



THE NEWS

OF THE MELBOURNE BUSHWALKERS

Edition 310

SEPTEMBER 1975

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NATIONAL PARKS ASSISTANCE WEEKEND

A letter as follows has been received from the FVWC:

FRASER NATIONAL PARK
Lake Eildon

Saturday 11th - Sunday 12th October 1975

The following jobs have been suggested by the National Parks Service:

- * Removal of horehound and other noxious weeds
- * Transplanting of Kikuyu to revegetation plots
- * Planting of seedling trees (if available)
- * Straighten tree guards and replace steel posts
- * Paint barriers
- * Repairing a nature trail
- * Rabbit control by fumigation

Appropriate tools may be provided by the Ranger - this will be confirmed later.

People are asked to gather near the main entrance to the Park at 9.00am on Saturday.

Campsites will be allocated by the Ranger.

To preserve the good name of all bushwalkers with the National Parks Service, it is vital that we muster a substantial crew of eradicators, planters, painters, repairers and exterminators.

Please persuade and/or conscript as many of your members as possible to help make this project a success.

Sandra Bardwell
Hon. Secretary.

SOCIAL FIXTURES

OCT 1: Talk and instructions for beginners to weekend walking. Come along and see the wonders of BOB STEEL'S successful system. Featuring: Equipment to take, food to eat and other handy hints.

OCT 4: Slides of Central Australia by the Oldfields and then turning into a PARTY. At the Hodgson's, 6/24 Lascelles Ave. Toorak. BYO drink, food and sleeping bag if you want.

OCT 8: Slides of the Upper Thomson River Diversion and Dam works, featuring work carried out by the MMBW Hydrographic Section, as well as scenery in the Matlock, Aberfeldy, Mt. Useful and Walhalla areas.

- Mick Mann and Ken McMahon

OCT 22: Travelogue film featuring Sabah and Singapore with original native music on the soundtrack. By David Billington. Come along, it should be interesting.

OCT 28: A Tuesday night. There is a slight possibility that we may be having a night out at "Dirty Dicks" \$7.50 per head. See the notice board or Geoff Crapper.

All correspondence should be addressed to:-

The Secretary
Melbourne Bushwalkers
PO Box 1751Q, G P O
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Meetings are held every Wednesday night at 7.30pm in the clubrooms, 14 Hosier Lane, at the rear of the Forum Theatre. Visitors are always welcome.

OCTOBER WALK PREVIEWS

Oct 5 VIEW HILL - DEEP CREEK Easy/Med

Leader: John Fritz (b) 652 8359
Transport: Van from Batman Ave. 9.15am Fare \$3.00
Expected time of return: 8.00pm
Map reference: Lancefield 1:63 360
Approximate distance: 11 miles

A good walk through rolling farmland, over timbered hills and along the banks of a meandering creek. There will be a couple of miles of tree lined country road and a short distance along the site of an abandoned railway line, but the bulk of the walk will be through "A" grade farmland and reasonably virgin bush. Water may be required for lunch.

Oct 12 MT. OBSERVATION-ARMSTRONG RIVER-CUMBERLAND FALLS Medium

Leader: John Siseman (p) 878 1839
Transport: Van leaves Batman Ave 9.15am Fare \$3.00
Map reference: McMahons Creek 1:50 000
Approximate distance: 5 miles

A fairly hard walk to visit the beech forests in the Armstrong River. Although mileage is low the walking will be fairly difficult as it involves scrub bashing down into the Armstrong River and then following the river upstream to the Cumberland Falls. If time permits we shall also be able to visit the Cumberland Valley Mountain Ash Reserve and see Victoria's tallest trees.

Oct 19 BREAK O'DAY - DEVLINS BRIDGE Easy

Leader: Tony Walstab (p) 812 732
Transport: Van from Batman Ave. 9.15am Fare \$2.50
Map reference: Glenburn 1:50 000
Approximate distance: 9 miles

The walk is in undulating farm country with good views from the ridge which the track (mainly) follows. Bring water for lunch.

Oct 26 PIONEER CK.-WOODALL TK.-SPION KOPJE-LAVERY CK. Easy/Med

Leader: Rex Filson (p) 883 683
Transport: Van from Batman Ave. 9.15am Fare \$3.00

See Rex in the clubrooms on Wednesdays for further details.

WEEKEND WALKS

Oct INTRODUCTION TO WEEKEND WALKING-BRISBANE RANGES Easy

11-12 Leader: Bob Steel (p) 473 743
Transport: Van Batman Ave 9.00am Saturday Fare \$6.00

Are you a day walker who thought they would like to try weekend walking but were put off by the heavy pack and Friday night start? Well - here's your chance! An early start and an early camp with plenty of time to pitch tents. Walking? - a maximum of 12 kilometres for the weekend. Bring a songbook for the Saturday night campfire. (See "Social Calendar" for an introductory talk by Bob)

Oct FEDERATION NATIONAL PARKS ASSISTANCE (FORMERLY TRACK CLEARING)

11-12 This year at Fraser National Park (Lake Eildon)
See elsewhere in this newsletter for details and/or see

Oct THREE WELLS-MELVILLE CAVES-FORBES CK.-KOI YOOR CAVE Easy/Med
17-19 Leader: Fred Halls (p' 973 724
Transport: Van at 6.30pm from Batman Ave.
Expected time of return: 8.00pm
Map reference: Dunolly Nat. Devel. 1:100 000
Approximate distance: 16½ miles

The Kooyoora Range has an undulating terrain, of hills topped with granite boulders and huge granite slabs. There are several good views of surrounding country from these large slabs. Early in the walk Three Wells will be visited, actually there are at least four of these aboriginal wells? or gnemna holes in the southern end of the Kooyoora Range. This is also the region where hundreds of Sun Orchids may normally be seen during mid-October, as well there will be various other species of orchids. Also there will be the papery purple fruits of the Giant Hop Dush.

Then follows a rock scramble around the vicinity of Melville Caves, thought to have been the hideout of the famous bushranger, Captain Melville. There is also pleasant walking through the open Red Gum forest of Forbes Ck. valley and the scramble over Koiyoor past the Rocking Stone to Koi Yoor Caves - the largest cave system in the ranges. As well there are the other numerous rock shelters, balancing stones, caverns and weird rock formations of the district and pleasant walking through forests of Long Leaf Box and Red Gum.
NOTE: Please bring a water container for use on Saturday night 18th.
For further information, refer to WALK 1957 and 1971.

FVWC CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

A meeting of this Committee will be held at 14 Hosier Lane (the clubrooms) on Tuesday 21st October, starting at 7.30pm. The aims of the meeting are to mobilise more people to assist the Federation in its Conservation work, and to discuss specific projects and policies.

The agenda will be:-

- 1 Structure and effectiveness of Working Group and Committee
- 2 Draft Management Plan for C W Tasmania
- 3 Information to LCC on Grampians area
- 4 Recommendations to LCC on Alpine area
- 5 Other LCC areas
- 6 FVWC policies
- 7 Other business

Conservation delegates should attend and anyone who has contributed to the Working Group in the past, or who are willing to do so in the future, should also attend.

CHRISTMAS TRIP TO TASMANIA 1975 - organised by Charles Knight

- (1) Leaving Melbourne Friday afternoon 19.12.75
Cradle Mountain, Piwa Valley, Lake St. Clair
Nine (9) days including sidetrips with day packs.
STANDARD: Easy/Medium
Walkers must have weekend walking experience.

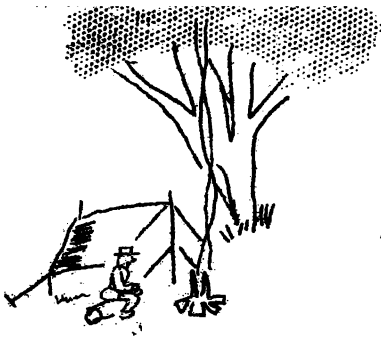
FOLLOWED BY

- (2) Leaving Hobart by light aircraft Monday 29.12.75
Eight (8) days - Port Davey, Lousy Bay, New River Lagoon, Precipitous Bluff, Lyne River
STANDARD: Medium
Experienced walkers only, or must have completed the first trip.

WINTER GEAR WILL BE REQUIRED.

FROM THE SOCIAL SECRETARY:

If anyone has access to any interesting films and/or knows the whereabouts of a theatre for hire (free preferably) could they please inform the Soc. Sec



ALONG THE TRACK

THE MASCAS I WOULD LIKE MOST TO GET LOST WITH (OR 2 THUMBS FROM NOWHERE WITH THE MASCAE)

What started out as a simple family expedition to the Mallee was in fact a competition between Graham and Marijke Mascas to see who could create the most mayhem whilst leading a bushwalk. The events flowed? roughly as follows.

AT WYPERFELD:

DAY 1: Graham uneventfully led the party until lunchtime. Then plunging through the wildest scrub available he described either a figure of eight or two large circles. After much goading from the party he accidentally found a track and led us home. (5 points)

DAY 2: Marijka led us over wild country. By superb navigation she finished up 2 miles from the campsite at 3 o'clock. Ignoring a sign which said "Wonga Hut" (HOME) she valiantly led us down a track in the opposite direction. Arriving at a sort of nowhere at 4 in the afternoon the exhausted (all), injured(one), and Weeping Infants(many) rested whilst our leader climbed every available high spot to try to find us. At one point in true leader style she plaintively enquired "Isn't this where we started from?" Having finally found a sign which said "Black Flat" we started the long 4 mile trudge home. Luckily, Paul, who injured fell by the wayside, got a lift home and sent out a relief column. (25 points)

DAY 3: Graham leading his small party of 3 (the survivors from day 2) plunged straight in. Soon after the walk started he enquired "Is that Pyro Dune?" pointing 180 degrees away from Pyro Dune which we had just left. He then zig-zagged through bush at high speed and quickly spread the party over the four points of the compass and a 1/2 square mile under the pretext of finding the biggest River Red Gum in the West. When he stumbled onto Brian Busby and the rest of the party he was most annoyed. It robbed him of points. (5 points)

DAY 4: We moved to Kulkyne State Forest to find more suitable mayhem terrain. Twelve hot showers for 50¢ were had in Hopetoun - the best shower block anywhere.

AT KULKYNE:

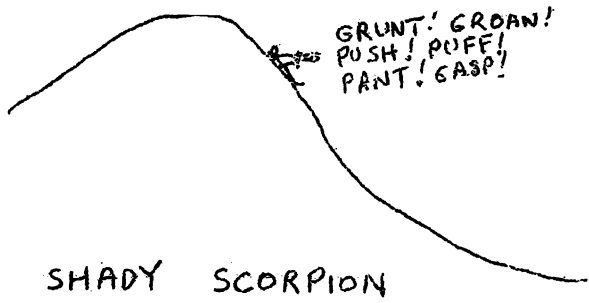
DAY 5: Graham once again started after lunch on a quiet? walk around the lakes. He cunningly led the party on a long curve, then struck a track which he firmly declared shouldn't be there. At the party's insistence he asked a browsing CAE student where we were and reluctantly led us home. Foiled again Graham! (5 points)

DAY 6: We drove to the starting point and began walking. Marijka didn't lose us until 3.30pm. Mind you, she didn't find us until 2.30pm. Even now there is muttering among the party that we were 2 thumbs* away from where Marijka says we were. (20 points)

* 2 Thumbs is Marijka's answer to the question "How far away fromare we?" regardless of time, place, distance or anything else.

DAY 7: Graham went for the "Grand Slam" by leading quietly all day, then attempting to drown 3 children (worth 65 points) by making a river crossing at the deepest point. The water was up to his neck - Brian Busby found a crossing where the water did not rise above the children's knees. (5 points)

DAY 8: The party mutinied and stayed in camp.



SHADY SCORPION

If anyone tells you that Sunday walks are becoming too short or easy, they obviously weren't on the recent Maribyrnong River walk. After an extra short van trip, the mob were deposited at Wildwood at 10.15am and began walking. They were still walking at 5.30pm and had to wade the freezing, fast flowing Jacksons Ck. to obtain the sanctuary of the van. The two bods who took along rubber waders to help nice young ladies across the stream shall remain nameless.

Those of you who went on the Queen's Birthday weekend to Barmah Lake might be interested to know that the Base Camp site is at present under 5 feet of water. In fact, the whole forest is underwater up to the levee banks. The bullfrogs of the swamp make fantastic "bongo" sounds and rhythms. After a bumper matrimonial year last year, the club has gone very quiet with only Margaret Grogan and David Warrington making the move so far this year. Congratulations to both of you and all the best for the future. There is a strong chance that the situation will improve with the advent of spring. You all know what they say. Anyway, the SS has noticed that several of the more confirmed bachelors among us have been seen with regular female companions lately. Hmm. It's about time we brought back some good old-fashioned gossip that used to be proliferated so well by the late Phantom Foesil (may he rest in peace)

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

- Guess Who: "Is that magpie over there an eagle or a hawk?"
- Mick(Mad) Mann: "Look, 2 drinks and she's anyone's, 3 drinks and she's Geoff's."
- Ken McM:(plaintively) "I've lost the pea out of my plastic whistle"
- Stuart H:(singing) "Farewell to old England for ever
Farewell to my run culls as....."
- Debbie J: "Sing an Australian song will you!"

I think Tyrone might be coming around to the belief that there may be something to waxing skis after all. For the uninitiated, Ty is a great believer in skiing on bare wood and this sometimes has its disadvantages. Recently he was attempting to follow the group down off the south face of Mt. McKay which has about a 1 in 5 grade. Everyone had zapped down at break-neck speed and left Tyrone on top. Then it was his turn. He pointed his skis downward and pushed off and began to slip downhill at snails pace, having to pause every few yards to maintain any momentum at all. This is fine if you are frightened of speed, but if you want to get somewhere in a hurry it can be quite frustrating.

Quite recently on a Sunday walk, a certain person left a rest stop with a spring in his step and wondering why the walk suddenly seemed so much easier. Five minutes later, when asked where his pack was, all he could say was "Well that IS a worry"

STOP PRESS: Have you played the new dice game devised by T.T.T.Publishing P.L. called "CHUNDER"? It's sweeping the country - everywhere the latest craze is to chunder around the campfire, chunder on van trips, chunder at Wilky. O.K. See November News for details.

Cont. from previous page.

FINAL SCORE: Graham 20 points Marijka 45points

By the way, I'd rather get lost with Gavin Mascas (aged 9) - he never goes more than half a mile from camp. And the Mascas are jolly good company!

Thanks Graham and Marijka.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS:

MANN, Michael - 1/32 Brixton Rise, Glen Iris 3146 (p) 257 756
 (b) 254 502

BRIER, Peter - 326 Cardigan St., Carlton 3053

BRISCOE, Ken - 55 Harley St., Knoxfield 3180 (p) 763 0382
 (b) 544 8433 x244

POCOCK, Doug and Robyn (p) 059 644 974

CONTACT SYSTEM:

The system reverts to the list on the Spring Programme, except that Sue and Rex Filson will be acting No. 3 Contacts for the next month in the absence of the Kenafackes.

* M A L E O F T H E M O N T H *

The award this month must go to CHARLES KNIGHT.
The citation reads as follows:

"He did, between August 25 and 31, unfailingly arouse the whole Mallee area of Victoria at 7 in the morning with his superb imitation of a Coyote's mating call."

WILDERNESS is an idea as much as a place, with modern man learning to pass like the shadow of a cloud across what he did not make and cannot improve.

"National Geographic," Feb. 74

molony's STILL TOPS FOR
 197 ELIZABETH ST. BUSHWALKING, SKIING,
 MELBOURNE AND CLIMBING NEEDS
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FOR ALL
 BUSHWALKING AND CLIMBING GEAR

Since the last conservation supplement the Conservation Group has continued its work in trying to assist in the preservation of bushwalking areas and other environmental matters. It is essential that YOU, as an individual, participate in this type work. I do not think that Bushwalkers need convincing of this, but it seems that many members of the club are at a loss about what to do. This issue of the Conservation Supplement is therefore devoted to things that you can do in a practical way.

1. Plant native trees to attract native birds to your garden - details attached.

2. Collect information about areas that local councils and other bodies have not yet cemented or built on. Write to them urging them not to destroy or sell the area, but to keep it as a suburban wildlife refuge. Examples of such areas are small suburban creeks and vacant blocks. An example of this kind of action is attached.

3. Pull up some Boneseed at East Flat at the You Yangs. Make it a family picnic. IF you read this before September 14th, join the Bird Observers Club on that day as they, and hopefully some MBW types, pull out Boneseed.

4. Think about the Club's role in Conservation matters. Read and debate the draft policies attached.

5. Join the Australian Conservation Foundation. Annual subscription is \$5. Application forms are available from Gerry McPhee or from the ACF at 206 Clarendon Street, East Melbourne. (4193360)

6. Don't spread Cinnamon Fungus (as did the FCV and CRB) - re article on this

AN EXAMPLE OF ACTION ON SUBURBAN RESERVES

This article is largely a reprint from Conservation Council of Victoria Newsletter, August 1975.

RAILWAY RESERVE

The following extract is from a letter to the Chairman of the Victorian Railways from the Waverley Group of the

"We have been most disappointed to note, over a period of months, that during the course of trackside work on the Glen Waverley Line, valuable bushland has been removed and would respectfully like to suggest that this be considered in future work.

The value of these areas as native conservation areas is immense, not only from an aesthetic point but also for the value of the species contained in these areas and in danger of being lost forever. Might we point out that the Land Conservation Council Reports have stressed the value of railway reserves as conservation reserves for natural bushland."

The group then went on to name one particular area of interest on the Glen Waverley line.

Here then is a challenge to Bushwalkers and other concerned bodies.

Prepare a catalogue of areas on your line:-

1. Bushland that could be retained
2. Bushland that could be improved
3. Areas where suitable plantings could create conservation areas.
4. Other areas of environmental interest.

Send these in to the Conservation Council of Victoria before the end of October, whereupon a submission covering all suburban lines will be forwarded to the Railways. There must be valuable areas on country lines also. Information sent in will be used to build up a later report for the country. The address to send your information is:-

Conservation Council of Victoria
15 Drummond Street,
Carlton, 3056.

NATIVE TREES TO ATTRACT NATIVE BIRDS

The following is reprinted from a handout prepared by the Bird Observers Club of Victoria. Further information can be obtained from the Club (Box 2167T, GPO Melbourne, 3001) or from
 - the Secretary - Mrs Ellen McCulloch - PH. 874 3914
 - The Assistant Secretary - Mrs Alma Mitchell - PH 874 5173

Native plants to attract birds to your garden	
ACACIA	boormanii (Snowy River Wattle) 2.5m.
"	howittii (Sticky Wattle) 5m.
"	longifolia (Sallow Wattle) 4m.
"	pycnantha (Golden Wattle) 5m.
ANIGOZANTHUS	flavida (Yellow Kangaroo Paw) 1m.
BANKSIA	ericifolia (Heath-leaved Banksia) 4m.
"	marginata (Silver Banksia) 4m.
"	spinulosa (Hairpin Banksia) 2.5m.
CALLISTEMON	citrinus (Crimson Bottlebrush) 3m.
"	viminalis (Weping Bottlebrush) 3m.
	All Callistemon species.
CALOTHAMNUS	species (Net Bush) 2-3m.
CORREA	reflexa (Common Correa) 1m.
EPACRIS	impressa (Common Heath) 1m.
EUCALYPTUS	forsteriana (Fuchsia Gum) 3m.
"	leucoxyloides (Red-flowering White Ironbark) 5m.
"	polybractea (Blue Mallee) 3m.
"	preissiana (Bell-fruited Mallee) 2m.
GREVILLEA	barkleyana (Gully Grevillea) 4m.
"	chrysophaea (Golden Grevillea) 2m.
"	hookeriana (Toothbrush Grevillea) 2m.
"	lavandulacea (Lavender Grevillea) 2m.
"	rosmarinifolia (Rosemary Grevillea) 2m.
"	triloba (Lobe-leaved Grevillea) 2m.
	All Grevillea species.
HAKEA	laurina (Pincushion Hakea) 3.5m.
"	nodosa (Yellow Hakea) 2.5m.
"	tenuifolia (Silky Hakea) 2m.
	All Hakea species.
KUNZEA	baxteri 2-3m.
LEPTOSPERMUM	lanigerum (Woolly Tea-tree) 4m.
MELALEUCA	decussata (Cross Honey Myrtle) 3m.
"	eliptica (Oval-leaved Honey Myrtle) 2.5m.
"	hypericifolia (Hillock Bush) 2m.
"	uncinata (Broom Honey Myrtle) 2m.
"	wilsonii (Common Honey Myrtle) 2m.
	All Melaleuca species.

Bird Pudding - A mixture of scraps including bread, bird seed, apple cores, breakfast cereal, etc. held together with melted dripping, set in container, using a string with button attached, like a wick down the centre. Hang out of reach of cats.

Bird Feeder recipes - Nectar Liquid - Dissolve 450g (1lb) brown sugar in 568ml (1 pint) of water. When putting out small quantities, break down one part of heavy syrup with two parts of water. Refrigerate balance. 2-3 drops infant vitamin concentrate may be added.

Solid Food Mix - Mix equal parts of dripping, honey or sugar, rolled oats and brose meal or dried ground peas.

Hanging pottery feeders are sold by the Club for \$1.50 each, but cannot be posted. Enquiries to above address or telephone numbers.

DRAFT CONSERVATION POLICIES

These policies are offered for your consideration. Please discuss them, and make your own views known to members generally and to the committee. Write to news if you agree or disagree.

I. General These policies on specific issues reflect the views of some MBW members in August 1975. It is recognised that the Club will only have limited opportunities for applying these policies at the present time. As a general policy, it is most important that bushwalkers use every opportunity to make their

voices heard by conflicting parties and decision makers.

2. Logging. This conflicts with bushwalking for many reasons:- (a) clearing of timber reduces the quality of the landscape, (b) construction of bull-dozer tracks, likewise, (c) construction of major logging roads reduces the wilderness value of large areas of bushland. (d) deterioration or destruction of wildlife habitats, (e) Soil erosion is a hazard on bull-dozer tracks, (f) logging aids the spread of cinnamon fungus (ie. "dieback")

Policy:- the areas logged should be restricted to minimise conflict. Methods are:-

(a) improved recovery after logging - such as revegetation of most roads, clearing of all fallen timber, and (obviously) re-seeding,

(b) exclusion of all logging in certain areas to be agreed upon by bushwalkers and others,

(c) existing roads are to be used for all future logging operations, instead of the construction of additional new roads.

3. Woodchipping. This is a conflict for the same reasons as logging, but with woodchipping the destruction is more complete.

Policy:- no woodchipping for Victoria. This policy goes further than current government policy that there should be no woodchipping until certain investigations have been completed.

4. Softwoods. In general softwood plantations should be confined to unused or uneconomic farmland. In particular softwoods should be excluded from certain areas to be agreed upon by bushwalkers.

5. Grazing. This causes (a) destruction of much vegetation, (b) soil erosion (c) pollution of watercourses, (d) flies.

Policy:- grazing should be phased out of the high country in the long term. In the meantime the effects of grazing (a and b above in particular) should be closely monitored.

6. Mining. In addition to local destruction at the mining site, this can lead to new roads through bushland. After the mine closes there are usually extensive slag-heaps.

Policy:- all mining operations in areas visited by bushwalkers should be subject to close study to evaluate the environmental and aesthetic results and approval should only be given if the impact is minimal.

7. Motorised Recreation Vehicles. These include 4-WD's, trail-bikes and snowmobiles. These cause problems of:- (a) Soil erosion, (b) destruction of vegetation, and (c) noise, (d) interference with aesthetic considerations such as "the feeling of wilderness."

Policy:- bushwalkers should assist in enforcing the restriction of the MRV's "on-roads". In areas to be agreed upon by bushwalkers, they should be restricted to 2-WD roads (at the present stage there seems no way of enforcing this outside National Parks). Snowmobiles and skidoos should be restricted to ski resorts, except for the actual search and rescue operations.

8. Huts. From the conservation viewpoint, huts lead to local overuse and hence (a) damage vegetation (b) litter (c) lack of dead firewood, (d) pollutes watercourses. Other problems are the safety hazard and the reduction of wilderness value.

Policy:- the existing number of huts are sufficient and no more should be built. Existing ones should be maintained as refuges only.

NOW FOR THE GOOD NEWS

Kanangra Boyd National Park

From Gerry Grandage

A great victory for NSW conservationists was won in April when the State Minister for Lands and Forests announced that there would be no planting of pines on the Boyd Plateau. He also admitted that "there seems no logical reason now for leaving the Plateau outside the Park". (meaning the Kanangra-Boyd National Park.)

Ever since 1969, when the Park was created, it has been a bone of contention that most of the Boyd Plateau was outside the boundary. The reason for its exclusion was that it formed part of the Kanangaroo State Forest, which was in demand from the NSW Forestry Commission as a large pine plantation. Not only has the Plateau great value in itself in scenic, ecological and recreational terms. Its preservation seems even more essential in view of its position. It is virtually surrounded by the existing Park, and because of its attitude, it dominates the area to a greater extent than its size would suggest. To use the Plateau as a soft-wood factory would be a negation of what the Park stands for- even though the Plateau is outside the Park.

The importance of the Kanangra-Boyd area to bushwalkers is mainly in its wilderness value. Using the "3miles to the nearest road" criteria, it offers more wilderness than the Kosciusko National Park. Furthermore the suggestions of the area, compared with the relative openness of the KNP, makes it superb value for its size. All this is only about 130 miles from Sydney.

Bushwalkers and other conservationists have had a long, uphill struggle to preserve the area for use by the people. Initially the problem was the over protective policy of the Metropolitan Water Board (the area is in the Warrangamba catchment): secondly, the proposal for limestone quarrying in the Colong Caves, at the South end of the Park: and lastly the potentially disastrous pine plantations. Perseverance has paid off.

WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE CONSERVATION GROUP

The group is still working on the L.C.C. Grampions submission, a submission to the Ranger Uranium Mining Enquiry, the plans just published for South-West Tasmania and other projects. If you would like to help, ring Gerry McPhee on 387 3417. He is waiting right now by the phone to give you free quotations on your.....

The Club Committee recently asked Rod Mattingley and Gerry McPhee to investigate the possibility of using the new Commonwealth Environment Legislation to stop R.E.D.S. (Regional Employment Development Scheme) money being used in environmentally undesirable ways. As this was a new venture for the club, their report is attached.

REPORT TO COMMITTEE

We wish to acknowledge the assistance of the following three persons:-

1. Tony Walstab	- M.B.W.; Lawyer.
2. Dick Johnston	- Editor, V.N.P.A. Newsletter; M.B.W.
3. Rod Calvert	- Acting First Assistant Secretary Proposals Assessment Division Commonwealth Department of the Environment.

Under the "Environment Protection - Impact of Proposals" Act (164 of 1974), the Commonwealth Minister of the the Environment can ask for an Environmental Impact Study (E.I.S.) in respect of any scheme, works or project using Commonwealth funds. Note that the Minister may ask for an E.I.S. Usually no E.I.S. is asked for unless the minister or his department has reason to suspect that the project may be environmentally undesirable. This raises a major point. The persons most likely to know about the impact of proposed projects are those at the grass-roots of the conservation-environment movement. However, these bodies are often unlikely to know of a project until it starts, especially with secrecy-obsessed organisations like the F.C.V. and M.M.B.W. By the time the project has started the Commonwealth has of course approved the project. Yes, it does have a familiar ring about it.

Mr. Calvert suggested that if we were to write to the Minister, he, the Minister, might consider asking his Department to look more closely at proposals originating from specific sources. We will do this. Mr. Calvert also pointed out that the Department of the Environment has the authority to consult with other bodies about projects under review. We asked if the M.B.W. and V.N.P.A. could be asked to comment, and he said that the Department of Environment

had the power to consult with anyone. On paper our task looks simple - to persuade the Department to consult us about proposals for F.C.V. and other dubious bodies before they are approved. The difficulties relate to just how this is to be done.

Another solution would be to require that all Commonwealth-funded projects be advertised in order to give the public time to consider their environmental impact. We will mention this in my letter to the Minister.

A problem is that the Commonwealth Department of the Environment does not have the manpower to examine all the projects funded by the Commonwealth. Therefore, it has delegated its authority for all projects under \$100,000 to the State Minister for Conservation. The Minister for Conservation's representative, Mr. Ian Cowdell, has been asked by us to pay particular attention to F.C.V. requests in future, and to contact me if any especially interesting ones come up. He has suggested that we formalize our concern in the form of a letter to the State Minister of Conservation, setting out our reasons. We intend to do this.

A ROOT ROTTER IN THE BUSH

Gretna Weste

Those who spend weekends and holidays in the bush have probably noticed areas where green grass trees change to yellow, then to a rich cinnamon brown. These are signs of death due to a root rotting fungus in the soil. The grass trees begin to droop, and finally the whole crown of leaves folds down and collapses like a broken umbrella. As the grass trees die, other shrubs turn yellow, branches die back and in a while only bare ground and sedges remain. About 12 months later the trees show disease, some die suddenly with brown leaves attached, others die gradually back from the outer branches. Tolerant and resistant trees remain apparently unaffected.

Nobody knows just how the cinnamon fungus first reached Victoria, but it was originally isolated from cinnamon trees growing in the mountains of Western Sumatra. As early as 1882 Queensland pineapples became diseased. We do not know whether the pathogen crept steadily southwards or whether it arrived in soil or on the roots of infected plants. So many Victorian native plants are susceptible that the fungus is unlikely to be a native organism. In order to survive for hundreds of years in the presence of a pathogen, native plants must show a high degree of tolerance to that pathogen or be eliminated in the competition for survival. Many overseas plants show this tolerance, but not Victorian natives.

The cinnamon fungus produces tiny microscopic swimming spores which are water dispersed. The swimming spores are attracted to sugars and amino acids excreted by the plant root which thus seals its doom. The spores penetrate fine roots, grow through and decay them. When its fine root system is rooted the plant dies from water and mineral shortage. Spores which can survive for long periods form in the soil and in the dying plant root. In the presence of free water, sporangia form on the edge of the root and produce more fine swimming spores. Disease is thus spread rapidly by the swimming spores in water or wet soil. Resistant chlamydespores and fungal threads present in either soil or gravel or plant roots also spread disease, but more slowly.

In Western Australia jarrah forests the cinnamon fungus has caused death and disease in huge areas, killing both the jarrah and the associated wild flowers. The East Gippsland coastal flats were probably the first Victorian areas to become diseased. Nearer Melbourne gravel pits in the Brisbane Ranges became infected and the pathogen was dispersed with road gravel. Rain washed the gravel and the fungus down the steep slopes into the valleys. At Wilson's Promotory the gravel pit on the Vereker Spur became contaminated, when tracked fire-fighting vehicles from Yarram dropped their load of infected soil. Rain spread disease down the Vereker Spur to Corner Inlet. Before the pathogen was recognised contaminated gravel was used on the Tidal River road, the old lighthouse track and the Oberon road and disease spread from this gravel. In other areas some Country Roads Board gravel sources became infected, and the fungus was dispersed with the gravel.

In the Acheron Valley, Narbethong, and in the army camp, Puckapunyal, disease originated from infected nursery seedlings in the same way as in our gardens. Many National and Forest parks contain small diseased areas, for example, Kinglake, Lerderderg Gorge, Angabrook and the Grampians. Dieback disease is present along the Great Ocean Road near Anglesea and in one place on the edge of Sherbrooke Forest.

From any source of infection disease is spread rapidly by water, at about 400m. per year on a downhill slope, but spread from plant to plant or through the soil is very much slower and depends on the soil type, contact between the roots and susceptibility of the vegetation. Disease spread is rapid in the Brisbane Ranges where soils are shallow, drainage impeded, through the soil by a clay layer near the surface, and the vegetation is very susceptible. Whereas most other fungus diseases affect only one or two plant species, such as rust on wheat, or Irish blight on the potatoe, the cinnamon fungus has 754 hosts, over 400 of which are Australian.

Because of the nature of this beastie, the cinnamon fungus is easy to spread - particulatly by people or vehicles which leave the roads for the bush. Thus soil carried on boots may spread the fungus. We cannot accurately state that a "fistfull" of soil will spread the disease. The fungus is entirely microscopic so theoretically any amount of soil may spread the disease. Of course a larger amount of soil will increase the probability that the fungus will be present. In any diseased area there is at least eight times as much fungus a round plant roots as in the soil between plants, so that if you dig up a plant you are very likely indeed to spread disease.

Once the cinnamon fungus is present in the soil, eradication is practically impossible. We speak from bitter experience here. We have tried and almost succeeded in eliminating the pathogen from very small areas of bush by drilling in fungicide, but in doing so we have destroyed everything else which was alive in the soil nearby. It is possible to control or eliminate the pathogen from cultivated soil, but not from native forest. So we aim to slow down and prevent the spread of disease as far as possible. Bushwalkers can report signs of disease such as dying grass trees and the exact location. In each case we can only be sure the cinnamon fungus is involved by visiting the area, noting all the symptoms and isolating the fungus from samples of soil and roots. Fortunately the pathogen is easy to recognise under the microscope.

Therefore, unless you want "every bloomin' campin'-ground exactly like the last", will you please take care if you leave the road to clean the mud off your boots, your jeep or trail bike and not carry the soil from one area to another, in case you are also carrying infection?

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