

**NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF THE ACT INC.**

**GENERAL MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday, 19 November 2020, 8pm (on Zoom)

**1. Welcome**

President Esther Gallant welcomed members and guests to the meeting including NPA life member Fiona Brand who is celebrating a birthday (in total there were about 20 participants).

Esther paid respects to the traditional custodians of the land and their elders, past and present.

**2. Announcements**

Esther announced that the ACT Parks and Conservation Service are holding a Namadgi open day on 23 January 2021 which will celebrate the 60th anniversary of the NPA. Esther is working with Namadgi staff on the details which will be promoted at a later date. NPA will have an information stall at the event.

**3. Presentation by Ian Turland - Trekking in the Indian Himalaya**

Ian Turland presented photos of the stunning landscape that he and others passed through on a seven week trek in August/September 2018. The group traversed the rugged terrain of Ladakh/Zaskar and into isolated regions of Himachel Pradesh, including the Spiti Valley.

Ian observed that when people think of trekking, Nepal is the major destination, but the Indian Himalaya also offers a fabulous experience. He said that Ladakh and the Spiti Valley provided some of the most spectacular trekking he has experienced.

Ian first started backpacking in the Himalaya in 1982 and has walked there several times. More recently he has been on a three year diplomatic posting in India from 2014-2016.

The route Ian and his companions travelled was essentially four treks 'stitched' together so that they could travel through some rarely visited areas of the Himalaya. The group were transported between each leg of the trek.

In Ladakh the geography and people have Tibetan heritage, and the soils and vegetation are fairly sparse. Further south the trek moved into more cultivated green areas in flat wide valleys and the areas are culturally Hindu.

The landscapes are spectacular and the group crossed a number of mountain passes, including over 5000 metres, and also had many exciting river crossings. Altitude was a key issue and heavy snowfall proved too dangerous for pack horses; and rockfalls on roads meant changed routes to avoid danger. The group saw lovely jolly fat marmots and snow leopard footprints.

Esther thanked Ian for his presentation and declared the meeting closed at 9:00 pm.

*Next general meeting – Thursday 18 February 2021, 8.00pm (location to be determined).*

Chair: ..... Date: .....