidgee catchment, a region where loss of biodiversity has been particularly acute. Perhaps there are lessons and pointers for NPA ACT to take up this challenge with the diminishing resources from the ACT Government devoted to these aspects of our conservation heritage in the ACT.

The NPA-West [NSW] project along with Kate Shearer, Biosurveys Project Officer, ran a successful biosurvey workshop in Coleambally on Wednesday 24 May. The workshop was well attended by 45 landowners from the district and staff members of the Coleambally Irrigation Corporation.

The presentation given by NPA-West explained what biodiversity is, what causes species to become threatened and the important role of environmental services in a healthy, functioning landscape.

One of the key aims of NPA-West is to establish landscape linkages across all land tenures. These are important to provide connectivity for biodiversity protection. Organisms must be able to move in order to forage, migrate and disperse to locate new territory or other habitat resources.

The Coleambally Irrigation Area is in the lower Murrumbidgee catchment and has been heavily cleared for irrigated rice production. All remnant vegetation on private land is critical to form landscape linkages to nearby vegetated crown land and state forests.

The irrigation corporation has employed the Australian Museum to conduct a series of biodiversity surveys over a five-year period. These have identified some important habitat areas for threatened species in the district and a number of key recommendations for their protection and enhancement.

The corporation is managing a biodiversity incentives scheme funded through the Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority.

The community is keen to undertake their own survey work so they gain a better knowledge of the local biodiversity issues. Six threatened fauna species have been recorded in the area, including the southern bell frog,

superb parrot, diamond firetail, grey-crowned babbler, large-footed myotis and the inland forest bat. Nine threatened plant species and one endangered ecological community have also been recorded.

Rick Webster, an ecologist from the local area, assisted with the field trip in the afternoon. He demonstrated the range of trapping and measuring tools that can be used during a baseline biosurvey.

Landholders used the data sheets provided in the NPA baseline biosurvey manual to gain an understanding of the methods of information collection. This type of hands-on activity is critical to increasing community understanding of the complexity of natural systems in the Australian landscape. It also helps make more informed decisions with land management and encourages successful implementation of biodiversity incentive schemes.

western NSW will help restore functioning landscapes by maintaining existing mature links to vegetated remnants. The protection of vegetated crown land is also vital for western NSW biodiversity.

NPA-West has also joined a group of organisations exploring options for protecting conservation values in travelling stock routes and reserves. The Green Leasing concept is only in its infancy but the expertise around the table will no doubt come up with some good directions.

The project is being considered by the Grassy Box Woodland Conservation Management Network, WWF Threatened Species Network, Rural Lands Protection Board, University of NSW Institute of Environmental Studies, Federal Biodiversity Facilitator and NPA-West. More information will be available as the project rolls out.



Rick Webster with some of the trapping and measuring tools that can be used in a baseline biosurvey. Photo: Kate Shearer

Other activities

The NPA-West project was introduced to the NSW Roadside Environment Committee at a meeting in Sydney in early May. Roadside vegetation, travelling stock routes and the "paper" road reserves across private property are all critical pieces of the landscape linkage mosaic in western NSW. This was demonstrated using some of the Landsat mapping produced by Carmel Flint for the NPA crown land project.

The protection of woodland remnants on roadside reserves in

NPA-West has also been successful in receiving funding from The Dara Foundation and The Wilderness Society WildCountry Small Grants Program. The program aims to support community groups involved in landscape scale conservation projects in southern Australia focused on understanding, protecting and restoring important ecological processes and connections at the national, regional and local scale.

**With thanks to Margaret Chidgey,
editor, NPA NSW Journal**

Camping and skiing in the 1940s – Part 2



Geof Hall's memories of his outdoors activities in the Canberra region 60 years ago continue. Geof arrived in Canberra in 1942, and while he pursued a distinguished public service career he always got out into the bush with his friends as often as he could.

A one-day hike becomes a four-day ordeal

One trip sticks out in my mind both because it illustrates the dangers of being over-ambitious and the need to apply "bush savvy" when unexpected dangers arise. Four of us — David, Neville, John and I — aimed to climb Mt Tinderry without knowing much about the terrain we would meet. Progress was slow as we had to scramble over a lot of granite rocks. After lunch David and Neville said they were too tired to go on to the summit and would go back to the car. John and I said we would go on as the summit was in sight although there was quite a steep and rough climb to get there.

At this stage the weather was fine but just as we got to the top a mist came up which subsequently turned into steady rain. There was no alternative but to go downhill and spend the night there. By this time it was dark and there was no question of retracing our steps over those boulders so we went down a gentler slope until we got to a small creek.

We had no food left over from lunch and it was important that we had water to drink. Luckily, although a non-smoker, I always carried a box of matches when bushwalking so we lit a fire to keep us warm and slept under a rough shelter made of branches. The next morning was bright and sunny but as we were not sure whether following the creek downstream would lead us to a settlement we decided to go up to the top of the ridge and see which way

would get us to the Cooma road where hopefully we would meet a car going to Canberra. It took us all the rest of the day to get off the mountain with only water to sustain us.

The next morning we had not gone far when we got to a farmhouse and after debating whether to disturb the inhabitants we knocked on the door to be welcomed as the "lost boys". What had happened was that David and Neville had waited in the car until it became dark and started raining, returned to Canberra and reported to the police that we were missing.

The next day the police and the local farmers formed a search-party which had no success by nightfall. They had just regrouped the next day when they heard the news of our arrival. The *Canberra Times* was there as they had heard about our adventures, and I took exception to the term "lost" as we always had a fair idea of where we were and we made our own way out. The article in the paper the next day quotes me as saying that "at no time were we lost".

The assault on Bimberi

One Easter we used cars to get to the old Orroral Homestead. We hiked over the pass which led to the old Cotter Hut and made this our base camp. Not all of us were keen on spending the night in a dilapidated hut which could be inhabited by all sorts of creatures so we pitched tents outside.

One couple set their tent up in a very picturesque spot under a magnificent large gum tree and reluctantly moved to an open space when told it was dangerous. Sure enough half way through the night, which was cold and frosty, there was a big noise and a large branch had broken off the tree and landed just where they had previously pitched their tent!

The next day we climbed up to Bimberi and were rewarded by the magnificent view and the satisfaction of being on the highest point in the ACT. We returned to base camp and then hiked back to the cars at Orroral Homestead.

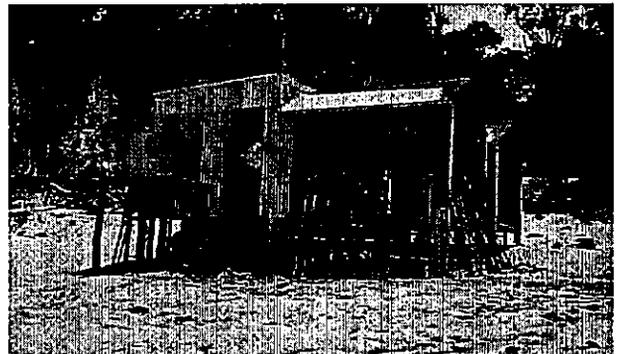
Skiing in the 40s

In the mid-30s a group of skiing enthusiasts formed the Canberra Alpine Club (CAC) using a clubhouse at Mt Franklin as their base. After the War they wished to resume activities and were concerned about lack of numbers. New skis were virtually impossible to buy and even second-hand ones were very expensive.

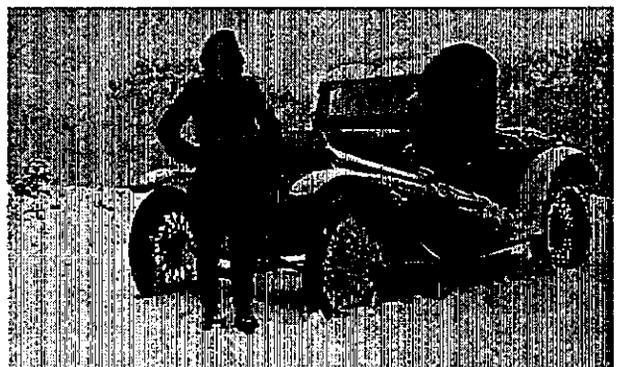
My bushwalking friends were very excited when we heard that the C.A.C. was conducting a ski-making workshop. We started off with billets of mountain ash which had the advantage of resisting scouring but also were very heavy. First of all we shaped them and then steamed them and bent them at the nose and the middle so they were the right shape. We added steel edges to prevent the edges from rounding. Toe plates made by a friendly blacksmith and heel straps rather like those found on modern cross-country skis were added.

These skis served us well in our introduction to skiing at Mt Franklin after several work parties to restore the lodge to liveable condition. Later I used the ski making skill to use fence palings to make rudimentary skis and a sled for my kids which introduced them to the joys of being in the snow.

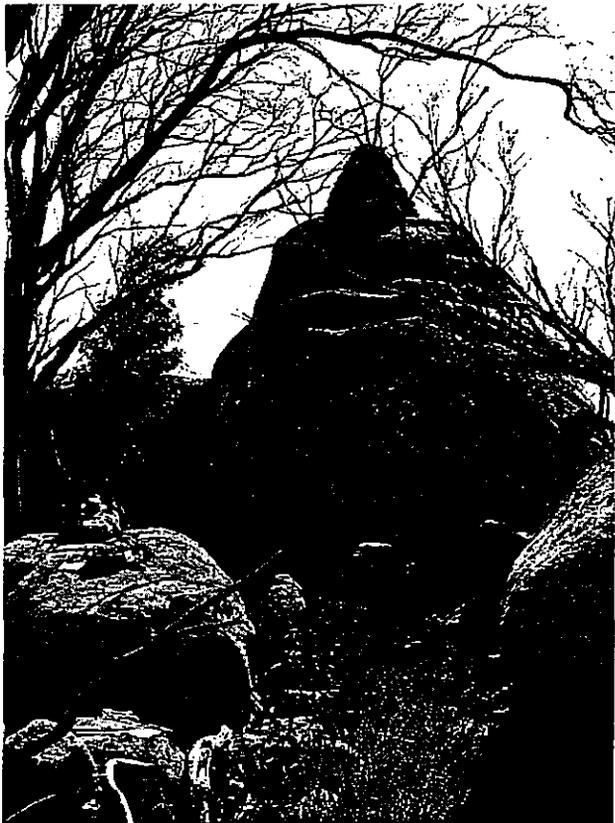
Geof Hall



Photos provided by Geof Hall.



Retracing old steps



constructed. Matthew wryly observed that no significant fires had been through the area in the intervening 102 years!

We gained access to the Smoker's Flat area via the newly aligned walking track — a first for two of us and only the second time for the other two. The re-aligned track certainly offers a less strenuous way to climb the ridge from Smoker's Gap. Once on the ridge, a short diversion to the Orroral Valley lookout also proved to be a first for two of the group. Unbeknownst to us at the time, a trend in retracing infrequent revisits was developing. After another hour or so we were at the base of the final

On Saturday 12 August 2006, four of us set off for a day's walk to McKeahnig Trig, not considering that it might be a day of revisiting past events. The day proved to be interesting, solely based on the inspection of three and a half years of forest re-growth, as this area seems to have been burned as badly as any other. But Margaret Power, Neville Esau, Alan Ray and I were in for more than blackened, fallen logs, rocky ground and prolific shrubby growth.

The only other time I had visited McKeahnig Trig was in October 1998, after Matthew Higgins had written an article about it in this publication. Matthew's research had shown the trig was constructed in 1896 as a part of the NSW Government's wish to map the colony. He also observed, from the remnant signs of construction, that ladders had been made on site and used to access the top of the massive boulder upon which the cairn has been

climb to the tors that mark the domain of the McKeahnig Trig. Some puffing and blowing and occasional stops to take in the vista (and to catch breath) brought the cairn into view. Over lunch and a discussion about the site and its history we pondered the task of getting to the top of the tor upon which the cairn is perched, let alone building it. At this point Alan remarked that he had a photo of "two blokes" astride the cairn. He went on to reveal that he was last at the trig 53 years earlier as a member of the 1st Canberra Rover Crew. With my last visit being eight years earlier and Margaret and Neville never having visited the place before, it left me with a sense of occasion. Boulders, recovering trees and palpable

history — again Namadgi had worked her magic.

Our revelry interrupted by time, the return journey was commenced. Square Rock is a place not frequently visited by any of the group, so a detour was in order. Afternoon tea allowed each to renew old associations with this commanding landscape.

To finish the trip, I elected to return to the car via the old (pre-fire) walking track. It seems that only I had used it before — the day was indeed to end the way it had begun.

On my return home I looked up the *Bulletin* article that Alan had written about the 1953 journey to McKeahnig Trig. Alan concluded with regret that he had not returned. I am happy to have helped him redress his regret.

Martin Chalk

Photo left. Mount McKeahnig Trig. Below. Margaret, Alan and Neville on the way down.

Photos Martin Chalk



Christmas Parties



NPA ACT Christmas Party
Sunday 10 December

Orroral Campground.
Come along and join the festivities to celebrate another busy and productive NPA year.



Gudgenby Bushies Christmas party
See GBRG news, page 18

See outings program for details

The Great Dividing Trail



*View NW from Mt Blackwood,
Mt Macedon on the horizon.*

While it cannot claim to have either the grandeur of the Australian Alpine Walking Trail or the length of the Bibbulmun or Heysen Trails, this 250km Victorian walking track offers access to a very pleasant, historically significant and perhaps seldom visited area of the State. Its name is derived from the fact that it follows the low, south western ridgeline of the Great Dividing Range, and actually divides at Daylesford. The leg of the Y is from Bendigo to Daylesford and the two arm branches are to Ballarat and Bacchus Marsh respectively.



Coliban Main Water Channel.

A considerable part of it passes through the area mined so heavily in the huge gold rush of the mid 19th century, and the evidence is everywhere in the form of shafts, pits, sluiced areas, water races, mullock heaps and the remains of old stone buildings. Unfortunately the miners introduced many exotic plants such as blackberry, gorse, hawthorn, ivy, briar and broom which have now become rampant in some valleys and little attempt at eradication is apparent.

This is a walk through predominantly sclerophyll forest and water tends to be scarce, but there are some picnic sites at which it is available and the trail actually passes through towns such as Castlemaine, Daylesford,

Creswick and Blackwood, and is close to Hepburn Springs. While there are no huts, toilets or tanks as provided on the Bibbulmun Track, there is an abundance of prime (albeit dry) camp sites, and accommodation is available in any of the towns. Many points of access by car means that the walk may be undertaken in stages as day walks as well as in longer stages as a pack walk.

Victorian Rail services each of the three trackhead cities.

Four track brochures are available:

1. The Leganook Track: Bendigo to Castlemaine, 58km
2. The Dry Diggings Track: Castlemaine to Daylesford, 55km
3. The Federation Track: Daylesford to Ballarat, 70km
4. The Lerderberg Track: Daylesford to Bacchus Marsh, 80km.

The Leganook Track: From Bendigo as far as the Sandhurst Reservoir the track passes through open sclerophyll forest. It then follows the big Coliban Main Water Channel for 16 easy km to reach the steepish ascent to Mt Harcourt. The descent to the Calder Highway passes through delightful timbered country on a dedicated foot track. After crossing the highway the track again enters forested country to lead to the centre of Castlemaine.

The Dry Diggings Track: This is the section in which most mining took place. It takes little imagination to appreciate the hardships and privations suffered by the miners in this dry, hilly, forested and rather isolated region which can be bitterly cold, windy or drizzly wet for weeks on end. It is here that feral vegetation has really taken over, but there is also a long section south of Hepburn Springs where the foot track follows the lovely Sailors Creek all the way to Daylesford. Much of the walk follows old water races.

The Federation Track: This section passes through country which was heavily accessed for timber in the nineteenth century and parts of the track utilise the formation of the old train line to Creswick as well as some of the old

timber tramlines. Sailors Falls should be a highlight, but this valley has been overrun by broom and blackberry.

From Mollonghip almost to Creswick there is regrettably a long unavoidable road bash before forest and a mined area are re-entered leading to Creswick. Beyond Creswick the track stays in lightly forested country until reaching the rather ordinary urban outskirts of Ballarat, leading ultimately to the railway station.

The Lederberg Track: This section between Daylesford and Bacchus Marsh is a walker's delight as it provides access via old fire trails, water races and dedicated foot tracks to beautiful, rather wetter forest and views into the deep Lerderberg Gorge. It passes Balt Camp (altitude 855m) which was a camp for Baltic refugee immigrants after WW2. Steep climbs and descents are offered and Whiskey Creek lies at the bottom of one of these.

From Mt Blackwood (altitude 736m) there are huge views to the west, to Mt Macedon, to the Lerderberg Gorge and to Melbourne in the distant east, and the track then starts a descent through forest to follow the western rim of the Lerderberg Gorge for some 13km. Unfortunately little is seen of the old glacial gorge because of the trees lining the trail, but there are several side tracks which offer opportunities to make the steep descent to the gorge floor.

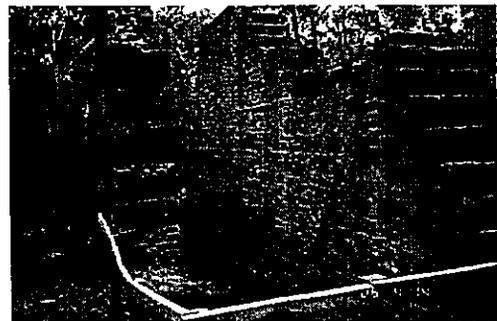
Descending from the Lerderberg ridgeline, the track enters open country, and a final obligatory slog of about 9km, mostly on roads, at least offers very wide views and ends at the Bacchus Marsh railway station.

This is certainly not a hard walk and the open sclerophyll forests, well developed foot tracks and good signage spare walkers from the need to scrub bash or mix it with dense, wet undergrowth or scramble over fallen timber.

Check the web at www.gdt.org.au for further details.

Ted Fleming

*Remains of miners' water wheel.
Photos Ted Fleming*





Mount Owen and Pigeon House

Map reference: Corang 1:25 000

Showers threatened as we (I was accompanied by Brian and Neville) set off from the Wog Wog entrance to Morton National Park. Bushes dampened by overnight rain were overhanging the track where it crossed Wog Wog Creek and wet weather gear had to be worn to avoid a drenching. An hour from the car park we passed a faint track indicated by a small cairn which leads to a lookout called Tinderry View. Nearby a tree in the shape of a Z fallen forward 90 degrees was of interest. Ten minutes beyond the lookout, the track crossed a swamp, re-entered forest and then divided. The left hand fork leads to Corang Lagoon. The rain began in earnest as we took the right hand fork.

Forest soon gave way to the scrub associated with sandstone plateaux. Rain and wet bushes made for heavy going. Near Korra Hill, which is about two and a half hours from the car, we stopped briefly for lunch. Beyond Korra Hill the main track continues to the east of Corang Peak (which was not visible because we could only see about 50 metres ahead) and on to the Conglomerate Slope. Other tracks go over Corang Peak or provide an alternative to the Conglomerate Slope for the descent to Canowie Brook.

We continued on the main track, which was indistinct in places as it approached the slope and care was needed particularly given the low visibility. At the bottom of the slope a boardwalk crosses the swampy sides of Canowie Brook. The track then heads to Burrumbeet Brook by way of a low saddle to the south of the aptly named Profile Rock. By 2pm, cold and wet, and soon after reaching the brook we found a suitable place to camp in a large overhang. It wasn't long before we were joined by two other wet walkers.

25-27 August 2006

Next morning cloud gave way to a sunny day. With day packs we followed the track eastwards up Burrumbeet Brook. Near the source of the brook, and about 15 minutes from the tents the track climbs past Yournga Lookout (a five minute detour to the south but best left until the sun is in the west). More climbing ended on a ridge running towards the cliffs of Bibbenluke Mountain. From the ridge there were views of Mounts Hoddle, Haughton and Tarn.

After about an hour of walking the track passes to the north of Bibbenluke Mountain, on the side of a conical-shaped hill. Twenty minutes further on we reached a well used campsite at the headwaters of the Corang River. Near the campsite a track heads to the east to Monolith Valley and beyond while our track turned northwards to, among other places, Mt Tarn.

The climb towards Mt Tarn was on a ridge which marks the watershed between the Shoalhaven to the west and the Clyde River to the east. There were also good views of the cliffs on the southern side of Mt Tarn and to the east Mt Donjon and Shrouded Gods. Trees obscure the view closer to the cliffs, then at their base the track contours to the east through moist forest where the predominant tree was a type of ash with a smooth creamy trunk bearing "insect" scribbles. After about a hundred metres at the base of the cliffs we turned up a gully which allowed access to Mt Tarn's flat top. It was three hours since we'd left the tents.

The top of Mt Tarn covers over a square kilometre and is swampy in places. Narrow ridges of stone running north to south cross the plateau. With the passage of time many of these rocks have been carved into odd shapes, the most famous of which resembles a giant anvil. From the eastern edge of the plateau we could view the splendour of Hollands Gorge, Mt Talaterang further to the east and the glistening sea. We spent two hours exploring the top of Mt Tarn then retraced our steps to our

campsite, but this time stopped at Yournga Lookout for views over Mounts Owen and Cole, Pigeon House and the Yadboro Valley.

Fog shrouded the Budawangs the following morning. We left the campsite at 8:20 and returned to the base of the Conglomerate Slope where a less used track branches north and follows Canowie Brook to the Corang River. The track crosses the brook a number of times and becomes quite rough as it approaches the Corang River. The area below the junction is known as the Rock Ribs. Reaching the Ribs had taken just over an hour and the fog had finally lifted. The Rock Ribs include small waterfalls and deep pools and negotiating a way through required scrambling down a small rock face. Downstream from the Ribs, the scrub becomes more open and the ground flatter. Another 50 minutes walking and we reached the junction of Broula Creek and the Corang River, where there is a small campsite.

The track continues downstream to Corang Lagoon but by a more direct route than the river. We arrived at the lagoon at 11am for an early lunch and pondered the possibility of a swim. Beyond the lagoon the track again leaves the river in a south-westerly direction. Some four kilometres from the lagoon and after a number of creek crossings (most noticeably Goodsell Creek) we rejoined the Wog Wog Track. We again passed Tinderry View but this time decided to explore the lookout. It's a round outcrop of conglomerate about 100 metres north of the track. The point of access onto the rock is indicated by yellow markers and involves scrambling. From the lookout there are views in most directions but I'm not convinced that we could see the Tinderry Range. By 3pm we'd again crossed Wog Wog Creek and reached the car park.

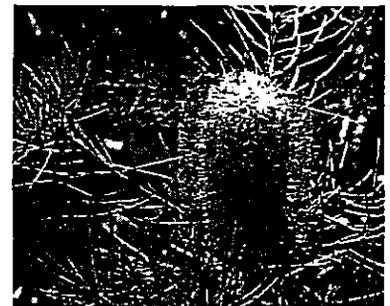
An enjoyable walk through spectacular country, despite the first day's weather. The wildflowers, especially wattle and banksia, were a feature.

Philip Gatenby

Right: Mystery plant: does anyone recognise this shrub?

Far right: The magnificent Banksia spinulosa

Photos Philip Gatenby



20-21 May 2006



boulders. The most northerly seems to be capped with a pile of stones yet does not appear to be the highest. This award went to the second most northerly which in any event was

On reaching Middle Creek we stopped for lunch. From here walking became easier as we made our way downstream. In places faint tracks could be followed and there were a number of clearings. Two of the party saw pigs in one of the clearings. By mid afternoon we'd crossed the creek from Bogong Gap and were again in the Gudgenby Valley. At about 4pm we arrived at our cars.

Philip Gatenby

Maps: *Rendezvous Creek and Yaouk*, 1:25,000 (2nd edition)

Mt Burbidge is an impressive peak in Namadgi National Park—over 1700 metres, capped with large granite boulders and one of the highest mountains completely within the ACT. Our walk started at the car park of the Yankee Hat Track. Soon after crossing Bogong Creek we left the track that goes to the paintings and went in a north-westerly direction, keeping Middle Creek to our right.

This part of the Gudgenby Valley is almost treeless and home to many kangaroos. We were making for the junction of Middle Creek and its main southern tributary, also known as the true right hand tributary of Middle Creek. The plan was to walk upstream to Bogong Gap where this creek rises. Just below the gap is a grassy clearing from where we could climb Mt Burbidge in the afternoon without packs.

Shortly before the creek junction the grass of Gudgenby Valley gradually gives way to forest. We passed a large boulder, about the size of a two-storied house, that was hidden in the trees. On arriving at the creek junction it was pleasing to find that the creek from Bogong Gap was flowing well. The first two kilometres of the walk up this creek was mostly flat and open forest. We then had a steep 300 metre climb to a knoll (map reference 731441). There is a good view of Mt Burbidge from the knoll. Keeping within about 50 metres of the creek, it was a further two kilometres to the clearing through gently rising and open regenerating woodland. Beyond the clearing the climb without packs to Bogong Gap (a rise of 90 metres) took about 15 minutes. Forty minutes later we were at the top of Mt Burbidge.

The mountain has a number of summits formed by large granite

easier to climb. Numerous surrounding peaks could be seen from the top, including Table Top and Jagungal in the distance to the south-west while nearby was Mt Kelly and Mt Namadgi. Prominent to the west were Bimberi, Murray and Morgan. The Gudgenby Valley was clearly visible to the south-east and below us was Rotten Swamp. It appeared to have a number of "cricket pitches". By the time we'd retraced our steps back to the clearing and the tents the sun had all but set. A cold night seemed assured.

As invariably happens, our tents were so placed as to miss most of the morning sun as it cleared the surrounding hills. There was still no sign of the forecast rain. We again walked to Bogong Gap, this time with packs, then descended 130 metres to Rotten Swamp, north of the gap. This strangely-named swamp is the source of Licking Hole Creek and lies between Mounts Kelly, Namadgi and Burbidge. The "cricket pitches" we'd seen the day before from the top of Mt Burbidge turned out to be strips of what looked like shade cloth, which have been laid out on sphagnum moss damaged in the 2003 bushfire. The moss, which was also burnt in the 1983 fire, is undergoing restoration.

Leaving the swamp we passed through a low saddle between Mounts Namadgi and Burbidge where another tributary of Middle Creek rises. We kept to the left hand side of this creek as we headed towards Middle Creek. It was slow going in places, particularly where alpine ash (*E. delegatensis*) regeneration since the 1983 fire had been burnt in the 2003 fire and subsequently fallen.

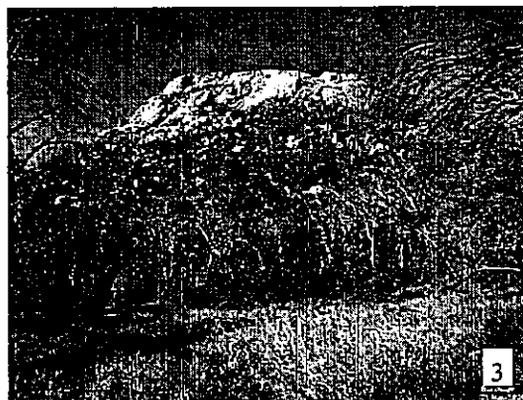
Above left: The summit.

Below: 1. Mount Burbidge lights up the skyline.

2. Climbing Mount Burbidge.

3. Mount Burbidge from Rotten Swamp.

Photos Max Lawrence



PARKWATCH

Jenolan transferred to NPWS

The majority of Jenolan Caves was transferred to NPWS [NSW] management on 1 July following NPA [NSW] supported changes to the *National Parks and Wildlife Act* last year. The area covered by Caves House and the show caves remains under the management of an administrator and will be transferred to NPWS after the plan of management is finalised. Wombeyan, Borenore and Abercrombie caves have also been transferred to NPWS.

The Government recently bought out the 99-year lease for Caves House after the lessee went into receivership. Due to NPA lobbying, the new lease cannot exceed 21 years and can only be offered after the plan of management is finalised and specifies strict environmental performance standards. NPWS will gain a new specialist Karst Management Unit looking at karst management across all NPWS lands.

National Parks Journal
August-September 2006

HIS protecting the bush from bulldozers

The NSW Government is about to protect more threatened woodlands thanks to HSI's increasingly successful 'Million Acres' Campaign. Concerned for its dwindling extent, HSI nominated Inland Grey Box Woodlands for protection as an endangered ecological community under the NSW *Threatened Species Conservation Act, 1995*, and the NSW Scientific Committee has recommended it be listed. Once listed, it can no longer be cleared. Scientists estimate that only 8 per cent of this habitat remains in small remnants, along the floodplains of the Murrumbidgee and Murray Rivers. This is just one of the many habitat types HSI has protected across Australia.

Humane Society International
July 2006

Road reserves — a potential for mass destruction

An area three times the size of Grampians National Park or 10 times the size of the Prom is under threat of being mown down and chopped to pieces. This is the area that makes up Victoria's road reserves.

A recent VCAT decision won by VicRoads may set a precedent for removing all trees within a seven-metre distance of roads in the Mount Alexander Shire, starting with the

historic tree-lined southern entrance to Castlemaine — despite objections from residents and the Shire Council.

According to local opponents, VicRoads claimed the action was part of their Arrive Alive safety scheme, yet residents had been informed that the death toll along that stretch of road was four in 18 years and that not all the accidents were tree-related.

The Shire says that roadside vegetation is vital to local townships, and with an estimated total area of 600 hectares it is the largest native vegetation asset for which the council is responsible.

VicRoads may argue that trees have to come down because they pose a public safety issue. What it should be doing is ensuring that our roads are safe enough to drive on in a way that reduces the likelihood of these types of accidents.

If there are safety concerns, there should be tighter speed limits on these roads, or sections of them, and Government should resource the police properly to nab unruly drivers.

If there are concerns about liability and compensation, let's legislate so that drivers cannot take legal action against government or road authorities if their vehicle runs off the road and hits a tree.

Roadside trees are often the biggest, oldest and best habitat trees left in Victoria, because they've been spared from land clearing on private land and intensive timber cutting in state forests.

These trees are often critical for threatened species such as the Squirrel Gliders around Costerfield, Superb Parrots around Nathalia and Grey-crowned Babblers around Violet Town — and the list goes on.

Indigenous shrubs, herbs and grasslands on road reserves must also be protected.

Park Watch, September 2006

Horse riders get a free run

A new recreational horseriding policy for NPWS has recently been approved by the [NSW] Environment Minister. The policy was initiated following representations by horseriding lobby groups several years ago in order to gain more access to national parks. NPA [NSW] considers that the new policy will facilitate more horseriding in parks.

The original policy prohibited horseriding in sensitive environments such as wetlands and rainforests. The new policy adopts a discretionary approach where regional managers

make a decision based on considering a range of criteria.

While horseriding in nature reserves remains banned and a code of practice must be followed by horseriders, it will now be more difficult for park managers to resist strong pressure from local horseriding groups to access nearby national parks, despite the well-known damage caused by horses.

Horseriding is expanding in parks across the state. Earlier in the year, the new Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management formally sanctioned 13 new drive-in horseriding camps. NPA is now seeking the introduction of a permit system to better regulate horseriding in this park.

National Parks Journal
November-December 2006

Funding shortfall threatens Wollemi art

Fieldwork in what's believed to be one of the most significant rock art sites in Australia has stalled after the federal government declined to fund further research, archaeologists say.

Over the weekend scientists exploring the Wollemi National Park northwest of Sydney announced the discovery of numerous shelters, many with rock drawings and stencils up to 5000 years old.

They also discovered what's believed to be the first hafted stone axe found in southeastern Australia, estimated to be around 150 years old.

But now the archaeologists are being forced to look for international funding to continue their work and can't even afford a day trip to the remote area to protect vulnerable sites from damage by bushfires, says team co-leader Professor Paul Taçon of Griffith University.

The largest and most significant site, an engraved platform a few kilometres from where the axe was found, is at immediate risk, Taçon says.

The platform features large eagle and koala figures and images of what are believed to be ancestral beings.

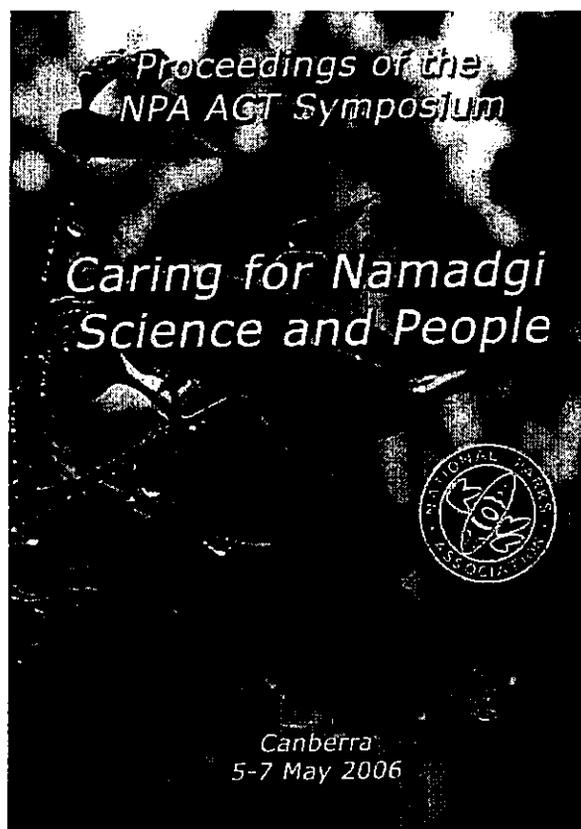
'There is a lot of vegetation around the edge of the platform and fallen tree limbs which will provide fuel [for bushfires],' he says.

'If we get a really hot one in the next few months there is a risk that some of the engravings we've discovered won't be there any more.'

News in Science, 16 October 2006
abc.net.au/science/news/

Compiled by Len Haskew

NPA ACT news



Caring for Namadgi — Science and People

The proceedings of the NPA ACT's very successful Symposium, held earlier this year, are now available. Contact any NPA Committee member for details.

Copies will be for sale at our general meetings. Orders may be placed with our Honorary Secretary Sonja Lenz (ph: 02 6251 1291) or by leaving a message on the office phone 02 6282 5813.

Cost (including GST):

\$22 for members of NPA ACT

\$27.50 for non-members

plus \$7.50 postage and handling.

The proceedings (A4 format, 191 pages, 55 in colour) include all presentations and speaker notes, an index and a photo gallery of the event.

We are searching for a volunteer to join the *Bulletin* Team to learn the ropes and to be able to produce the September issue next year. I will be away most of July, August, and September next year so, if you are interested, let me know and I will be happy to go through the details. Now is the time to join the Team! (editor)

Discussions are continuing on the format for the Great Australian Bushwalk (GAB) next year. Options being considered are:

- Put on a full GAB in early September in accordance with NSW GAB and involve all ACT bushwalking clubs with walks all over the ACT
- Run small GAB walks with the rest of Australia in early September but have no involvement with other clubs and with walks restricted to virtually the normal NPA program. This option would be open to participation in Parks Week with other bushwalking clubs
- Combine Parks Week—mid October 2007—with a GAB later than the rest of Australia; the GAB would put on GAB-branded walks involving all ACT bushwalking clubs and walks all over the ACT.

NPA will be considering these options over the coming months in consultation with other clubs and Visitor

Services from Parks, Conservation, and Lands.

This year's NPA GAB grant will enable some extra activities this year. Included in the grant will be:

- Reprinting walking brochures for NAAS Valley, Horse Gully Hut; Square Rock and Yankee Hat, (with a possible re-naming of Yankee Hat to an appropriate Aboriginal name).
- Developing and printing new brochures for Orroral Valley — "Ngunnawal to NASA"; Nursery Swamp and Booroomba Rocks; this will be a more expensive and time consuming process.
- If there is money still left over, developing signage at Yerrabi Track, Nursery Swamp (at the fen itself) and Orroral.

We are developing a new segment of the Namadgi Visitor Centre display to focus on the NPA involvement in the establishment and history of the Namadgi. The Committee is now considering material to be included in the display in conjunction with the Centre. If you have any comments or material which might be included please contact the Committee members asap.

Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group news

The past year has been a time of consolidation and assessment for the GBRG. After the broadscale seeding in August 2005 following the removal of the last pines, the group is investigating ways to address the long term problems of returning native vegetation to a degraded area.

Two work parties were devoted to weed survey and removal of pine wildings. At one work party a total of 146 wildings were found and removed. On another almost 90 were cut down. Pine removal is a favourite pastime for

some group members! Blackberries and briars have been mapped over a large extent of the area and we plan to attack these in the coming months.

We have also spent time removing old fencing materials as these can be a hazard for wildlife. Much of the wire has been rolled up and can now be easily transported from the park.

Some of the *Eucalyptus stellulata* planted as a memorial to Eleanor Stodart in an area now known as Eleanor Grove, did not survive their first year. The group has re-planted

many of these trees and provided added protection from grazing by placing wire guards around them. The Grove has been extended and the trees have been watered to encourage their survival.

The annual general meeting was held in September. The positions of office bearers remain largely unchanged, although we welcomed two new members to our committee. Clive Hurlstone remains President, Syd Comfort, Treasurer, and Hazel Rath, Secretary. Committee members are

(Continued on page 19)

Book review

Mountain Landscapes and Historic Huts

by Klaus Hueneke, published by Tabletop Press, 118 pages, hard bound, medium format, \$39.95

This book is the ninth by Klaus Hueneke on Australia's High Country. In the introduction the author freely admits that he has been held in the tight hug of the high country for the last 35 years. This passion (or is it an infection?) is clearly portrayed in the book's pages to both the casual reader and those who also have the "High Country bacterium" coursing through their veins.

The author has combined his photographic and writing skills to weave a very personal tapestry that reflects the heritage of landscape, people, ecology and huts that is the High Country. In a land that is obsessed with things coastal and dominated by the idea of the wide brown land, the High Country needs eloquent ambassadors in this, its time of greatest recent threat from climatic change. This work is the testament of one such ambassador.

The book is divided into four sections that explore Namadgi and Kosciuszko National Parks, the Victorian Alps and Tasmania. Each section commences with a brief description of the significance of the area and is followed by a series of captivating and evocative colour photographs that tell their stories, either individually or as brief essays, assisted by extended captions.

If you are looking for images of grand vistas, you will not find them here. As the author explains, his work is more intimate and interpretive: "My photos are grabbed when and where I can without a tripod and without heavy machinery". Alas, this reviewer thinks that this casual statement sells the author's abilities considerably short.

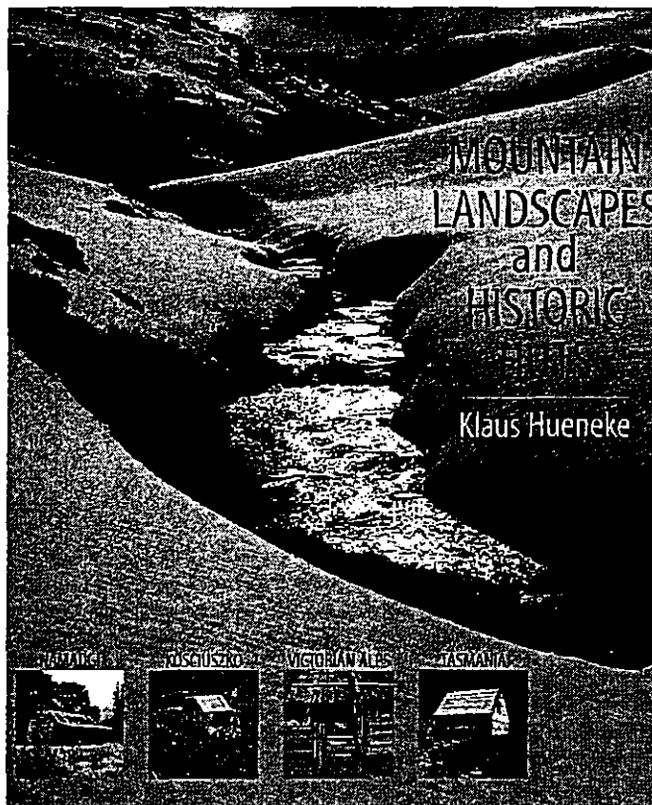
The book's authority rests not only

life — some can be left for the next. Personal philosophies and rationalisation of mortality aside, there are certainly worse regrets in life than not having recovered from an infection by the High Country bacterium.

The book can be ordered from Tabletop Press (phone 02 6242 0995 or tabletopress@bigpond.com.au) and can be purchased from most reputable bookshops.

Many of the images are also available in the 2007 calendars *High Country* and *Huts*, both available from Tabletop Press.

Martin Chalk



There is a limited offer to NPA ACT members to obtain copies of Mountain Landscapes and Historic Huts at a special price of \$33 at the November and February member's meetings. Alternatively copies can also be obtained by placing an order with the NPA ACT office and forwarding payment of \$33 plus \$6 postage and handling. The offer finishes on 28 February 2007.

with the considerable reputation of the author, but is assisted by an endorsement by the Australian Alps Liaison Committee.

The author concludes this latest work with the thought that not all the magical places encompassed by the High Country need to be visited in this

Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group news

(Continued from page 18)

Martin Chalk, Frank Clements, Michael Goonrey, Sonja Lenz, Kevin McCue, Fiona McDonald-Brand and John Waldron. Brett McNamara presented a verbal report of activities relating to Namadgi National Park. Of particular interest to the group are the feral species program and their plans for continuing reduction and removal.

GBRG's Christmas party will be held on Saturday, December 9. We plan to work in the morning and then have a

special lunch at Frank and Jacks Hut. This will be followed by a visit to the Yankee Hat block which was seeded in August 2005. NPA members and friends are very welcome to join us on that day to see what the group has achieved.

Martin Chalk



Free to a good home

A quantity of old car camping gear:

- Two burner gas stove
- Gas lamp
- Toaster
- Jaffle iron
- Four person tent
- Assorted tent pegs
- Folding table
- Air beds
- Camp chairs.

Maxine and Neville Esau
nemax@bigpond.com

National Parks Association Calendar

	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
<i>Public holidays</i>	<i>Mon 25 Tues 26</i>	<i>Mon 1 Fri 26</i>		<i>Mon 19</i>
General meetings	—	—	Thur 15	Thur 15
Committee meetings	Tues 5		Tues 6	Tues 6
<i>NPA ACT Christmas Party</i>	Sun 10			
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration ¹	Sat 9	—	Sat 10	Sat 10

Further details ¹ Yankee Hat carpark 10:00am, Clive Hurlstone 6288 7592 (h)
040 778 3422 (mob)

General Meetings

Third Thursday of the month
(not December and January)

8:00pm

Uniting Church hall
56 Scrivener Street
O'Connor

Thursday 15 February 2007

Three days in the life of a volcano

Kevin McCue and Sonja Lenz

Kevin and Sonja visited Rabaul PNG in September and October last year. On Friday 6 October they drove to a harbour volcano Tavurvur which last erupted in 1994 with devastating results for Rabaul. On Saturday 7th the volcano burst into life again and just as quickly quietened down on Sunday 8 October. A series of photographs captures this brief period of unrest.

Thursday 15th March

God save the Queen

Bill Lines

Bill will look at how our British heritage has influenced the kind of society we have built in Australia and, in turn, the kind of conservation movement we have.

Since 1991 Bill has published six books about people and nature in Australia. His sixth, *Patriots: Defending Australia's Natural Heritage*, was published in 2006 and is a history of, and commentary on, Australian's conservation movement since 1946.

The association welcomes the following new members:

Kerri Bradford
Rosalie Grant
Brenda and John Harper
Leon and Kay Pietsch
Doug Campbell
Jim and Ros Hanigan
David Patmore

We look forward to seeing you at association activities.

Wishing all a relaxing, safe and enjoyable holiday season and a happy new year

NPA ACT Bulletin

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