



Sitting where we are now, in a position where Australians are known and respected for their expertise in national park management, it's difficult to imagine a time when conservation of natural landscapes was an emerging thought.

## LINKING THE JEWELS

Yes, strange as it may seem, major conservation achievements of the past thirty years have some of their origins in the late nineteenth century fashion for railway travel and Banff's hot thermal waters and appreciation of the geysers and magnificent vistas of Yellowstone National Park. Banff National Park was established in 1885 to protect its hot springs, while the world's first national park, Yellowstone, was established in 1872 around the very famous 'Old Faithful' Geyser and Yellowstone Lake. Australians can be proud of their Royal National Park since this magnificent coastal scenery was protected in 1879 as the world's second national park. With time and growing sophistication, a terrestrial conservation culture developed so that by 1962 there were enough interested parties for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to hold the first world conference on national parks in Seattle Washington. Ten years later, the second world conference on national parks was held in Yellowstone National Park, and represented 1823 parks worldwide. It's success set the scene for this international conference on

Key connectivity conservation initiatives in South America focus on the obvious but challenging Andes. In the Peruvian Andes around the Sacred Valley, farming has occurred for generations. The combination of farming and the more recent addition of Eucalypts into the landscape has seen the fragmentation of natural areas. The Sacred Valley region is at the northern end of the Vilcabamba-Amoró connectivity initiative which is helping to restore the natural connections along this part of the Andes with connections into the Amazon and the western coastal plain. The farming, which is so vital for the local community, continues in harmony, with the added benefit of cultural heritage being preserved in initiatives such as the Gran Ruta Inca.





Take a look at this issue and you'll have a sense of just how much goes on in and around the Alps. Not only is there a fair bit happening (as always), but the variety seems especially obvious in these latest 20 pages. From the story on the moon landing 40 years ago, to the battle currently being fought against the hawkweeds. And sometimes past and present fuse, as in the story of how a post-fire landscape behaves in flood – we can look at either current or million year old evidence to gain an understanding.

There's current news on all sorts of levels, balanced by a reflective view offered by someone who has the benefit of many years' connection with the Alps – Brian Martin.

Then from another perspective, Graeme Worboys gives a sense of what conservation has evolved from and most importantly, where it's heading if we're to continue to achieve bigger picture results and where the Australian Alps fit in. (Here's a hint, connectivity is the key.)

It's not the first time the Alps community has been described as a passionate lot. Reading between the lines of this issue proves it yet again.

Happy reading 'til next time.

**Rod Atkins**  
program manager & editor

Published by Australian Alps national parks, Program Manager and Editor: Rod Atkins. For editorial contributions, or mailing list updates contact Rod, 500 Cotter Road Weston ACT 2611. T: 02 6205 2487. M: 0429 618 308. email [Rodney.Atkins@act.gov.au](mailto:Rodney.Atkins@act.gov.au)

For more information about the Alps, including information about the Parks, other publications and news, visit the Australian Alps Web Page, [www.australianalps.environment.gov.au](http://www.australianalps.environment.gov.au)

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parks to be conducted every ten years. From the 1970s there was increasing realisation by countries around the world that biodiversity was being lost very quickly due to pressures from a bulging world population and the depletion of natural areas. By the time the 1992 IUCN IVth world congress was held in Caracas Venezuela, there were 8641 protected areas world wide, and the theme focused on 'Parks for Life'. The clear understanding of threats to life on Earth led to an extraordinary challenge to world leaders – "to formally protect at least 10% of planet Earth by the Vth world congress". The result exceeded the challenge, with over 11% of Earth being reserved as protected areas by the time of the 2003 IUCN Durban World Congress. This comprised an amazing 113,000 (terrestrial) protected areas. From less than 2000 protected areas forty years previously, nations of Earth had achieved one of the greatest voluntary land-use transformations in human history.

There is a point to all this, because without this quick sprint through the beginnings of the conservation of national parks, or, more technically, protected areas, it's difficult to appreciate the shift which has brought us to where we all sit today. We understand that we need to conserve our natural landscapes and biodiversity. We also now know that a system of protected areas as islands in a modified landscape is not enough. However, despite the expansion of protected areas, species extinctions are still happening, and the effects of climate change are showing their impacts. For effective conservation, we have learned we need to retain natural links between these protected area jewels to retain much larger natural areas. It is a new, but essential conservation response for the 21st Century which builds on the work of the last forty years. We have moved from sampling representative areas, to recognising that whole of landscape conservation is critical.

This new conservation approach is reinforced by the many bleak messages that surround us – sadly, well founded – but which help drive our conservation efforts. Like the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment report which looked at the condition of major ecosystems on Earth and concluded that humans are trashing the ability of many ecosystems to provide life support services such as clean water. Or the consolidated view presented by over 1000 scientists of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change who agree on the existence and effects of climate change on Earth. Our atmosphere is finite. We've burnt (in just 200 years) huge amounts of the coal and oil deposited over 500 million years in the rocks of the planet, and simultaneously dumped the pollutants into our atmosphere, so yes, we need to expect changes and potential trouble. Humans have definitely changed Earth's atmosphere. We now need to fix this problem and to deal as best as possible with the long-term consequences.

We must take on an adaptive response to climate change, and this is why connectivity conservation is being adopted and applied around the world – including Australia. To explain more, we asked someone who has history with the Alps as well as experience of mountains and connectivity conservation work in other parts of the world – Graeme Worboys, Vice Chair of the IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas (Mountains Biome and Connectivity Conservation).

"Fixed protected area boundaries are not always useful to species that have to move over large areas as part of their way of life or, to survive climate change. It was this dynamic – the need to help keep species alive through healthy ecosystems; and rapid changes to natural lands – which triggered special interest in the concept of connectivity conservation around the world. Climate change means plants and animals found in certain locations may not be able to survive at those sites as temperatures increase and rainfall increases or decreases. Many species, if they can move, may move to cooler locations either up-mountain or closer towards the south (or north) pole. A continuum of large natural areas between protected areas helps permit these movements and adaptations. Natural lands which interlink protected areas are critical for species, and it is why 'connectivity conservation' has become important with climate change happening so quickly. The alternative of protected areas existing as islands in a sea of modified lands in a climate change world will mean many species will not make it. Experts are forecasting terrible numbers of species extinctions for Earth. Connectivity conservation will at least help save some species."

"One of my favourite areas on Earth, the Australian Alps national parks, is a good example of connectivity conservation at work. Standing in the Alps, it seems huge, and it certainly is one of the great interlinked protected areas in Australia extending from Walhalla in Victoria through NSW to Canberra in the ACT. It takes weeks (if you are smart and allow time to absorb it all) to walk the length of these mountains. The parks are outstanding, natural, fresh, invigorating and their professional management has been recognised globally. The Alps world leadership status in international transboundary conservation management has been maintained now for an amazing 23 years."

"But let's think of the Alps and its role in a context of climate change. In addition to managing locally, we need to move our thinking from this local perspective to view the management of the Alps parks relative to the whole Australian continent. I don't mean the Alps as if we are viewing it from a flight between Melbourne and Sydney. We need to consider the whole east coast of Australia as if we are using Google Earth and where we can see, all at once, Cape York and the turquoise blue of the Great Barrier Reef as well as the snow capped mountains of the Alps. Suddenly we can consider land management from a continental context. The Alps parks provide an anchor point for one of the great connectivity conservation corridors of Earth and this corridor parallels the east coast of Australia. It can be seen



Straddling the international boundaries of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda, the Greater Virunga Landscape pulls together 12 neighbouring protected areas (some of which have World Heritage listing) with a variety of altitudes and habitats. This is home to the mountain gorilla (*Gorilla beringei beringei*) as well as 75 other threatened species, and the pressures to bear are due to a mix of warfare and population growth. Driven by non-government agencies, success has come through working with local communities (public education) and by building relationships across national boundaries (resource sharing).

essentially as a continuum of green. The Alps parks are one of many 'core protected areas' embedded within this huge 2800 kilometre Great Eastern Ranges connectivity corridor."

"It's a new conservation perspective but it is the one we need to have in the 21st Century. Temperature increases and changed precipitation for example are forecast to span many degrees of latitude, such as forecast drying conditions from Melbourne to Brisbane and beyond. In anticipating the inevitability of more severe climate change effects, big thinking responses are needed to deal with forecast big changes. The Great Eastern Ranges initiative is part of this type of thinking, and the Alps parks are a critical part of future responses."

"Australia is lucky. It is a miracle that the Great Eastern Ranges are still essentially intact in the rapidly developing east coast of Australia. It was formed when dinosaurs (like



The Great Eastern Ranges Connectivity Corridor is a 2800 kilometre north-south essentially natural and interconnected landscape. The protected areas embedded within this large natural corridor form an archipelago of core parks within other public and private lands. Viewed from space, the Alps parks may be seen as a foundation to this tremendously large natural area, an area in which species may have a greater chance of survival at a time of climate change. The effective management of the Alps as part of an interconnected landscape plays a very, very important role in the conservation of species for the long term. For Australia, it is about conserving the greatest diversity of our species. It is also about keeping the common species common for the long term.

(Extract from Connectivity Conservation Management: A Global Guide)

the newly discovered Winton dinosaurs, Matilda, Banjo and Clancy) roamed Australia and it has witnessed the evolution of our Australian plants and animals through the millennia. Why shouldn't we be smart, and keep all the vegetation naturally interconnected like it has been for 80 million years? Why would we let it be broken up, especially when we understand that these forests and woodlands are part of the water supply catchments for 94% of people living on Australia's east coast? Why should we permit the greatest concentration of Australia's native species (found along the Great Eastern Ranges) to be impacted further and why replant trees to protect catchments when we have a choice not to cut them down in the first place?"

"We are trying to retain the last of these large natural lands to keep basic ecosystem processes going. It's a new way of thinking, at a larger scale, which transcends political boundaries and takes in a whole set of organisations responsible for different patches.

It's a big picture response to deal with big picture issues. It's a new challenge for our nation, and it is not only possible, it is critical. Thankfully the NSW Department of Environment

and Climate Change has taken a leading role with the Great Eastern Ranges corridor project and connectivity management work is underway in that State. Other states and territories have agreed to participate with this work"

Different Australian scientists, park managers, conservation organisations and many individuals have been working on connectivity conservation such as the Great Eastern Ranges initiative since late last century, developing programs and materials to put the theory into practice. This now needs to be mainstreamed and supported – for large scale connectivity areas on Earth like the Great Eastern Ranges – as a critical response to climate change. Australia can do far more to support its own initiatives. It can also assist with some other initiatives around the world, and indeed this has been happening. A number of 'Australian Alps people' have been playing key roles in various international workshops over recent years including Graeme Worboys, Roger Good, Ian Pulsford, Peter Jacobs and Gill Anderson as well as the current Alps Program Manager, Rod Atkins, who organised the most recent IUCN WCPA Connectivity Conservation workshop in Kathmandu last November. It's smart to conserve these large natural areas and ensure that they are adequately managed at a time of climate change. It is an investment for the future. Many of these connectivity conservation initiatives and what is needed have been described in a new book to be published by Earthscan and IUCN later in 2009 called Connectivity Conservation Management: A Global Guide\*."

\*The Australian Alps is one of the case studies in this new book co-edited by Graeme Worboys. This is the readable reference for anyone who is serious about connectivity conservation, being filled with chapters covering the rationale, science and challenges. Best of all there's a range of case studies from around the world, authored by those who've lived each story. For more information about connectivity conservation or further reference materials, contact Graeme on [g.worboys@bigpond.com](mailto:g.worboys@bigpond.com)



Yellowstone Falls, Yellowstone National Park.

For each of the following people, the Australian Alps is only part of their day to day work. It's from having this broader perspective that they are able to spot what makes the Alps Program the winner that it is. Be warned – you'll only find praise amongst the words that follow...

## BLUSHING PRAISE



The Alps Heads of Agencies, L-R, Russell Watkinson (ACT), Chris Rose (Vic), Peter Cochrane (Commonwealth), Sally Barnes (NSW) at Guthega, Kosciuszko National Park - Mt Twynam in the background.

From the perspective of Peter Cochrane, Director of National Parks for the Australian Government, the Alps Program is clearly an approach for which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. And he has a fair idea, after years of watching the Program in action, how this has come to be.

"It's one of the very best Federal-State protected area collaborations, where sharing expertise and views has literally improved management standards and effectiveness. It was quite a visionary approach at the time, given it was based on the idea of the State and the Federal governments working together. And while it may have initially focussed on a shared interest in feral animals and weeds (neither of which respect borders), it has broadened considerably so that most recently the focus has been on tourism, marketing and promotion of the Alps as a whole."

The model upon which the Alps Program runs has proven itself for 20 years or more, but according to Peter there's more to the program's success than its cross-border structure. "It has been the people who, with remarkable commitment, have created a culture of co-operation. We now talk in terms of shared interests rather than points of difference and the result has been a fantastic collaboration."

Russell Watkinson, Director of Parks, Conservation & Lands in the ACT, may only have been in the role for three years, but he has an unreservedly high opinion of the Program. He has experienced situations where, as he delicately puts it, there wasn't anywhere near the same degree of harmony between parties responsible for the management of conservation areas. However, he discovered something quite special with his first dealings with the Alps Program.

"Looking at New South Wales, Victoria, the Australian Capital Territory and the Commonwealth, I could see that they were all working together with very little of the jurisdictional,

competitive friction. Their's was a seamless management approach, a living example of how we can have shared management between different regions."

As for potential changes to the model, Russell puts it simply – "Why would you want to change something that works so well? The Program has managed to establish a relationship of sharing where there is a high level of personal commitment. It has engaged staff at all levels; it provides those involved with great learning opportunities; and it has been remarkable in what it has achieved."

The philosophy behind the Alps Program is not new to New South Wales where as Sally Barnes, Deputy Director General, Parks and Wildlife Group puts it, "we've long understood that the way to make conservation work is to apply it at a landscape scale and get the community involved; in other words respond to community needs and fit these into the plan." New to both her role and exposure to the Alps Program in action, Sally has a fresh perception of the Program. "What strikes me is both how effective it is, and how mature are the relationships between the jurisdictions."

But perhaps more importantly, and despite the fact the Program has been around for some time, she points out perhaps its greatest asset. It's something you'd have expected to see when the Program was in its infancy – not 20 or more years later. "There's a passion and commitment amongst those involved that's fresh and innovative. People are committed to the Program like it's a new thing." Combine this with those mature relationships Sally's described and it's obvious why the Alps Program continues to impress, and get on with the job.

The Alps may only be one part of Chris Rose's patch – he's Regional Manager Eastern Victoria – but in his mind it's definitely a major region physically, but also in terms of issues, politics and the Program.

"I was exposed to the Alps program while in Tasmania and was excited by the fact that it actually incorporates and develops solutions with people outside the agencies." Chris' view is that there's less emphasis on the agencies looking for all the answers from within themselves, and perhaps this is one of the key's to the Program's popularity.

"It's largely voluntary, and people are involved with it because they want to and they believe, with a passion, that it's important. There's nothing mundane or day-to-day about what's being done."

He sees a bright future for a model which is constantly being described as having proven 'legs' after all this time. "I think the world gets smaller every year and in the same way so do the borders and boundaries we operate within. What began initially as a co-operative effort between agencies is becoming much more a question of how we manage a whole landscape through co-operation, sharing and innovation – one landscape and one set of best practice solutions, workshopped across the Alps by the Program."

For further information about the Alps Program contact the Program Manager, Rod Atkins (details on page two).



There's a great deal of hands-on work being done to improve the situation of a critically endangered animal species. Not only is the news quietly positive, but it illustrates the effectiveness of collaboration. David Dobroszczyk, Senior Wildlife Officer at the ACT's Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, tells the story...

## POUCH YOUNG = EXTINCTION BUFFER

"Research and conservation is part of what we do at Tidbinbilla. Some of this involves monitoring and managing the free ranging animals within the reserve's six and a half thousand hectares, but we also support captive breeding programs for endangered species."

Tidbinbilla is one of several sites where the critically endangered southern Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby (*Petrogale penicillata penicillata*) is being captive bred. It's a collaborative effort by a dedicated (in more ways than one) recovery team with members from the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment, Parks Victoria, Zoos Victoria, Adelaide Zoo, Waterfall Springs (NSW) and Tidbinbilla.



and now some BTRW facts:

- the range of the Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby (BTRW) extends from south-east Queensland to the Grampians in western Victoria, roughly following the line of the Great Dividing Range
- this species occupies rocky escarpments, outcrops and cliffs, using these to shelter or bask during the day, becoming more active at night
- these wallabies browse on vegetation in and around these rocky areas, eating grasses and forbs as well as the foliage and fruits of shrubs and trees
- living in family groups of two to five adults with usually one or two juvenile and sub-adult individuals, the dominant males breed with up to four females and defend a territory of about 15 hectares
- prior to European settlement, Rock-wallabies were best described as abundant and common, though impacts from hunting and competition for food from introduced cattle and rabbits later devastated the population

- it is estimated that in the early 1900's 1.1 million BTRW were shot for the fur trade
- modern threats are depressingly standard - the loss, degradation and fragmentation of habitat; predation by foxes and dogs; fire, when it reduces abundance or diversity of food materials; and in some locations, competition with feral goats and loss of genetics
- the current captive breeding program makes use of an accelerated breeding technique called cross-fostering, where newly-born BTRW pouched young are placed into the pouches of other foster wallaby species. This then triggers the critically endangered Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby females to release their diapause embryos to take the previous joey's place, helping to produce as many young as possible - up to eight young every year

\*There are currently 30 Brush-tailed Rock-wallabies at Tidbinbilla, including 12 which are on public display.

"There was a time when the Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby was found here at Tidbinbilla, but is unfortunately now considered extinct in the ACT – an example our collaborative agencies don't want to see happen elsewhere. Without our collective approach, this species would probably die out."

Happily the work to date is showing promising results. Sharing expertise and information at regular meetings has been part of the process, adding to a pool of knowledge that stretches back decades. And there have been breeding successes, slowly at first, but now, over this last year, eight new pouch young at Tidbinbilla. Knowing that the current estimate of animals in the wild is only 20 puts the efforts of the captive breeding program into stark perspective.

The other good news is that in the case of the southern Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby, areas of appropriate habitat exist where captive-bred animals can be released – to live and breed in the wild. "In November 2008, the recovery team released 10 animals into the Grampians National Park; which is an area where BTRWs have existed historically, and where the land management criteria have been satisfied. Four of these ten animals released to the wild – a family group – were raised and 'hardened off' at Tidbinbilla. It is extremely satisfying to see the work we are undertaking at Tidbinbilla making a real difference to Australian conservation efforts."

In addition in May 2009, a further three Brush-tailed Rock-wallabies from Tidbinbilla were sent to the Grampians for "hardening off" prior to being released later in 2009.



John Saxon, on the left, with Mike Dinn at the Honeysuckle Creek tracking station operations console during a simulation before one of the Apollo missions.

This event is worth commemorating and celebrating for several big reasons. It literally shifted our view and perception of Earth (perhaps in the nick of time from a conservation perspective); it was an unbelievable achievement (some conspiracy theorists still don't believe it really happened); and perhaps most relevant of all to local readers of *news from the alps*, it took place right in our Alps.

## THE MOUNTAINS AND THE MOON

Like all big history stories, the facts are often blurred by popular expression through literature or moving pictures, but the fact remains that when we all watched astronaut Neil Armstrong step onto the moon, the images were courtesy of the Honeysuckle Creek tracking station tucked away in, what is now, Namadgi National Park, about a 45 minute drive from central Canberra.

It's been 40 years since then, and over four days in July 2009, many who had a hand in supporting the mission together with anyone who's simply fascinated by what took place, gathered to take part in the celebrations. A time capsule was buried and a commemorative plaque dedicated, the ex-Honeysuckle antenna (now located at the Canberra Deep Space Communication Complex (Tidbinbilla) and soon to be de-commissioned) farewelled, and a fair amount of old and never-before-seen-in-Australia-footage was screened.

But perhaps most importantly, it was the people connected with the event who were the most valuable in this moment, sharing their memories of a significant (and this description is not used lightly) historical event.

John Saxon, who helped to pull together the celebrations, was one of those at Honeysuckle who were sitting at the operations desk when it all took place. John was an electrical engineer, part of a team monitoring massive amounts of data. "Armstrong decided to get out of the craft early – Houston expected them to wait eight hours after landing on the moon before stepping out – and it was at that point that we realised it would be taking place when it did. As it was happening, it felt like a simulation but without the contingencies we had practiced so often."

The information fed down from the moon was received by various sources and in the end, for eight critical minutes, including that first step, Honeysuckle received the best quality, dependable feed and was selected as the source for the television broadcast seen by the world.

And after Honeysuckle's eight minutes were up, Parkes Radio Telescope took over and John and the team continued monitoring the TV and other data – among it telemetry (spacecraft health data) and of course the voice and command data for the rest of their 12 hour shift, helping to make the mission the success it was.

Visit [www.jsaxon.org/space/hsk/Reunions/40th2009](http://www.jsaxon.org/space/hsk/Reunions/40th2009) for more details.



Right: The original Honeysuckle Creek antenna, now located at the Canberra Deep Space Communication Complex (Tidbinbilla), is soon to be decommissioned

Pretty Plain Hut, before the fires.



You'd think that a mountain hut timber workshop would simply be about letting a bunch of people keen to develop their timber-working skills do just that. Not so.

## POPPING SLABS OFF A LOG

Yes the group who gathered recently at Khancoban had as much hands-on instruction as anyone could wish for. More than 30 volunteers and parks agency staff from Victoria, ACT and NSW including the Victorian High Country and Kosciuszko huts associations took part, learning about timber properties and what species to use in the conservation and rebuilding of huts. They also learnt how to split slabs and shingles with a maul & froe, and to mortice logs to build interlocking log walls.

However there were some longer term, not-so-obvious outcomes from the workshop as well. Not only has it helped add to a growing pool of specially skilled willing hands – much needed to conserve the hundreds of culturally significant structures dotted across the Alps – but it also played its part in a clever approach to the rebuilding of timber huts in remote areas.

It's basic common sense, but the people with the skills aren't always available to trek into some of the more remote locations where work needs to be carried out. Which is why this workshop was unique, because while everyone was picking up the skills, technically they were also rebuilding a hut named Pretty Plain right there in Khancoban instead of out on the actual site which is best described as a logistical challenge.

Before it was burnt in the 2003 fires, Pretty Plain hut was a large interlocking log cabin, built in 1953 for Captain Colin Chisholm, holder of the grazing lease at the head of the Bulls Head Creek. To rebuild it, logs of alpine ash are being recycled from a recent felling carried out for safety reasons; the hut will first be built at Khancoban before being dismantled and transported to the original site and reassembled.

Oh, and there was one more spin-off from the workshop – the cheers of pleasure as another lovely slab was popped off a log.

Anyone interested in the rebuilding or conservation of huts in Kosciuszko National Park can contact the Kosciuszko Huts Association on [www.kosciusko.org.au](http://www.kosciusko.org.au) or the NPWS Tumut office on 02 6947700. In Victoria, the Victorian High Country Huts Association plays a similar role - [www.vhcha.org.au](http://www.vhcha.org.au).



Top: Clive Richardson of the Kosciuszko Huts Association dresses a freshly 'popped' slab. Bottom: Stuart Garner from Currango splits shingles.

While past conservation plans focussed on technical conservation and visitor management at the rock art sites in the ACT, this latest plan takes a different approach, bringing Aboriginal custodians and Park staff together in a series of training and planning workshops to define a mutually supportive program for conserving the sites into the future...

## RAMP UP ON ROCK ART

Late last year, the first of several workshops was held, gathering together a broad group of people to explore and define the issues critical to conserving these sites. Then, in late April and again in early May, another two workshops were held with a more practical focus on issues of site monitoring and maintenance.

This has been a capacity-building exercise designed to give Parks staff, Aboriginal staff and community representatives some widely used technical skills for looking after rock art sites. The focus was not so much on cultural meanings as on gaining the hands-on experience of photographing and maintaining the rock art.

“By photographing the art using the same conditions and camera settings, we can establish whether there have been any changes, either environmental or through vandalism”, explains Meredith Wilson (Stepwise Heritage and Tourism). “We also ran an exercise using different potential graffiti materials and tested techniques for removing them from rock surfaces.”

These workshops were very much field-based and hands-on, while another which followed in early June was concerned with developing a conservation management plan. In this case an existing model, the ten-step Stepping Stones

for Heritage process used widely in heritage management planning was adopted as the basis for a discussion between Parks staff and representatives from regional Aboriginal organisations.

As an example of one of the topics raised, there was some discussion around the rebuilding of visitor infrastructure – in this case a boardwalk and nearby hut – which until its recent destruction by fire had serviced one of the rock art sites. Some people feel that the state of this site, post-fire, surrounded by natural regrowth and with fewer visitors, is closer to its original state. The possibility raised by this observation is that some of the seven sites could remain virtually closed to visitors.

Given the far-reaching discussions and the volume of topics covered, it will take some time yet before the first draft of the conservation management plan is completed. A long timeframe for the plan’s preparation has been an intentional strategy to make sure the changes to the management of the sites is well considered and implemented. There has been another over-riding benefit to come from all these workshops. “They’ve built confidence in staff members who want to know that they’re doing the right thing by the Aboriginal community.”

L-R, Dave Whittfield, Andrew Morrison, Nicholas Hall, Jay Daley.



NPWS carpenter Uwe Petersohn and structural engineer Guenter Janssen assessing the Opera House hut before works begin.



To preserve our alpine cultural assets, people go to great lengths...

## THE OPERA HOUSE



The Opera House is nestled in a steep valley on the western fall of the main range in Kosciuszko National Park.

One of the huts burnt during the 2003 fires is commonly known as the Opera House, so named because it was built by the Snowy Mountain Authority at the same time as Utzon’s slightly better known Opera House by the harbour. And, as the story goes, it cost more per square foot (this was the era of imperial measurement) to construct than its Sydney counterpart.

Of course this seems an astonishing claim, until you appreciate both how big the hut isn’t and where it’s perched – on the western fall of the Main Range, in Murray River country. It’s not an easy place to get to which makes the dedication of those whose responsibility to rebuild it all the more noteworthy.

“Bushwalkers would probably describe this hut as being in a challenging location because you need to hop down the boulders at Watson’s Crags to get there”, explains Megan Bowden who manages the huts rebuild program out of Tumut in New South Wales.

“The Opera House is basically a besser block, stone clad structure. The fires entered through the windows and blew the roof 10 metres down the slope, so we needed to replace these and re-line the interior. To do this we’ve needed to have as much ready before March each year as possible.” The roof and windows are now ticked off, which leaves work to be done on the interior fittings.

What’s being rebuilt is not just a shelter used by walkers since the Snowy Hydroelectric Scheme handed the hut over to the care of the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service. It’s also the place where the Scheme’s hydrologists stayed, before computers and radio telemetry made their efforts to measure water flow obsolete.

Sometimes it takes a major, even catastrophic event to understand something that's been operating below the radar forever. For example, if you'd been driving along the Omeo Highway after the 2003 fires you'd have been stopped in your tracks by flooding. If you were familiar with the area you might have wondered how a series of little streams, charged with normal rainfall, had managed to have such a huge effect on the landscape. The answer is tied up with a) drought & fire, and with something known as b) the Western Pacific Warm Pool & rain. Understanding the relationship between these two aspects of what is a unique-to-eastern-Australia 'see saw' is the key to the mystery and it's especially relevant to anyone whose business it is to manage landscapes within the Australian Alps. Thanks to David Dunkerley of the School of Geography and Environmental Science, Monash University in Melbourne, we have the condensed version...

## FIRE & FLOOD GO HAND IN HAND

For those not already in the know, take it as a given that surface water, travelling across the large stretch of Pacific Ocean thanks to strong South East trade winds eventually forms the toasty (29° C!) Western Pacific Warm Pool. Sitting between Australia and Papua New Guinea, this steaming body of water has a major effect on rainfall along Australia's eastern coast. To put it simply, when the Pool is in action, Australia is in the grasp of La Niña and therefore drought free. On the flip side, in years when the wind is weaker, the pool forms elsewhere under the banner of El Niño, and we experience drought conditions where fire is much more likely.

It's this rainfall-drought oscillation and its links to fire, as David Dunkerley points out, that's unique to Australia. Gaining a greater understanding of these cycles and effects can only help us as we make decisions concerning the long-term stewardship of the Alps.

Having this bigger cycle picture helps to understand what happened on the Omeo Highway. "This was an area where the fires had swept through so that when a normal afternoon thunderstorm followed soon after, the erosion was spectacular. To begin with, trickling streams that normally flowed under the road, blocked repeatedly causing flooding." The volume and velocity of the water scoured vegetation from the banks and striped the slopes of their precious soil, sand and even boulders. In his report\* David says, "The landscape appears to have been geomorphologically 'reset' by these processes, and to have experienced the redistribution of substantial volumes of soil. The sedimentary record preserves only rare (undated) records of similar events, and the stratigraphy suggests that events like those of the past 5 years have not occurred for at least several millennia." In other words, this was a rare event, but a whopper.

Climbing down into the valley floors where the post 2003-4 fire run off had cut deeply, David and fellow researchers could see evidence of a catastrophic cycle. "From the stratigraphy – the masses of boulders and sands that had been deposited in similar ways – we could see that it has all happened before, though very infrequently."

Which brings us to two philosophies for managing landscapes. Those who believe in catastrophism, a significant event that has a more profound effect but happens infrequently, face the gradualists who believe things are adjusting bit by bit as time goes on.

Take the Omeo Highway culverts for example. A catastrophist would replace the small culvert pipes with something to handle the rare mega event while the gradualist would sit tight and repair damage on a needs basis. Effective environmental management appears to come from a mix of the two, tailored to each location and informed by good research.

Take a look at these to find out more...

Victorian valley recovers from floods (July 2007)

ABC Landline reporter: Tim Lee

<http://www.abc.net.au/landline/content/2006/s1983392.htm>

Lessons from Macalister Flood History, (August 2008), by Graham Hawke Deputy Chief Executive Southern Rural Water posted at the Australian Meteorological and Oceanographic Society

<http://www.amos.org.au/documents/item/117>

The Impacts of Bushfires following a Flash Flood Event in the Catchment of the Ovens River, a report by the EPA

[http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/water/rivers/docs/ovens\\_catchment\\_report.pdf](http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/water/rivers/docs/ovens_catchment_report.pdf)

More reports on river health posted on the EPA site

<http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/water/rivers/bushfires.asp>

\* Geophysical Research Abstracts, Vol. 10, EGU2008-A-05771, 2008, Catastrophic runoff and regolith erosion following the 2003 and 2007 wildfires in the eastern uplands, Victoria, Australia.

Tamboritha Road, upstream of Licola (Victoria), cut by post-fire flooding.



Below: In this photo, taken during a day-to-night shift changeover at the incident control centre at Ovens (Victoria), the cross border co-operation is obvious. Here Victoria Police and CFA, Parks Victoria, DSE, NSW and ACT fire fighters and many others work together on the Beechworth Fire.

## BLACK SATURDAY

The Victorian fires of February 7th proved to be an acute example of cross-border co-operation. The Alps-wide community, including agency staff, gathered together in a pool of skills, experience and resources to manage what is best described as an extreme fire event. Dealing with unimaginable situations, the Victorians found themselves supported by members of both the NSW and ACT fire services, many of whose members are also parks staff. Post fire, the effects and loss have prompted further support, with the thoughts of many with those who have been most closely affected.







Hawkweed invading a scree slope and tussock grassland, New Zealand.

Botanist Keith McDougall understands that the moment to take on hawkweeds is now. “If we leave them, we will never have another chance.” He pulls no punches as he spells out the threat they pose. “Based on hawkweeds’ performance elsewhere, they have the capacity to be an environmental disaster.” And in terms of the Alps in particular, “there is no precedent for a plant of this nature, which will take off at a very rapid rate and effectively out-compete the native flora.”

## THE GOOD FIGHT

Keith, (Senior Threatened Species Officer, NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change) is by no means a lone voice speaking out on the subject. Just ask anyone who’s actually seen some growing on their patch and you’ll get the same reaction – concern mixed with respect for these brilliantly adapted invasive weeds: like Charlie Pascoe (Parks Victoria’s Manager of Environment Programs for the Alpine District); or Elaine Thomas, Ranger at Mt Beauty who has co-ordinated the assault at Falls Creek and the adjoining areas of the Alpine National Park; or Falls Creek Resort Management, Natural Resource Manager Ben Derrick; or Louise Perrin who’s in a similar role at Mt Buller; or Peter Espie who hails from New Zealand and has seen what happens when hawkweeds aren’t stopped. (See his view next page). Both Ben and Louise, with significant support from Parks Victoria and Elaine Thomas in particular, are dealing with affected areas in and around

the two resorts. Happily at Mt Buller the infestation is small and made up of Orange Hawkweed, (*Hieracium aurantiacum*) which is easier to spot amongst the yellow flowers of other weed species – like dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) – than the yellow flowered King Devil Hawkweed, (*H. praealtum*). Says Louise, “Our sites run along a track which has now been quarantined for four years. We’ve been treating the weeds with herbicides since they were first discovered and our aim is eradication through using best practice methods, including frequent routine monitoring and survey and by rotating herbicides to reduce the risk of creating herbicide resistant plants.” Of course doing this within a dynamic landscape makes things more complex. Before the 2006-07 fires, the infestation was contained on the track, however post fire, water and wind appear to have helped to spread the weed both above and below the original site.

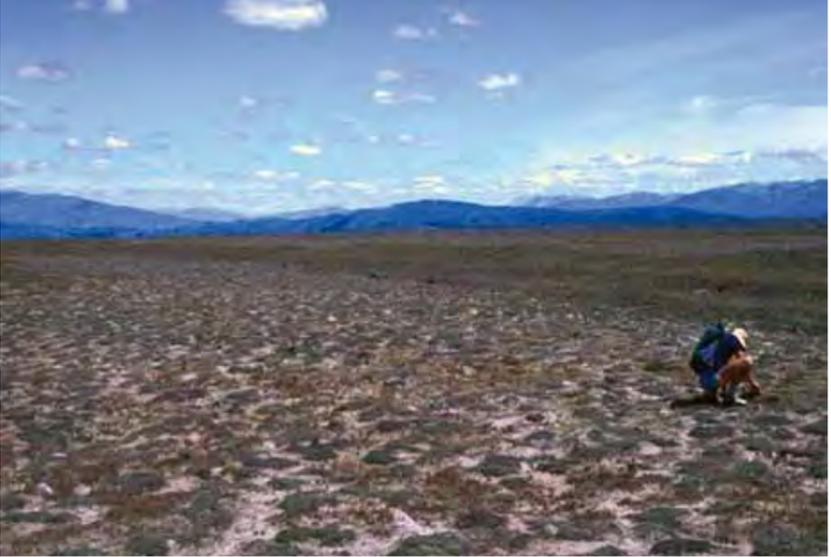
“A lot of research is being done hand in hand with the management of these weeds because we don’t know how it behaves in our Alps – we need information about how long seed is viable and how fire affects the plant.” In the meantime, with Parks Victoria support (“we all work closely together”), Louise has set in place protocols to reduce the risk of spreading it further afield and to discourage the importation of other non-indigenous plants into the Resort. Education is also key as the more informed eyes there are on the ground, the greater the chance new infestations will be spotted.

However spotting is often a matter of pure chance, as Keith discovered while he was out studying the impacts of the 2003 fires. “We’d been out in the Jagungal wilderness area of Kosciuszko National Park doing flora surveys, and were on a management track taking a look post-fire. There was a log across the road and it was a toss up whether I’d drive over the top. In the end I decided to reverse, and when I opened the door to get out to move it, there was the hawkweed.”

Taking chance out of the equation will be part of the path to success. At Falls Creek, where Orange Hawkweed escaped from a resort garden, working collaboratively, Elaine has designed a cross tenure control program. Guided by a Melbourne University wind dispersal model, which has provided them with a template area for searching, destroying and ongoing weekly monitoring – that’s exactly what they’ve been doing. Says Ben, “Hawkweed is difficult to spot, especially where it may be growing under closed heath. The resort provides in-kind support – accommodation and transport – to the Parks Victoria and Department of Primary Industries organised volunteers who come up over summer.” This is the time to find the hawkweeds, when they’re in flower, as for the rest of the year it takes a well trained eye to distinguish them from other common yellow-flowered daisies.

So will we win the good fight? Says Ben, “I like to think we can get on top of it – not just control it, but eradicate it – but then the magnitude hits you.” And Louise, “The agencies believe it’s perfectly viable to assume it can be eradicated with sufficient resources. Peter Espie thinks so as well which is heartening to hear from him.” Elaine’s view is also positive, though anchored in reality. “We’ve built a solid foundation but, we must maintain the rage to ensure our hard work so far is not undone”

The devastation of a monoculture of hawkweeds, New Zealand.



Being able to meet, face-to-face with someone like Peter, has proven invaluable. As Charlie Pascoe explains, “Peter has been carrying out research into hawkweeds in New Zealand for the past two to three decades so he understands their biology and ecology intimately. He was the ideal person to bring to Australia to educate land and weed managers about the peril we face if we don’t eradicate these insidious weeds.”

Charlie and Keith arranged a series of presentations and field visits in Melbourne, Falls Creek and Round Mountain in Kosciuszko National Park, culminating in a hawkweeds eradication workshop at Charlotte’s Pass. “All of this activity in early December was great because it has helped the DPI in Victoria to recognise the serious threat posed by hawkweeds – to both agriculture and the environment and the limited window of opportunity available to attempt to eradicate them. They’ve now taken up the challenge and appointed a full-time hawkweed incursion officer and significantly increased funding for Hawkweed control in 2009/10, which is fantastic. Bringing Peter over from New Zealand was an extremely effective investment by the Australian Alps Liaison Committee.

### the NZ experience



– courtesy of Dr Peter Espie, who led the hawkweed research team at AgResearch (a Crown Research Institute similar to Australia’s CSIRO) before moving to the University of Otago, where his research work continues.

Hawkweeds arrived in New Zealand from Europe in the 1850s, probably as contaminants in seed. By the 1990s they had colonised over six million hectares and today are major components of many upland native grasslands. They have the ability to colonise an enormous range of environments and to completely transform ecosystems. They adversely affect both indigenous biodiversity and agricultural productivity, and they’re still aggressively expanding their range. We have not seen their full impact yet.

My advice to those facing hawkweeds in Australia is simply that you are facing one of your country’s greatest biological threats, equivalent to the introduction of the rabbit and the cane toad. Your urgent priority should be to locate and eliminate all hawkweed plants at all known infestation sites and to prevent any further reoccurrence.

However Australia has the inestimable advantage in that the mainland hawkweed invasions are small, localised, and can still be eradicated. There is excellent awareness and inter-agency co-operation among front-line staff and agencies. The challenge, as with any new invasive species, is obtaining sufficient resourcing to act swiftly and decisively when eradication is possible. Senior managers, politicians and the general public may not be aware of the true magnitude of this issue, however seeing the devastation resulting from the hawkweed invasion across the Tasman is a huge help for evaluating the risk from the deceptively innocuous early stages of colonisation. Complete eradication is achievable at some sites in the Australian Alps under current control strategies. Other sites may require increased inputs to confidently determine the exact extent of distributions for effective control. Ignorance, complacency and inadequate resourcing could be the greatest obstacles to eradicating hawkweeds. Your greatest asset is people.



Brian and calm, summit of Mt Wellington, Tasmania.

To go forward it's a good idea to look back occasionally

## THANK OUR LUCKY STARS

For some, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – the basis of our current management of the Alps – might be considered a powerful but also venerable document, something drafted at around the same time that the Alps rose out of a primordial plain. But for the people who were there, putting the words together 20 or so years ago, it was a blink. Brian Martin was one of them, and careful as he is to explain he is by no means the sole author of the Alps management bible, he was obviously up to his elbows in its creation.

Back in the late eighties Brian was with the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, helping to develop co-

operative Programs between the states and territories, so it was inevitable that he'd become involved in the earliest days of the Australian Alps Program. In practice this meant working on drafts of initially the policy paper, then the MOU, and wearing one of the first convenor hats.

"In essence, the MOU found a solution which wasn't threatening to any of the states. No changes were needed to legislation for it to function. It was something which all state ministers could support and agree to and it placed no burden on anyone's budget."

With the Program's good bones defined, perfect timing would carry it forward. "To get any agreement a public servant needs both to be well organised with to have a bit of luck added in. In terms of the Alps Program many of the people working on it or making the decisions, had, like myself, a personal involvement and passion about the area. This was probably the most important factor – to make it work, or not. We had lucky political stars because the ministers were amenable."

Good bones and passionate support are great beginnings, but why has the Program done so well for so long?

"I think because it was shown early on to be very useful. It may be hard to imagine now but before the agreement, people had to ask permission to phone someone in another state agency, whereas now no-one gives it a second thought. Obviously field staff across the Alps thought the Program had something going for it."

The Program was to begin by sharing practical information through cross-border and cross agency workshops, and over the years this has expanded in complexity to the Program we all know and love today with its many areas of activity, support and partnership building. "It was a first for Australia and where cross border co-operation hadn't been done well in the past anywhere in the world, the Australian Alps Program was shown to work. We can claim some credit for starting that process internationally."

As well as seeing the Alps as a whole, set at the core of the Program is another great conservation tool, a culture based around adapting and adopting. Together these are essential as we work to manage the Alps in an era of climate change. "None of us know the answers or at times even what questions to ask, but we do understand the importance of research to help us inform our decisions and monitoring to fine tune our adaptive management. We also understand that having a good relationship with the Alps community is vital as without their input and support we've lost the race."

If we encourage Brian to hop up on a soap box and give current managers some advice, "I think progress could be made in the area of training and professional development. The agencies already do their best, but by linking together Alps-wide and forming partnerships with universities, a great deal more could be achieved."

And as a final confirmation of the value of the Program, Brian points out how many of the people involved from the beginning are still very much concerned and involved after all these years.

(So where's Brian now? Flash forward a few years and you'll find him living on Victoria's eastern coast and working as an environmental planning consultant. The move south followed his departure from the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service to manage the Greenhouse Office in Melbourne.)



Since it was officially launched as one of the nation's premier tourism destinations, the Australian Alps has moved ahead in leaps and bounds to establish itself and the Australian Alps brand...

## THE HOLISTIC APPROACH

First up, a major branding study helped to identify the 'essence' of the Australian Alps – in other words, what sets it apart from other Australian landscapes. Hot on the study's heels followed an audit of internationally-ready tourism products which has gathered together the best-of-the-best experiences from across the Alps.

However, given the wide range of stakeholders involved – including three state and territory tourism and land management agencies, three regional tourism bodies, around 12 resorts and a similar number of local government areas – pulling together co-operatively and in a co-ordinated fashion is essential.

Which is why everyone has agreed to form an independent body, Australian Alps National Landscape Incorporated (AANL). Neville Byrne is the organisation's first executive officer, providing part-time support to the broad-ranging management committee and leading the thrust to gain financial support and recognition.

And there have been some worthwhile developments in the past few months: gathering \$280,000 from stakeholders for the production of a DVD in conjunction with Australian Geographic (Jan-Mar '09 edition of Australian Geographic). The DVD of the Australian Alps aired on Channel Nine's Best of Australia series in January this year and has been on-sold to international free-to-air and pay television; collecting almost \$20,000 from the wide range of representatives on the Management Committee for administrative support; obtaining \$60,000 from the Federal government and collecting a further \$44,000 from stakeholders to fund the preparation of

a Tourism Master Plan; securing \$40,000 from the National Landscapes Indigenous Tourism Program for two projects to increase the interpretive skills of Indigenous guides and operators, and to assist Indigenous communities to further develop their tourism aspirations; and submitting an application for \$500,000 in brand and product development initiatives to further promote the experiences of the Australian Alps.

Broadly speaking, the Australian Alps National Landscape is poised to become even better known as it develops its own website, works with tour operators to promote the Australian Alps brand, assists Indigenous communities to further develop their tourism interests, and market the Alps' major strengths.

For those who came in late...The National Landscapes initiative ignores tenures, land classifications, local, regional or even state borders in its quest to help develop exceptional and sustainable tourism destinations. Its Reference Group is co-chaired by Tourism Australia and Parks Australia, and its aim is to assess proposals and support the marketing and development of Australia's significant destinations for international experience seekers. Nine National Landscapes are now identified, among them the Red Centre, the Great Ocean Road, Kakadu, Kangaroo Island and the Australian Alps. For more information about National Landscapes visit [www.tourism.australia.com/nationallandscapes](http://www.tourism.australia.com/nationallandscapes) or, for the Australian Alps in particular, you can subscribe directly via email for information on developments by sending your email address to Neville Byrne at [australialps@ozemail.com.au](mailto:australialps@ozemail.com.au).

Below: Participants in the third meeting of the Australian Alps Traditional Owners Reference Group at Mt Buffalo, L-R, Megan Bowden, Jay Daley, Peter Jacobs, Mary Mudford, Uncle Ernie Innes, Uncle Vince Bulger, Tandy Annuscheit, Anthony Evans.

To speak with one voice over country requires regular meetings of the Australian Alps Traditional Owners Reference Group. And at the March meeting in Bright, members gathered for the third time since the group was formed, to continue to talk about the best ways to manage the Alps as a whole from an Aboriginal peoples' perspective.

## CARING FOR COUNTRY: UPDATE

The emphasis at this meeting was on Alps-wide tourism and as Uncle Ernie, who is a member of the Taungurung clan and is a reference group member, says, "This is an exceptional



Some could argue that while we humans are just as much a part of a natural ecosystem as any other thing alive, what might set us apart from other organisms is our culture, created around us as we live our lives.

## RECORDING THE TALK

The Australian Alps, like any other landscape occupied by humans, is full of evidence, from those who lived there thousands of years ago, to those that are still alive to tell the tale.



opportunity for the Australian Alps traditional owners to showcase 40,000 years of culture that is alive and well."

Of course, putting this into practice requires some thinking and at the meeting various possibilities were discussed: interpretive signage presenting the history of the country both in language and in English; training and employment for traditional owners to showcase their culture through topics such as flora & fauna, food, dance, dreaming and art; and perhaps most importantly, creating an Aboriginal Cultural Centre to be a hub for Aboriginal alpine cultural tours. Together these suggestions have a straight-forward message. As Uncle Ernie puts it, "We would like everyone to know that these are the people who come from here and this is what they're about. It's about taking visitors into the culture and opening their eyes to understand."

As with the first meeting, the discussion points raised at this latest one are being fed into the various systems currently in place through which the parks are managed. "We make suggestions, saying this could be a good idea and this is how it could work". And this is how the Group is influencing what's being implemented overall as part of the Alps Program.

Regardless of the age of this culture, the Alps Program takes its responsibility to acknowledge, record and protect a surprising range of cultural evidence seriously.

Hence the oral history workshop held late last year at the Snowy Mountains town of Cabramurra in New South Wales. Knowing that the number of people with stories to tell is dwindling – after all we are all mortal – the organisers of this workshop set about providing those who signed up with the sort of skills needed to make the most of the moment when they take on the responsibility to record someone's oral history.

For the 30 or so participants who clearly had a pre-existing passion for this field, it was a real pleasure to meet Matthew Higgins, Senior Curator at the National Museum Canberra, and hear what he had to offer on the subject. They gained a good grounding on the more practical aspects such as using quality equipment and ensuring your subject is happy to be recorded and have that recording made available as a public resource, and they also were exposed to tips on what to ask to get those wonderfully detailed recollections.

What emerged from the workshop was a realisation that material gathered should be made available from a centralised, border-free data base. In this way everyone would have access to the network of stories that runs, ignoring all boundaries, across the Alps.

For more information about oral history recording, visit the Oral History Association of Australia's website - [www.ohaa.net.au](http://www.ohaa.net.au)

Jon Stanhope and Auntie Agnes Shea.



Seems like Tidbinbilla's annual Extravaganza gets bigger and better each year.

## THE PLAQUE SAYS IT ALL

At this year's event, the new visitors' car park was officially opened along with two walking tracks - the Lyrebird and Cascades Walking tracks at Mountain Creek, which had been closed following the 2003 fires. Free buses ferried visitors to the Sanctuary, Ribbon Gum Theatre, Mountain Creek walking trails and Rock Valley Homestead throughout the day, and there was the usual family fun on offer: live music, storytellers, Aboriginal dancers, face painting and the Cuddly Critters kids' show. And in the midst of all this celebration of our natural landscape was a moment of great significance. Chief Minister and Minister for Territory and Municipal Services Jon Stanhope and Auntie Agnes Shea, representing the traditional owners, unveiled a plaque recognising Tidbinbilla's heritage status as part of the Australian Alps. In other words, a plaque which acknowledges the fact that Tidbinbilla is part of the National Heritage Listing for the Australian Alps – eleven national parks and nature reserves across NSW, Victoria and the ACT which are listed for their diverse natural, Indigenous and historic values.

There's a good reason why the newly-renovated Alps website is lighter on the eye and easier to find your way around.

## [www.australionalps.environment.gov.au](http://www.australionalps.environment.gov.au)

Seems the person who pulled it apart and put it back together in a consultative process, was smitten by the topic matter.

"It's a lovely subject area", says Jenny Bruce (Web Manager, Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts), "and so many aspects of the Alps – the environment and resource management, the cultural heritage, the recreation opportunities – are so interesting that it's easy to get involved in the subject, especially because it's so important."

Launched in May, the new site looks different. It's less cluttered and lighter on the eye thanks to improved master navigation (fancy words for letting visitors to the site know what's on offer and where to find it quickly). And the reason this navigation approach works well is because it was developed through user testing. Like any good website, care has been taken to ensure everyone has access to the information available even if they're running a dinosaur of a system with gothic connection facilities.

That the site is a success is due, according to Australian Alps Program Manager Rod Atkins to Jenny. "I'd like to thank Jenny for her dedication to getting the job done which required many, many hours outside of her normal work time." So pay the site a visit and discover all the wonderful information and resources available, much of it previously buried, but now happily at your clicking fingertips.

## VALE: UNCLE BOBBY MCLEOD 1947-2009

Uncle Ernie Innes of the Taungurung clan writes of fellow Australian Alps Traditional Owners Reference Group member, Uncle Bobby McLeod...

I first met Uncle Bobby at the Gathering in 2005 at Mt Hotham and just knew there was a connection. Some time later I learnt that it was a family connection. Over the following time I started to see some of the deeper things in his life as a Leader of the Jaithmathang People. His connection to family, his people, his Country, music, dance and poetry were all part of who Uncle Bobby was. He carried a deep sorrow within, being separated from his Country. With his connection to Country being restored in December 2008, his hopes and dreams for his people were being fulfilled, lifting his burden. To his family and all who knew Bobby, we pass on our deep sorrow. You will be sadly missed, brother.

### Bobby's Place

Among high places where the mountains rise  
Is the voice of the wind, the earth and the skies  
Tread softly as you move through these sacred lands  
On paths you are guided by unseen hands  
Jaithmathang man, this land's where you belong  
To follow your dreaming, keeper of the dance and song  
We will never know how all things will transpire  
But we do know you've found your heart's desire  
To be restored to your mountain home  
Where forever your spirit is free to roam  
Along life's journey we all must go  
Not even a footprint left to show  
Where you now walk with your people of long ago  
For your mountain paths are now covered in snow.

Uncle Ernie Innes, July 2009

# DIARY

August 2009

Beechworth

Victoria

Fourth meeting of  
the Australian Alps  
Traditional Owners  
Reference Group

October 2009

Bogong High Plains

Victoria

Science  
Management Forum

Date and venue TBA

Australian Alps First  
Peoples' Gathering

December 2009 to

January 2010

ACT, NSW and Vic  
Hawkweed Surveys

March 2010

Victoria

Historic Cultural  
Heritage Workshop

March 2010

Victoria

Alps Frontline  
Workshop

May 2010

Victoria

AAWT Stakeholder  
meeting



These workshops carry the name 'Frontline' for a reason. If you ignore the slight battlefield overtone and focus instead on being at the forefront of meeting people, then you have it, because that's just what people who take part in these workshops do most days. They're alpine rangers, visitor centre staff, hotel employees and alpine resort people – and they have two things in common. They work in the Alps and they deal with visitors.

## BIG IMPACT PEOPLE

By signing up for the Frontline Workshops participants are guaranteed a fantastic overview of the Australian Alps and possibly a greater appreciation of the role they play. Lisa McIntosh (Visitor Services Manager, Rural District) and Lois Padgham (Visitor Services Coordinator) from ACT Parks Conservation and Lands organised the most recent at Birrigai in the Australian Capital Territory.

Says Lisa, "We had a range of people from all three states, and over the two days we exposed them to a short and sweet series of topics – geology, ecology, tourism and the National Landscapes Initiative, the Alps National Heritage Listing and of course the Alps Program which makes workshops like Frontline possible." As well as the indoor session there were trips out and about – to the endangered Northern Corroboree Frog captive breeding program at Tidbinbilla, and up into the Alps to Mt Franklin. A special thanks must go to Roger Good, Matthew Higgins and Keith McDougall who all volunteered their time to share their expertise.

But set against all this fascinating information about a landscape where many of the participants live and work, is something much more profound. "We take a good look at the Frontline role, as an interpreter to inform and impact on the visitors' experience. It's always great to see people realise that they really do play a big role in each person's experience. They leave the workshop understanding that they are in fact the key person in that moment."

Like all workshops the opportunity to network and share ideas, experiences and appreciation of other people's roles and objectives is invaluable. Another session is planned for early in 2010 to be held in Victoria, keep an eye out for more information...

people working  
together for the  
Australian Alps

