



#30 summer-autumn 2005

news from the
alps

the huts

Alpine huts are appreciated for many different reasons, and by people with a wide range of interests. Some simply offer refuge to walkers and skiers in poor weather. Others act as the focus for environmental education, and there are those whose history gives them a heritage value – providing opportunities for visitors to gain an insight into peoples' interaction with the alpine landscape since European settlement.

Of course, none of this is news, so that when the fires of 2002/03 swept through and destroyed huts across the Australian Capital Territory, Victoria and New South Wales, it's perhaps not surprising that the alps and wider community showed an incredible interest in what was going to happen next. The formal process which followed – post fire assessment, recording and allocation of funding – was based on defining each hut's role, and whether restoration, reconstruction or interpretation was warranted.

The result overall has been that some huts have or will be rebuilt, and others won't. While the fires have certainly resulted in loss, they have also offered up some positives – among them, new information in the form of evidence of Indigenous sites, many in the vicinity of huts which were destroyed (see *surveying* page 10). And for those that won't be rebuilt, steps are being taken (see *how to remember* page 3) so that visitors will still be able to gain an understanding of what was once there and the stories and people associated with those places.

Rebuilding at Geehi

Bushfire burnt four of the five huts located at Geehi, (a camp in the lowlands of the Kosciuszko National Park based around the remains of an old Snowy Mountains Hydroelectric Authority township). Two huts in particular, both of river-stone construction, emerged structurally sound, though all the timber elements (flooring, doors and window frames) and roofing tin had been destroyed.

"These huts had significant cultural heritage value", explains Andrew Harrigan (Area Manager Alpine, Kosciuszko NP), "so their restoration had to follow guidelines outlined in the Geehi Huts Conservation Study (1996). Work took place within the scope of carefully prepared restoration plans drafted by heritage consultants."

Uwe Petersohn (Carpenter, Department of Environment & Conservation, Jindabyne) spent three months restoring both huts meticulously replicating old construction methods and using original species timbers where possible. "He's a real artisan with a genuine passion – even to the point of using a tannin solution to weather the new roofing tin." Now completed, their opening provided the opportunity for Uwe and the original builder of one of the huts known as Old Geehi, Ken Nankervis, to meet.

Future decisions and possible works on other huts damaged in the 2003 fires will be guided





welcome

...to this summer-autumn issue of "news from the alps". This issue has a new look and a slightly different approach. This issue, while we've been asking people to give up their time for interviews, (apart from a few exceptions) no-one has been asked to write anything. So if you have something you think relevant and worth sharing with the broader Alps community, just send me an email or give me a call. I'd also welcome comments and criticism – we're still fine tuning, and the more input at this stage especially, the better.

So what's inside? This issue is unashamedly focused on post fire recovery – from huts, to walking tracks, bog rehabilitation and survey results. We've the usual columns – "around the alps" and "program update" – both good for keeping up with what's been happening, and we've added a few (hopefully) regular columns; one to help share the pool of Alps knowledge around, and another which looks at Alps people and answers the question, *where are they now?*

Happy reading and see you again in winter-spring.

Gill Anderson
Program Manager and Editor

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Restored stone hut at Geehi

by The Draft Kosciuszko National Park Huts Conservation Strategy, created with input from the Kosciuszko Huts Association and interested members of the broader community, due out in April. For further information contact Megan Bowden megan.bowden@environment.nsw.gov.au

Making decisions

In the Alpine National Park, Victoria the fires claimed 29 huts in 24 different locations. The response from the community was huge, and, armed with an overwhelming enthusiasm to rebuild, various individuals and key stakeholders* took part in a workshop (May 2003 in Bright) held to decide which huts would be rebuilt.

"We looked at each in terms of its licence, management, heritage and refuge values as well as other social values to the community, the requirements of the Alpine Park Management Plan, and the consensus was that it wasn't possible or even necessary to rebuild everything," says Ray Supple (Team Leader, Heritage Strategy, Parks Victoria). "There was also an appreciation that where a hut's primary value was one of heritage, to rebuild would only present a re-creation of what was there, something which would lack authenticity."

One of the bonuses brought by the fires was the formation of a friends group - the Victorian High Country Huts Association - which has made a major contribution to the post fire strategy concerning huts, and will continue to support the maintenance of existing huts. The group is also supporting any future reconstruction of huts that hold prior rights as part of a grazing licence .

As a result of decisions made at the workshop, two huts – Federation (Mt Feathertop) and Michelle (Mount Bogong) - have just been completed to fulfil their primary function - refuge. Another hut, McNamaras (Buckety Plain), has also been rebuilt because of the role it plays in community and environmental education.

*Stakeholders include: Victorian High Country Huts Association, Mittagundi, Victorian National Park Association, Vic Walk, Mountain Cattleman's Association of Victoria, the North East Freemasons and representatives from the Alpine resorts.

Another approach

In some ways, the decision to rebuild the Franklin Chalet (Namadgi National Park) was straightforward. "The Canberra Alpine Club had strong links – visible and tangible – with the Chalet, and some form of reconstruction was almost a given." So says Brett McNamara (District Manager, Namadgi National Park). Franklin's was the oldest club-built ski chalet in the Australian Alps (1938). Two storeys' high and sleeping 30 people, it was filled with memorabilia – Italian ski boots from the late '20s, photos, hand-made skis – and a cast iron stove which had once stood in the prime Minister's Lodge, Canberra, used by Dame Pattie Menzies to cook Sir Robert's breakfast. The Austin A40 (in use until the early '60s) still sits at the top of the slopes (cleared by hand) where it was used as a lift by running a cable around the rear wheel rims. Some of the smaller artefacts were rescued during the fires. "We had a large containment line around the Chalet, but I took a few photos and wooden skis as a precaution. And then it all went very pear-shaped."

Post fire, all that stood was the stove and the car. "We've buried the remains of the Chalet on site, just off to the side, so there is a sense that it is still there. And since it isn't possible to rebuild as it was, we've engaged a conservation architect to draw plans for a replacement structure with two zones – one, lockable, for use by the Club, and another section for refuge use by the general public." The artefacts which were saved will be placed in the Club's section, and interpretive signage will help visitors see not only what was once there, but also how well the mountain regenerates.



Enzo Brotto, leans against post at new Federation Hut.

“The task was complex...

...but made easier by the sheer enthusiasm and passion of those involved. Huts can bring out emotions in people and everyone worked extremely hard towards the common goal of rebuilding.” Enzo Brotto (Ranger Bogong Unit, Alpine NP), describes the commitment behind the construction of both Federation and Michelle huts. As neither hut had heritage value, the new contemporary designs’ focus is public refuge. Prefabricated off site at Stanley (Victoria), the logistics associated with transportation and erection were complex.

“The challenges were great. A few days prior to our scheduled flight into Federation Hut for both the final inspection and to bring out the construction crew I received a telephone call to say that the building inspector who was to

inspect and sign-off on the hut had been flown to Melbourne with severe chest pains. The next day, I had a call from the helicopter pilot to tell me that there was an air leak in the fuel line making the aircraft unserviceable. Then on the Monday morning, on top of the hassles of the weekend, the weather was being its usual fickle self and the mountains were shrouded in thick fog. Needless to say, the site visit was rescheduled and the construction crew had to walk out. Poor reward for the crew who had been camping out for weeks enduring storms, rain and hail.”

“Rebuilding the huts was the largest and hardest, but most satisfying contract that I’ve been involved with. We’ve created a new piece of history, and I’ll be proud to take my kids out there one day and be able to say I was involved.”

How to remember what has been lost...

...and can’t be replaced? This has been a focus for many Australian Alps staff. A two part response has been developed – interpretive signs and a book which will be a record of the places which were lost, a way of remembering the intangible cultural values for places that won’t be rebuilt, and something for those sections of the community with attachments to these places. Says Ray Supple, (in this case Convener, Cultural Heritage Working Group),

“This way, the stories behind a large number of cultural heritage places will live on, even though the physical fabric has in many cases almost entirely disappeared.”

Interpretive signs, using a selection of images and text, help visitors to appreciate that sites like these are historic - in places many layers deep, from indigenous use through the eras of European settlement, mining, pastoralism, forestry, water supply and recreation. The huts may be gone, but these signs will help explain the cultural values within the landscape.

Please remember – enjoy visiting the huts, but don’t use them for overnight accommodation. Huts are for emergency shelter only.



Using traditional log construction...

...McNamara’s was rebuilt last Easter (2004). The original hut was built in 1940’s by “Roney” McNamara and others - “Roney” Mac and the Naughtons of Cobungra Station used the hut when grazing cattle on the Bucketty Plain run, hence its value as a link with the high plains cattlemen. The hut also played an important role in shaping appreciation for the alpine area amongst the many young people who spent time there through the Mittagundi program. Victorian High Country Huts Association volunteers, (many of who are skilled trades people) carried out the construction; students of Mittagundi are finishing off the chimney as well as other works; Parks Victoria rangers will be constructing a new toilet and assisting with revegetation.

bogs

Amanda Carey

A sphagnum bog is a sight to behold. Full of wildflowers in summer and often snow covered in winter, there are plants and animals found here that are found nowhere else in the world. Most of the bogs found in the Australian Alps were burnt during the January 2003 fires. Post fire they have become the focus of rehabilitation works across the Alps, as described by Amanda Carey, Ranger with the ACT Parks and Conservation Service.

Sphagnum cristatum bogs are found on the higher altitudes of the Australian Alps and Tasmania, usually between 300m and 1500m elevation. They form a highly specialised habitat that makes up only a small fraction of the landscape of southeastern Australia.

In simple terms, a sphagnum bog can be likened to a filtering sponge. They intercept and store water, releasing it slowly into waterways as well as removing sediments and nutrients. They form an important component of water catchments and the maintenance of their integrity is vital to water supply and catchment health.

Sphagnum bogs form in infertile anaerobic soils, where there are areas of relatively high rainfall and low evaporation not normally subject to drought. They commonly occur in river valleys, beside lakes and streams or on sandstone shelves, where drainage is hindered. Sphagnum creates an acid environment, deterring bacterial and fungal growth that would otherwise decompose dead material. This allows for the build up of peat. High water tables and mossy vegetation result in a fragile ecosystem sensitive to disturbance, such as trampling and burning. However, in alpine areas where suitable conditions for plant growth exist for only a short period, bog development and recovery is very slow – perhaps decades.

An array of flora and fauna - some of which are endangered species such as the Southern and Northern Corroboree Frogs - is supported by the Alps bogs. For this reason alone, the bogs are important in maintaining the genetic and eco-

logical diversity of a number of species found only in alpine and subalpine wet heaths and bogs.

after the fires...

Prior to European land management practices in the Alps, sphagnum bogs were much wetter and would not have readily burnt. High country grazing provided the catalyst for much drier conditions in these areas, the effects of which are still evident today. In the January 2003 fires, less moisture in the bogs, several years of drought and extreme fire weather conditions resulted in burning of almost all Alps bogs.

Response to the fire has been variable, reflecting different fire severities and the pre-existing effect of drought. Most have some living sphagnum hummocks, but proportions vary considerably. While it's expected that the bogs will slowly recover, without management intervention, vegetation will probably shift towards sedge and grass dominance. This will increase runoff during rain events that may result in stream incision and ultimately stream bank collapse and erosion. The function of the bogs as a water storage and filtration component of catchments will be lost and there will also be loss of Corroboree Frog habitat.

...without management intervention, vegetation will probably shift towards sedge and grass dominance.

As well as this, wind-borne weed infestation is likely to occur as a result of exposure and aeration of the bog peat layer. Living sphagnum is highly acidic (pH3.5) and weeds cannot establish but on burning the peat becomes neutral and provides an excellent weed bed. Weed growth is not yet extensive in the Namadgi Bogs but there is germination of thistles (*Cardus* sp.), Sheep's Sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*) and Cats Ear (*Hypochaeris* sp.).

Trampling by feral animals with hard hoofs (i.e. goats, pigs and horses), rooting by pigs and grazing by horses also disturbs regeneration and promotes weed infestation. Trampling also causes surface compaction leading to reduced moisture infiltration, increased surface runoff and erosion. For these reasons it's essential to continue ongoing vertebrate pest programs, especially those focused on feral pigs and horses.

Dry conditions persist in the Alps region. This not only increases the risk of further wildfire but also reduces available moisture. Once Sphagnum hummocks dry out, they do not re-hydrate. Therefore any surviving patches of Sphagnum will be killed by lack of water accentuated by UV exposure, with the loss of shade provided by the shrub layer.



ACT rangers Darren Rosso and Mark Mickleborough checking the progress of sphagnum shaded from the effects of UV.

quoll research continues

Monitoring of the Spotted-tailed Quoll

(*Dasyurus maculatus*) both before and after the fires has produced some interesting results, and, as always seems to be the way with research projects, many more questions... Andrew Claridge, (Fauna Ecologist, Department of Environment and Conservation, Parks and Wildlife Division, Southern Branch, Queanbeyan NSW), explains.

"As you'd expect post fire, we detected a reduction in the population to around 30 percent of the original number, however fifteen months later the situation was back to pre fire levels."

This is good news for this endangered* marsupial carnivore, about which little is known. One of the aims of this multi-departmental research project, which is being conducted in an area of rainshadow woodland within the Alps, is to feed information into the draft national recovery plan for this species. Not surprisingly, the ultimate objective is to take the necessary steps to reverse the quolls' decline. "We're learning about its basic biology. Where are the current quoll populations and how do these animals use the landscape. We need to know more about group size, territories, food, shelter, threats – in other words, what forms their basic habitat."

Information gathered using infra red cameras and radio tracking devices before the fires showed that quolls take shelter in a variety of ways - below ground in wombat and rabbit burrows; under fallen trees, in hollow standing trees and within large granite outcrops. "The animals weren't wearing transmitters when the fires took place so we are assuming those individuals which survived sheltered below ground and within the insulation of the rocks."

The research continues. For more detailed information existing to date, contact Andrew Claridge: andrewclaridge@environment.nsw.gov.au

*listed as a threatened species at both the State and Commonwealth level



Alps-wide restoration...

A cross-border project to initiate the recovery of Sphagnum bogs and restore ecological processes to their pre-fire state, has already begun. Ongoing for at least three to five years, the project consists of both on ground works and research and monitoring. Very briefly, the project aims to...

- retain, pool and spread water within the bog systems; and prevent stream incision. Straw bale dams (99% guaranteed sterile weed free bales of *Demuta fescue*) are built at strategic locations in streams while erosion control 'logs' of jute filled with coconut husks, are placed along contour lines to divert water into areas of surviving sphagnum.
- enhance Sphagnum moss recovery. If you take a scheduled

flight between Melbourne and Canberra, when crossing the Bimberi Wilderness, you may spot large rectangles of cream coloured material lying over Rotten Swamp on the southern side of Mt Namadgi. (One puzzled airline pilot apparently reported this as some sort of distress message.) This 70/30-shade cloth has been placed over surviving and regenerating sphagnum to protect it from sun and exposure until the shrub layer returns – a process which may take between two to three years.

- minimise further peat loss and,
- take advantage of the opportunity the project provides to inform and educate the community of the values and significance of sphagnum bogs in the Australian Alps.

Is it working..? On revisiting restoration sites in Kosciuszko and Namadgi, the bogs are much wetter with many more ponds as compared with pre-restoration. The shaded sphagnum is surviving and there is also new moss in evidence. As a result, the project is expanding this year with restoration planned at sites in the Bimberi and Jagungal wilderness areas and ungrazed sections of the Bogong High Plains.

For more about this cross border management restoration project contact Amanda Carey Amanda.carey@act.gov.au. See also *Sharing the Knowledge* on page 11.



around the alps

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

from the ACT...

With the passing on the second anniversary of the devastating Canberra Bushfires, staff from across Environment ACT are starting to get a sense of normality with professional working lives returning to some sense of routine. Rangers and Field Staff have focused their collective energies on some of the key "bread and butter" park management issues such as vertebrate pest, weed and visitor services programs. Recently staff from the Cotter delivered a highly successful Cotter Bush Picnic Event on Australian Day with over 3,500 people attending the festivities.

However fire management issues are never too far from top of mind, and an extensive fire trail maintenance program is now under way within Namadgi National Park - a key element of which has been the cultural heritage survey of nearly 300km of fire and management trails working in close liaison and consultation with the local Ngunnawal community. As a result over 100 new sites, and two new rock shelters, have been identified (see *surveying*, page 10 for more).

After nearly ten years the last pine tree at Boboyan has fallen. A former pine plantation planted in the 1960s, it was earmarked for removal with the declaration of Namadgi National Park. (Unfortunately the January 2003 fires passed through the area having little or no impact on the pines.)

The next phase of the project represents an exciting challenge - aerial seeding of local providence species following an autumn burn of the remaining log piles.

The next phase of the Alpine Bog Rehabilitation program is well underway with results to date indicating a very positive response to the techniques employed to support the recovery of the sphagnum. Recently, Northern Corroboree frogs were also located in a previously unknown site to the west of the Brindabella's - very encouraging news given the impacts of the fires in this region. (See *bogs*, page 4 for more details)

Following 12 years of dedicated professional service, David Dwyer is moving on to greener pastures, taking a sea change, commencing a new career. After all those years of cleaning toilets as a Ranger, Dave has decided to become - a plumber.

Michelle McNamara has also moved on, in taking up a job with the Commonwealth. In true McNamara style of keeping the Alps in the family, Michelle is now working for Parks Australia as Executive Assistant to Peter Cochran. With the recent news of the Alps program returning to Parks Australia, Michelle is well placed in providing an insight into the nuances of the Alps program.

Within the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve visitation continues to increase, school holiday activities are popular as are the regular Ranger Guided Activities. Notable achievements include: the ongoing success of the Northern Corroboree Frog breeding program; new breeding facilities for the Brush-tail Rock-wallabies; the continuing recovery of 'Lucky' the koala, soon to move into her new enclosure; reopening of the Wetlands area; a new display on the Northern Corroboree Frog at the Visitor Centre; and the incorporation of the adjoining 500 hectares of former pine forest land 'Jedbinbilla'. Upcoming projects include the

development of a Nature Adventure Playground and planning is underway to enhance the visitor experience of seeing our unique wildlife immersed in a natural setting.

On the people front - wedding bells are soon to be heard in the Tidbinbilla valley with Ranger Maree Gilbert to marry partner Sean Yazici with the majestic Tidbinbilla Range creating the perfect backdrop for their ceremony in April; and Spring will be coming early to Ranger Kristy Gould who is expecting her first baby in May.

from Victoria...

Walking track repairs have focused on replacement of fire-affected structures and the re-instatement of track surfaces. These works have ultimately returned track conditions in priority areas to pre-fire status (or better) in line with plans of management classifications, and current Australian standards for walking track construction. Risks to visitor safety have been reduced as well as threats to environmental values, and levels of visitor satisfaction have improved. (See *it's open again*, page 8. for more details)

The new Federation and Michelle huts were installed over the summer as replacements for two high refuge value huts burnt during the 2003 fires. (See *huts*, front page.)

With approval granted in 2002 and AAC support, Lovicks Hut has been demolished by the Lovick family and will be rebuilt within the existing footprint but on a smaller scale.

The Revised Management Plan (the original plan was prepared in 1992) for Baw Baw National Park is due for release any day. It sets future directions for the Park and recognizes the important role Baw Baw plays in the Australian alps parks system.

Burbank - the new lessees of the Mt Buffalo Chalet and Ski Fields - have embarked on a major works program of the Mount Buffalo Lodge in preparation for a full refit. This will include the addition of ensuites to the group accommodation area previously know as 'the backpackers' now renamed the 'Cresta Ensuites', and works involving trenching across ski slopes to facilitate the provision of power.

Mount Buffalo National Park's 15 year old control program for the Himalayan Honeysuckle, *Leycesteria formosa* was assisted, to some degree, by the fires which destroyed mature strands. However, it also provided ideal conditions for seedling germination, which has been abundant; spreading it beyond its previous containment areas. Through the Bushfire Recovery Program, work continues - revisiting last year's control work areas; working in new areas (previously unable to be treated due to post fire regrowth of native species); and surveying new areas for infestations.

The East Alps unit of the Alpine District now has its full compliment of staff. To service such a large area, in an innovative approach a ranger position has been split into concurrent six month positions, located at opposite ends of the unit - Omeo and Bendoc. Paula Tumino (Omeo) and John Blankenstein (Bendoc) have been able to pick up important projects such as roading, replacement of gates, signs and interpretation panels.

And in terms of other people news - Chris Rose has been appointed as East Region Manager and will be relocating to Bairnsdale in April. His face will still be seen around the Australian Alps for some time yet. After 10 years at Mt Buffalo and Bright, Maz White is heading north to live her dream (well for 7 months at least); sailing and living on her new catamaran in the Whitsundays. Dan Jamieson has commenced in Bright as the Fire and Environment Project Officer. Nigel Watts left for his ranger exchange at Kakadu in late December. Anna Pickworth (Nigel's Replacement) started mid January. Bright area has been very productive over the last year seeing the addition of 3 family members to the area in the months prior to Christmas. We welcomed Leah (Ross Grant), Mia (Darin Lynch) and Emily (Craig Hore). Needless to say the dads are tired but walking proud. And congratulations to Bart Smith and Fleur Turner who were married at JB Plain (Mt Hotham) and celebrated into the wee hours of the morning at Dinner Plain.

and from New South Wales...

A big crowd witnessed the October reopening of the two historic huts at Geehi in the southern end of Kosciuszko National Park, badly damaged during the bushfires of 2003. As both huts are highly valued by the community, their opening was cause for celebration with around a hundred people there on the day. (For more information, see *huts* on front page.)

Over 70 people gathered for a special dinner in Jindabyne in December to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Alec Costin's *Ecosystems of the Monaro*, first published in 1954 and today regarded as one of the nation's most important scientific studies on mountain ecology. To mark the occasion, a limited number of facsimile copies of the book were produced for guests attending the dinner, scheduled to coincide with International Day of the Mountains. The occasion offered both a chance to pay tribute to one of the nation's great scientific minds, as well as highlight the threats now facing mountain landscapes around the world. Said recently retired NPWS scientist and organiser of the dinner, Roger Good, "Alec Costin's book is still regarded 50 years on as the bible on mountain ecology. Nothing yet has surpassed it for quality, understanding, detail and insight. It remains a remarkable work."

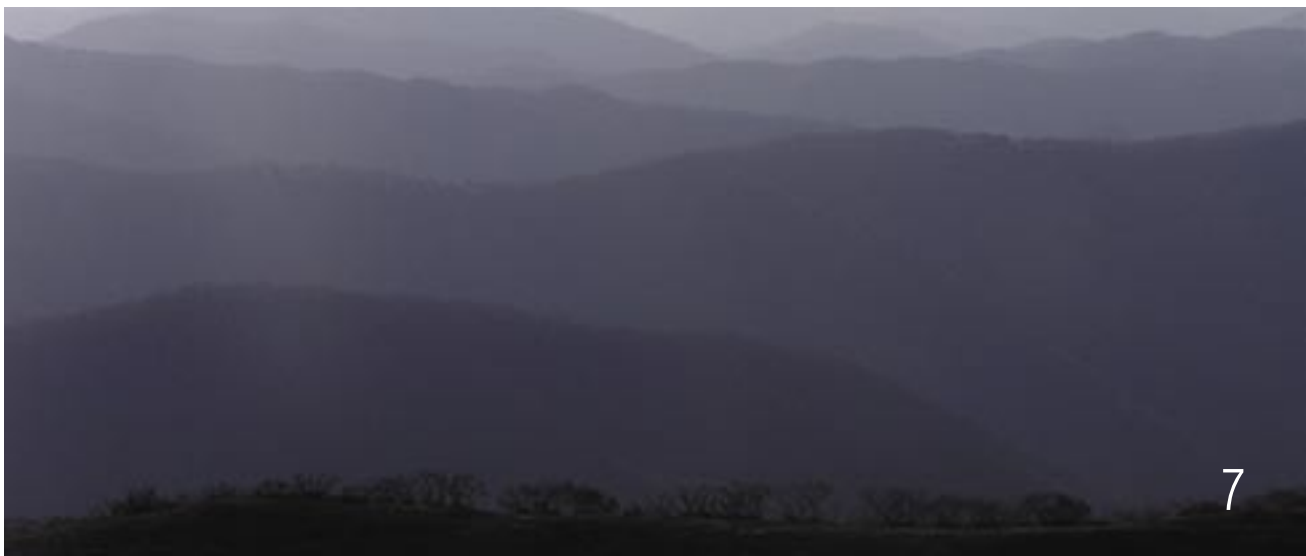
The finishing touches are being put to the draft plan of Management for Kosciuszko National Park which will soon be reviewed by the park's two advisory committees and the State Advisory Council. The Minister will then have final say with the plan which is expected to be adopted by the end of the

year. With the Kosciuszko Plan of Management Review finally winding down, the team which has been working on the project for more than two years is gradually being disbanded. Public Consultation officer, Ann Maree O'Callaghan has departed to return to her hometown of Geraldton for a well earned rest while Planning Officer Sam Rando is doing much the same. GIS Officer Louisa Mitchell has also departed while the team Manager, Penny Spoelder, has returned to her former role as DEC Resorts Division Manager but keeps an eye on the Plan of Management as it makes its way through the various remaining hoops.

In terms of other people moves, Chris Colley returned to Dorrigo last November after a six month stint acting as the Snowy Mountains Region Regional Operations Coordinator, standing in for Megan Bowden while she took some time off to give birth to her second child. (Megan has since returned to duty.) And after more than 30 years working mostly for the NPWS, Roger Good, someone well-known over the years as a key player in the management of the Alps, has finally pulled the pin and retired from the NSW public service. Based for most of the past 20 years in the NPWS Queanbeyan office, Roger was recently farewelled by a huge party of friends and former colleagues at a function held at Canberra's Botanic gardens.

Among Roger's many achievements (his contribution is extraordinary) is his key role inspiring and assisting with the drafting of the Memorandum of Understanding for the cooperative management of the Australian Alps. Also during his career, Roger was responsible for: leading the development of pioneering techniques to arrest catastrophic soil erosion as a result of grazing and to rehabilitate the alpine area of Kosciuszko National Park; helping to improve the community's understanding about the nature and role of fire in the Australian environment and in the Australian Alps in particular; pioneering the development of fuel and fire prediction models and using computer-based systems to aid prediction of real-time fire behavior and fuel hazard risk analysis; improving the community's understanding of the outstanding scientific conservation values of Kosciuszko National Park through presentations and by writing and publishing many papers, articles, books and conference proceedings; inspiring and training of staff in alpine and forest ecology, fire, fuel and catchment management; and, contributing to the success of many land assessment processes and to major multi-agency and community-based natural resource management and conservation committees.

Roger will be sorely missed, but everyone who knows him well understands he won't be letting the grass grow under his feet.



it's open again



The 2003 fires took their toll on the Australian Alps Walking Track – 650 kilometres of high country tracks linking alpine areas across state and territory borders. Post fire, each agency was faced with the task of assessing the damage, prioritising and undertaking repairs. Now, some two years later, with much of the work complete and the risks to both walkers and the landscape reduced, most of the Alps Track has been reopened. Reactions from walkers vary – from horror at the extent of the fire, to pleasure at the regeneration and the work completed.

a chance to re-route

“Though the sections of the Alps Track contained in the ACT add up to 40 kilometres”, explains Simon Tozer (Senior Ranger), “post fire, with 95% of the ACT’s Namadgi National Park having been burnt (around 100,000 hectares), there were very few sections of the track which weren’t affected.” Post fire surveys (carried out with help from volunteer groups such as The Canberra Bushwalking Club) showed that the section most severely impacted lay between the Namadgi Visitors’ Centre and Booroomba Rocks (a distance of about 15 kilometres). “It was a scene of utter devastation. With a fire of this intensity there was very little vegetation cover left; in sections there was nothing to hold the soil in place; steps, bridges and Australian Alps Walking Track totems were destroyed.”

“It was a scene of utter devastation...”

The first section to be tackled was that between the visitors’ centre and Mt Tennent, the 7km popular day walk. “With so much gone, we made use of the opportunity to put



Path reconstruction between Namadgi and Mount Tennent

in a better track with more steps, bridges and some realigning so that the journey itself is more interesting. The standard of rehabilitation was very high, and it shows.” Reopened in October (2004), in some places the Alps Track is better than it was before. “We’ve had a lot of positive comments.”

The next section, from Mt Tennent to Booroomba Rocks had almost completely disappeared after the fires. Works on the new track – mapped, assessed and with funding standing by to support works – are expected to begin in April. “It will take a more level route and provide some wonderful new vistas. We’re also keeping people away from the creek lines, both to prevent erosion and reduce maintenance (clearing the vegetation which grows more quickly in the wetter conditions).”

As for the remaining 25 kilometres within the ACT, they are in reasonable condition and being predominantly wilderness areas, (the obvious signs of management – signs and route markers – are kept to a minimum) there has been less to do.

while the fires still burned

In Victoria, assessment work began while fires still burned elsewhere. Despite the pressure on resources, a fire recovery team quickly formed (due to be disbanded in June), to prioritise and begin work on all aspects of the fire recovery effort. “In fact, post-fire funding made it possible for the entire Victorian section to be assessed – for risks, signage, damaged structures, overgrown or ill-defined areas,” says Project Officer, Darin Lynch. This was a complex process which factored in such issues as increased run-off and erosion as well as the possible negative impact visitors could have on regeneration of the more fragile landscapes.

“We’re in the process of completing works identified by the original assessments, though some sections will be returned to as a follow up.” In many instances, the works were tough going. “To repair sections of the Alps Track around Bogong where the fire had damaged steps, edging and water run-offs, the crews had to hike in, taking all the equipment needed, and camp for nine days at a time.” Working along relatively inaccessible sections of the Track, using whatever was available on site and ‘dry stone’ (no cement or mortar) techniques, they’ve done an amazing job to create skilfully stepped and drained sections with stone retaining walls on side slopes and switchbacks – features to last for generations with minimal maintenance.

out of the fires – a new strategy

After the fires, each agency faced their own unique challenges to take steps to reopen the Track. What also emerged was the need for each agency to work together along with interested and dedicated community stakeholders (bushwalking groups and parks associations) – hence the drafting of the newly revised Australian Alps Walking Track Strategy (to be launched at Tharwa in April) which identifies and addresses those issues relevant to the Track regardless of artificial management boundaries.

Andrew Harrigan (Area Manager, Alpine Snowy Mountains Region Parks and Wildlife Division, Department of Environment and Conservation) explains. "Each state has its own management plan for the Alps region. However this Strategy has allowed us to meet, exchange information, share ideas. We've been able to focus on three key areas for action – initially post fire repairs, but in the coming months we'll be working to identify and interpret Aboriginal heritage routes through the Alps as well as improving our 'branding' of the many individual tracks which together make up the entire Australian Alps Walking Track."

when you go... Stay on formed tracks, to be aware of the possibility of dead limbs and trees falling, to only camp on open unburnt ground and not to rely on track markers or signs as some may still need to be replaced. New yellow track markers have replaced the older blue markers to improve visibility and to meet new Australian Standards. In some heavily forested sections of track in Victoria where it is difficult to navigate, the yellow track markers will be placed on trees, and remember that there are no markers in Wilderness Areas.



L-R: Cath Kent (PV), Victor Hamadi, Andy Gillham, Andrew Harrigan (NSW Parks), and Simon Tozer (ACT Parks), at Mackey's Hut (AAWT Jagungal Wilderness) working on the Alps Track Strategy – early December 2004.

Further information on the Australian Alps Walking Track: Australian Alps national parks www.australionalps.deh.gov.au • ACT: Namadgi National Park www.environment.act.gov.au/bushparksandreserves/namadgi.html or call the Namadgi Visitor Centre 6207 2900 • NSW: Brindabella and Kosciuszko national parks www.npws.nsw.gov.au or call the National Parks Centre 1300 361 967 • VIC: www.parkweb.vic.gov.au or contact the Parks Victoria Mt Beauty, Bright or Omeo Offices on 13 19 63 for the most up to date information. Further reading: • Australian Alps Walking Track by John Siseman 1998 from Pindari Books • Australian Alps Walking Track Map Guide available from Tabletop Press tabletoppress@bigpond.com



One of the new, more visible Walking Track totems.

international perspective

A regular update from Graeme Worboys* "The year 2004 was very active for the 460 expert members of IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas, Mountains Biome. Two new capacity-building publications on mountain protected area management were launched (details below), two conferences held – one (in Banff) on continental scale mountain connectivity conservation, and another (in Hawaii) on international montane cloud forests. As well as this, a suite of smaller mountain protected area conservation tasks was accomplished. New plans for the period 2005 to 2008 have been prepared which recognise mountain workshops on connectivity conservation (in Quito Ecuador, 2006), transboundary management (in Kathmandu Nepal, 2007) and ecotourism management (in JuiZhaiGou, China, 2008). The workshops will help develop new mountain protected area management texts for these subjects. They are, in part, a response to the rapid changes happening in mountain areas of the world due to climate change."

For more information about IUCN and the WCPA Mountains Biome visit www.iucn.org/themes/wcpa.html, or email Graeme.g.worboys@bigpond.com

new (2004) IUCN mountain management publications

Hamilton, L.S., McMillan, L (2004) Guidelines for Planning and Managing Mountain Protected Areas. IUCN WCPA Rue Mauverney 28, CH-1196 Gland Switzerland (info@books.iucn.org). Harmon, D., Worboys, G.L. (2004) Managing Mountain Protected Areas: Challenges and responses for the 21st Century. Andromeda Editrice, Italy (andromedit@tin.it). The Alps program has purchased a copy of this excellent book for the library and is available for staff to borrow. Email Gill.ganderso@parks.vic.gov.au

*Deputy Vice Chair of IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas (Mountains Biome). The IUCN has six such global commissions – networks of technical, scientific and policy experts. The following information has been drawn from a worldwide pool of mountain protected area conservation and management expertise – useful for anyone who works within the Australian Alps.

surveying **from another perspective**

“We set out to determine what impact the fires had on known indigenous sites.

What emerged was an opportunity to discover much more.”
– Gary Currey (Manager, Southern Aboriginal Heritage Section of the Culture Heritage Division, NSW Department of Environment & Conservation)

And this has been very much the case throughout the Alps. The condition of those known sites in the Kosciuszko National Park referred to by Gary – mainly artefacts scatters and scar trees – had been documented to varying degrees before the fires, so this was an opportunity to see how they’d fared. As expected the trees suffered the biggest impact. “Those that remain have now become more significant and valued.”

As well as monitoring the effects of the fires, this was an opportunity to examine the landscape in greater detail than

had been possible before. Previously hidden by vegetation, the results are helping archaeologists, land managers and indigenous groups to better understand how indigenous people moved through, and made use of the alpine country in the past.

The success of the indigenous surveys overall is due largely to the involvement of local communities. For example, in the ACT, staff members worked with the Brown family, Williams family and the Bell family. As Adrian Brown (Environment ACT Cultural Heritage Officer) explains, “It brought the local community together, and from what was discovered, has given us a better idea of how the people roamed.” Using a helicopter to access the more remote areas, 100 new sites were identified as well as two new rock shelters. “We were lucky because an hour after we’d landed, we found a place which was completely dry, containing stone flake artefacts with a creek nearby.”

Documenting the discoveries is important, not only to direct further surveys, but also to protect known sites in the future. For example, in Victoria 300 new sites were recorded, and the findings of the survey have been compiled into a 4-volume report upon which future works are based – site protection, additional surveys, heritage action plans and building on local community links.

As for the future, all the land management agencies will continue to build on the co-operative working relationship which this survey has helped to develop with indigenous communities. Respect and recognition of Aboriginal people, and their ongoing connection to the Alps holds a very high priority.

For more information, contact:

ACT: Adrian Brown Adrian.brown@act.gov.au

NSW: Dean Freeman Dean.freeman@npws.nsw.gov.au

VIC: Ricky Mullett rmullett@parks.vic.gov.au

the success of the indigenous surveys overall is due largely to the involvement of local communities



Carl Brown, Joe House and Larry Brandy in the Gudgenby area (Namadgi National Park)

a new icon

For most visitors to the Alps, the concept of leaving no trace is easily understood – at least in concept. The expectation of finding a pristine wilderness encourages everyone to reduce their impact while walking and camping, and the set of icons which appear on everything from brochures, interpretive signs and maps are designed to take the theory and put it into practice.

Plan ahead. Use a fuel stove. Carry it in, carry it out. Got to ‘go’? Stay on track. Leave no trace. These six messages, each with its own icon, are about to be joined by another – Respect heritage. With valuable input from the national not for profit group, Leave No Trace Australia, this new icon’s aim is to remind visitors that the landscape contains both Indigenous and European cultural sites – places of value to be appreciated and left how you find them.

A revised version of the existing brochure, Care for the Alps - Leave no trace will be published later this year. For more information contact Gill Anderson ganderso@parks.vic.gov.au, tel 03 57550011.



sharing the knowledge

news of workshops, reports and other forms of useful information

mining heritage report

In 2002 Rob Kaufman completed a strategic assessment of mining heritage in the Alps. "The enormous individual contributions made to the mining heritage of the Alps sets it apart from other European cultural activities. The Alps mining heritage is not collective – it is tens of thousands of individual labours, each indelibly imprinted in the landscape because of the very nature of mining. Their efforts are still etched in the shallow shafts, tunnels and sluicing works, each holding its own unique story of hope, toil, frustration, desperation, disappointment or excitement, that in most cases will never be revealed..."

Post 2003 fires has seen Rob back in the Victorian Alps surveying sites which were most affected by the fires; strongly indicative of a particular field; likely to reveal new features; and / or most likely to be threatened by regular visitation. Places visited and surveyed included alluvial diggings, quartz reef mines, crushing works, former town sites, camp sites, hut sites, water races, tramways and abandoned cemeteries. Many vulnerable sites were exposed by the fires, and evidence of theft of small artefacts and illegal disturbance by bottle collectors and 'treasure hunters' was common in all areas. However the fires also revealed many previously unrecognised mining features that had been hidden in dense scrub.



Andrew Swift (Mining Heritage consultant & enthusiast) inspecting the Green's Creek Battery in the remote Dart River area.

The mining heritage report is now finally available in hard copy: email ganderso@parks.vic.gov.au

For further information on the post fire survey contact: Ray Supple rsupple@parks.vic.gov.au or Robert Kaufman lrmservices@netc.net.au

bog forum

A group of key people involved in bog restoration across the Alps, met last November at a forum - Alpine ecologist Roger

Good, Genevieve Wright and Keith McDougall of NSW NPWS, Amanda Carey of Environment ACT, Kevin Cosgriff of Parks Victoria, Liz MacPhee of DPI Ovens, Warwick Papst, Honorary Research Fellow at the Arthur Rylah Institute and La Trobe University, Trish Macdonald from the Australian Alps, Geoff Hope of the Australian National University, and World Heritage Biologist Jenny Whinam of the Tasmanian DPI. Over two days, while visiting various sites - the Ginini Flats Wetlands at Namadgi National Park and Kosciuszko National Park's Pengelli's Bog, Guthrie's and Prussian Creek - experts discussed and shared information. The group will reconvene in a year to explore progress based on the recommendations produced in November.

A write up of principles and techniques for restoration is being produced, to be included in the Manual of Ecological Restoration for Mountain Environments, ready for distribution in May. For further information contact: Amanda Carey Amanda.carey@act.gov.au



Danny Cochran talking to participants at feral horse workshop, near Dead Horse Gap.

feral horses

With such intense community interest in the control of feral horses, which have an adverse impact on the Alps environment, agency staff have begun to work with the community to establish strategies for sustainable management and in some cases total eradication of horses from an area.

A workshop held in March 2004, over three days (with a field inspection of some trapping sites at Dead Horse Gap in Kosciuszko National Park) provided an opportunity for staff involved in managing feral horses to network and share ideas on techniques and sustainable management strategies. (Major advancements have been made in techniques for trapping, mustering, transporting and handling wild horses as well as development in impact monitoring and population surveys.) Twenty-three people attended the workshop from conservation agencies from NSW, Victoria and the ACT. In addition there were representatives from other organisations - the NSW Department of Agriculture, The Department of Primary Industries Victoria and the RSPCA NSW.

The workshop recognised the importance of - public education; working across borders with an open dialogue; consistent monitoring techniques so that comparisons can be made and data shared.

For more details, contact Pam O'Brien Area Manager Snowy River Kosciuszko NP, 0264505575.

where are they now

The Alps Program has been long-lived and has seen many different faces over the years. And while many of these individuals have moved on to other ventures, most retain an active interest in the Alps...

Ian Weir. Vic representative on the Liaison Committee (from inception 1986 to 1991) After leaving Parks Victoria, Ian completed a wide range of consultancies and contributed to many conservation forums based around the Phillip Island area. He has now set most of these aside to work in a voluntary capacity, contributing to the proposal for a biosphere reserve covering Mornington Peninsula and Westernport. He enjoys walking, travel overseas and flying his home-built ultralight. Contact ianweir@relax.com.au

Neville Gare. Member of the informal Kosciusko Group while with NSW NPWS in the late 1970s and Commonwealth rep on Liaison Committee 1986-1988. Nev is a regular visitor to the Queanbeyan NPWS office. He professes a continuing interest in land use policy and issues such as climate change. Having recently completed his memoirs he is looking for a publisher. Since retiring he completed some oral history interviews with identities who were instrumental in establishing KNP. Sings regularly with the Australian Rugby choir. Contact 02 6248 6570.

Theo Hooy. Commonwealth representative on the Liaison Committee 1992 –1994. Since 1994 Theo has continued to work in the Commonwealth having moved through various off reserve conservation roles such as vegetation management, coasts and water. He is about to start a new role managing the Heritage Management Branch which is a step closer to Alps business. Theo is a recent convert to mountain biking – having three offspring (youngest being 7) tends to do this to you. Contact theo.hooy@deh.gov.au

Diane Garrod. ACT representative on Liaison Committee 1991-1996 Di left the ACT at the beginning of 1997 to take up the position of Regional Manager at the South Coast Region of NSW NPWS based at Nowra – and she's still there so she must be enjoying it. Di divides her time between her son Matthew (now 10 years old), work and enjoying living on the coast. Contact diane.garrod@environment.nsw.gov.au

Greg Tedder. Vic representative on Natural Heritage Working Group 1994-1995. Greg moved to Sydney in 1996, to work as the Regional Operations Co-ordinator in Sydney South Region with the NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service. More recently, Greg has moved from Sydney to fill the Area Manager position at Nowra for three years while Sue Feary resumes her studies in Canberra. Contact greg.tedder@environment.nsw.gov.au

Liz Wren. NSW representative on Community Relations working group from 1992 to 2003. Liz left (or should that be fled?) Kosciusko during the bushfire emergency in January 2003 to take up a position as communications consultant with the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service. She loves her new home and reckons it has everything – gorgeous parks, fantastic mountains, the best beaches in the world, unbelievable seafood, friendly people, amazing history and no brumbies. Contact Liz.Wren@parks.tas.gov.au

Peter King. Commonwealth representative and convenor of Community Relations working group 1992- 1998 Peter left Environment Australia in 1999, to join the NSW National Parks



Top, L-R: Diane Garrod, Greg Tedder, Liz Wren.
Left: Peter King.

and Wildlife Service as Senior Ranger, Neighbour and Community Relations at Glen Innes. Peter loves life on the New England Tablelands, where he can still roam among snow gums, black sallee and yes even the occasional snowfall. Trading the Canberra lifestyle for a low-key rural life suits him fine. Work puts him in magnificent World Heritage parks and his 2000 acre play-farm allows no spare time to miss the sophisticated delights of Canberra. Contact peter.king@environment.nsw.gov.au

regeneration

Just prior to the 2003 fires, botanists Neville Walsh (National Herbarium of Victoria) and Keith McDougall (NSW Department of Environment and Conservation) carried out a flora survey in the treeless subalpine areas of Kosciuszko National Park – the objective being to create a plant community classification.

Those fires, which burnt through the study area, as well as much of the treeless high mountain country of New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory, were the first extensive burn since 1939. With little post-fire study possible until now, and armed with initial data to make a comparison, Neville and Keith returned during the summer of 2003-2004. Of the original 215 study sites, 119 were burnt. Sixty of these were relocated (using GPS) and re-sampled in late 2003 to assess the mode and extent of regeneration. Overall, indicate that there was no significant difference in the number of species in the sample areas pre and post-fire, though the average number of weeds was significantly greater post-fire (though this number was affected by a high number of weeds in specific areas such as the bogs). Says Neville Walsh, "among the more interesting outcomes were the species hitherto not seen, or seen only rarely in the Alps. And consequently the paradoxical notion that plant communities not regarded as being fire-evolved contained species that appear to be dependent on fire for their existence."

A progress paper is about to be released which goes into much more detail concerning differing species' responses, fire behaviour and strategies for regeneration.



LEFT, Top: *Chenopodium erosum*, not previously recorded within Kosciuszko National Park, and possibly the first native chenopod recorded in Australian alpine vegetation. Bottom: *Stylidium armeria*. Right: *Xerochrysum subundulam*.

where are they now, continued...

Sue Feary. Convenor, Cultural Heritage Working Group 1988 – 1994. Sue left the mountains behind in 1995 when she moved from the Queanbeyan office to take up an Area Manager's position in the South Coast Region. She is currently on leave without pay and doing research for a PhD at ANU, looking at how the involvement of Aboriginal people in forest based industries can address social and economic disadvantage in Indigenous communities. Sue is really enjoying the opportunity to pursue her long time interest in this subject and although she misses having a salary, it is more than compensated for by not having to write in 'bullet points' and the absence of millions

of emails and telephone calls. She is currently preparing to undertake fieldwork on Cape York peninsula and in the great forests of south-western Western Australia. Contact sue.feary@anu.edu.au

If you know the details of others, or want to follow up on any of the Alps alumni, then drop Greg Hayes (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service) a message. Contact greg.hayes@environment.nsw.gov.au



program update works around the alps program update works around the alps

Program Development

- Annual Reports** Produce and distribute the 01/03 & 03/04 annual report of activities conducted under the Australian Alps Co-operative Management program. 01/03 and 03/04 Annual Reports distributed.
- Strategic Plan 2004 -2007** Produce, print & distribute 2004 – 2007 Strategic Plan printed and distributed.
- Australian Alps Newsletter** Produce News from the Alps for local community and interest groups/individuals and Australian Alps agency staff. Produce quarterly Alps Update for internal agency distribution via internet. Potential to produce 2 editions annually – Summer & Winter. Spring & early Summer editions emailed to staff & interested parties.
- Communication Framework** All working groups identified the need to develop and implement a Communication Plan – for both internal and external stakeholders. Communication framework being developed in consultation with working groups - Alps Program stakeholder data base updated and rationalised.
- Product Development & Access (internal & external)** Distribution, marketing, revision & reprinting of brochures, reports and strategies. Alps brochures X 4 being revised & reprinted (X 10,000)
- Web improvements & maintenance** Alps Web redesign, maintenance & revision. Placement Alps publications onto web. New Web design uploaded. Alps key publications & reports to be digitised & placed on web.
- Australian Alps Expert Scientific Panel (ESP)** An expert scientific panel (Alps ESP) to provide advice on issues of common concern that affect the Alps such as values identification and the impact of fire on recovery of those values. ESP recommendations sent to key stakeholders for response and implementation where relevant.
- Heritage Assessment of the Alps for National Listing** . National Heritage List nomination to be staged – draft Stage 1 nomination under Criteria E (Aesthetic Values) is being further developed over next few months. Stage 2 nomination (Natural and Cultural values) to follow in 2005/2006.
- Fire History** Collate a fire history for the Alps including a mapped summary of the wildfires and where possible the history of fuel reduction for the last 100 years. This will include a brief commentary on the fire management practices. Phil Zylstra (NPWS), Technical Officer Fire, Jindabyne seconded to undertake work – draft complete – incorporating key stakeholder comment. Report to be printed and released to public during 2005.
- Alps Operational Group (AOG)** Conduct AOG meetings to seek feedback on the on ground relevance of & potential improvements to the Alps Program. Meeting held Beechworth 11 & 12 August 2004 Meeting planned for early June 2005.

Natural Heritage Conservation

- Completion of the Alps Rehabilitation Manual** The current draft manual was distributed in 99/00. When completed the manual will assist project supervisors and staff to understand the broad principles and refined techniques of the alpine area environmental management and land rehabilitation. Manual to include sections on post fire rehabilitation. Consultant Roger Good has been engaged to complete the Rehabilitation Manual.
- Feral Pig Workshop** Hold a workshop for agency staff involved in the management of feral pigs in the Alps to provide an opportunity to exchange information on current pig control programs, latest research and discuss options and challenges for future management of feral pigs, particularly given the likely removal of Warfarin from use. Scheduled to be held late May in Khancoban.
- Analysis of Alps Fire Ecology Plots** Updating the Alps Fire Response Database (entering the large amount of Alps Fire Plots data), analysis of this data and preparation of a report following the 2003 wildfires for each of the 3 Alps jurisdictions. Analysis of data has started.
- Feral Horse Management Summary** To make best use of the information contained in M. Walter's PhD thesis for feral horse management purposes, it is proposed that a management summary be compiled for use by Agency staff involved in feral horse management. The management summary will be 10 pages or less and contain the key points from the PhD study relevant to on-ground management.
- Coordination of Post Fire Alpine Bog (Mossbed) Recovery** Form a steering group to coordinate the significant on-ground efforts currently underway for post-fire Sphagnum Bog restoration by each jurisdiction (ACT, NSW, VIC). The group will develop best practice guidelines for bog restoration to be included in the Mountain Ecology Restoration Manual (AALC and the Australian Network for Plant Conservation). Bog Restoration Workshop ran in November 2004 – inspected bogs in Namadgi & Kosciuszko national parks. Attended by experts from across the Alps & Tasmania. Findings to be incorporated into Rehabilitation Manual.
- Alps Invaders Booklet revision and reprint** The Alps Invaders booklet is a field guide to weeds of the Alps, and is small enough to be carried on walking trips through the Alps. It contains forms in the back that can be filled out for sightings of certain 'high alert' problem weeds and that can be given to a Parks office. The target audience is anyone with an interest in

new weeds added. Structure and content being revised – park staff have provided feedback on weed species list.

program update works around the alps program update works around the alps

Wild Dog special project group Small group to share information on dog control methods, research & community relations across Alps. Initial discussions (Charlie Pascoe, Rob Hunt & Bill Woodruff) to be held in Canberra late March.

Cultural Heritage Conservation

Sharing the Knowledge The project involves the people who prepared the reports on Scientific Sites and the Mining Heritage of the Australian Alps present the results of their projects to the relevant forums within each park management agency. Presentations were given at Adaminaby to NSW staff and Namadgi to ACT staff. Copies of the Mining Heritage report will be distributed to park offices during March.

Establish an annual event for Aboriginal Traditional Owner and family groups with connections to the Australian Alps Primary purpose of the Gathering is to bring together Traditional Owners of Country within the Australian Alps to build relationships, share information and experiences and discuss future involvement in the Australian Alps national parks. Consultants Joanna Freslov, Russell Mullett and Rachael Mullett and the Steering Committee are consulting with Indigenous people and preparing for the Gathering to be held at Dinner Plain (Victorian Alps) in early April.

Remembering Lost Places Production of an illustrated publication about those places lost in the fires of January 2003. Consultant Rob Kaufman has been engaged to produce the publication. Funding partnership external to Alps Program.

Recreation Tourism Management

Australian Alps Walking Track (AAWT) Working Group Support AAWT sub group. Update AAWT Strategy. Organise stakeholder meeting. AAWT group met in Kosciuszko National Park in December 2004. Draft Strategy (revised) to be presented and discussed at the Stakeholder meeting in late April.

Australian Alps Walking Track Signage Design & produce promotional signage along the Australian Alps Walking Track (AAWT).

Reprint Brochures (x 3) If required reprint "Care for the Alps", "Huts Code" and "AAWT" brochures that incorporate new Minimal Impact Codes to replenish stocks at Alps Offices & VC's. \$ Part of "Communication" Project. RTWG responsible for review & revision. Incorporate 'Respect Heritage' into MI code.

Welcome to Country signs Work with Aboriginal communities to build on the NSW Welcome to country pilot project & develop other pilots to improve awareness of visitors about Alps Aboriginal connection to country through welcome to country messages. Together with information about the Alps indigenous culture & appropriate behaviour at Indigenous sites, the pilots will explore welcome road signs & other appropriate ideas. Project Brief / Plan being prepared by RVFWG in consultation with CRWG & CHWG & partnerships with Aboriginal communities, tourism industry & park managers.

Recreation Impact Monitoring The project will build on work previously developed by the Recreation and Tourism Working Group and applied to horse riding impacts. The working group is to Investigate previous work and prepare a detailed brief for future funding bids.

Community awareness

Australian Alps Education Kit Completion of the 2001/02 Education Kit review and rewrite. Jennifer Andrew. Stage 1 complete – Stage 2 draft due for comment

Australian Alps Touring Map Revision and reprinting Review, update and reprint the Australian Alps touring map. Revisions will include update/correction of all map details and incorporation of new MI messages. Complete. Distribution Klaus Heueke Tabletop Press.

Newspaper Articles Key feature article (2-5,000 words long) to be written and distributed to newspaper editors. Fire Recovery:- progress since January 2003 focusing on Threatened species. Project to be revised on advice from Stuart Cohen. Journalists to cover key stories on behalf of the Alps.

Update Travelling Display To update, produce and distribute the alps portable travelling display (total of four to be produced, one for each agency). Comment on draft design supplied to designer Design Edge). Similar design to the existing display – reformatted to fit lightweight banner system.

Promotion and Advertising of the revised Alps Education Kit Market and promote the revised Alps Education Kit using advertisements placed in relevant School and University faculty journals and also Environmental education and Interpretation newsletters, newspapers in conjunction with feature articles. Communication plan being developed.

Frontline Workshop Hold a partnership building Workshop for Key Visitor Services staff (internal and external), Tour Operators & park staff. Frontline aims to promote a greater awareness of the Australian Alps national parks by providing information on "where to go and what to do"; minimal impact; and natural and cultural heritage interpretation. Steering Committee decided to hold first Frontline at Mount Buffalo National Park in early May and second at Charlotte Pass early Nov. Invitations & draft program being finalised.

diary

Australian Alps First Peoples Gathering Dinner Plain, April 1-April 3

Australian Alps Walking Track Stakeholder meeting - Namadgi NP Australian Alps April 27-April 28

Australian Alps Call for Projects close April 29

Frontline of the Australian Alps workshop Mount Buffalo National Park, May 2-May 3

Feral Pig Best Practice Workshop Khancoban, May 25-May 27

Biodiversity (fire recovery) Workshop this is a collaborative project with DSE, PV & various agencies & research institutions across the Alps,(location to be confirmed), June

Working Group & Alps Operational Group Project Review and Planning for 2005-2006 June

Australian Alps Liason Committee Project Assessment and Approval for 2005-2006 June

new look alps site

It's worth taking a look at the Australian Alps web site which has undergone some very beneficial tweaking in the past few months. Not only is it better looking, but it's also easier to find your way around – a bonus for anyone wanting to access information about the Alps..

www.australialps.deh.gov.au



Australian Government
Department of the Environment and Heritage

environment ACT



people working together
for the Australian Alps