

# NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF THE ACT INC.

## GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

Thursday 18 March 2021, 7.30 pm

Uniting Church Hall, 56 Scrivener Street, O'Connor

### 1. Welcome and apologies

President Esther Gallant welcomed members, life members and guests to the meeting. Apologies were received from Allan Sharp, Rod Griffiths, Cynthia Burton, Judy & Dave Kelly. There were approximately 30 members and guests at this first face-to-face meeting for a year (Covid-19 precautions had been put in place).

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

### 2. Announcements

- Esther was pleased to announce that the Minister for Environment and Heritage, Mick Gentleman, has agreed that a plaque commemorating Peter Ormay (deceased) can be placed next to a River Red Gum that is growing near the road between Tharwa Village and the Namadgi Visitor Centre. Peter was a botanist with ACT Parks and Conservation Service, founder of the Friends of Aranda Bushland and contributor of the NPA's *Field guide to the native trees of the ACT*. He had identified the tree many years ago noting that River Red Gums are not common in the ACT.
- The NPA will have a stall at the Lawson Markets on 27 March 2021 (8.00am to noon). Anyone who would like to volunteer on the stall, please contact Allan Sharp on 0435 819 015. The NPA is supporting protection of the adjacent North Lawson native grasslands which are under threat from urban development.
- ACT Parks and Conservation Service have noted that some new visitors to Namadgi National Park may not understand rules within the park. Please contact the Namadgi Visitor Information Centre if poor behaviour is observed.
- Esther commented that the beautiful Indigenous artwork used on the new NPA work trailer had been framed and was on display at the meeting.

### 3. Presentation by Peter Cotsell – Fire recovery in Namadgi

Esther welcomed Peter Cotsell, National Parks and Catchment Regional Manager, ACT Parks and Conservation Service.

Peter provided an excellent overview of the impact on flora and fauna of the January 2020 fire that burnt 80% of the Namadgi National Park. Key points included:

- one year after the fire satellite imaging shows quite a lot of green areas
- there are patches of burnt and unburnt areas
- sites with high moisture are recovering more quickly
- the fire has resulted in ideal conditions for spring growth
- some species have produced more fruit following the fire
- a few areas of Alpine Ash remained unburnt
- large trees were more likely to be burnt
- some species will remain disadvantaged following the fire e.g. Lyrebirds require shaded undergrowth
- other species will have an advantage e.g. Stubble Quail and Bush Bronze-wing Pigeon numbers are higher (probably from immigration) and there is good orchid recovery in highly disturbed areas
- Broad-toothed Rat and Greater Gliders have not been observed
- few dead animals have been observed following the fire (much less than had been found following the 2003 Namadgi fire probably because unburnt areas provided refuge)
- weed species are a problem. Commonwealth funding has been provided for weed work, so please let the Parks Service know of any particular weed issues
- a condition report for bogs and fens will be released shortly, but La Niña conditions have been helpful with their recovery

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- ash and soil run-off is a problem and a huge 'slug' of sediment is being monitored in the Cotter River. It is expected to reach the Cotter Dam shortly
- ACT Parks and Conservation has undertaken some regeneration work mainly around high-use areas such as the Orroral Campground. Rehabilitation of the 15 miles of containment lines will commence soon
- vegetation and infrastructure at rock art sites were cleared prior to the fire and are relatively unscathed
- Max and Berts Hut and Demanding Hut were burnt and Heritage Council is considering replacement or acknowledgment in some other way
- ACT Parks and Conservation are working with Attorney General's Department to see how much damage has been done to boundary survey markers
- Walking tracks were assessed for safety. Some rerouting has been undertaken and new infrastructure installed
- the delay in re-opening Namadgi is mainly due to work required on roads and bridges. Peter hopes more parts of the park will be open soon
- Prescribed burning will now be on hold for 5 years.

After some questions and comments from the audience Esther thanked Peter for the excellent update and declared the meeting closed at 8:30 pm.

*Next General Meeting – Thursday 15 April 2021.*

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