



NATIONAL PARKS
ASSOCIATION
OF THE A.C.T.
BULLETIN

VOL. 8 NO. 1 August - September 1970

Annual Subscription to Bulletin: \$1.20, per copy 20¢

Registered in Australia for transmission by post as a periodical

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF THE A.C.T. INC.

"A NATIONAL PARK FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL"

President: Miss Julie Henry, Currong Flats, Braddon
(48.5130)
Secretary: Miss C. Westwood, Box 457 P.O., Canberra
City.
Treasurer: Miss Norma Price, Box 457 P.O., Canberra
City (49.6905)
National Parks Association of the A.C.T. Inc. Phone
47.9538

MONTHLY MEETING - 3RD THURSDAY OF THE MONTH

Announcing the new committee of this association,
elected at the Annual Meeting, last month.

President: Miss Julie Henry
Secretary: Miss Celia Westwood
Assistant Secretary: Miss Wendy Haines
Treasurer: Miss Norma Price
Publicity Officer: Mr. Keith Green
Committee: Mr. L. Adams, Dr. J. Hill, Mr. Hobbs,
Dr. P. Schodde, Dr. Kirk, Mr. J. Schunke.

The grateful thanks of the association go to retiring
committee members, Dr. Nancy Burbidge, Miss Isabel
Dahl, Miss Margaret Aston, Mr. John Schunke and Mr.
Glyn Lewis, for their work throughout the past years.

Membership fees are now due for the year July 1970 to
July 1971. Please send your subscription as soon as
possible. \$3 single membership; \$5 family membership;
\$1.20 junior membership.

Competitions: 1. Slide and Photographic Competition
organized by Mr. G. Lewis, assisted by Miss J. Henry.
Many thanks to all people who participated in the
competition and to the judges.

Results were as follows:

1. Close up (Flora or Fauna)

1st Prize: Mrs. A. McKenzie - Flame Robin

2nd Prize: Mr. D. James - Souther Blotched Blue-Tongue
Lizard

3rd Prize: Mr. A.U. Clark - Watching and Waiting.

Highly Commended: Mrs. M. Hardy - Carp at Feed Time -
Hawaii

M. Sherman - "And Baby Makes Three".

2. Scenic (Landscape)

1st Prize: J.W. Flowers - Snow Scene

2nd Prize: B.V. Clark - Clearing Weather

3rd Prize: J.M. Duniway - South Pacific Sunset

Highly Commended: Miss G. Watt - Charlotte's Pass.

3. Action (Personality)

1st Prize: J.M. Duniway - "Roo in Motion"

2nd Prize: Miss J.H. Henry - "Laurie"

3rd Prize: L. Kevec - "What's That?"

The prizes, an open cheque for \$10 for the purchase of photographic equipment for first prize and a roll of 35 mm. transparency film for 2nd prize were donated by Canberra Photographic Specialists, Garema Place; Georges Camera Store, Petrie Street, City and Manuka Photographic Centre, the Lawns, Manuka.

3rd Prize of \$2 cash was awarded by the N.P.A. and a special award of \$5 was also made by the association to Vincent Sutherland for one of his print entries in the junior section of the photographic competition.

2. Poster Competition

The Poster Competition held during Conservation Week has yielded approx. 1,000 posters from Primary and Infants School, in the A.C.T. A wonderful response you will agree. The book prizes will be presented on Friday evening, 21st August at the Griffin Centre, Room I, by Mr. Engledon. As many posters as possible will be displayed in the Mall from 22nd August to 29th August.

BLACK MOUNTAIN RESERVE

With the commencement of work on the Barry Drive extension another sacrifice has been claimed by the 'Great God Car' from our diminishing natural areas. He apparently turned down an offering of the few tin sheds and a cottage which constitute the Agricultural Depot, or perhaps the high priests of the cult decided that such replaceable and unsightly structures would not constitute a worthy offering, and with their added wisdom decided that once again Car would only be satisfied with irreplaceable natural bushland.

Devotees of the cult are no doubt celebrating this latest offering as another small step along the path to victory of the machines over man. Car of course is only one of the many machine gods but he is by far the most powerful, and is leading the race to the complete mechanisation of man's environment.

However those who fear this mad race (called progress by cult members) is in truth leading mankind to disaster need not lose all hope. The number of those who fear this end is large and is increasing daily. These people are questioning more and more the wisdom of blindly following the machine gods. The high priests of the machine cult are becoming as one would expect, more and more dogmatic in their prophecies that only by putting even more effort into machine production will mankind obtain salvation.

But those who deny that mankind's real needs are to be satisfied in this way, should be heartened by many increasing signs that the path we are now following is leading us truly to disaster. We have increasing poverty, crime, violence, drug addiction, and mental illness in these societies which have so far been most faithful in their worship of machines. The time has therefore come to denounce the machine gods for what they are, false gods, which far from satisfying man's needs are forever creating more and more illusory needs which cannot ever be satisfied, and by so doing are failing to satisfy two of man's greatest needs contact with nature and meaningful and satisfying relationships with other people. Machines are diabolical in their ability to separate man from man.

CONSERVATION SEMINAR

This seminar held on the 26th to 28th June was most successful and some very clear lessons for conservationists emerged. The seminar opened with a statement by Mr. L. Peres, senior lecturer in Political Science at the University of Melbourne. He stated that although ecology was the most political of sciences, conservationists were not united in their demands, and that action should be taken to obtain uniformity throughout the movement. Also he said that conservation was another interest clamouring for attention from the government. He did not see it as a basis for all government action. He saw politics at present as a constant conflict of interests and considered this system as being the one most likely to achieve to fairest satisfaction of the many conflicting interests in our society.

Papers were presented on the Colong Caves, South West Tasmania, the Barrier Reef, the Myall Lakes and Black Mountain campaigns. Each speaker emphasised the following points. The public has always been slow to realise that action which will adversely affect the environment is contemplated, it seems as though it is assumed that the land will remain in its natural state forever. The slowness to realise the danger is aggravated by the official secrecy which traditionally surrounds all government action in this country.

The speakers emphasised the need for being alert to threats to the environment, and that legislation similar to the Freedom of Information Act in the United States which gives the individual the right to demand information from government departments regarding any public matter which does not involve national security, is urgently needed in this country. Once a threat has been discovered it is vital to arouse the public to the danger and publicity through the mass media, public meetings, magazines, car stickers etc. It was emphasised that publicity is vital to the success of any campaign.

A paper was also presented by Mrs. C. Lanteri from Victoria on Pollution Legislation in Victoria. The Clean Air Act was passed in 1957 providing for regulation of the emission of dark smoke and air impurities, the height of industrial chimneys and the approval of new plant.

No prosecutions have initiated under the Act, although local Councils have conducted successful litigation. Water pollution is covered by a multitude of acts, and there is no single authority. The Water Pollution Control Bill was introduced into Parliament but received spasmodic support and opposition from both sides of both Chambers.

Mrs. Lanteri gave the campaign against the construction of an oil pipeline under Port Phillip Bay as an example of public opinion successfully affecting administrative action, unfortunately she said the same cannot be said of political action and used the Water Pollution Bill as an example.

She concluded that pollution legislation in Victoria needed reform. Legislation regarding air pollution needed re-examination to increase its effectiveness, and a unified, conscientiously administered scheme was required as an essential preliminary to effective conservation of water resources. Strong expression of public opinion can effect decision making in conservation matters. Expression should be in a reasonable tone, and should be supported relevant technical information. No opportunity should be given to the opposition to describe the campaign as hysterical. Publicity is essential for success.

Mr. Engledow presented the situation of the public servant in relation to conservation. He emphasised that the message which the public service could take from the seminar was the conservationists would look to senior public servants to be receptive to conservation needs. He explained that this was already the aim of the public service, but that it operated within the limits of its legal position. The disturbing message from the papers presented was probably a crisis of confidence, and he considered that much of the criticism levelled at the public was due to a failure to understand the limitations under which it functioned.

The public service is a massive organisation and therefore cannot be expected to adjust to changes quickly, and 'it is at least debatable whether they are set up to shape and lead public opinion'. He went on to explain that it is very aware of its responsibility for the spending of the public's money. The public demands 'the same painstaking attention to trivial issues as to major issues and to the small man as to the large, whatever the cost'.

With regard to the criticism of secrecy regarding the activities of the public service he stated that 'Experience has encouraged the public service to be discreet especially where individual interests are involved, and I guess often to try to avoid the delays inherent in controversy by keeping its own counsel.' He went on to say that in his view some change will have to be encouraged to allow more involvement by interested groups in the processes of decision taking. He was not in favour of the public having the right to information as to public issues, except where national security is involved, as he saw it extending to involving the disclosure of individuals' private affairs.

With regard judgments built around economic criteria he said the public servant 'is taught by the community itself to be conscious of the G.N.P. and what advantages money brings'. 'Public servants will continue to weigh costs and advantages against alternatives and will continue to think in terms of increasing prosperity'. Any shift of emphasis will have to be based widely on public opinion.

Also Mr. Engledow stated that making conservation matters public political issues will only cause greater lack of communication between the conservationist and the public servant. Harsh criticism of public service actions can lead to complete lack of communication, and situations of confrontation. He asks whether conservationists have directed their actions to obtaining co-operation from the public service, rather than simply indulging in criticism to which the public servant cannot reply.

Finally he makes the following recommendations to conservationists. Fruitful dialogue must be maintained between conservationists and members of the public service. There must be continuing exposure of the public servant to concepts of conservation of the environment. There must be some system of priorities. Cases must be presented accurately and objectively, emotional appeals will not succeed, and conservationist must demonstrate that they are not opposed to progress.

Mr. Piesse gave a paper on the activities of the A.C.F. emphasising that the Foundation was concerned with national issues, but would become involved in local

issues if a principle of national importance was involved. He also said that if approached about a local conservation issue the Foundation could direct those involved regarding the action to be taken.

Following the papers reports were given from the study groups which had considered various aspects of conservation action. The group discussing the basic criteria of conservation considered the most important principle was maintaining diversity. At present there is an imbalance of input and output, particularly in the case of people. To take action with regard to this balance feedback is essential. To obtain this the following are needed:-

1. A national body of resource management.
2. Better co-ordination of State conservation organisations.
3. Better education of the public.

The human elements involved in the conservation problem were considered to be politicians, public servants, commerce, the general public, and conservation groups. Conservation groups should disseminate information to other units, through schools, the mass media, etc., and also make specific approaches to politicians and the public service, through such means as reports. Public access to information was regarded as vital, as was the provision of basic conservation information to planners.

Conservation education should be provided at the primary and secondary school levels. There should be an undergraduate course for all involved in land use, a course in human ecology should be provided for all undergraduates, and there should be refresher courses for administrators.

The services for the decision maker were regarded as being most inadequate. The group did not know of any enabling legislation. There was an urgent need for an increased breadth of knowledge in the public service, particularly in the States. Information should be provided to the public service by such means as advisory committees. There is little feedback between the public and the politicians.

With regard to early warning systems, discovering what is being planned while there is still time to take action, the importance of local conservation groups was indicated. Once again the vital need for access to information as to planning was emphasised. The public is entitled to know what action is intended which is likely to affect public land or the environment. Activities regarding crown land should have greater publicity, with public hearings, and adequate advertising of the intended development, at least three months. This type of public notification should be extended to public authorities such as electricity and water supply authorities.

It was suggested that conservation groups be given the right to peg claims for land for such purposes as national parks, similar to the right to peg mining claims. Anticipation of likely development is vital and local bodies are essential in this regard. They would require information as to likely developments in their area for them to be fully effective.

Consideration was given to action to be taken when undesirable development is planned. In the case of eleventh hour action where work has actually commenced. There are obvious measures which can be taken, the first step is to stop further work and this can usually be achieved by approaching the men on the job saying that you are doubtful of the legality of what they are doing. Most people wish to avoid trouble and most workmen will wait long enough for you to contact their superior. The next step is to contact the superior, e.g. the engineer, and state your case and request that work cease until the matter can be investigated. Following this contact should be made with news media, politicians local federal or state, and conservation organisations.

Where undesirable action is imminent, emphasis is on being able to obtain information and there is a need for conservation bodies to be able to obtain information about planned projects. They should be able to call for reports from agencies such as fisheries departments or the Soil Conservation Commission, and to insist that local authorities should obtain such advice.

The final topic discussed was counter espionage. The group considered that most opposition to conservation would come from commercial interests and the government. The opposition would be by withholding information, discrediting conservationists, reassuring the public that all is well, using economics as the sole criterion for action, and by use of the half truth. Campaigns against conservationist measures would be by lobbying and through the mass media, and if possible would be directed at the weakest point for instance at the local government level.

In this contest the conservationists have the advantage if they wish to use it. Their strength lies in their efforts being directed to the community interests rather than for profit, they have the advantage of information as many who are expert in the fields affected are active conservationists. However to co-ordinate their efforts a news service regarding conservation is urgently needed. Another urgent need is for full time legal assistance as is being acquired by conservation groups in the U.S.A.

Black Mountain Reserve (Cont'd)

Let us therefore regard the Black Mountain Reserve as a symbol of man's true position as master of the machine and of his need for nature as a background to his activities, and deny any more of this land to the machine gods. Cars are only a means of transport, and the private car has been shown over and over again to be the most expensive and inefficient means of transporting large numbers of people. The enormous freeway development in Canberra is only to cope with peakhour traffic twice daily. The people of Canberra must demand that this land be used for a better purpose.

AUGUST MEETING AND OUTING

Meeting Date: Thursday, 20th August, 1970 at 8 p.m.

Place: Room I The Griffin Centre, Bunda Street, City.

Feature: An illustrated talk by Mr. Robert Boden of the A.N.U. about his studies of the subject "Outdoor Recreation and Preservation of Natural Areas".

Outing: Date: Sunday, 30th August, 1970

Place: Tidbinbilla Reserve

Meeting at the reception centre of the Reserve at 10 a.m., to explore the area and walk the trails. If there are sufficient members interested, a group will meet earlier than 10 a.m. at the reserve in the hope of hearing the lyre birds calling. If interested please contact Dr. Nancy Burbidge.

It is with regret that the September meeting and outing cannot be advertised but these are matters that the new committee will discuss. Arrangements will be announced at the August meeting and outing and in the "Canberra Times".