

National Parks Association of the ACT Inc

**General Meeting Minutes (held as a Zoom webinar)
Thursday 21 May 2020, 8:00 pm**

1. Welcome

President Esther Gallant welcomed about 45 members and guests to the webinar and paid respects to the traditional custodians of the land and their elders, past and present.

2. Confirmation of 20 February 2020 meeting and matters arising

Esther noted that because of the Coronavirus pandemic it was three months since the last NPA general meeting held on 20 February 2020 and that she would not seek comments on the minutes.

3. Recent NPA activities

Esther noted that work has commenced on organising the walks and work party activities within the Coronavirus 'rules' established by the ACT Government. These activities will be advertised on the NPA website.

4. Other business - no other business was mentioned

5. Presentation by Brett McNamara - *Summer of Discontent*

Esther welcomed Brett McNamara as the guest speaker for the evening to talk about the recent major fire which had impacted on Namadgi. She noted that Brett has worked within the ACT Parks and Conservation Service for 30 years, and has had many years service as Manager of Namadgi National Park.

Brett congratulated the NPA on reaching its 60th anniversary and noted the significant achievements of the organisation, including the protection of the area that is now known as Namadgi National Park.

In his presentation he reminded us of how dry the conditions were in the ACT and surrounds during the 2019-2020 summer season, and how confronting it was to have numerous fires burning not far from the ACT border, including Mary's Hill and Dunn's Road fires.

To help protect historical assets from fire during December and January ACT Parks established portable dams and sprinkler systems at a number of locations including Gudgenby Homestead and Brayshaws Hut. Containment lines were also established where water was not available, for example at Frank and Jacks Hut.

A fire started in the Orroral Valley on 27 January 2020 and was 'spotting' to other areas within hours. Aerial fire fighting was a significant effort in controlling the Orroral Valley fire. Brett showed video footage of a DC 10 plane dropping fire retardant, guided by a Learjet. He also showed a photo of a fire fighting truck crushed by a fallen tree, noting safety is a key consideration.

Brett informed the meeting that most of the bogs south of Mount Gingera have been burnt, and Geoff Hope has just provided a report on damage. Restoration work has already commenced including the use of sterile coir logs which can be used to form leaky weirs to slow water flow.

A key issue for the recovery following fire is grazing by deer, and wildlife cameras to monitor their numbers have been installed. The Yankee Hut access boardwalk had been removed from around the site prior to the fires, and the art work has not been impacted.

Brett noted that northern Namadgi will be the first section to be reopened, and that damage to public roads will need to be repaired before other parts can be opened. The Visitor Centre is being refreshed, and hopefully will open soon.

Esther thanked Brett for the presentation, and for persevering with the technology from his home computer.

Chair: Date: