

#33 winter-spring 2006

news from the  
**alps**

Adversity has a way of bringing people together. From time to time, the national parks and the snow sports industry have been known to have a different take on the Alps as a resource, but right now they're in perfect step. You guessed it: climate change.

# keep winter COOL

The Keep Winter Cool initiative, launched this season, is proof of two things. For all sorts of reasons, the alpine community values and loves the mountains. It also shows, unfortunately, that the scientists are right. Climate change is real and will have an adverse impact on alpine environments. However, we can all do something real to help.

As Dave Woods, Environmental Liaison Officer Resorts Section based at Jindabyne puts it, "You can't just ignore what's happening, drive away from the mountains, and become a beach person. And that's because everything is interconnected. But these links can also work in your favour because what you do at home is important and will make a difference up on the mountain."

With the effects of climate change already putting pressure on the Alps, it's not surprising that the need for a climate change awareness program came together on several fronts at roughly the same time. In Victoria, the Alpine Resorts Co-ordinating Council (ARCC) held a sustainability forum in Melbourne in 2005 with keynote speakers Graeme Pearman, a leading climate specialist formerly from the CSIRO, and Auden Schendler, the environmental manager for the Aspen fields in the United States. And everyone came - from the Victorian agencies and members of the snow sports industry to their equivalents from New South Wales. Di Paterson, from the ARCC, puts the forum in context. "The Victorian Government had released its Alpine Resorts 2020 Strategy the year before, which confirmed that the industry would need to adapt to cope with the effects of climate change - we'd be making snow and promoting all-seasons usage."





# welcome

...and here we are with another issue of *news from the alps*, the twice yearly mini magazine which gathers together all the management news in and around our Australian Alps.

And this issue is special, because we take time to recognise that it's been 20 years since the first signing of the Memorandum of Understanding. This living, dynamic agreement between the two states, and the ACT and Australian Government has had a wonderful impact influence on the management of the Alps region, and it continues to this day. As the stories in this magazine show, we've become part of a network which has brought us together to work on the same issues - something which adds dimension and depth to our work. Take a look at pages 13, 14 and 15 and you'll see what I mean.

We've also the usual columns, filled with information about workshops, reports, manuals, DVDs, and dates for the diary. A quick look at page 7 will give you an overview of what's being-done-where all over the Alps.

And finally, be sure to read our lead story on the Keep Winter Cool campaign, and *international perspective* on page 14 if only for some very good further reading.

Happy reading.

## Gill Anderson

program manager and editor

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Strategies like these are one way to deal with the situation, but more was needed. "Together with other Alps partners such as the Australian Alps Liaison Committee, we were all aware of climate change research and the need to do respond to its message. The Alpine Resorts recognised the need to be responsible for their own environmental practices. We knew we had to lead the way." And so the Keep Winter Cool initiative was developed.

Launched in April by the Minister for Environment, the Hon John Thwaites MP, the Keep Winter Cool message is simple. Individuals can make a difference. Change how you live your everyday life just a little, and there'll be a snowy landscape to enjoy each winter.

Hooking onto the fact that people are more likely to change their behaviour where there's a personal connection, the campaign is out wherever there are people with links to the Alps. This winter, if you didn't hear the Keep Winter Cool message on community radio in both states, read about it in various forms of the press, have a brochure handed to you, spotted the posters and bumper stickers or driven under a very big banner, then the campaign organisers on both sides of the border would be very surprised.

In terms of leading the way, a growing list of agencies, organisations, businesses and groups have signed the Keep Winter Cool charter. "It was wonderful", says Di, "to see a Falls Creek lift operator as advocate, with a sign announcing to everyone that their lift is powered by renewable energy." Says Dave Woods, "Everyone involved appreciates that there is no short term view on this - it's not just about the 2006 season. Instead it's a program which will roll out over the years and through all the seasons."

## need to know more?

For a quick overview of the potential impact of climate change see Al Gores' movie, *An inconvenient truth*, or if you're after something more detailed, Tim Flannery's book *The weather makers*. A fact sheet produced by the Climate Institute has information from the perspective of the Australian Alps - [www.climateinstitute.org.au](http://www.climateinstitute.org.au) - as does a four page set of action items put together for managers of protected areas by Graeme Worboys, Vice Chair of the IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas (Mountains Biome) which you'll find at <http://www.mountains-wcpa.org/downloads/ManagersResponseGlobalWarminJuly2005.2.htm>

And of course, there is lots of information about the Keep Winter Cool initiative and how you can help on their website at [www.keepwintercool.com.au](http://www.keepwintercool.com.au).

It's also worth noting the next science management forum will be on the subject of Climate Change. (See page 9 for more info on the forums.)

## make a difference by...

- share a ride or take the bus to the snow and to work.
- turn off lights and appliances when you are not using them.
- choose energy efficient appliances (5 star energy rated, fluoro lights).
- insulate your house and lodge.
- wash clothes in cold water, fit water efficient shower heads and install solar water heater.
- buy greenhouse friendly products.
- support renewable energy sources and sign up to green power.
- reduce, reuse and recycle. less landfill means less methane (a greenhouse gas).
- plant a tree and help create carbon sinks.
- lead change at your workplace or business.

## healthy mountains for all sorts of reasons...

Winter snow-fall is not just for the benefit of skiers, snowboarders and snow players. The alpine landscape has connections for many people, from different perspectives, year round. The alpine environment is also home to an amazing array of biota. For example, if there is less snow, species like the Mountain Pygmy Possum (*Burramys parvus*) will struggle to retain their place in the complex ecological landscapes of the Alps. We also need to ensure that Alpine bog communities are not put under stress - for their own sake and for their role to slow and filter snow melt and run-off so that people hundreds of kilometres away have pure drinking water.

Cresta Valley, Mount Buffalo, July 2006.



# aroundthealps

news, big or small on Alps-based projects, people and events

## from Victoria...

**High Country Initiatives...** At the end of the first year of the three year Program a great deal has been achieved by Parks staff. Moss bed rehabilitation continued, which combined the installation of 'sock' weirs (to reduce run off and lift the water table) with weed control and replanting. In terms of pest plant and animal control, the increased funding has helped tackle the three most significant weeds - English broom, willow and blackberry - as well as feral animals, horses, pigs, foxes, dogs and goats. And together with the Victorian High Country Huts Association, stage one restoration of Fry's Hut in the Howqua Valley near Mansfield was completed. This leaves Roper's Hut, on the Bogong High Plains as the final hut of six huts to be rebuilt following the 2002-03 fires. Working together with the Victorian High Country Huts Association, the necessary planning and organisation is underway so that work can take place this summer season. This hut has high refuge value as well as cultural links to the Roper family who once held grazing licenses in the Alps.

This sits alongside other initiatives which also have an impact on the Alps - the management of transitional payments by the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) for those who previously held grazing licenses within the Alpine National Park; DSE's development of mechanisms to gather and protect the range of cultural values linked with the Alps region; and Tourism Victoria's support of community-based tourism initiatives.

**Bogong High Plains...** roads, walking tracks & yards... With a \$2 million State Government grant in hand, planning has begun for the sealing of the Bogong High Plains Road. While the Alpine Shire is in the process of seeking the remaining necessary funds as a Federal Government road grant, Parks staff are developing strategies to ensure the project is a landmark of environmental excellence - that works centre on the footprint of the existing gravel road to prevent any new ecological disturbances. The road is needed to promote tourism, and the timing of its upgrading is ideal given a ready source of gravel will soon be available from a tunnel being dug nearby as part of a new power station in the Kiewa Hydro Power Scheme.

A section of walking track between Falls Creek and Roper's Lookout damaged during the 2002-03 fires has been rebuilt and upgraded complete with stone steps, and a piece of alpine cattle-grazing history has been purchased in the form of the cattle and horse yards at Pretty Valley. The culturally significant site will have an ongoing use for recreational horse riders.

**Fire Plans...** Dan Jamieson, the Fire and Environment Planning Officer based at Bright over the last year has produced three ecological fire plans. These will form the scientific basis of planned fuel reduction burns, the aim being to burn to protect biodiversity (and maintain a distribution of vegetation age classes) as well as asset protection.

The Parks Victoria two person weed team assigned to the Alps region (there are others throughout the State) is making it's mark on two fronts. Working seasonally and based on Omeo, Dookie (Keith) Spencer and Yakka (Eugene) Vereshaka work one week close to home and the other wherever there are small isolated populations best reached with a 4WD

and camping gear. They have the flexibility of being able to be teamed with weeding contractors, and when they are out along the roadside or around camping grounds, their presence plays a key role in promoting the often unseen work of weed management in the Alps.

**Partnerships and MOUs...** The collaborative work done through partnerships between the parks and various stakeholders continues to be invaluable. Already mentioned, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Victorian High Country Huts Association has helped to carry out restoration works while a recent workshop aimed to establish how to get the best from the partnership and set hut management guidelines.

Another MOU with the Sporting Shooters' Association has helped to control wild goats at Mount Mittamatite and is being expanded to address other areas. And alpine deer populations are being monitored through an MOU with the Australian Deer Association - decisions on managing their impact will be based on this valuable data.

A contract with the Alpine Brumby Management Association continues to remove feral horses - two new management methods are being carefully trialled; access by horse to wilderness areas and the use of dogs within the national parks.

Four Wheel Drive Victoria is working with parks staff to clear tracks and provide education to weekend visitors on responsible 4W driving.

At this point, 12 months post one of the biggest decisions ever made in the Victorian Alps - the decision to stop cattle grazing in the Alpine National Park - it's worth noting the success of the transition. Staff were charged to make it work, and despite initial public fears of increased weeds and fire hazards and a view from some that it would be unmanageable, the transition has been run remarkably well thanks to a great partnership with the Department of Sustainability and Environment, the licensees and Parks Victoria staff.

And as staff reflect on a very poor ski season and what looks like further drought conditions, there are growing concerns, for local tourism and also in terms of the ecological impact. Reduced snow cover offers less protection for fragile alpine biodiversity in winter and spring and an increased risk of fire the following summer.

**Working across borders...** following the First People's Gathering held last year, an Indigenous Reference Group was established in September with an ongoing role as a point of liaison between the ten traditional owner groups and parks staff. As part of the Natural Heritage Working group, the Wild Dog group is developing cross-border strategies as is the Baw Baw Southern Alps Liaison Committee. Staff from Victoria and New South Wales also meet regularly to discuss fuel reduction burning and resourcing fires from both sides of the border.

**People news...** Cath Kent has gone off to have a baby, with Ross Grant acting ranger in Charge at Bogong while she is away for a year. Peter Jenkins has moved into a regional role as the new Visitor Services Planning Officer and Scottie Graham has the new east Region OHS officer Role. Rod Oldfield is the new entrance Station Co-ordinator at Mt Buffalo (previously working in the Snowy Region, Kosciuszko

National Park) and Elaine Thomas and Mick Keenan have joined the Alps team after 10 years at Wilson's Promontory. Pauline Hepburn has retired and Lisa Basler is now Alps District Business Officer.

### Snowy River National Park

In the lower regions of the Park, Swinburne University has brought in its expertise to carry out baseline surveys of small mammals in clay heathlands, the aim being to make a comparative study of populations both within and outside areas affected by the 2002-03 fires.

Work on Deddick Trail, a premier 4WD destination in Victoria, are due to begin in Autumn with funds from both the registration levy and Four Wheel Drive Victoria. The dangerous red clay areas will be gravelled while other works will improve drainage and help preserve soil.

Testing sites for the proposed Telstra and Department of Sustainability and Environment trunk radio repeater station has identified Monkey Top as a likely location; the station is needed to improve the safety of those working in the radio shadow of the deeper valleys, especially when engaged in fire fighting.

Planning has begun on the third **Wilderness Bike Ride**, a wonderful event for both riders and the local communities involved. Numbers are deliberately capped to maintain an intimate event and the course runs through remote areas within the Errinundra, Alpine and Snowy River National parks as well as the state forests. Supported by Tourism Victoria, not only does it attract riders from all over Australia and overseas, it's a valuable means of linking small rural communities with the world outside the Alps.



Sunrise at Goong, Wilderness Bike Ride.



A pilot program based on sound science is expected to have a significant impact both on the landscape around Mt Delegate, but also on the future of how fire is managed. The community fuel management project is working across state borders and involves the Department of Sustainability and Environment, Parks Victoria, the Country Fire Authority, the New South Wales Parks and Wildlife Service, Forest New South Wales and the new South Wales Rural Fire Service.

And in terms of **people moves**, Doug Thompson has taken up the new role of Indigenous Field Services Officer., Part of his role is to help interpret indigenous values and facilitate links with local indigenous communities. Robyn Calnin, who previously managed the lower area of the Snowy River National Park and has moved to take on responsibility with a coastal focus. David Preece, whose connection with the Park includes putting together an environmental action plan on secondment four years ago, has taken up the position. And Wing Hagger from Bendoc is now a member of the Australian Alps Recreation and Visitor Facilities Working group.

### Baw Baw National Park

In early April the Australian Alps Liaison Committee came down to the southernmost end of the Alps for their quarterly meeting, taking time to take a look around and pick up on the work and issues relevant to Baw Baw National Park.

**Willows...** the willow control program which began in January 2000, funded through a Parks Victoria Community Grants program, is now 90% complete. Making use of 1800 volunteer hours, 925 trees have been treated at 278 different locations. The process has been featured as a segment on the television show *Landline* – to get hold of a copy contact Andy Gillham, agillham@parks.vic.gov.au. Over six years effort, in removing an introduced species with a known negative impact on hydrology, is producing results. Not only are species like the critically endangered Baw Baw Frog (*Philoria frosti*) benefiting from the slowing down of water, but the water quality of many of Victoria's major rivers, who have their headwaters in the park, is improving.

**Fire Rehabilitation...** The 15,000 hectare fire at Moondarra State Park earlier this year took up a significant amount of staff time, not only during January and February with fire fighting but also through rehabilitation works carried out in March and April. And given the 20 years or more experience at Baw Baw of feral cattle control, staff from the Alpine National Park have been making use of this resource to set up and successfully manage their own program.

Two major groups which have supported Baw Baw for many years have celebrated their 25th birthdays – the Friends of Baw Baw National Park and St Gwinear Ski Patrol. (See page 13 for more.)

And after approximately 10 years of working with Andy Gillham, Craig Oldis has moved to the Victorian Police Force leaving Andy as the Baw Baw 'lone' ranger.

### from New South Wales...

**Park Entry...** Putting the NSW Government's winter surcharge in place – for entry into the State's ski fields – has involved a fair amount of work on many fronts. Among them, an advertising campaign has set out not only to promote the benefits of pre purchasing an annual permit but also to let

locals know what exemptions have been put in place. The new Kosciuszko visitor entry station at Sawpit Creek was completed in early June, just in time for the season. Built by the Road Traffic Authority the process was supervised by parks staff, in particular Ron Nedham, Steve Redden and Dave Darlington. If visitors are now paying more, at least they aren't queuing at the old facility. Two booths have been replaced by seven, with an express lane for advance purchased pass-holders.

**Interpretive displays & Bhutanese rangers...** As part of the ongoing rehabilitation post the 2002-03 fires, new interpretive materials have been set up at Wallace Craigie Lookout on the Barry Way overlooking the Byadbo Wilderness. Produced with input from Aboriginal Education Officer Rod Mason, the new format signs present a shared cultural history. Also recently completed, a display featuring the Himalayan nation of Bhutan has been created in the Education Centre at Sawpit Creek – a collaboration between parks staff and Kelzang Tshering and Tshering Phuntsho, Bhutanese rangers who have been studying at the Australian National University. A relationship between Kosciuszko National Park (KNP) and the Royal Government of Bhutan's Nature Conservation Division has led to visits from senior Bhutan government officials, Nature Conservation Division staff as well as Bhutanese rangers who've have gained valuable experience



New interpretive signage at Wallace Craigie Lookout, Kosciuszko National Park.

by working with rangers, scientists, environmental planners and education officers in Kosciuszko National Park. The new display is an accurate, culturally appropriate representation of Bhutan's equally fragile alpine ecosystems, and it offers visitors (especially students) the opportunity to compare how the ecosystems are managed within Kosciuszko National Park.

Under the State Government's **Towards Centenary** program for Kosciuszko National Park, the upgrade of facilities at the Yarrangobilly Caves is well underway. All the galvanised iron handrails have been removed, and with them the threat to the caves' delicate ecosystem through corrosive chemical residue, and stainless steel replacements have been installed in South Glory Cave. The next stage of what is a four year program, will include state of the art lighting and interpretive signage.

Rehabilitation of the sites remaining from construction of the Snowy Mountains Hydroelectric Scheme continued at T2 Dogleg, Kaiser-Walsh Sandwashing site, Link Road Quarry, Nungar Quarry and many others in the north of Kosciuszko National Park. In the south revegetation works began at

Khancoban Creek, a medium sized site of approximately 25 hectares. Months of effort goes into preparing every site, collecting seed, making compost and growing tubestock. To date approximately 100,000 tree, shrub and grass tubestock have been planted across the Park.

Willow removal programs along kilometres of river and road systems also continued, centred around the upper Tumut, upper Snowy River, Khancoban Creek, Happy Jacks Creek and Thredbo River catchments.

An estimated 350 minor and 36 major sites will be rehabilitated with the \$32 million provided by Snowy Hydro over the next 20 years.

**Spotted Tree Frogs...** A captive breeding program based around what is believed to be the last male spotted tree frog in New South Wales has led to the successful release of offspring into Bogong Creek. Staff from the Biodiversity Conservation Unit of Department of Environment and Conservation working in collaboration with the Amphibian Research Centre in Melbourne, successfully mated the male frog with three Victorian females collected from Wheeler Creek, the closest source in geographical and genetic terms. Last summer 200 one-year-old frogs were released and by late season monitoring suggested a quarter had survived. During the next summer season 400 more are planned for reintroduction and parks staff are keen to see how the original group has overwintered as low temperatures and high water flows during winter can result in high mortality in this species.

**About fire...** An oral history based on the 2003 Kosciuszko fires has been highly commended by this year's National Trust Heritage Awards. The concept of creating an oral documentary – edited interviews with a range of people, telling their fire experience – was driven by the fact that nothing exists from previous fires. An initiative of the Snowy Mountains Bushfire Recovery Taskforce and funded by NSW Premier's Department, the booklet and disk set *Spirit of Survival* is available from Regional Visitor Centres in Cooma, Jindabyne, Khancoban and Tumut for \$10.00. Profits from CD sales go to local Rural Fire Service brigades. For further information contact Graeme Enders on 02 64521455.

**Illegal activity...** And a group of six horse riders has been penalised more than a combined total of \$8000 in the Cooma Local Court after being caught riding illegally on the Main Range in Kosciuszko National Park last year. Spotted by Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) staff who were carrying out survey work in a helicopter, each rider was spotted riding a horse and leading a pack horse, through sensitive bog and fen vegetation and post fire rehabilitation works. Horse riding is permitted in more than 100,000 hectares of Kosciuszko National Park and it was completely unnecessary for the riders to be in the alpine area of the Main Range.

### from the ACT...

**Visitor centres...** A new interactive, touch screen technology interpretive display at the Namadgi Visitor Centre was launched on 10 September with a gathering of staff, members of local indigenous groups, other community and interest groups and visitors. It replaces the 15 year old exhibit and has a strong focus on Aboriginal culture and the importance of our past and present community users, neighbours and supporters.



# all about huts

A great workshop is all about getting together with others who share the same area of interest and expertise, swapping ideas and methods, and learning something you didn't already know.

The recent workshop on huts achieved all this and more. Tumut-based ranger Megan Bowden, one of the people responsible for the three day session, describes why it was such a success. (It's also probably worth noting that the next huts workshop is scheduled for three years time, and if you want to be one of the lucky ones to score a place, be sure to move quickly when you first hear mumbblings on the Alps' grape vine.)

Itself a culturally rich site, the historic Currango Homestead west of Cooma was a brilliant setting. "We held the 'indoor' sessions in a marquee on the tennis court; everyone stayed in the homestead, out-buildings or camped; and we made use of the range of building styles that make up Currango as a reference tool during some of the sessions."

"Fifty people attended (many others missed out on a place), coming from across the Alps, representing volunteer caretaker groups in three states, among them members of the Kosciuszko huts Association and the Victorian High Country Huts Association, and all the relevant agency staff were there." (Not surprising given the workshop was an Alps-wide initiative from the Australian Alps Liaison Committee (AALC), the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), Parks Victoria and Environment ACT.)

"We share a love of huts and we were there to learn more about how a hut is built and how to look after them. And we began by looking at the huts in the context of the landscape – the significance of their existence relative to stock routes and the aboriginal pathways these routes often followed."

It's hard to decide which session was the most popular but two stand out, firstly the welcome by Uncle Vince Bulger and Auntie Marg Berg which was followed by a discussion

"No-one wanted to down tools..."



of the links between the first peoples and the landscape by Aboriginal Heritage officers Dean Freeman and Adrian Brown. "We had great feedback that this gave people a much deeper understanding of the cultural importance."

The other session loved by all was the care and use of hand tools – among them the adze, broad axe and froe. "No-one wanted to down tools and leave that one."

And a great deal else was covered over the three days. People learned how to go about working around huts within guidelines set up by legislation designed to protect the huts. "You can't just rock up and replace a wall because it would alter the original fabric of the structure." There was discussion about occupational health and safety, and the safety of the huts themselves, particularly from fire. "In the United States they've been wrapping structures in foil, though it hasn't proved very effective." The tour of the Currango homestead buildings showcased different building techniques from different eras – vertical slab, horizontal slab and weatherboard – and there were hands on session on working with stone, as well as how-to theory on sourcing and storing authentic period materials and appropriate repair techniques. There was even a tour to other significant sites – Cooinbil and Coolamine homesteads, Long Plain and the Kiandra Court House where everyone learned not only how to record a site, but also how to audit it to create a scheduled plan for future works.

Perhaps most importantly was the discussion about seeing the huts as an Alps-wide collection worthy of national significance. Having them acknowledged as such must certainly be on the to-do list...

## if rehab is your thing

If you spend time in the Alps – living, working, playing – chances are you'll get involved in a bit of rehabilitation at some point. That involvement could take any number of forms and on all sorts of levels, so you might want to make a note that two very useful manuals have just been released.

*The Australian Alps Rehabilitation Manual*, by Roger Good for the AALC, a high altitude rehabilitation pioneer, gives a good conceptual and historical viewpoint into alpine ecological rehabilitation. The Manual also aims to provide managers dealing with destruction and denudation with principles and guidelines – a selection of tried and tested techniques. The ideal partner manual is the *Rehabilitation Guidelines for the Resort Areas of the Kosciuszko National Park*, with much of the technical detail contributed by Elizabeth MacPhee, Rehabilitation Officer for the former sites of the Snowy River Hydroelectric Scheme. The Guidelines is a collaborative document that has been contributed to by various stakeholders of the NSW ski resorts. This technical manual offers prescriptive instructions for on-ground work, and, as all sites are different, is only intended as a guide. Every three years it will be reviewed, in order to gather knowledge. It is hoped that eventually the two manuals will be incorporated into one dynamic and contemporary guide to high altitude rehabilitation techniques. Says Elizabeth, "People tend to develop methods which work, but if they don't write them down, when they move on that information is lost."

For copies, contact Gill Anderson, Australian Alps Program Manager, [ganderso@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:ganderso@parks.vic.gov.au)

# management + research = better outcomes

The aim is a good one – getting good science behind the management of the Alps. And the method for doing this is an oldie and a goodie, a workshop which brings together the right people, in this case those people who manage these landscapes and the scientists whose research is likely to have a impact on the way this is done.

So in May, a group of regional managers, district rangers, area managers, rangers in charge, planning and project officers and applied researchers (among them Dr Dick Williams – CSIRO, Dr Pat Lane - Melbourne University, Dr Kevin Tolhurst - Fire Ecology, Melbourne University, Dr Malcolm Gill - CSIRO and Roger Good - semi retired – (NSW NPWS) met in Thredbo for the first in a series of science management forums. The aim of this two-day workshop was to explore the information available post the 2002-03 fires: identify ways in which this might be translated to on ground programs in each person's patch, and to make some defined decisions for future fire management programs.

"The scientists certainly weren't there to tell people what to do", explains Roger Good. "Given that these managers have a great deal to do, effectively sifting through the huge volume of research data which exists is a big ask. Our aim was to give an overview of the issues, so that during the workshops, the participants could begin to challenge some of the existing management practices and to possibly recognise more appropriate alternatives. These people are under considerable pressure, and it was rewarding to see a growing confidence in the science available to support their professional ability."

Charlie Pascoe, Manager Environment programs, Parks Victoria's Alpine District backs this up. "The opportunity for managers to interact and discuss the implications of fire with scientists is absolutely invaluable."

No surprises that a great deal of discussion focused on the complex issue of managing fire on all its fronts – social, economic and ecological. As Roger Good explains "If the

managers don't do enough prescribed burning for example, they are criticised for placing public assets at risk. If they do too much as a response to external pressures and influences, and it impacts on the plant communities, habitats and native fauna populations, they are criticised by the public and ecologists alike. Fire management is very demanding of skills and the knowledge of the science underpinning ecologically based programs – arguably the most complex and challenging program in protected area management."

From the broad to the specific, the forum also offered information to help identify and make specific decisions appropriately and at the right moment – such as which weeds will thrive post-fire unless checked quickly, or the benefits of maintaining vegetation along watercourses to effectively control silt movement following post-fire rainfall and runoff.

Given that this was the first of these forums, there were a few lessons learned. It was suggested that presentations be kept shorter but to have more of them; that there be more scientists, smaller workshop groups and more time for questions and answers, in other words, more opportunity for discussion between the scientists and managers. Above all, many felt there needed to be a greater focus in the workshops on the management implications of the research. After all, everyone wants to take home clear operational messages.

The next science management forum will deal with Climate Change and the implications for park management.



## the history of fire

To state the obvious, fire is an integral part of the Alps. It's linked with the landscape – both being affected by it and having its effects in return. What's equally obvious is that anyone, with an appreciation and understanding of this relationship, is in a better position to manage this landscape, which is why the newly released *Fire History of the Australian Alps* is so useful. Author Phil Zylstra explains...

"Following the 2002-03 fires it was decided that we should try to get a continuous fire history together over the Alps – one that listed and mapped what had taken place up until then, with as much detail as possible on what was burnt, how and why."

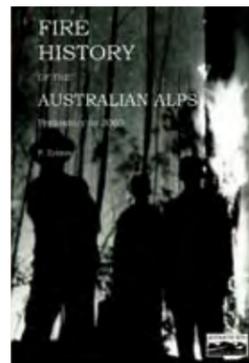
Carrying out an extensive review of scientific and historic research conducted in Victoria, NSW and the ACT as far

back as 1860, the history effectively pulls together a view of the last 600 years. What emerges is surprisingly consistent. For example, that the Aboriginal people did not burn the Alps frequently, or across large areas. "They were very specific about what to burn, and what not, and there were strict penalties for those who stepped outside the boundaries."

With the arrival of Europeans, the fire environment changed. While some were careful and considered – maintaining small fires and deliberately not burning Snowgum forests that would send up suckers; the impact of others overwhelmed them, so that the legacy of the time was a massive increase in fire frequency, size and impacts.

This is just one aspect of the History which makes fascinating reading for fire and land managers, cultural historians, researchers and anyone interested in the history of the mountains. It is also an invaluable tool to help us gain a sense of the scale and pattern to fire in the Alps.

Use this link to get your copy – [www.australialps.deh.gov.au/publications/research/fire](http://www.australialps.deh.gov.au/publications/research/fire) or email Gill, [ganderso@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:ganderso@parks.vic.gov.au)



# two matts | hot rats



We try hard – to get it right, not wrong – but we had the wrong Matt in the caption with the Alps angel at Mt Buffalo. So to set things straight, meet the two matts - Matt Moylan who was in the picture, and Matt Holland whose name was in the caption...

**Matt Moylan** is based at Mt Buffalo and the bulk of what he does each year falls within the areas of visitor services and cultural values management (this includes monitoring of the historic Chalet). Other duties include coordinating the Lake Catani Camping ground volunteers, depot and office power, water & sewerage maintenance and servicing, vehicle fleet management, the management of cross-country ski trails, and contact officer for tour operators and permit applicants. And as he says, "This isn't the limit to what I may do during the year, but it's a bit of an overview."

**Matt Holland** also has a varied role managing the west side of the Snowy River National Park. When he's not radio tracking released Brush Tailed Rock Wallabies (see picture) as part of the program for this threatened species, he's dealing with pest animals both as part of the good neighbour program and to protect the released wallabies. His work also focuses on pest plants and those that are endangered like the Leafy Green Hood orchid (*Pterostylis cucullata*). Then there's the usual range of works projects – roading, picnic facilities, walking tracks - and liaising with local community groups, for example Landcare, the Buchan Tourism Association, and local schools.



## dvd resources

This is where new technology helps reveal a tens of thousands year old culture – two DVD's just released share a common theme, Aboriginal people as an integral part of the Alps.

When the first traditional owner gathering in modern times took place in the Alps in April 2005, more than 100 people came, most of whom were representing the many Aboriginal Traditional Owner groups that have been associated with the Alps for thousands of years before Europeans arrived. The Koori Heritage Trust was also present, filming throughout the three days. *Australian Alps First Peoples' Gathering* captures the important issues from an Aboriginal perspective. With open discussion and interviews with individuals, this DVD is an interesting insight into the Gathering.

Another DVD, *Dancing and the Devil Fire – Uncovering the Hidden History of the Alps*, has been produced with support from Parks Victoria and the Department of Sustainability & Environment. After the 2002-03 fires, a wealth of evidence showing the connection between Aboriginal people and the Alps became apparent. A collection of interviews with Traditional Owners, land managers, and archaeologists supports the growing knowledge of a cultural landscape interconnected by travel routes and pathways.

For anyone who works in the Alps, both DVDs are an invaluable resource, both as a cultural briefing tool and as a means of showing the value of Aboriginal community involvement.

*Australian Alps First Peoples' Gathering* and *Dancing and the Devil Fire*, available from Gill Anderson: [ganderso@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:ganderso@parks.vic.gov.au)



Studying a number of the smaller pieces of a jigsaw can give a clearer view of the bigger picture (but you still have to join them together to make some sense of what you have). This approach to examining the larger picture of global change is used by ecologists such as Ken Green of the National Parks Wildlife Service (NSW), whose work involves monitoring alpine and subalpine fauna.

Long-term data for a species are precious, especially when the species reacts to climate or other changes. In this case it's *Mastacomys fuscus* - the Broad Toothed Rat.

Part of Ken's work involves monitoring these rats, adding to data that go back to 1978. The New South Wales populations of these herbivorous rodents live above 1000 metres with the densest populations in areas with a seasonal snow cover which puts them in an ideal position for studying global warming and its effects.

On the most basic level, *Mastacomys* depends on the snow both for insulation during winter and for protection from predators such as foxes. Change to the timing of the thaw has a profound effect on their survival.

Between 1978 and 1999, the data show that the populations remained relatively stable. In 1999, following the earliest thaw on record, the population numbers crashed. Another crash followed the 2003 fires, and yet another following the 2005 winter. This pattern is pointing very clearly to a local impact from global warming. We're beginning to see the future for the Alps and it doesn't look good.

Of course it takes more than data based around one species of rat to confirm a trend. Ken is also involved with the UNESCO sponsored Mountain Research Initiative (MRI) and GLORIA (Global Observation Research Initiative in Alpine Environments) which is studying 36 sites worldwide - Kosciuszko National Park being one of them.

A wealth of great reference material exists at [www.aias.org.au](http://www.aias.org.au), the web sit of the Australian Institute of Alpine Studies. Here you'll find details of the work being undertaken by people like Ken Green – be sure to check out the Institutes' newsletter.



# fenced vs unfenced



Jenny Edwards wears more than one hat (but in the Alps that's not unusual). Most of the time she runs Gippsland High Country Tours, taking people out into those special places, but she also finds time to help look after the landscape through Friends of the Cobberas. And one of the ways this has taken place on the ground has been a Friends-run ongoing study on the impact of feral horses.

**"When the Friends of the Cobberas began in 1997, our aim was to support the staff of the East Alps Unit of the Alpine National Park. And given that the area has possibly the highest concentration of feral horses in the Victorian Alps there was an obvious interest in monitoring them."**

The Friends' first president, the late Ian Smith appreciated that the monitoring would be most valuable if it was done scientifically, so with a grant from the Australian Alps Liaison Committee, consultants Kevin Thiele and Suzanne Prober were called in. In 1999 after site inspections and discussions with Friends, parks staff, the Alpine Brumby Management Association and Mountain Cattlemen's Association, two sites were set up at Cowombat Flat and Native Cat Flat, each with four sets of paired plots – one fenced and one without. The Friends, together with support from parks staff, keep an eye on the fences and year after year take photographs from designated points. "It's beautiful, wild country, so no great chore to gather Friends for the visits."

"We weren't expecting any significant changes until at least the ten year mark, but at six years there was enough happening to warrant another grant-supported botanic survey." The report is still to be finalised and will be out later this year, but what has become apparent is the affect the horse hooves have on the hydrology. "All the plots span minor water courses, and the ones which are fenced don't have distinct incised channels; they have excellent vegetation cover to the point where there is very little water visible."

Key to the study is the notion that the fences exclude feral horses but not other grazing native fauna. (The sites were chosen carefully – they are not grazed by cattle ensuring that impacts could be directly attributed to feral horses, not to introduced grazers in general.) Interestingly, results may show that the physical damage by hooves is having more of an impact on the landscape than grazing habits.

And while the report is being finalised, the monitoring continues with another botanic survey planned for the 10 or 12 year mark.

Anyone interested in more information on Friends of the Cobberas or the Feral Horse Monitoring Project can go to the website [www.friendscobberas.com.au](http://www.friendscobberas.com.au) or email the group [info@friendscobberas.com.au](mailto:info@friendscobberas.com.au)

Above: The difference a fence can make. Exclusion plots in the Cobberas. Below: Friends of the Cobberas, L-R: Paula Tumino, Mike Dower (Parks Victoria), Pam Chynoweth, Geoff Mattgingley and Christine Edwards.





# from a trickle to a roar

Often it's an outsider's perspective that gives the best view – and in this case we have Richard Snashall to thank for a series of short stories based in and around the Alps. With a simple agenda at their basis, to show people living, working and playing in an environment they love, these are very special mini documentaries...

This project, initially proposed by the Community Relations Working Group (AALC), gathered momentum and became *From A Trickle To A Roar: Alpine Stories* after ABC Local Radio 666 in Canberra spoke to Richard about the idea of radio stories based on the mountains. With funding both from the ABC Radio Regional Production Fund and the Alps program in hand, Richard made a key decision – he'd not only record sound, but *video* as well.

The first ten in the series – made during the Alps' winter, ten more will follow in summer – are now up and able to be viewed at ABC Online's multiplatform website. Or listen out for them on any ABC regional radio stations...they're on air now.

They've also been bought by ABC2's *Australia Wide* program and ABC Enterprises have plans for a DVD release.

So who did Richard go out and speak with? "I started by recording the people who took part in the huts workshop at Currango Homestead. Then I met Charlie Lovick, whose fam-

ily have been Victorian high country horsemen for around 150 years. I shared a day with Felicity Brooke, Ranger in Charge at Mt Buffalo, then another with Rob Kauffman a mining heritage expert who helped to explain the Alps' gold rush. And then Australia's fastest skier, Michael Milton, showed me round the slopes at Thredbo where he learnt to ski. Michael put me on to another skier, Tommy Tomasi, and Italian partisan who worked on the Snowy Hydro scheme and co-founded the Thredbo ski patrol; I rode through the night with Steve Lizard Lister, a snow groomer; learned about climate change through Mountain Pygmy Possum world-authority Linda Broome; visited Elizabeth Ecclestone who lives in new Adaminaby in the same house that she lived in when it sat in old Adaminaby before the Snowy Hydro created lake Eucumbene. Oh, and I became a ski bunny for a day, taking lessons and talking to people on the slopes."

To take a look, go to [www.abc.net.au/canberra/alpine](http://www.abc.net.au/canberra/alpine). You won't be able to stop at just one...

## MOU and the alps – both priceless

Conceived by those who shared a love of the Australian Alps; embraced, refined and sustained to this day – we celebrate the twenty year birthday of the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the basis of our current management of the Australian Alps national parks.

Signed by Joan Kirner (Victoria, Conservation Forests and Lands), Bob Carr (NSW, Planning and Environment), John Scholes (Commonwealth Territories) and Barry Cohen (Commonwealth, Arts Heritage and Environment), at the time the agreement was unique, driven by a shared ministerial view that the region's natural and cultural resources required the best ideas, information and expertise for its careful management. Barry Cohen said it then, and it's just as relevant today. "It will have tremendous benefits for the large number of Australians interested in the protection and use of this priceless natural asset."

Twenty years on, the MOU is itself a priceless asset, having been adjusted and re-signed on four occasions: in 1989 to recognise the establishment of the Victorian Alpine National Park and self government for the ACT; in 1996 to include new conservation reserves such as Brindabella National Park and the three-year strategic plan approach; 1998 to include a shared expectation and vision of 'best practice management', removal of the contiguous 'restriction' and as a result, inclusion of Mount Buffalo National Park; and most recently, in 2003, which gives greater recognition of Aboriginal heritage values and involvement; and added Baw Baw National Park and Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve to the Alps.

...a wonderful moment to reflect on the past twenty years of co-operation, and at the same time participate in some exciting futures thinking and planning.

The MOU represents a shared view and commitment from so many people past and present, and it's this group with like minds who will gather at Thredbo on December 10th and 11th as part of a two day celebration.

Says Gill Anderson who is gathering everyone together, "Twenty years later, we're all just as enthusiastic about the Alps and the benefits and challenges of co-operative management. But at the same time we're still looking for the best ideas and ways to reconfirm, reinvigorate, perhaps even remodel the Alps program into the future. I'm hoping the MOU celebration lets people meet up with friends and colleagues – old and new. It should be a wonderful moment to reflect on the past twenty years of co-operation, and at the same time participate in some exciting futures thinking and planning.

For more information, contact Gill Anderson, [ganderso@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:ganderso@parks.vic.gov.au)

There's a lot to celebrate in 2006/2007...

- It's been 100 years since the first reservation area at Mt Kosciuszko (covering the Main Range area) came into being in 1906.
- Thredbo village is 50 years old.
- 40 years since the National Parks and Wildlife Service was established via an Act of Parliament.
- 40 years since the Kosciuszko National Park Sawpit Creek building was first opened.
- 25 years since the formation of the Friends of Baw Baw National Park.
- and 25 years since St Gwinear Ski Patrol was first formed.
- 10 Years since the Snowy Region Visitor Centre in Jindabyne was opened.
- (last but not least) 10 Years since Parks Victoria was formed.



A regular update from Graeme Worboys, Vice Chair of IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas (Mountains Biome). The IUCN WCPA Mountains Biome is a network of technical, scientific and policy experts dealing with mountain protected areas globally – and many Australian Alps staff and supporters are members.

"I was delighted to learn that this issue was focusing on the very serious issue of climate change, and I would like to commend the Australian Alps Liaison Committee for this decision. It is one of the major issues all mountain managers need to deal with right now, and for the future, and the focus is very timely. I assume that readers will have read Tim Flannery's book (*The Weather Makers*) and will have seen (or heard of) Al Gore's 2006 movie (*An Inconvenient Truth*) and generally will be on top of this issue thanks to the regular media commentary. However, there are also some specific references you need to read at some quiet moments, and I have listed some of these.

Climate change impacts are one of the reasons why we (the WCPA Mountains Biome) are running a workshop on

continental scale connectivity conservation in Quito Ecuador this November. It is a response to climate change which can still be made. (see [www.mountains-wcpa.org](http://www.mountains-wcpa.org)). Species have a much greater chance of survival in unfragmented, natural landscapes even with climate change threats. The workshop is highly relevant to the Australian Alps, and its leadership lessons for cooperative connectivity conservation management will be communicated by Gill Anderson, Peter Jacobs, Rod Atkins and others.

Climate change is also the subject for our second joint IUCN WCPA – Australian Alps Liaison Committee Science-Management workshop. The first workshop on Fire, this May, was very successful thanks to the energy of the 70+ participants and our first class speakers. For our second workshop, we are currently enlisting the input of some of Australia's leading climate change scientists who have sound knowledge of the Alps. What can be done to help manage for climate change? Don't miss this important workshop planned for May 2007. You could also visit our web site and access a document titled "Climate change and protected area managers". It lists some contributions that can be made to reducing climate →

change impacts. It is available on our website. ([www.mountains-wcpa.org](http://www.mountains-wcpa.org); go to alerts; go to bottom of page (Effects of global warming); click on "climate change and protected area managers"). For more information about IUCN and the WCPA Mountains Biome visit [www.mountains-wcpa.org](http://www.mountains-wcpa.org), or email Graeme [g.worboys@bigpond.com](mailto:g.worboys@bigpond.com)

### Some Australian climate change readings of relevance to the Alps:

Howden, M., Hughes, L., Dunlop, M., Zethoven, I., Hilbert, D., and Chilcott, C. (2003). *Climate change impacts on biodiversity in Australia*. CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems, Canberra.

Pickering, C.M., Good, R. and Green, K. (2004). *Potential effects of global warming on the biota of the Australian Alps*. Australian Greenhouse Office. Canberra.

DEH [Department of Environment and Heritage] *Climate change risk and vulnerability*. Australian Greenhouse Office. Canberra.

### Some new (2006) IUCN WCPA publications of relevance to mountain management:

Lockwood, M., Worboys, G.L. and Kothari, A. (2006) *Managing protected areas: A global guide*. IUCN WCPA Rue Mauverney 28, CH-1196 Gland Switzerland, Earthscan, London.

Dudley, N. and Phillips, A. (2006) *Forests and protected areas. Guidance on the use of the IUCN protected area management categories*. IUCN WCPA Rue Mauverney 28, CH-1196 Gland Switzerland ([info@books.iucn.org](mailto:info@books.iucn.org))

Emerton, L., Bishop, J. and Thomas, L. (2006). *Sustainable financing of protected areas. A global review of challenges and options*. IUCN WCPA Rue Mauverney 28, CH-1196 Gland Switzerland ([info@books.iucn.org](mailto:info@books.iucn.org))

for info on climate change...  
[www.australialps.deh.gov.au](http://www.australialps.deh.gov.au)  
[www.aias.org.au](http://www.aias.org.au) and  
[www.keepwintercool.com](http://www.keepwintercool.com)  
[www.mountains-wcpa.org](http://www.mountains-wcpa.org)  
[www.climateinstitute.org.au](http://www.climateinstitute.org.au)

## where are they now

Here we meet up with some of those people who were working in and around the Alps in the early days...

**Alec Costin's** life's work has been to define and understand the ecology, soils and hydrology of high mountain environments. His university course in agricultural science in the 1940s was supported by the Soil Conservation Service who encouraged his early investigations of the Upper Snowy and Murrumbidgee catchments – "the water shed area for the most important rivers in south east Australia." At that time, there was growing concern in New South Wales for the effects of grazing, burning and forestry practices on water catchment values and subsequently on nature conservation. Sampling, mapping soils and vegetation Alec soon realised how lucky he was. "I was working with a wide diversity of environments over a relatively small area, from the alpine tops down to the drier rainshadow Monaro tableland and the forested escarpment of the south coast." Keen not to disassociate himself from the mountains, when the Service planned to move him to a desk job in Sydney, Alec resigned. Through scholarships provided by Sydney University, the large amount of lab work necessary as a follow up to the field work was made possible. Another scholarship allowed Alec to spend more than a year overseas, working with leading mountain ecologists in New Zealand, Britain, the continent and Scandinavia – including Watt, Godwin, Braun-Blanquet, Gams, Scottsberg, Du Rietz, Nordhagen and Sanberg. In 1952 Alec returned to a position with the Victorian Soil Conservation Authority and a moment of epiphany – "I had a sense of the unity of the alps. We were looking at one piece of country, not three or four separate sections." Several years later, having visited the construction sites in the early stages of the Snowy Mountain Hydroelectric Scheme, and having a prior knowledge of the landscape, Alec talked himself into a job with the CSIRO. This was the era – "...one of the most satisfying times of my life" – when several long term studies were commenced, mostly in conjunction with Dane Wimbush who joined Alec a few years later. Many other scientists, both in Australia and from overseas, visited them and started important projects of their own. After Alec and his family moved to Canberra, his work with Dane continued, some of it to this day. "The longer the measurements can be made, the more valuable they become." During his time in Canberra Alec was able to broaden his experience of mountain environments by periods of work in North America, New Guinea and the Subantarctic. Retiring to take up farming, by the late 1970s Alec was soon back in the alpine

loop: carrying out studies at the Australian National University, co-authoring *Kosciuszko Alpine Flora*, maintaining his connections through membership of the Kosciuszko National Park Advisory Committee for more than 20 years. As for his view of the Memorandum of Understanding, "It forms the basis for even bigger steps forward. I've always visualised the alps as one huge national park. While it's now the Australian Alps National Parks, ultimately I'd like to see it become the Australian Alps National Park with world heritage listing."

**Roger Good** was coming to the end of a Soil Conservation Service tertiary traineeship in 1963 when he went up to Mt Kosciuszko to work for the Service over summer. This was the beginning of a connection with the Alps which, apart from a five month work exchange in the high country of New Zealand, continues to this day. "I returned from New Zealand and took up a permanent position with the Soil Conservation Service in the then Kosciuszko State Park, now Kosciuszko National Park working on the rehabilitation of eroded lands following the removal of grazing. We lived in Cooma where we brought up our two daughters. In late 1974, with the rehabilitation project coming to an end, and not wanting to be transferred out of the mountains, I applied for a position with the National Parks & Wildlife Service. We moved to Sydney where I was the Botanist Research Officer, dealing with fire management research and native flora surveys." In 1977 Roger moved back to Canberra where, in a collaboration between CSIRO and the National Parks Service, he worked on alpine fire prediction modelling and fire management studies. In 1982 Roger moved to Queanbeyan where his rehabilitation work in the Alps catchments continued. Roger was one of a small group who promoted the concept of an agreement for cooperative management across the Alps Parks and worked for several years to this end. At the time of the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperative Management he remembers a wonderful sense of optimism and enthusiasm. "We felt we'd made a big move forward in inter-State park management relations."



In 2004 Roger retired to live on a small farm near Canberra, but as he states "I suppose I'm not really retired." Roger continues to lecture on fire science and management at various universities, something he has done since 1977. "I'm always hopeful of having an influence on an increasing number of conservation minded



people in the fields of fire and catchment management." He continues to manage natural area rehabilitation projects in the Alps, volunteers his knowledge through training courses on ecological rehabilitation techniques, has written a manual on the subject (for more information, see page 8), supports the Australian Alps Liaison Committee, does some ecological consulting work and somehow finds time to do some writing of papers and be scheduled in to care for his grandchildren on a weekly basis.

**Geoff Mosley** grew up in the heart of the region which became the Peak District National Park, witnessing a successful national park movement – "without which the area would have been swamped by suburbia." In 1960 Geoff arrived in Australia from the United Kingdom, via Canada and New Zealand, to study for his PhD at the Australian National University (ANU). Based in Canberra he walked an estimated 1,500 miles in Tasmania as part of his research into the aspects of the geography of recreation. Not surprisingly he helped bring it back to life the long defunct Canberra Walking and Touring Club (with the new name of Canberra Bushwalking Club). The Club's activities included both a walking and conservation focus, and with Geoff's knowledge of planning and land use of protected areas, the Club put together a detailed submission in 1964 supporting a zoning plan for the Kosciuszko State Park, including wilderness areas. Geoff then moved to Newcastle to take up a research fellowship looking at national parks and wilderness areas, then in 1966, he moved back to Canberra to give at the ANU what was probably the first year-long course in Australia in the conservation of natural resources. "Again I was in a good position to influence events around Kosciuszko and the new NSW national parks and wildlife legislation."

Geoff had also begun his connection with the Australian Conservation Foundation, formed in 1965, becoming assistant director in 1968, moving with the Foundation to Melbourne in 1969, and in 1973 becoming its director. In Victoria, Geoff was able to gain another Alps perspective, one that confirmed the value of the notion of a cross border national park. To demonstrate the unity of the alpine parks Geoff set out to walk from Canberra to Walhalla, along what is now known as the Australian Alps Walking Track, falling just short of his target partly because of his choice of boots. But the point was being made. Geoff also remembers being blessed with clear weather that momentous day in 1984 when on the last day of a visit by MPs which he had organised they were invited up to take a look at the grazing exclusion plots at Daners Gap. "The Alps stretched out in all directions, across state borders, and having taken a look at the plots, the two Environment Ministers present - Rod Mckenzie (Vic) and

Terry Sheahan (NSW) - undertook to work for a formal agreement for the cooperative management of the Alps." After leaving the ACF, in 1988 and 1992 (with Alec Costin) Geoff wrote two publications on the world heritage values – of the Alps and the adjoining forests both stressing the need to protect "the contiguous corridor of Eucalyptus dominated vegetation which stretches from the sea to the snow – one of the best altitudinal transects displayed in the world." Gaining World Heritage listing for the Alps and forests was now the aim – and still is – and as Geoff puts it "It's a long journey. We're still on it. We haven't reached the end yet."

**Dane Wimbush** began his connection with the Alps as a zoology and botany student working one summer with Alec Costin. "I stayed on after I graduated in 1958, employed by the CSIRO as an experimental officer working for Alec who was an inspiring guiding hand." Living and working out of the old Snowy works township of Island Bend, Dane was left in charge when Alec was posted back to Canberra. In 1960 Dane moved to Waste Point in Kosciuszko National Park where he ran a one man field station ("I did have assistance at times") out of a stone building converted into an office, herbarium, laboratory and living quarters. "We brought up our children there – it was in a lovely situation." During this time Dane carried out experimental work in the field, amongst other things, on the hydrology of the alpine vegetation systems and on grazing and burning. "After livestock were withdrawn in 1958 it was my job to monitor recovery over the next 20 years and the permanent quadrats and transects we established are still there and being measured after close to 45 years." Dane was then called to Canberra as Jim Peacock, then Chief of Plant Industry, was keen to get in people with field experience. "I retired in 1986 and we moved to Bermagui." Though Dane was retired, his involvement continued. "I was on the Snowy Water Enquiry; I worked for the Murray Darling Basin Commission, making use of satellite images to outline vegetation communities and identify them on the ground; surveyed rare and endangered species along The Alpine



Way; and most recently transferred all my permanent quadrat data from 1959 onwards to digital format for future use." As for the significance of the MOU, "I feel its main impact was the emphasis it placed on conservation. Ultimately it helped get stock off the Alps."

# diary

Victorian Alps Indigenous Reference Group 28 – 29 September, Dinner Plain  
Cultural Heritage Working Group Meeting 2-3 October, Albury  
Natural Heritage Working Group Meeting November Tumbarumba (TBC)  
IUCN Connectivity Conservation Management Workshop 14 – 17 November, Quito, Ecuador  
20 Year Australian Alps MOU Celebration 10 – 11 December, Thredbo, Kosciuszko NP  
Baw Baw Tourist Track Centenary Celebrations 10 – 12 March 2007, Baw Baw NP  
Australian Alps Walking Track Celebration Walk March & April, 650 km Walhalla to Canberra  
Alps 'Call for Projects' April 1 – April 30  
Alpine Resorts (ARCC) Sustainability Forum late April Melbourne  
Science Management Climate Change Forum Workshop early May, Falls Creek, Alpine National Park  
Sustainable Materials/Practices Workshop early May, Falls Creek, Alpine National Park  
Alps Operational Group Meeting early May, Falls Creek, Alpine National Park



# what's new?

*Remembering Lost Places – a tribute to the places lost in the 2003 bushfires* - Rob Kaufman for the AALC 2006  
*Australian Alps Rehabilitation Manual – a guide to ecological rehabilitation in the Australian Alps* – prepared by Roger Good for the AALC August 2006  
*Fire History of the Australian Alps – prehistory to 2003* - Phil Zylstra for the AALC 2006  
*Australian Alps Statement of (Natural & Aesthetic) Values* – AALC June 2006  
Australian Alps Leave No Trace Camping brochure (full colour, folded DL) August 2006  
Australian Alps Cultural Heritage portable display banner  
*Mountain Landscapes and Historic Huts* – Klaus Hueneke, Tabletop Press 2006

people working together for the Australian Alps



Australian Government  
Department of the Environment and Heritage

