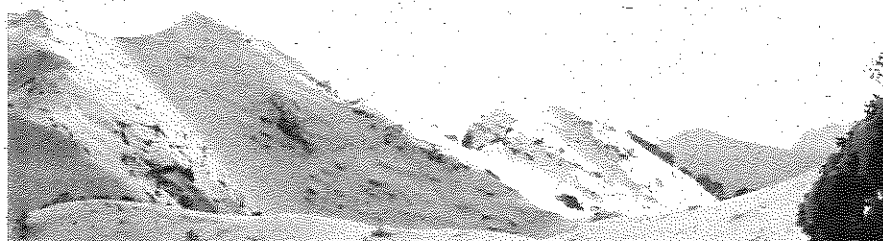




*a newsletter for
people interested in
the Australian Alps*

from the **ALPS**

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF MOUNTAINS



The United Nations has declared 2002 the International Year of the Mountains (IYM2002). The aim of the declaration was to increase awareness of the importance of mountain regions including sustainable development. The resolution recommended the involvement of government and non-government organisations and the private sector in promoting the year.

The importance of mountain systems overseas and in Australia can not be over emphasised. This is clearly set out in the petition attached to the declaration.

"Nearly 40% of the Earth's surface is mountainous and a tenth of the world's population lives in these regions. Those that live in the plains depend upon mountains for water, energy, building materials, and for sport and leisure. Mountains are the essential element of the chryosphere. The level of the seas depends on glacial melting, and the majority of the Earth's glaciers are found on the most mountainous of all continents: Antarctica.

The majority of the world's forests are also found in mountain areas, and along with them, an infinite biological diversity of life. Most of the 300 million people who live in tribal societies live in mountainous regions. No less important are the values, the charm and the spirituality mountains have inspired in our modern human culture."

Australian mountains play a very important role in the quality of life for Australians. They are a major source of water, hydroelectric energy, biodiversity and recreation. Their cultural and heritage values have also been considered outstanding, and are on a par with many world heritage listed areas.

No 24 Spring 2000

In this Newsletter

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- 7 The Alps walking track
- 8 Working Group progress reports
- 14 Around the agencies

Dates for your Diary

25 September 2000 *open*

10 November 2000 *close*

Call for Projects 2001-2002
Cooperative Works Program

7 - 9 November 2000

Communicating Across
Cultures Workshop

*Currango Homestead
Kosciuszko National Park*

14 November *Jindabyne, NSW*

16 November *Bright, Victoria.*

Sharing the knowledge... Research
from the Australian Alps workshops

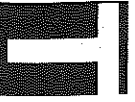
21- 23 November 2000

Alps Program
Development Workshop

Dinner Plain, Victoria.

26 - 30 March 2001

Walking Track Management:
An Alps Best Practice Field Forum
Alpine National Park, Victoria.



Sharing the knowledge.. Research from the Australian Alps

Over the last year or so there have been a large number of outstanding natural heritage research projects funded by the Australian Alps Liaison Committee. In the interest of actively promoting this work, the Natural Heritage Working Group has initiated a travelling road show to highlight and promote the valuable contribution these projects have made to our 'on ground' management of the Australian Alps national parks.

The travelling road show will consist of two one day presentations of the projects and their key outcomes and will be made at Jindabyne and Bright on Tuesday 14 and Thursday 16 November 2000 respectively.

The presentations are aimed at ALL INTERESTED parties be they agency staff, land management agencies and other organisations that have an interest in the Australian Alps. Everyone is most welcome to attend. The presentations will be on the following subjects:

- Vegetation Restoration in the Alps
- Stream Health Monitoring
- English Broom Management Strategy
- RCD and Predator Prey Responses
- Alps Natural Treasures & Alps Scientific Sites
- Population Ecology of Feral Horses
- Vegetation Fire Response and Affects on Fauna
- Fox/Wild Dog Bait Station and Spot tailed Quolls

Keep an eye out for the promotional flyer soon to be distributed. If you would like further information please contact Evan McDowell at Parks Victoria on (03) 5755 1577 or email emcdowel@parks.vic.gov.au

Closer Ties with the Victorian Alpine Resorts

The Victorian Alpine Resorts and the Australian Alps Liaison Committee (AALC) are expected to work closer together to the benefit of both parties following a series of meetings and correspondence between the parties. The Victorian Alpine Resorts are not formally covered by the Alps MOU, unlike NSW resorts which reside within Kosciuszko National Park. As a result, the AALC and the Victorian Resorts are keen to ensure that effective communication channels are established and maintained with all of the resorts operating within Victoria.

Chris Rose, our Victorian Alps Liaison Committee representative is enthusiastic about the opportunities to ensure that the resorts and the Alps Program share their experiences.

Experiences in terms of environmental management as well as the sharing of resources in solving many problems common to all parties. Many of the pest plants and animal problems faced in the resort and the parks are the same and while there is pretty good cooperation in place now, closer ties with the Alps Program will hopefully further the outcomes of all our efforts.

Australian Alps Products... just a phone call away!

The Australian Alps Liaison Committee (AALC) has recently entered into a new partnership arrangement with CanPrint Communications to undertake distribution and marketing of all Alps related products and publications.

CanPrint Communications operates an extensive network which incorporates a call centre, consumer information services, publication warehousing and distribution. Underpinning this operation is a state of the art databases management system and a wide area network supporting substantial inventory management, subscriber services and electronic information distribution and access operations.

The AALC is very keen to enhance and supplement arrangements with CanPrint Communication for the marketing and dissemination of Alps information and products through this comprehensive network.

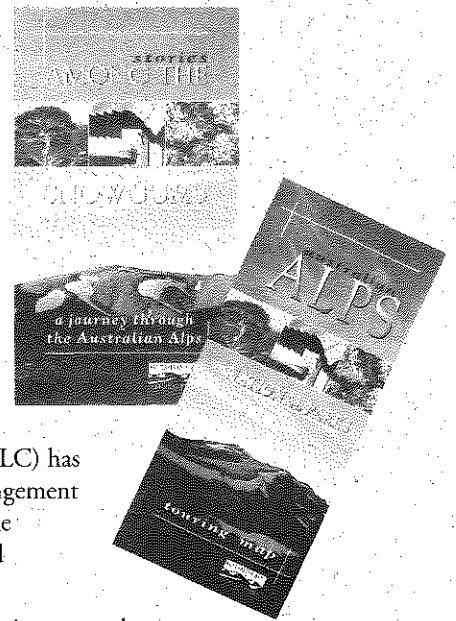
To order any Australian Alps national parks publication and/or product simply ring either Sam or Carlene for fast efficient and friendly service at CanPrint on (02) 6295 4444.

Alps Olympic Connection

The Alps program can claim a special link, albeit somewhat dubious to the recent event held in Sydney...!

Odile Arman, Convenor of the Community Relations Working Group was involved with the Olympic Games as a volunteer to the Jamaican Team. Not only did Odile lend a hand in assisting the Jamaican athletes around the team village at Homebush, but Odile was also heavily involved with both the Opening and Closing Ceremonies as a team marshal.

It has been reported that Odile was also seen handing out Alps Icon Brochures, Touring Maps and the Alps video *Stories amongst the Snowgums* to our overseas visitors, so if you happen to come across any athletes from Jamaica visiting the Australian Alps, say G-day!



Mountain Walking Track Management: an Australian Alps Best Practice field forum

Following on from the internationally acclaimed Human Waste Management Workshop held in March 2000, the Alps Program will once again be hosting another in the series of 'best practice workshops', this time looking at Walking Track Management.

To be held in North East Victoria from the 26 – 30 March 2001, the Field Forum will showcase relevant walking track management issues within Mount Buffalo National Park and the Alpine National Park, Victoria.

The Field Forum will have a strong practical on-ground focus and aims to increase the level of awareness, expertise and interest amongst park agency staff and interested stakeholders in contemporary approaches to walking track management as they relate to planning, construction and maintenance techniques throughout the Australian Alps national parks.

The primary target is field staff and managers of the Australian Alps



national parks. It is expected that the forum will also generate considerable interest from field and management staff of other mountain protected areas, other park and land management agencies. Such agencies for example will include, forestry, local councils, commercial operators, ski resorts and other key interest groups. It is also expected that interest may also come from community groups such as Tassie Trail and Bicentennial Trail groups as well as industry representatives. The forum will also aim to attract international speakers and delegates.

The program for the Field Forum will be 3 days (3 nights) with an option for delegates to spend another day on a full field trip after the formal conclusion of the Field Forum.

After a comprehensive selection process, Janet Mackay & Associates have recently been appointed to undertake the coordination and delivery of this exciting project. To register your interest in receiving additional information on this project contact Janet Mackay directly at jmackay@snowy.net.au or phone (02) 6456 3876.

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF MOUNTAINS continued

The Australian Alps program is well positioned to highlight the important opportunity that the IYM2002 provides for promoting the conservation and appreciation of mountain regions within the context of the Australian Alps Memorandum of Understanding.

And on 3 August 2000, a galaxy of interested people met at Environment Australia HQ in Canberra to take the first step in planning Australia's response to IYM2002.

One of the objectives for IYM 2002 is to 'deepen the understanding and appreciation of Australian mountains and mountain communities', not only in Australia, but also in the Northern Hemisphere, where many don't consider that we actually have mountains...!

Some preliminary suggestions to celebrate mountains and highlight the interconnection between mountains and people included:

- developing an appropriate 'slogan' for 2002 some suggestions so far are:
"Mountains - My Place";
"Our Mountains - My Place";
"Get high in the mountains in IYM 2002"
- plan major community events at the beginning and end of 2002, with smaller ones throughout the year including music, sport and heritage;
- market sustainable mountain activities, including tourism;
- host mountain science events and encourage mountain research;
- develop a calendar of events for 2002 for publication;
- support a professional development program for educators;

The assembled group agreed on the need for a steering group to act as a first point of contact in terms of facilitating a coordinated response. This steering committee is convened and chaired by Roger Good from NSW NPWS.

As part of the 2001–2002 Cooperative Works Program, the AALC would welcome project proposals from any interested parties and individuals which assist in promoting and highlighting this significant event. Refer to Call for Projects article in this newsletter.

For an international perspective on IYM 2002 visit www.fao.org/iym/en/ To find out more about the Australian Alps response to IYM2002 or to suggest an idea, contact Roger Good at roger.good@npws.nsw.gov.au or Brett McNamara at Brett_McNamara@bigpond.com

Call for Projects...

2001 / 2002 Cooperative Works Program

The Australian Alps national parks (AANp's) is a cooperative management program administered by the Australian Alps Liaison Committee (AALC).

As part of the 2001-2002 Cooperative Works Program, the AALC would welcome project proposals from any interested parties and or individuals which assist in delivering the identified outcomes under the Australian Alps Strategic Plan 2000 - 2003. In addition the International Year of the Mountains in 2002 provides an opportunity for projects to highlight and promote this significant event. Criteria for projects are listed below, however if you believe a proposed project is of high value to the improved management of the Australian Alps, but outside the criteria, please submit it for AALC's consideration.

To obtain a Project Proposal Form contact Brett McNamara at the address given below OR visit the Alps Home Page at www.australialps.environment.gov.au Send completed project proposals by 10th November 2000 to:

Brett McNamara
 Program Coordinator
 C/- Tharwa Post Office
 Canberra ACT 2620
 Phone (02) 62071694
 fax: (02) 62072901,
 email: Brett_McNamara@bigpond.com.au

The timetable for consideration of project proposals is:

25 September 2000	Opening of Call-for-Projects 2001 / 2002
10 November 2000	Close of Call-for-Projects 2001 / 2002
December 2000- Jan 2001	Working Groups meet to assess and rate project proposals received within the context of Alps Strategic Plan 2000 - 2003
21 & 22 February 2001	First Round Meeting, Jindabyne. Presentation by Working Group Convenors of project proposals to AALC. Consideration and development of preliminary listing of project proposals
9 & 10 May 2001	Second Round Meeting, Environment Aust. Canberra. AALC and Working Group Convenors Funding / Works Program Development Meeting
July 2001	Project Budget Allocated.

Criteria for projects under the Australian Alps Cooperative Management Program

All project proposals are considered on their merits in terms of implementation of the Australian Alps Strategic Plan 2000 - 2003. Projects have the greatest chance of success if they also meet the following criteria:

- a) Outcomes that have application to park management in at least two of the States/Territory,
- b) Result either directly or on implementation, in 'on-ground' benefits to the management of the AANps,
- c) Promote and highlight the International Year of the Mountains in 2002 within the context of the AANps.

The Liaison Committee will consider supporting 'on-ground' works (on a cost-sharing basis with an Agency) where the project:

- involves implementation of a strategic approach developed under the MOU,
- has direct cross-border benefits, and
- has priority support for continuance and/or maintenance by the Agency.

The AANP program is operated on a budget of only \$400,000 pa, and while no funding limits are set, for guidance, project funding in the range of \$5,000 to \$50,000 per annum should be considered.

A project proposal application form should be completed for each project proposal.

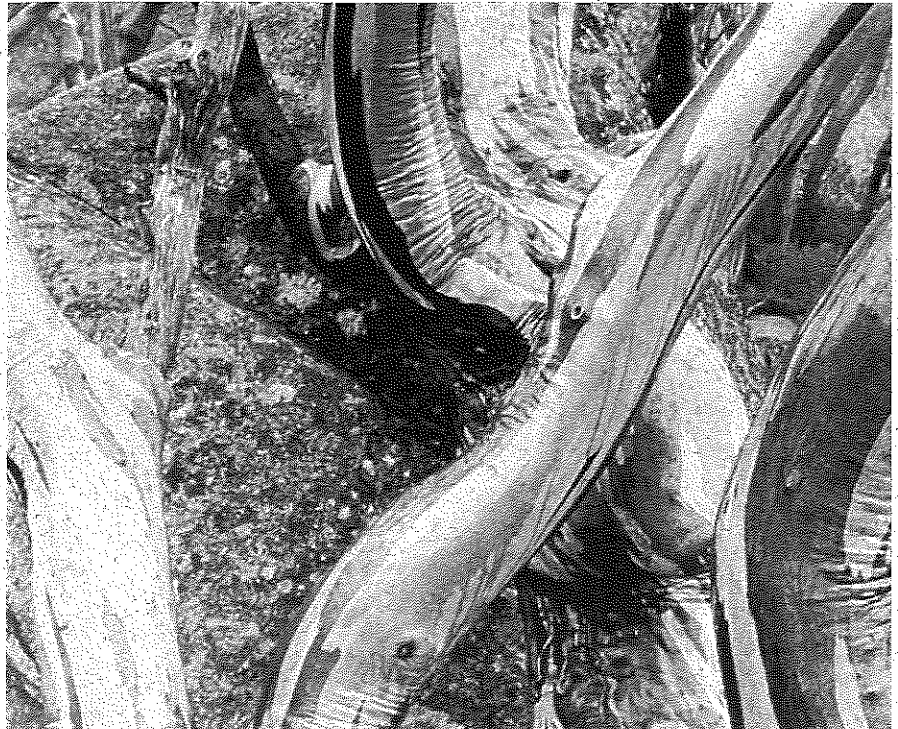


The Year that was....1999 / 2000

The year of 1999/2000 was one of further achievement for the Australian Alps Program in attaining excellence in protected area management. This was achieved through a continuing strong program of cross border liaison and cooperation amongst the managing agencies involved. The results of this cooperation have greatly enhanced the management and understanding of the Australian Alps national parks on a regional basis.

A major achievement was the production of a suite of retail products, designed to enhance visitor experiences to the Australian Alps. *The Australian Alps national parks Touring Map* represents an outstanding piece of work involving digital technology. The video *"Stories among the snow gums: a journey through the Australian Alps"* has met with wide acclaim and focuses on the personal stories and memories of a diverse group of individuals, all of whom have strong connections and feelings for the Australian Alps.

Complementing these products is an easy to use, introductory field guide to the region. *"WildGuide plants and animals of the Australian Alps"* has been skillfully written to suit a broad audience. It has been written and illustrated to assist those visiting the region to gain an insight into the unique natural features of the



Australian Alps. The focus on community awareness continued with the development and production of an Australian Alps icon brochure and travelling display. Both products were produced as a means of communicating the unique features and values of the region as well as the tangible benefits of the Australian Alps cross border cooperative management program.

A key initiative was the commissioning of a study into the natural values of the Australian Alps national parks. Dr Peter Coyne was seconded from Environment Australia to undertake a major strategic project "Protecting the Natural Treasures of the Australian Alps". The project has identified and documented the status of the significant natural features of the Australian Alps and their immediate threats. As a result, a long term strategy has been developed which has prioritised the features and threats in terms of allocating future resources for research and management funding.

During the reporting period the Cultural Heritage Working Group developed and successfully delivered an indigenous issues awareness workshop titled *"Communicating Across Cultures"*. The workshop provided field based staff and managers working in the Australian Alps with an awareness into, and greater understanding of, the issues faced by contemporary Aboriginal people.

Visitor facilities and services were targeted with the AALC hosting a 5 day international workshop that examined the issue of human waste management. Through a comprehensive program of plenary and concurrent sessions, site visits and industry exhibitions, delegates explored contemporary approaches to human faecal waste management at visitor facilities, trailheads and in the remote backcountry of the Australian Alps national parks.

The role and activities of the AALC in introducing innovation, providing a forum for staff networking and coordination continues to be highly valued by staff managing the Australian Alps national parks. The response of staff has been to give their time in addition to their normal duties and become closely involved with the Australian Alps program.

The cooperative management strategies and implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding have been recognised internationally as world's best practice. I believe that the past year reflects the success and relevance of the Australian Alps cooperative management program to land managers, stakeholders and to the wider community.

I would like to record my sincere thanks to the members of the working groups and to the Australian Alps Liaison Committee for their collective efforts in achieving excellence in cross border protected area management.

Lee Thomas
Convenor
Australian Alps Liaison Committee

Remarkable Mount Kaputar National Park

The following shows that you can take the Ranger away from the mountains, but you can't take the mountains out of the Ranger. Adam spent many years wandering around the mountains of Namadgi NP (ACT PCS) before heading west in the pursuit of a career with NPWS...

In Australia there are some pockets of high country in places far from the original 'high country' of southern NSW, ACT and Victoria. Tucked away in the far north of NSW near Narrabri (over 700 kilometres from the northern extent of the Australian Alps national parks) the intrepid traveller will find Mount Kaputar National Park.

This 38,000-hectare park protects a large portion of the Nandewar Range - a rugged and heavily dissected mountain range that rises abruptly from the plains to an altitude of over 1,500 metres. It is in the high areas of the Park that sub-alpine vegetation communities and conditions can be found, including all the well-known plants such as the snow gum, snow grass, silver wattle, native currant and the alpine daisy.

Ice, snow and cold mists are winter hallmarks in the high country of the park, often vexing parks staff based down in the warm and sunny township of Narrabri. Sporadic snowfalls occur each winter from about 1,200 metres upwards. This is made all the more remarkable considering the park's position perched on the edge of the vast western plains. The high plateau and peaks provide excellent vantage points to look west over dead flat plains that go on and on - seemingly forever. If you're heading west this is definitely the last sub-alpine area till you reach Africa!

Adam Henderson, Ranger,
NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service
Narrabri Area

An intrepid traveller enjoying a recent snowfall on Mt Kaputar.



Quest for Quolls in Namadgi National Park (ACT)

Although there has been a number of unconfirmed sightings of Spotted-tailed Quolls (STQ's) in the ACT, there are less than ten confirmed records of the species in the Territory over the last 50 years. These records (sightings and hair in scats) have been from across the ACT and include three within the suburban area. The paucity of records makes any determination of the status of STQ's in the ACT extremely difficult, and highlights the need for focussed survey work to help obtain a better understanding of the distribution and abundance of the species.

A pilot Spotted-tailed Quoll survey was conducted at Namadgi National Park in July 1999. This trapping survey focussed on the Orroral Valley, from where recent records of STQ's have been obtained, and the adjacent Upper Cotter area. This winter the survey was expanded to include other areas both within and adjacent to the Park where unconfirmed sightings had occurred earlier in the year. In addition to the traps, hair tubes were deployed this year at a number of other sites within Namadgi National Park (and also at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve) in habitat suitable for STQ's and from where they have been recorded in the past.

A number of high calibre volunteers (including Peter Hann, a former Namadgi National Park Manager) assisted staff from Wildlife Research and Monitoring and the ACT Parks and Conservation Service within Environment ACT to set up and check the traps and hair tubes. We are also grateful to the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service for the loan of traps and hair tubes, and to Peter Catling (CSIRO) and the combined expertise on the South East Forests Spotted Tailed Quoll Working Group for advice.

Although we did not catch any Quolls during the 1999 and 2000 surveys, we still have our fingers crossed that the hair tubes will reveal the presence of STQ's. It is hoped that the program will continue until the status of STQ's in the ACT is resolved.

Lyn Nelson, Wildlife Ecologist
Wildlife Research and Monitoring
Environment ACT
Lyn.nelson@act.gov.au

The Alps Walking Track... YES It is a very long walk

There is no doubt about it...

650 kilometres is a very long walk in anyone's language. But one keen Canberran, John McGrath, completed his six-week walk along the Australian Alps Walking Track in May at the Namadgi National Park Visitor Centre, near Tharwa on the outskirts of Canberra. Actually, John believes he walked closer to 700kms as he made detours to collect food and pick up walking partners!

Rhonda Aquilina, the owner of Walhalla General Store (Vic), saw John McGrath and his first walking companion off in early April. "They set off so full of enthusiasm, ready to navigate all the way through the Australian Alps national parks, I think they deserve a medal", she said as they set off.

John has sent the Alps Program the full story of his epic adventure, some highlights follow. The rest will be posted on the Australian Alps website www.australialps.environment.gov.au soon.

Six weeks on the 'Track'

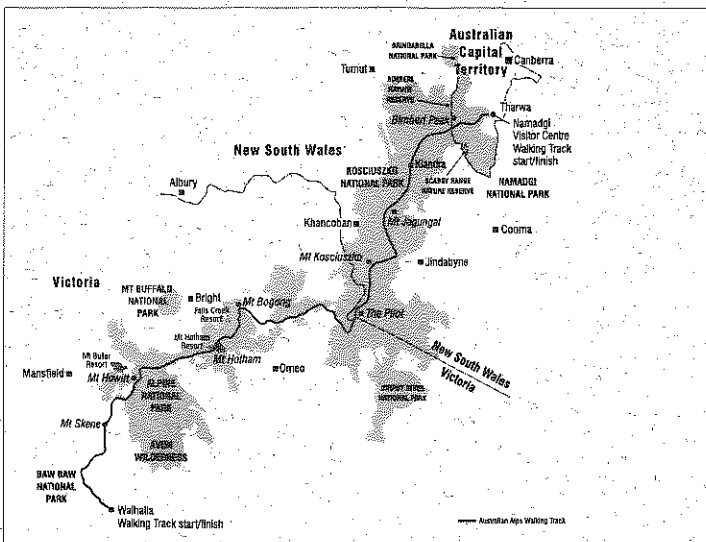
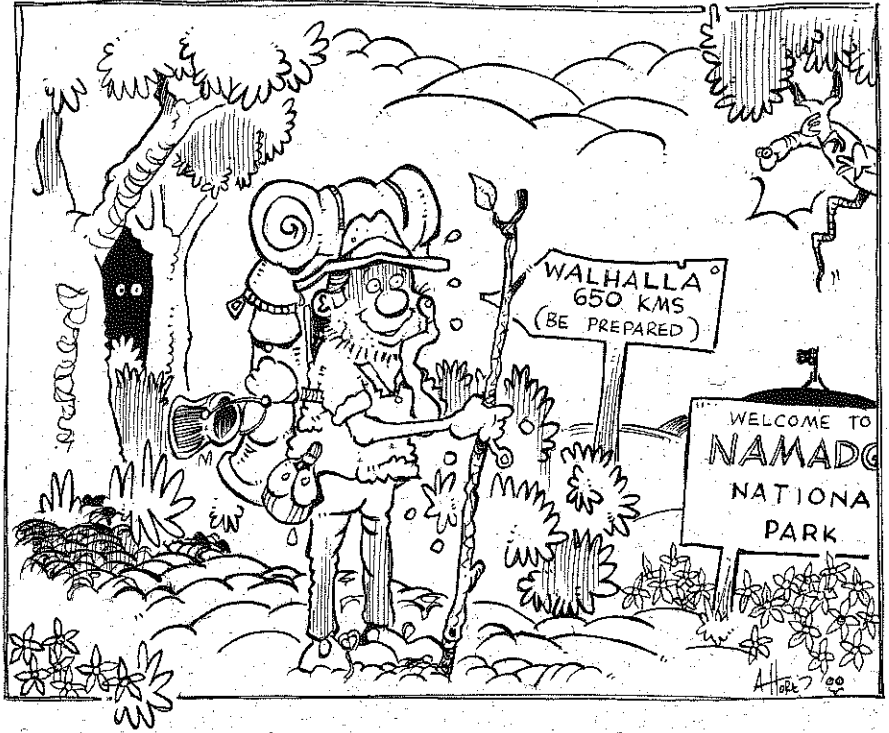
We are squatting in the rain and semi-darkness, rearranging pebbles to increase the trickle of muddy water, picking off legions of leeches crawling up the legs, tightening the hoods on our jackets, collecting cup by cup of precious liquid. We're in Victoria's infamous 'Dry Barries' range, it's near dark, it's very cold and very wet.

For the seventh night in a row Carolyn Roberts and I have had to hunt for water after a long day's trek. Each day has presented a new challenge: to cover the distance for the day; trying both to camp near a likely source of water and keep on schedule for a food-drop rendezvous at Mt Hotham on Day 14 of our 6-week odyssey on Australia's most celebrated walk, the Australian Alps Walking Track.

That evening we were lucky (two of the previous nights we had resorted to drinking handkerchief-filtered water from wheel ruts on the dirt roads)! After an hour of collecting several litres of water, millilitre-by millilitre, for cooking and drinking for the morrow, we retired to cook a meal in the dryness and warmth of the sleeping bags and tent.

The following day, a 21km section to Diamantina Hut at Mt Hotham, Carolyn and I trekked, drenched, in terrible conditions. In all 2 inches of rain was recorded for the day! Needless to say, upon my arrival at the hut, I was so cold I could not control my hands to light the stove and boil up a much-needed cuppa. Carolyn got it going and soon some fellow campers got a fire going. By dinner time our clothes were nearly dry and with the arrival of Neill Burton (my 2nd walking companion), and other friends, Mike and Kieran, the arms of hypothermia were replaced by those of companionship. Our friends brought many goodies including wine, port, fresh fruit, food for the next section of the track and news from home. All the hardships were forgotten for the night as Carolyn and I recounted 220km of adventure. Such is life on the AAWT – tough days mingle with simple moments creating a wonderful experience on all levels – physical, mental and spiritual.

John continues his story, describing many of the challenges of the AAWT. Visit the website (to be updated very soon) for more.



Working Group Progress Reports

Alps Icon Brochure & Travelling Display

Recently a new Alps Icon Brochure and text for a travelling display were produced for park visitors and Visitor Centers as a means of communicating the natural and cultural features of the region as well as the tangible benefits of a unique cross-border cooperative management program.

All good things come to an end, especially in our changing corporate world and so it is the case for the original Alps Brochure and travelling displays. Although both were state of the art in their day, especially the brochure which still remains aesthetically pleasing, changes in logos and agency titles has presented the opportunity to review the text and improve the graphics.

The Community Relations Working Group combined the talents and expertise of graphic design, interpretation and cartography consultants to come up with a new Alps 'icon' brochure and travelling display. Both products are in a similar style which reflects the unique beauty and diversity of the Alps. The full colour brochure, which is now in a more user friendly DL format and on environmentally friendly paper stock, is now available. Over 15,000 copies have been produced for wide distribution to visitor centers, schools and community/interest groups.

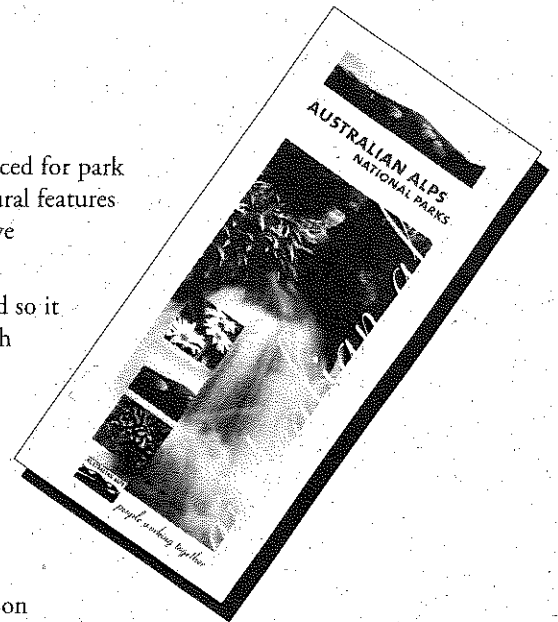
The four lightweight travelling displays will form an integral component in the AALC endeavors to advance the region and the Alps Program at local shows, shopping centers and visitors centers: The displays fully compliment the icon brochure and promote the Australian Alps national parks as a significant natural feature and a premiere tourist destination.

To order your FREE copies of the new Alps Icon Brochure contact CANPRINT Communications on 02 6295 4444

For more information contact

Gill Anderson, Community Relations Working Group

Phone (03) 5755 1577



Kosciuszko Alpine Flora: second edition

The first edition of Kosciuszko Alpine Flora published by CSIRO in 1979, was met with wide praise from expert and layperson alike, from around the world as a benchmark publication. Now out-of-print, it is soon to be republished in a completely revised second edition, with the latest species revisions and new photographs.

Supported with seed funding from the Australian Alps Liaison Committee, as well as from the CRC for Sustainable Tourism, CSIRO Publishing commenced work on the new Kosciuszko Alpine Flora in 1999. As well as describing and illustrating the area's 200+ native species, 21 of them endemic, it discusses the geological and human history of the area, the life-form and habitat classifications of the plants, and explores the various plant communities and their environmental relationships. The book contains identification keys, detailed descriptions, and distribution and habitat notes for each species. Superb colour photographs show details of flowers, fruit, foliage, and ecological relationships.

The new book includes a comprehensive table which shows which species are to be found in the other alpine areas of NSW, as well as ACT, Victoria, Tasmania and New Zealand.

The 400 page book will be published as a hard-back, while an affordable soft-cover 'field edition', which omits the detailed taxonomic section, will be published for the benefit of the growing tourist market to the Australian Alps national parks.

Both editions of Kosciuszko Alpine Flora are to be launched on 7 December 2000 at the National Botanical Gardens by Senator Robert Hill.

For more information contact

Amanda Carey

Natural Heritage Working Group

Phone (02) 6207 2900

Below Participants gather outside the Kosciuszko Education Centre, Sawpit Creek.



Frontline of the Alps

A two day training workshop developed for visitor services staff, entitled Frontline of the Alps: a training workshop, was convened by the Community Relations Working Group and held in Jindabyne (NSW).

Thirty-five frontline staff from visitor centres from over twelve organisations in the ACT, NSW and Victoria attended. The workshop aimed to increase participant's knowledge of the Australian Alps national parks as a premier tourist destination, while becoming familiar with the information material produced by the AALC. The workshop also provided the opportunity for participants to network with colleagues from 'across the border'. The workshop successfully achieved one of the key objectives of the Australian Alps program in raising community awareness and understanding of the overall management principles of the Australian Alps national parks and the objectives of the Alps cooperative management program.

A small registration fee was charged to attend with participants receiving a copy of the Australian Alps Tourist Map, video 'Stories Among the Snowgum' and a choice of WildGuide or Explore the Alps. The evaluation conducted at the conclusion of the workshop revealed that participants indicated a very high level of satisfaction with these products, particularly with the Alps Tourist Map and Explore, indicating that such products would greatly enhance the visitor experience to the Australian Alps national parks.

The workshop included a number of topical presentations that addressed such issues as minimal impact, recreational management, natural and cultural heritage values of the Alps bioregion, together with opportunities in managing national parks for visitors. In addition, there was an extensive one-day field trip, along with group presentations. The workshop was well received with participants expressing a high level of satisfaction. A further workshop is planned for 2002 in Victoria.

For more information contact

Odile Armani, Convenor

Community Relations Working Group

Phone (02) 6207 2088

Left Christian Hampson (NSW NPWS) explains the cultural significance of Curiosity Rocks, Jindabyne NSW.

Below right Frontline participants brave the weather on a field inspection to Dainers Gap, Kosciuszko National Park (NSW)

Bottom right Australian Alps publications such as Explore were considered by participants to greatly enhance any visitor experience to the region.

*To admire the
snowgums is vision.
To explore their roots
is knowledge.*

Robyn Rowson,
Frontline of the Alps participant



Natural Treasures of the Australian Alps

The Australian Alps national parks are a treasure-trove of remarkable features, some of which occur no where else in the world. The region contains the only marsupial species which stores food; an insect which changes colour to reflect or absorb heat and, a remarkable cliff-bound lake created by the grinding action of a glacier. The catalogue is long and diverse, yet the significant natural values of the Australian Alps national parks is rarely fully recognised.

In December 1999 the Natural Heritage Working Group seconded Dr Peter Coyne from Environment Australia to undertake a major strategic project "Protecting the Natural Treasures of the Australian Alps". The project was to identify and document the status of the significant natural features of the Australian Alps and the threats to them. The project also involved prioritising the features and threats in terms of allocating future resources for research and management funding. Ranking of priorities was undertaken by a workshop of agency and university experts and others with relevant expertise.

The report identifies more than one thousand significant natural features of the Australian Alps, and the threats to their continued survival, and assesses their priorities. The recommendations are designed to improve the long-term security of national and international assets by encouraging the collection of detailed scientific information and by striving for best practice management approaches to be implemented across the Australian Alps bioregion.

The report recommends that greater emphasis be given to managing the Australian Alps national parks as a single ecological entity rather than as discrete functional units, and recommends strategies by which this can be achieved.

The Australian Alps Liaison Committee and the Cooperative Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism provided additional funding to enable the development of an interactive electronic database from information collected during the project.

For more information contact

Rob Hunt
Convener
Natural Heritage Working Group
Phone (02) 6298 0356

Ranking of priorities was undertaken through a workshop attended by park agency and academic experts



Cultural Heritage Research and Implementation Strategy

The Australian Alps Liaison Committee commissioned a project to undertake a desktop review and develop a Cultural Heritage Implementation Strategy based on the known cultural heritage values of the region. Debbie Argue from Environment ACT was seconded on a six month project to

- assess and supplement the available information about cultural heritage in the Alps national parks in light of the new initiatives being taken to consider cultural values in a national context
- Review cultural heritage management guidelines which had been prepared for the AALC,
- Establish if it would be feasible to create a simple database of cultural heritage sites in the Australian Alps national parks.

Following guidelines established under the Australian Heritage Commission's Principal Historic Themes the Cultural Heritage Research and Implementation Strategy has identified existing gaps in the knowledge of cultural heritage values within the Australian Alps national parks.

As a result of this gap analysis, the Cultural Heritage Working Group has identified a number of projects for consideration. It is anticipated that an outcome from each project will be to contribute to an ongoing analysis of national heritage values and significance of the Australian Alps national parks.

The project also discusses the feasibility of establishing a simple database of cultural heritage sites in the Australian Alps and has identified the style of management guidelines considered by staff to be of most practical application in their day-to-day work.

For more information contact
Debbie Argue
Cultural Heritage Working Group
Phone (02) 6207 2167

Alps Stream Health Monitoring

The use of biological rather than chemical methods for assessing water quality has increased in the last decade. The Australian River Assessment Scheme (AUSRIVAS) has been developed and provides a standardised, easy to use and rapid method for assessing the relative health of streams. Over the past few months the macroinvertebrate fauna and a wide range of habitat features were sampled and measured at 95 sites across the Australian Alps national parks.

Seventy-nine reference, minimally impacted sites were used to provide baseline conditions against which test sites can be compared and assessed. Sixteen test sites with suspected or known impacts were sampled and assessed using AUSRIVAS.

AUSRIVAS uses environmental characteristics that are unaffected by human activities as an independent way of matching test sites with reference sites. Consequently the macroinvertebrate fauna expected to occur at a site in the absence of environmental stress can be predicted. The fauna observed (O) at a site can then be compared to fauna expected (E), with the deviation between the two providing an indication of biological condition. A site displaying no biological impairment should have an O/E ratio close to one. The information from the 79 reference sites sampled has been used to construct an "Alps" AUSRIVAS model with the model known as the Alps Summer Riffle and a description of the methods now available on the Internet (Coys et al. 2000, <http://ausriv.as.canberra.edu.au/ausriv.as>).

The AUSRIVAS predictive models are a valuable tool for identifying possible effect of land uses and management practices on the biological communities of rivers and streams within the Australian Alps national parks. The impacts of management activities such as grazing, track construction and fire can now be easily assessed using the AUSRIVAS "Alps" model.

For more information contact

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Phone (02) 6207 2117

Cultural Heritage Residential Training Course: A feasibility study

Recently the Cultural Heritage Working Group initiated a project to scope a residential training course on the cultural heritage values of the Australian Alps national parks.

As a part of this feasibility study, Earthlines (Marion van Gameren and Dierdre Slattery) were engaged to determine the viability, recommend the content and identify the logistics for a residential course. Through responses to a questionnaire, a large percentage of land managers expressed interest in participating in a residential-cultural heritage course.

The feasibility study recommends progressing from the provision of core information, to developing expertise in methodologies and the use of cultural heritage expertise, to small group research, investigation and planning projects. Heritage themes would be used to provide coherence and a means for helping participants develop a deeper understanding of certain aspects of the cultural heritage.

In delivering the course, a coordinator with proven educational skill and experience would manage the course and lead a team of motivated heritage professionals with proven communication skills committed to spending time leading and interacting with course participants.

One of the aims of the course would be to eventually achieve tertiary accreditation.

In order to broaden the expertise involved and assist with the financial resourcing required in delivering the residential course, the AALC intends to seek partners to join with it in staging the pilot course.

For more information contact

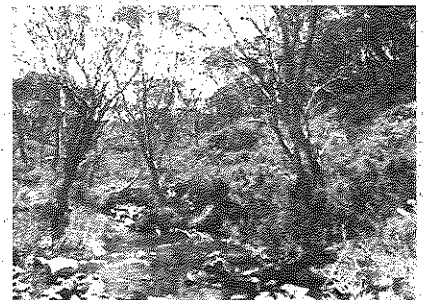
Ray Supple, Cultural Heritage Working Group, Phone (03) 9816 1130



Guthrie creek in Kosciuszko National Park



Tributary of the Langford East Aqueduct, Bogong Unit



Shaw Creek upstream of the horseyards, Wonnanganatta - Moroka Unit

Australian Alps Walking Track Re-route

The Australian Alps Walking Track (AAWT), opened in 1995, provides an identified route through the Australian Alps between Walhalla in Victoria and Tharwa on the outskirts of Canberra.

In April this year work commenced on the 5km reroute of the Australian Alps Walking Track within Namadgi National Park (ACT). The project, which aimed to divert the track off two relatively busy public roads, was identified as a high priority in the Australian Alps Walking Track Management Strategy, 1997. The project received funding from the Australian Alps Liaison Committee and was matched by \$10,000 from the ACT Parks and Conservation Service.

More than 90% of the new track is complete. The remainder of the work will be completed in Spring with the installation of decking on a number of bridges together with track signage and appropriate markers. This re-route between Booroomba Rocks carpark and the Honeysuckle Plateau takes the AAWT alignment off the Booroomba Road and the Honeysuckle Road. By taking the track off the roads the walker's experience and safety will be greatly enhanced.

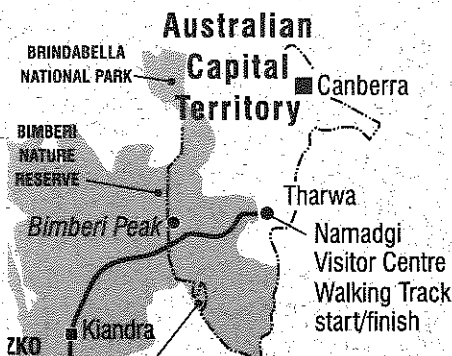
The lower 2km of new track follows a formerly overgrown, disused 4 wheel drive track while the top 3km of track has been benched in by hand. It gently follows the natural contours of the land where possible to minimise drainage problems. Water diversion bars have been installed along the length of the new realignment with hardwood steps located in steeper areas. Several watercourses have had footbridges placed over them with very little disturbance to the natural environment. This not only prevents wet feet but also reduces impacts on water flow.

The sourcing of materials was carefully undertaken to obtain an environmentally sound outcome. The hardwood steps and bridge spans were all salvaged from a new powerline easement tree clearing activity. The decking for the 8 footbridges was obtained from an Australian firm, specialising in the use of mill waste from durable eucalypt species that may otherwise not be used.

The contractors used for the track construction were Kangarutha Nursery together with assistance from local volunteer crews.

For more information contact

Dave Dwyer
Namadgi National Park
ACT Parks & Conservation Service
Phone (02) 6207 2900



Above Hardwood Steps and water diversion bars sourced from a powerline clearing activity.

Left Kangarutha Nursery maintenance crew constructing steps along the new section of the Australian Alps Walking Track.



Recreational Planning Model

The Recreation and Tourism Working Group identified the need to establish a model that park managers could use to gather information and assist in making decisions about recreational settings and activities within the Australian Alps national parks.

After the initial pilot study completed in 1998 which developed a recreation planning model, Missing Link was commissioned to undertake the next stage to determine a set of potential sites where the model should be applied.

The objectives of this stage were to identify and map individual unit areas representing a class from the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS); to identify recreational activities and facilities for each area mapped with a ROS class; and to identify visitor management issues for each area mapped. The project also aimed to identify the areas with the greatest visitor management issues for potential application of a recreation planning model and to involve parks staff in the data collection and in doing so, increase their understanding of visitor management.

The results to date have now been analysed with the implementation phase to be commenced within the northern section of Kosciuszko (NSW) and Namadgi (ACT) national parks. This final phase of the project will refine and improve the decision making process regarding the implementation of the recreation planning model in these strategic areas.

For more information contact

Peter Jacobs
Mt Buffalo National Park
Parks Victoria
Phone (03) 5755 1466



The RTWG perusing the recreational opportunities from Little River Gorge in Victoria.

ALPINE ECOLOGY COURSE



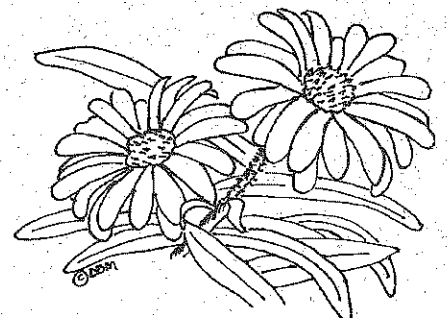
The highly acclaimed Alpine Ecology Course is on yet again...!

Six exhilarating days of stimulating field studies at the peak of the wildflower season begin on 7 January 2001 on the Bogong High Plains, Victoria. The Alpine Ecology Course is designed for Land Managers, Naturalists, Rangers, Educators and Conservationists, indeed anyone with an interest in the ecology of the mountains. This highly acclaimed course will provide an opportunity to learn about the plants, animals, landforms and soils that make up alpine ecosystems, and their significance for land use and conservation issues. With an emphasis on practical "on-ground" experience, most sessions are conducted in the field in small groups. Places are very limited, so register your place TODAY!

Applications close on
27 October 2000

Enquires:
Lesley Sayer
Phone (03) 9479 2190
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Warwick Papst
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Around the Agencies : Correspondents report...

NEW SOUTH WALES

The word from the Lyrebird...

Liz Wren, NSW NPWS

What a great start to the new century – a ski season which began weeks ahead of schedule and which delivered much we in Australia have come to hope for in our ski seasons. One cold front after another delivered light dry snow which just kept falling, smoothing over the hills and hollows and promising great backcountry skiing well into spring.

Despite the many days of snowy, blowy conditions there were remarkably few search and rescues. Area Managers Andrew Harrigan and Ranger Cameron Leary would like to think was the result of a Winter Backcountry Safety Campaign, which was developed in conjunction with the NSW Police and Fire Brigades. The public education campaign featured a brochure which was widely distributed throughout the snowfields, weather warning blizzard conditions on the Main Range, mannequins demonstrating appropriate conditions and the hire of emergency safety beacons.

As well as coping with the usual winter crowds, NPWS staff have managed a number of significant achievements.

Publications Officer Mike Young realised the completion of a two year project when his book *"The Aboriginal People of the Monaro"* was published by the NPWS in early June. A project which began as an attempt to update information on the first inhabitants of the Monaro and what is now Kosciuszko National Park, resulted in adding a significant chapter to the history of the Monaro. The book has been well received by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and Mike continues to receive inquiries and information about Aboriginal people in the Monaro / Snowy Mountains area.

A milestone of a different nature occurred with the sealing of the Alpine Way on July 31. In a project spanning decades, the Alpine Way has been transformed from a rough

construction track to a fully sealed Scenic Mountain drive. It capped off what was yet another busy summer of improvements to the road both at Thredbo as part of the reconstruction program following the landslide as well as major improvements to batters south of Khancoban.

In the south of the park, a new approach to wild dog control appears to be meeting with success. Snowy River Area Manager Pam O'Brien, Rangers, Field Officers and contract trappers have put in an enormous effort into minimising the effects of wild dog attacks on properties bordering the park. The program in the Paupong-Numbla areas is one of the states largest ground baiting programs to be undertaken.

Planning and preparations have been going full steam ahead for the NPWS as it prepares to receive a major addition to the reserve system. As part of the Southern Forest Agreement, more than 100 new national parks and nature reserves and additions to 80 existing reserves will be created in the Southern Directorate. To prepare for this challenge, staff have been up to their necks in maps, scoping out the land on foot, in four wheel drives and from the air and making every effort to get acquainted with the folks who will be our new neighbours.

VICTORIA

An update from south of the border...

Chris Rose, Chief Ranger,
Alpine National Park

This winter has been a great one for all lovers of winter snow sports with record seasons at most of Victoria's Alpine Resorts. Parks Victoria (PV) entered teams in two events this year - the Hoppit at Falls Creek and the Age Falls Ck Corporate Ski Races - both were successful events.

The coming summer works period is going to be busier than ever (despite the fact that the flood restoration program has finished) with an increased commitment to pest plants and animals, and face to face

interpretation. PV has again confirmed the Summer Ranger Program successfully trialed last year. This will mean another 5 or so positions across the Alps helping permanent staff out on a variety of jobs and undertaking visitor and interpretation programs.

Our commitment to environmental works will be stronger than ever this year with a further increase on last year's program. In the firing line are English and Cape Broom, as well as a number other key Alps invaders.

Parks Victoria's commitment to the Australian Alps Walking Track has been confirmed through the completion of a new bridge at Taylors Crossing on the Mitta Mitta River. The new bridge replaces the last one lost in the floods of '98, and has been designed to see out further floods.

On the staff front, long serving Alps Ranger Gill Anderson has a new job based out of the Bright Office. No longer a Ranger, Gill has won the new and very important position of Program Manager Assets and Visitor Services for the District.

The job will involve setting strategy and developing plans for management of some of our key assets, as well as developing and implementing visitor programs across the District. For those of you who know Peter Jenkins, he has sadly had to have a full knee reconstruction after a workplace accident... we wish him well in his recovery!

COMMONWEALTH

What's the buzz with Parks Australia

Paul Stevenson, AALC Secretary

The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act and Regulations came into force on 16 July 2000. Associated procedures are being defined relating to permits in protected areas; compliance and enforcement procedures; and environmental impact referrals.

The new Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and Regulations can be found on the web at <http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/index.html>.

Schedules 5 - 8 of the Regulations define Australian World Heritage management principles; principles for managing wetlands of international importance; Australian Biosphere reserve management principles; and Australian IUCN reserve management principles. The website also contains an interactive database covering all Australia for matters of national environmental significance, at <http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/db/interact.html>. You may wish to explore the database, as it relates to your region.

A new certified agreement came into force on 2 August 2000 defining conditions of employment for Environment Australia staff. Environment Australia staff continue to work on a more rigorous approach to measuring performance in park management.

Renovating the Environment Australia website continues. The website hosts the Alps site.

Lee Thomas, who is a Regional Vice-Chair of the World Commission on Protected Areas/IUCN, as well as the Convenor of the Australian Alps Liaison Committee, will be attending the World Conservation Congress in Amman, Jordan, in October. He will be presenting a new publication on the collective experience of practical park management across all agencies in Australia "Protected Area

Management: principles and practice". The book to be published by Oxford University Press early in 2001 has been part funded by Environment Australia and involved extensive work by former Alps personnel such as Graeme Worboys (formerly NSW NPWS) and David Phillips (Environment Australia).

ACT

The Gang-Gang gossip...

Peter Galvin,

Ag Western District Manager

Several changes have occurred within the ACTP&CS since the last newsletter and mostly relate to the previously mentioned "Future Directions" process which was implemented in early August. Although, hot off the press is the very recent announcement of a new permanent Manager for the ACTP&CS. The successful applicant for this position is Mr Tony Corrigan. As previously mention, Tony has been acting in this position since April. We wish Tony all the best in his new challenging role.

Arrangements now in place for the ACTP&CS through the implementation of "Future Directions" has resulted in a reduction of six districts to two larger districts and Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. Namadgi National Park and the Murrumbidgee River Corridor now comprise a larger district west of the Murrumbidgee, whereas Canberra Nature Park north and south and Googong comprise the other district east of the Murrumbidgee.

Two District Manager positions at the Senior Officer level have been created to manage and lead these new districts. These positions have been temporarily filled pending permanent recruitment, which will occur in October. A third District Manager position at the Senior Officer level for Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve was created some months ago. The successful applicant, Mr Rod Hillman, has recently commenced in this position.

The District Manager for the new West district will be located in the Namadgi National Park Visitor Centre at Tharwa and the new East District Manager will be located at the Mitchell depot. The new district arrangements come at an exciting time and present many challenges for all staff. Given the professionalism, diligence and aptitude of ACTP&CS staff I am confident these challenges can be met and overcome through a process satisfactory to everyone concerned.

Virginia Logan is currently on long service leave. Virginia has handed over may of her duties to Paul Higginbotham who has transferred from Canberra Nature Park. Paul is currently the Operations Manger for the Western District, a new position created under the restructure. Virginia's contribution to the ACT PCS over many years has been considerable.

We currently have an enthusiastic group of Green Corp workers who have undertaken work on walking trails, weeds, fences and other projects. Steve Welch is overseeing the group and giving them the benefit of his experience. Steve is also preparing for the next stage of the Boboyan Pine revegetation project.

As has been experienced elsewhere across the Alps, the snow season has been long with plenty of good snow to be had on the Brindabella's. Jeremy Watson has recently taken up the Bendora Ranger position with Angie Jenkins moving on, Jeremy has certainly experienced a baptism of fire in terms of visitor management with plenty of practise in the Bendora Ranger position, one he has taken up with great enthusiasm!

It's a busy time for the rest of us and we look forward to the complete implementation of Future Directions.

Contacts

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Australian Alps Web Page

www.australionalps.environment.gov.au

Gill Anderson 'hangs up' the Ranger patch...



Gill Anderson
clearing some snow
in the early days.

Share your copy of News from the Alps

If you think someone else might be interested in reading about news from the Alps, please pass it on to them or suggest they ask for their own copy by contacting the Program Coordinator.

Please tell us your stories

What makes your 'slice of heaven' in the Australian Alps so appealing, tell the world. We want articles up to 500 words, with pictures on any topic, be it current issues facing land managers, to interesting and humorous stories about your work in the Australian Alps.

A prize will be awarded for the most interesting article!

Send your article or short story to the Program Coordinator ASAP.

After 21 years of an illustrious life as a ranger, Gill Anderson from the Parks Victoria Bright Office has hung up her ranger boots to take up a new role as Alpine Park Planner with Assets and Visitor Services. Fortunately for the Alps Program, Gill will still maintain her current role as an active member of the Community Relations Working Group.

Gill's career commenced as a seasonal ranger in 1978/79 and was the first female ranger employed in the former Victorian National Parks Service. So, to the best of our knowledge Gill is the longest serving female ranger in the state of Victoria!

Gill started as a Park Assistant at Cape Schanck and moved to the Prom in 1981 as a relieving ranger. A couple of moves between Mt Buffalo and Wilsons Prom over the next few years, eventually saw Gill stay on at Buffalo as the Ranger Gd II. From the Coast to the Alps, and stints at Namadgi NP in the ACT and 12 months with the Queensland Dept of Environment and Heritage, Gill has seen and contributed a great deal to park management. Gill was Parks Victoria East's nominee for "Outstanding Visitor and Customer Service" at the recent Staff Awards Day.

No doubt things have changed over the years, and thankfully the notion that "the sheilas" can't do the same things as "the blokes" has been proven wrong!

Gill's memory of that attitude surfaced at her first ever interview for ranger permanency, when she was asked "How will you cope when working in the field (bush) and you need to go to the toilet?"... fortunately, Gill and others can laugh about this now.

Well done Gill and good luck with your new role.

Andy Nixon
Ranger In Charge
Warrandyte
Parks Victoria
with thanks to Bushy Tales

*People working
together for the
Australian Alps*

