

The Bushwalker

Newsletter of the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs (NSW) Inc
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Voting for the Environment

What's Best for Bushwalkers?

With March 25 just around the corner, we have a rare opportunity to decide which set of politicians would run NSW for at least the next four years. Conservation Officer **Andrew Cox** evaluates the parties and candidates and attempts to help bushwalkers consider what's the best deal for them.

Does Politics Matter?

Bushwalkers should be concerned about the effect their vote will have on their interests. The most contentious issue of relevance to these interests is outcomes for the natural environment. Unanimously, bushwalkers agree this should be protected and well managed. If, at the end of the day, the old growth forests are gone or our national park system has been thrown open to recreational 4WDers, horseriders or mining companies, then we as the voters are partly responsible.

There is no question that different political parties view the natural environment differently. Obviously, the implementation of these views will result in differing envi-

ronmental outcomes. Some policies will degrade the environment, others will protect or rehabilitate the natural environment. If the natural environment is important to us, then it is imperative to consider the implications of our vote.

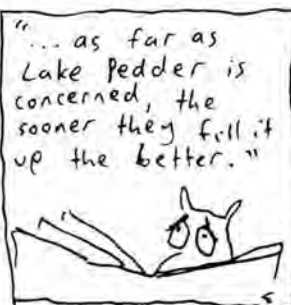
Evaluating the Major Parties

Some say, never trust a politician. But what else can you do as you cast your vote? The Greiner/Fahey Government has been in power since the start of 1988. It has had ample opportunity to display its environmental credentials. Labor, on the other hand, can only make promises. It must be remembered that sometimes it may be difficult to force a party to implement all their promises.

Are the Minor Parties and Independents Important?

While most media focus and the ma-

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The Issues

1. Blue Mountains

A area of obvious interest to a large proportion of bushwalkers and, due to the large area and constant pressures from incompatible interests, one where a strong and environmentally committed Government is needed to protect its natural values.

The results of an Environment Forum at Katoomba (22 February) that allowed the candidates in the Blue Mountains electorate to present their policies, will give a more thorough picture.

a. Warragamba Dam Raising

The Government continues to support the 23 metre raising of the dam, with the EIS expected to be released in April. The opposition supports dam safety and flood mitigation measures (which may include the 23 metre raising) and opposes the long term

storage of further water in the dam (which the Coalition will not comment on). Labor will also seriously review the dam raising proposal upon election.

b. Gardens of Stone National Park - declared in 1994, however more contentious areas and special areas such as Rocky Creek Canyon, were omitted. Labor and the Coalition support the present park (Labor previously opposed the park).

c. World Heritage Listing - both Coalition and Labor support moves to list the Blue Mountains area, but it's not known whether all the Blue Mountains bushland worthy of protection will be included as World Heritage.

d. National Park Plans of Management -

no Plan of Management has been prepared for either Blue Mountains or Wollemi National Parks. There has been a requirement to prepare a plan for all national parks "as soon as practicable" since 1974. Draft plans were exhibited at the start of the Coalition Government's first term. Labor have promised to implement plans early in their term.

e. Aircraft Noise - Largely a Federal issue (cf. Third Runway), but one where the State could take a more active role to prevent low, noisy commercial plane and helicopter flights over national parks and wilderness areas. The EPA have made limited efforts around residential areas. Labor supports regulation (not clear to what degree) of commercial joy flights to reduce noise levels in National Parks and wilderness areas.

2. National Park Declarations

Almost all National Park declarations from the Coalition Government have come in the last six months in two batches. As a result,

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John Ryan MLC (Liberal), Chairperson of the Coalition Backbench Environment Committee (on the right) visiting Rocky Creek. This canyon in Newnes State Forest needs the protection of a national park

The Issues

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we have 12 new National Parks and 2 new Nature Reserves. No further park declarations have been promised by the Coalition, while Labor have promised to declare 20 new national parks.

3. Forestry

Forestry has developed into a major issue in Federal politics thanks to an Environment Minister taking his job seriously and an unsatisfactory Resources Minister. Except for World Heritage and export matters, the NSW Government has the lead role in the forestry area. Current abysmal logging practices reflect the Coalition's position. Labor has

promised to protect all high conservation value old growth forests from logging. They will also declare 40,000 ha of State Forests in south east NSW in national parks. Further announcements are expected, however the goal of phasing out logging in high conservation and wilderness forests will require considerable pressure to force either party to achieve.

4. National Parks funding and management

The funding boost to the park service provided to NPWS in 1994 was long overdue and essential to restoring the level of resources to a starved and stressed organisation, however more funds in areas such as land acquisition, preparation and implementation of management plans, wilderness management, "off park" conservation and feral animal and plant control are required. Labor may increase funds further, but wait for the policy launch.

5. Bushfires

The anti-environment euphoria whipped up by elements of Government (esp. National Party members) following the January 1994 bushfires is indicative of the value placed by that part of Government on the environment. This political opportunism influenced government policy and legislation to give more power to bush fire fighting authorities. Neither party is known to support a move towards thorough community and environmentally based bush fire management practices.

6. Wilderness

The pathetic performance of the Government in firstly promising to declare seven areas (divided into 18 sections) from ten nominated wilderness areas, then declaring a fraction of this in six of the original areas, speaks for itself. Labor has promised to declare these ten identified wilderness areas in accordance with the Wilderness Act, however, they refuse to be tied down to specifics or boundaries. There are still further areas awaiting considering, and more that require investigation and protection.

The Minor Parties

Lower House

Each lower house electorate has its own candidates and issues, and cannot be covered here. Performance of the three unaligned independents, has shown them all to be beneficial to parliamentary process and protecting natural areas. All three independents have both supported and implemented major pieces of environmentally responsible legislation. Peter McDonald attempted to have passed legislation to declare national parks, and to institute reforms in water authorities. Clover Moore tried to force the declaration of Gardens of Stone National Park. John Hatton supported most environmentally positive legislation.

NSW Greens will stand candidates in some individual electorates. Refer below to their policies.

Upper House

With 42 members in the Legislative Council, and only 21 due for re-election, the contest for the minority parties will be intense. Last election, the Democrats and Call to Australia Party (CTA) picked up the last two seats, with the Green candidate missing out to CTA by a handful of votes.

Democrat candidate, Richard Jones, has actively assisted environment groups and Confederation, where possible. He has promised to implement resolutions from the 1994 Environment in Crisis Conference, the resolutions which covered a broad range of issues and received unanimous support from all environmental representatives. He has also helped the Kowmung Committee in its opposition to the Warragamba Dam raising.

Elaine Nile, Call to Australia candidate up for re-election, has a disappointing recording for environmental protection. Most tragic was their party's failure to support the passage of the South East Forests Bill which would have seen important forests protected and a compensation and retraining package implemented for timber workers.

The Greens have developed policies in close consultation with the environment movement. Their policies focus on environmental protection and sustainability. Amongst a broad range of policies, they support the declaration of all reserve system proposals, appropriate national park management (including preparation and implementation of plans of management) the declaration of wilderness identified by the NPWS under the Wilderness Act and strong forest protection policies.

The Bushwalker is the newsletter of the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs NSW Inc. It is published quarterly. The aim of the newsletter is to provide articles and information of interest to the members of clubs affiliated with the Confederation. Any opinions expressed by individual authors do not always represent the official views of the Confederation. Election comments in this issue by A Cox, authorised by D Noble, GPO Box 2090 Sydney 2001. Printed by Breakout, 391 Sussex St, Sydney.

President's Report

We were climbing a delightful gully at the end of a canyoning trip the other day. Amongst the bush and vines near the base of some low cliffs, the way was suddenly barred by a huge, old log - thicker than just about any living tree I have seen in the Blue Mountains region.

Botanists tell me it was probably a Blue Mountains Ash that took advantage of favourable conditions, nearly a thousand years ago. Today, for miles around, there is no tree approaching the size of our log. Why is this? Has something changed? What was our gully like 200 years ago - or 60,000 ago?

Perhaps our find was significant, perhaps not. At any rate, it caught me at a vulnerable moment. I was in the middle of reading a new book called *The Future Eaters*, by Tim Flannery (published by Reed Books). Dealing with the ecological history and future of Australasia - in a style the biological layman like me can follow - it is the most informative and thought-provoking work relevant to Australian conservation issues I have ever come across. The book should develop or challenge your beliefs about everything to do our Australian ecology and conservation.

When the Federation of Bushwalking Clubs got going in the 1930's, there were few other conservation bodies in existence. It strove to have natural areas preserved, and the primary motive had mainly to do with preserving the 'natural' and recreational value of areas favoured by walkers.

Although these things will continue to be a priority for bushwalkers, now the debate is complicated by a myriad of deeper issues. Greenhouse, native forest exploitation, fire management, wilderness management (what is wilderness?), eco tourism, pollution, endangered species, the eating of native animals, and - perhaps most importantly - population growth, are relevant not only to a bushwalker's way of life but to the future of Australia.

As individuals who, I hope, are generally more in touch with the bush than most Australians, it behoves us all not only to take an intelligent interest in such matters, but to take personal action to further the cause of ecological sustainability.

To what degree, if any, should Confederation step beyond the basic role of protecting areas for bushwalking? This is an important question for our strategic planning process (and if you haven't heard about that, ask your club's committee).

Andy Macqueen

Walking On The Net

The Australian Bushwalking News Group and World Wide Web site
- a report by Rob Hynes (SUBW)

For all bushwalkers who prefer to do their walking by computer, here is the thing for you. If you have access to Internet's UseNet news there is a newsgroup called *aus.bushwalking* which has been going a few years now. Recent topics of discussion over the last few months include reports of break-ins at Claustal and Kanangra etc; the discovery of the Wollemi Pine; gear reviews, etc, etc. Our Confederation Tracks and Access Officer, Michael Maack, has used this newsgroup to disseminate relevant tracks and access information.

Another related newsgroup is *aus.snow* which becomes, not surprisingly, more active during winter months and is a useful guide to snow conditions for cross-country skiing. At least it's probably more accurate than the resort information.

An Australian Bushwalking World Wide Web site has been set up by Danny Yee at the University of Sydney and contains archives of the *aus.bushwalking* newsgroup, club information, equipment

reviews, trip reports and a US Backcountry page. It also gives access to the Bureau of Meteorology's Gopher Site which gives daily weather forecasts (which is useful when planning ski trips). The URL for the Bushwalking page is:

<http://www.anatomy.su.oz.au/danny/bushwalking/index.html>

Walk Against Want - March 26th

Why not participate in this worthwhile activity in support of Community Aid Abroad. Over 100 starting locations. Register by phoning (02) 264 1399 or toll free 1800 034 034. State Transit and City Rail provide free transport to the Domain for the Sydney walk

Get Connected

Below is a copy of the text placed by Michael (Ted) Maack on the Internet *aus.bushwalking* news area :

The Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs NSW has now joined the Internet and switched into the future of mass communications using a computer and modem. For clubs to keep informed of the latest issues or have their say on Bushwalking issues and other Rucksack sports please monitor the *aus.bushwalking* group. Postings to this newsgroup by clubs will be monitored closely and the Confederation officers will try to reply quickly. It is a national, even international, newsgroup and is very informative about a number of issues from discussions regarding the best type of pack to the current state of the Australian Bushwalking Idiom.

Michael Maack
Tracks and Access Officer
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Voting For The Environment

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majority of the public's support is for the major parties (Liberal, Labor and the Nationals), it has been the minor parties and the independents that have had an influential role in matters such as the environment. It has been many years since a Government has had an absolute majority in its own right. As a result, the government party has had to negotiate legislation through parliament and consult more widely to ensure it has a broader range of support. While some argue that this ties the hands of Government, allowing minor parties and individuals to have an unrepresentative role, this is not borne out in practice.

The smaller parties and independents have not abused their positions. Government has still been able to pass legislation which reflects its policies, but this legislation has often addressed environmental concerns raised by the Independents and Democrats.

Members of the minor parties and independents are also able to present their views in debate, by asking questions of other members, participate in parliamentary committees and introduce their own bills.

Stay Tuned for More

Only during the last few weeks of the election campaign will the major parties release their detailed environment policies.

Editorial

A lot of this issue deals with technology and the bush. Bushwalkers are now "surfing" the Internet. They are discussing global positioning satellite navigation systems (S&R - Wilderness Rescue has 2 such devices) and the pros and cons of carrying portable phones on walks. In other ways technology has intruded. Some of the discussion on the bushwalking bulletin board on the net relates to comments about gear. For example, there have been recent technical comparisons of fabrics such as GoreTex and Reflex and their place in the bush. Despite the intrusion of all this technology (and I'm sure we've seen nothing yet!) it is still possible to go bushwalking without it. Bushwalking boomed in the great depression when money for more expensive forms of recreation was scarce. With careful packing and the benefit of experience many bushwalkers have perfected super light weight walking. They are true minimalists. Light sleeping bags, frameless packs, an old jumper, a nylon tent fly and a few odds and end of food are all they carry. Enencumbered by the weight of cellular phones, video cameras, portable TV's, radios and GPS devices they rely on the old map and compass to navigate and don't worry too much about what the weather will do. Perhaps this type of walker even has a more enjoyable time in the bush.

This issue has been prepared with many of the regular contributors on holidays. Thanks to Andy Macqueen and Andrew Cox for their major articles. As always we would like to get more contributions (articles, photos, maps, cartoons, reviews, trip reports, favourite walks or just an article about your club) from more clubs. Please get writing and send articles to the address on page 11. Note that articles can now be Emailed to the editor. Also a special thanks to Robin Workman of SPAN for her excellent job doing the layout for the last issue.

To finish off. This newsletter is not possible without the support of contributors as well as the production team. Another important group of people are the advertisers. They play a large part in meeting the cost of printing and distribution of this newsletter. One steady supporter over the years and a good friend to bushwalkers have been Eastwood Camping Centre. Congratulations to them for 25 years of support to bushwalkers and campers and for being supporters of this newsletter.

David Noble, Editor
For the Newsletter Committee.

Bits and Pieces

Compiled by David Noble

The break in of cars reported at Kanangra walls and Mt Tomah has been continuing. On a weekend in August last year, members of the Sydney Bushwalkers returned from a trip to Kanangra Walls to find their cars had been broken into and any items of value stolen. One member, Morag Ryder had written to the club musing on the possibility of organising minders for cars parked during walks. In the logbook on Mt Tomah at the start of the Claustral Canyon track are references to continual car thefts. One local person has added the annotation for visitors not to blame the locals - apparently they are aware of the problem and are keeping an eye on parked cars when they can. A few years ago at the Scotts Peak Dam parking area in South West Tasmania the same problem occurred. The police hid in the bushes and within a short time they had apprehended the people responsible.

New Zealand has a massive new national park in the North West of the South Island. Called Kaurangi N.P. it is now the second largest in NZ after Fiordland. Previously much of the area was forest park. The mountains of the area not being as high as those further south mean that it contains some of the finest tramping (NZ for bushwalking) country in NZ.

Congratulation to the other Dave Noble, a bushwalker based at Blackheath and no relation to the editor for his discovery of the

Wollemi Pine in the Northern Blue Mountains. Like the editor, this other Dave Noble and a group of his friends had been exploring many of the creeks and gorges of the area during the past

few years looking for canyons. The importance of his discovery can be shown by the amount of attention it has recieved in the world's media (eg a 6 page article in the Canadian edition of Time Magazine I'm told that mentions amongst other things that the stand of trees is so important that it is being constantly guarded by rangers and a pack of alsatians!). The Northern Blue Mountains is the largest wilderness remaining in NSW and we are left to wonder what other treasures it contains. Hopefully, we can expect the state government to finally get around to gazetting a management plan for this park.

Whilst on things botanical. A report of a walk in the newsletter of the Narrabri Bushwalking Club by Kay Durham mentions that on a walk in the Oaky Creek area of Kapitar N.P. they happened to come across some giant stinging trees and some brush bloodwood both found supposedly only in coastal or subtropical rainforests. Apparently, University of New England botanists were quite excited by the discovery.

In the last issue was a mention that downhill skiing was not covered by Confederations insurance policy (only cross country skiing is). Maurice Smith reported at a recent Confed meeting that likewise indoor gym climbing is not covered.

Reading a travel supplement of a national newspaper recently I came accross that oxymoron "Wilderness Lodge" again. As Bob Brown has pointed out in recent speeches - if you have a lodge in a wilderness area then it is no longer wilderness by all accepted defintions of wilderness.

Wilderness Rescue (formerly S&R) are after somebody to work on a project to compile a history of S&R (It will be 50 years old next year). So far some research has been done by Andy Macqueen and Gordon Lee. A small book should be the outcome. If interested in helping contact either John Tonitto (02) 622 0049 or Keith Maxwell (02) 528 6174.

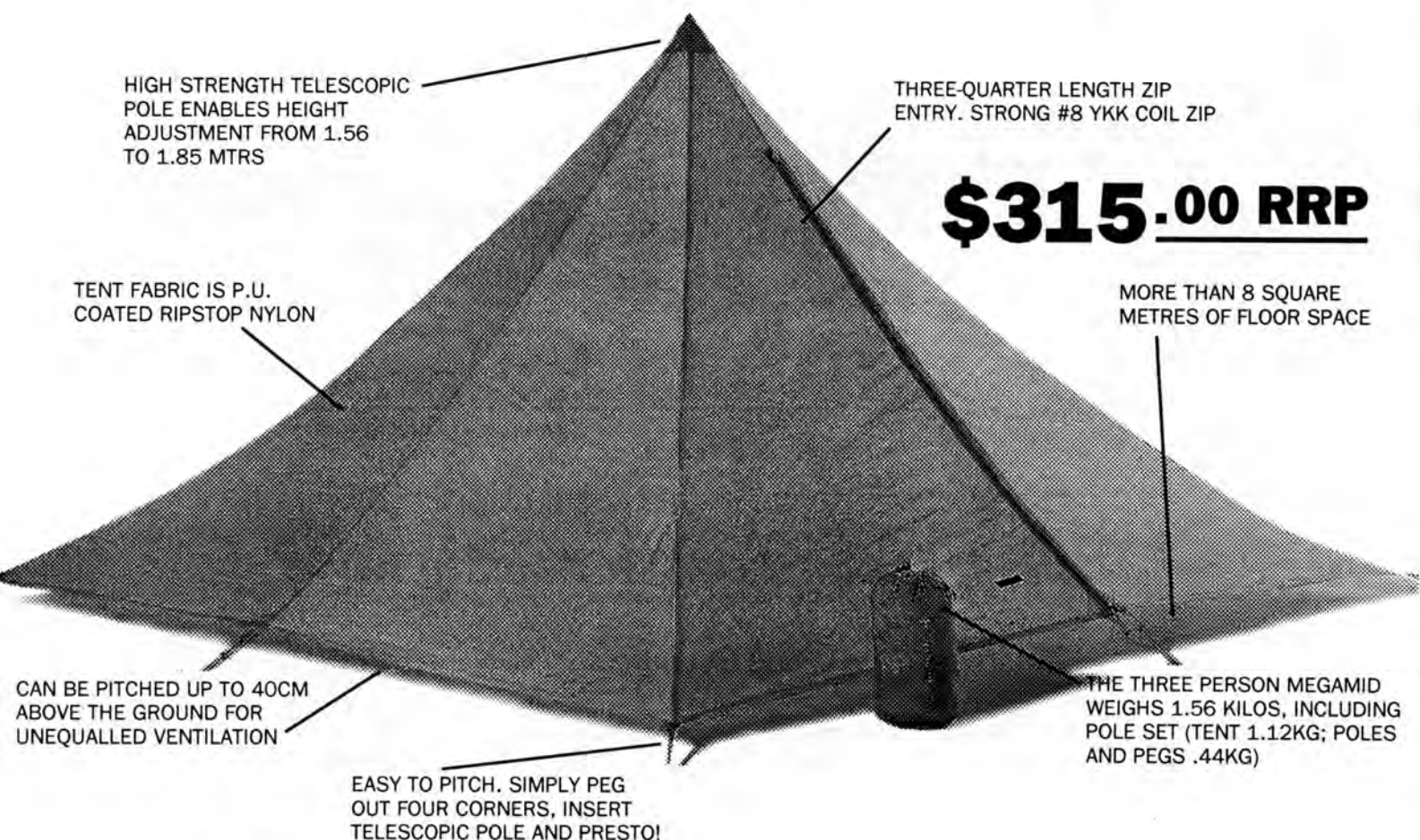
"the stand of trees is so important that it is being constantly guarded by rangers and a pack of alsatians!"

From the October Sydney Bushwalker magazine is a report of a club daywalk from Kanangra to Katoomba. The author, David Trinder, comments - "Instead of carrying

emergency gear for a breakdown, mobile phones were carried by the walkers and by Tony Holgate (a member of the support group - ed) Contact was actually made between Yellow Dog and Narrow Neck. It is good to see this equipment being used"

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Paddy Pallin

A Savage Peak

An Analysis Of The Mt Savage Logbook

by David Noble (SUBW).

Mt Savage is one of the major peaks of the Colo part of Wollemi National Park. It is flanked by the steep cliffs of the Colo Gorge and also has a protective layer of scrub on all sides. So it has a reputation as being a peak worthy of a visit. There are no worthwhile views from its summit but nearby are excellent views of the Colo. About 20 years ago a small logbook was placed on the summit in a metal icecream tin. On a trip to the peak during October 1993, Rob Hynes (SUBW) and myself found this old logbook had been partly eaten by ants and the tin having rusted partly away. It would obviously not last too much longer so I decided to carry it out. Below are a list of all the entries in the book as best as I can decipher them. Some entries are very faint and some have decayed (or been eaten by the ants!).

5 May 1973 (date difficult to read) - The book was placed by a party from the National Parks Association (NPA). The top part of their entry is impossible to read but they probably went to the peak from the Grassy Range fire trail and Canoe Creek, climbed Buck Pass 17 (Colo Sketch map compiled by Bob Buck and Geoff Daley for the NPA), went to Mt Savage and then went back to the Colo via Tambo Creek. They would have returned to the fire trail via pass 19. The party consisted of (?) Foley, Tim Herborn, Bob Buck, Brian Walker, Ted Daniels, Barry Davis (?), Dennis Danaher.

21 May 1976 - an SUBW party of Chris and Bronwynne Cosgrove visited the peak. They too started from the Grassy Range trail and visited Tambo Creek on their way back. They also went down the Colo to Angorawa Creek and then headed out to the Putty Road.

30 July 1977 - A party of three from the Kameruka Bushwalking Club (KBC) - David Noble (also SUBW), Bob Sault (also SUBW) and Hugh Paterson (YMCA Ramblers) repeated the route followed by the NPA party.

7 October 1977 - Tom Williams from the

Springwood Bushwalking Club (SBC) and David Noble (SUBW) visited the peak as part of their northern three peaks trip. They left the Putty Road and walked to the Colo via the Grassy Range trail and climbed pass 17. They then climbed Mt Savage and crossed Tambo Creek and the three branches of Main Ck before reaching Mt Mistake, their second peak. They then followed an un-named creek to the Wollangambe River just before its junction with the Colo. They then climbed the Island (peak 3) and returned to the Putty Road.

24 April 1978 - Tim Hager, Margaret Dinan, Bob Burton and Vince Murtagh from the Catholic Bushwalking Club (CBC) were the next party. They went from the Grassy Range to the Colo and then went to Pinchgut Ck, Mt Barakee, Mt Savage, Tambo Ck, Colo R, Parr West and then the Island.

22 December 1980 - Milton Sams and Matthew Moore traversed to the peak from Lithgow, via Deep Pass, Nayook Ck, Mt Cameron and Mt Tambo. Comments include "no water thanks to the drought" and "if anyone ever tells you that long pants are an optional extra on a sojourn in the Blue Mtns then you could safely tell him/her to jam his/her fully extended Swiss army knife into whatever orifice it might fit. I'm dreaming of Levis."

8 May 1983 - R MacKillop and M Wilson (Macquarie Mountaineering Soc. and Three Peaks Outdoor Soc). They started from the Putty Road, went along the Drip Rock trail towards the Island, up Main (?) Ck to Baldy Grass Hill, Pommel Hill, Tambo Limb, down Bull Ring Ck and up Annie Rowan Ck, then along part of Tambo Ck, Mt

"if anyone ever tells you that long pants are an optional extra on a sojourn in the Blue Mtns then you could safely tell him/her to jam his/her fully extended Swiss army knife into whatever orifice it might fit"

Barakee, Pinchgut Ck, Mt Savage, Colo R, Little Pass (pass 18) and then back to Drip Rock. This was an 8 day trip.

May 1983 (day obliterated) - Ian Hickson

and Anne Bromfield from Canberra Bushwalking Club visited Mt Savage - probably a day or two later than the party above. They record - "Met the above two who somewhat spoil our "wilderness experience". Its getting like bloody Pit Street round here". They were on a ten day trip. Their route - Hollow Rock (Culoul Range), pass 7, pass near pass 17, Mt Savage, Camp Ck, Wolgan R, Capertee R, Gaspers Ck, Green Hill, Girribung Ck, Munee Ck, Wollemi Ck and back onto the Culoul Range via pass 1.

2 June 1984 - An SUBW party of David Noble, Steve (Gus) Henzel and Rob Jung (ex MUMC) repeated the now standard trip to Mt Savage via Canoe Ck and pass 17 and back via Tambo Ck and pass 19.

6 October 1985 - Dave McIntosh and Bob Noss went to Canoe Ck, then down the Colo and up Tambo Ck, climbed out to Mt Savage and then dropped into Pinchgut Ck. They report the undergrowth as being burnt.

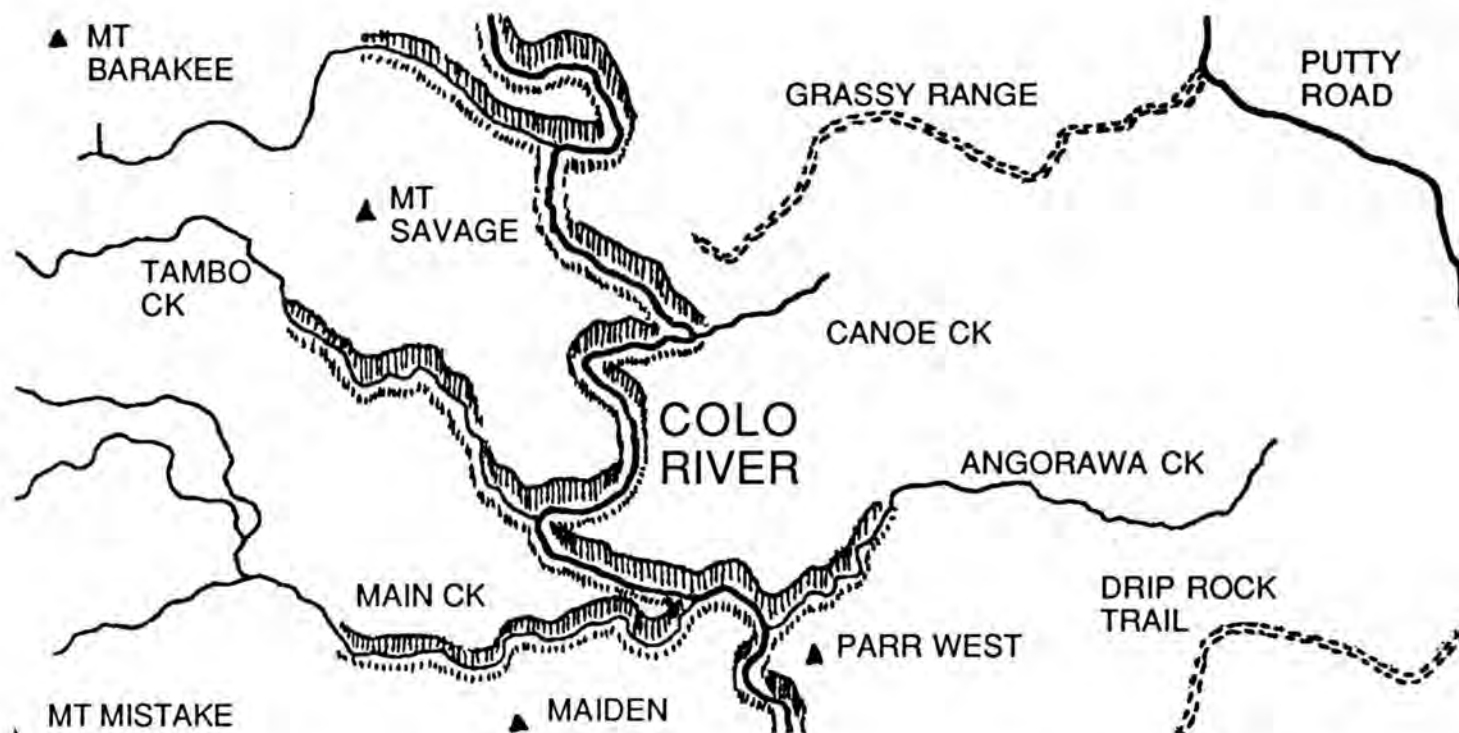
7 October 1985 - the day after the previous party, Graeme G Hall visited Mt Savage as part of a week long solo walk. His route - Grassy Hill, Pinchgut Ck, Mt Savage, Tambo Ck, Main Ck, Mt Mistake, Wollangambe Colo Junction, Island, Parr West, Angorawa Ck, Grassy Hill. He reports meeting the above two in Pinchgut Ck.

5 April 1986 - An SBW party of David McIntosh, Bob King and Fazeley Read visited the peak. No details of their route are given.

30 November 1986 - Ian Reed and Bryan Beresford-Smith reported "great ridge walking around here, good to verify that there is no need for long pants". No route details.

27 September 1993 - An SUBW party of David Noble and Rob Hynes visit the peak as part of a 6 day Colo to Bell trip. They used pass 17 from the Colo and crossed Tambo Ck high up to climb Limit Hill and then crossed Nayook Ck and then to the Valley of the Swamps. They then went to Bungleboori Ck and along the Waratah Range before roadbashing to Lithgow.

This was the last entry in the book. They left a scrap of paper in the remains of the tin. They both visited the peak again on 29 October 1994. This was an SUBW trip and they were joined by Bob Sault, Doug Bock,



Ashley Burke and Sally Partridge. No other parties had recorded a visit in the interim.

Summary

Year	Parties	People
1973	1	7
1974	0	0
1975	0	0
1976	1	2
1977	2	5
1978	1	4
1979	0	0
1980	1	2
1981	0	0
1982	0	0
1983	2	4
1984	1	3
1985	2	3
1986	2	5
1987	0	0
1988	0	0
1989	0	0
1990	0	0
1991	0	0
1992	0	0
1993	1	2
1994	1	6

In 22 years, the peak has been visited by 14 parties or 34 individual bushwalkers.

It should be noted that not all bushwalkers record their visit in logbooks. Some don't make an entry for philosophical reasons. Also the Mt Savage book was not located on the actual highest point of the peak but rather a short way down (in a slightly more open place) on the ridge leading to pass 17. The tin was to be found within a rock cairn. So some walkers may not have realized a book was there.

Pass 17 is the quickest way to reach the peak from the Putty Road side. This pass has one tricky exposed move that may put off some walkers. All around the peak is to be found thick tangled and prickly scrub. Some walkers may prefer leather gloves and gaiters or even long pants. Tambo Creek is

very beautiful featuring long sections of open slabs and is highly recommended. Pass 19 is aptly described by Bob Buck in the notes on his map - "steep ridge, with a 15 ft difficult section of rockwork - 60 ft rope needed". Views from this pass and the ridge back to Grassy range are excellent.

Cronulla Sludge Dumped in Newnes Forest

by Andrew Cox

Confederation and National Park Association (NPA) Central West Branch called on Sydney Water (ex. Water Board) and NSW State Forests to end the dumping of sewerage sludge from Cronulla in pine plantations within Newnes State Forest.

The operation to dump 600 tonnes of sewerage sludge, trucked from Cronulla Sewerage Treatment Plant, began on 16 January 1995 and is due to end in March. Two forest coups at Cockatoo Hill will initially be treated, however it seems likely larger areas on the plateau will be used in the future.

Both Confederation and NPA are concerned by the location of the application, the dangerous components of the sludge and the unsuitability of the sandy soils in the area.

Located on the environmentally sensitive Newnes Plateau, the dumping site is within the headwaters of pristine Deanes

Creek and Bungleboori Creek which run into the Wollemi wilderness and Blue Mountains National Park. Endangered plants also grow in creeks downstream from the site.

Heavy levels of nutrients, heavy metals, bacteria and viruses will be placed on the site. Approximately 30 tonnes of Zinc and 200g of Mercury per hectare will be applied. High levels of Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Calcium, Copper, Magnesium and Lead are also expected.

Due to the sandy soils in the forest, these contaminants are likely to leach into local waterways and find their way into the water table. Ideal sites contain clay based soils which will bind the nutrients and contaminants.

NPA, while not opposed to the use of sewerage sludge, urges for more suitable sites to be found. The study that was conducted prior to the dumping gave poor consideration of the soils in the area or the effects on the adjacent national parks.

Wanking With Wilderness Wizardry

by Andy Macqueen

Ted has chucked the Silva compass away. Instead, he's got the latest bit of technology.

It's called the DigiWild. Available from gear shops, it's a small solar-powered navigation and communication device, linked to the information superhighway via the satellite network.

On the DigiWild's screen, Ted can call up a complete contour map. This can be at any scale, from a map of Australia, zooming right down to the area one hundred metres around him. His precise location is shown on the map.

By pinpointing his destination, Ted's various route options are automatically shown, as is his estimated time of arrival by each route. And because of the automatic orientation feature of the DigiWild, it is a simple matter to follow the route of his choice.

If he doesn't want to hold the DigiWild, he can put it in his pack, where it bleats out verbal instructions: "Turn right past the next outcrop ... if you keep going this way you'll fall over a 79 metre cliff in exactly 25 metres ... Faster! Faster! ... this is no time for a rest ..."

The DigiWild also incorporates a video-telephone. On dialling up the girlfriend, Ted can impress her with real-time views of himself, even in the bottom of the canyon. In the event that he has an accident and is unable phone, the emergency locator beacon is automatically activated.

There are many other features. For instance, the precise location of every person in the region is indicated, so you can select a campsite with other people, or away from everybody, according to preference. (Unfortunately for Ted, the technology to identify unattached female walkers is a few years away.)

As far as Ted is concerned, the DigiWild is indispensable, as is all the other high-tech gadgetry he carries. He can't understand the attitude of his bushwalking friend, Bruce.

Like Ted, Bruce has thrown away the Silva compass and maps. But he hasn't replaced them with anything!

A compass is useless he says - it interferes with his innate sense of direction. Contrary to NPWS laws, Bruce carries no communication device, and has no rescue insurance. In fact, he has rejected all innovations designed to make us perfectly safe and comfortable in the bush.

Bruce's only concession to technology is the large plastic bag which serves as his emergency shelter - it was the wrapping on a new mattress his wife bought for the home. (In contrast, Ted uses an air-conditioned two-storey MIB-preferred tent, similar to

those used by most of us these days.)

* * *

Where are we going in the wilderness? Are you a Ted, or a Bruce? Most of us are rapidly becoming Teds.

The first bushwalkers had no high-tech gear and definitely no electronic communications. When they got into trouble, help was sometimes days away. Today, we have fancy packs, tents, clothes and foods; we have contour-maps, altimeters, GPS units, cellular phones, radios and emergency locator beacons. And a helicopter is never more than a few hours away.

In a few years most of us will be using DigiWilds - or whatever. Even if we don't like the idea, we will probably be forced into it by media-influenced governments.

Dunphy wrote sixty years ago: 'No matter what he programs, the experienced adventurer in the wilderness knows before he starts out, that the unexpected will happen, and that he will have to cope with it.' Isn't this what it's all about? Whatever happened to the idea of self-reliance in the bush?

And whatever happened to the peace to be found on top of a mountain or under a gum tree, appreciating the bush on its own terms?

If we can call Mum at the first sign things are getting tough; if there is no uncertainty in navigation; if rescue is only an hour away; if the sighs of the casuarinas are drowned out by the footy or the phone ... where is the challenge and where is the peace?

Do I hear you suggest that mobile

phones and satellite navigators could be carried at the bottom of the pack, for emergencies only? Garbage! What is an emergency? Is it an emergency if you forgot to feed the cat? Let's face it, we'll be reaching for the bottom of the pack every five minutes. Soon, the whole notion of 'emergency use only' will be forgotten. The next generation of bushwalkers will have a marvellous time, navigating about the wild with absolute certainty and safety as they chat to their friends back home. Dial-a-Pizza is no doubt planning its helicopter arm already.

Even if you have the conviction and courage to cast aside all the technological trappings, you will forever be bumping into people with their DigiWilds. You'll just never get away from it all.

There is a solution. I propose that all techno-freaks go wilderness walking in a virtual reality machine. That way they get to experience the wild with absolutely no risk. And the wilderness will be untouched - the ultimate in Minimal Impact Bushwalking. (Of course, the four-wheel-drive brigade could have their own virtual reality machine, too!)

For those who can't afford such a machine, there would be cheaper alternatives. To experience Tasmania for instance, they could just stand for a week in a bath full of mud under a cold shower, surrounded by prickly pot-plants, electric fans and Wilderness Society posters.

With everyone else in a virtual reality machine, you and I will have the bush to ourselves - without a DigiWild of course.

Get back to basics: ban electronic aids!

Wilderness Rescue Group Training Weekend

April 1 - 2, 1995

Camp Coutts Scout Camp
Princess Highway, Waterfall

The aim will be to train as many bushwalkers as possible for land search and rescue operations and to ensure that bushwalkers have the knowledge to handle emergency situations in the field. Aspects covered will include -

- Radio operation
- First aid
- The rules of Crime Scene Prevention
- Basic survival techniques
- Visual Tracking
- The rules of helicopter safety

Come equipped to camp overnight

close to your car (no bunkhouse accommodation available this year). Long trousers are required for the helicopter training. Members may arrive on the Friday night after 6 pm. The official start will be 0830 on Saturday and events will finish at 1600 (that's 4pm for non-military types) on the Sunday.

To get there from Sydney drive to Waterfall on the Princess Highway and then continue on the Highway - not the tollway. Turn right at the sign pointing back towards Sydney then look out for a left turn to Camp Coutts. If coming from Wollongong - don't take the tollway. Look for the turnoff to Camp Coutts to the left just before you merge with the Tollway traffic at Waterfall.

Mobile Phones in the Bush - The Continuing Story

Two issues back in Volume 20 No 1 we reported on the feelings of two bushwalkers about the use of mobile phones in the bush. It is reported elsewhere in this issue (see Bits & Pieces) that some Sydney Bush Walker members used mobile phones to communicate with a backup group whilst completing a long daywalk. Here are some more thoughts that editor David Noble has collected from a few of the bushwalking club magazines.

In the August 94 SBW magazine the editor comments:

"One thing that has become rather obvious since we started talking about mobile phones is that more and more people are getting them and that, like it or not, we'll just have to live with them."

"There is already sufficient evidence of their intrusiveness to the cause concern to many club members that they may become a disturbance on Club walks."

"At the last committee meeting it was decided that it is probably time for a few rules controlling the use of mobiles on walks. A code of conduct if you like, that will give us access to the advantages of mobiles and yet minimise their intrusion. To get this going a small subcommittee was formed..."

Meanwhile in the Summer 94/95 edition of the Illawarra Rambler, Nuri Chorvat, in an article, has detailed the pros and cons of mobile phones vs portable UHF

radios in the bush. A useful list of the channels monitored by emergency services is presented. The author starts by saying

"With the increasing danger of being caught in a bushfire, someone suffering a heart attack or being injured and requiring an emergency medical treatment we need to consider how a good communication system may ..."

This doesn't sound like a very good advertisement for that club if these dangers are all "increasing". Maybe a lot of their members should go along to the S&R training weekend (see page 11) with its emphasis on self rescue and first aid.

The author suggests that as well as for summoning assistance in the event of an emergency, radios can be used for

- communicating between vehicles on the way to the walk

- having one radio at the back and another at the front of a large group

- Keeping in communication when routefinding when the party may split up to check out different possible ways.

One thing Nuri suggests is that two radios should be carried in case the battery in one fails and to allow within group communication.

I can remember being on a walk circa 1975 on which the leader was worried about one particular walker being on the trip. He had a reputation for becoming lost easily. The leader thought it wise to carry a small set of portable "walky talky" type radios. Sure enough, just before dark on the first day, that particular party member seemed to vanish in thin air despite walking in the middle of the group. On this occasion the radios did prove very useful in the ensuing search.

Another related issue is the carrying of small receiver only radios that allow individuals in the bush to listen to important news flashes and weather reports. Some take it further and listen to the cricket or the 2BL quiz in the evenings (with a portable phone they could actually take part!). One walker I walk with objects so violently to such devices being carried on walks that he constructed a special radio jammer that he now carries.

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Cooee! YHA can stretch your club's budget further! Group membership costs just \$24 and gives your club access to over 140 hostels throughout Australia. All YHAs offer comfortable, affordable accommodation, a social, friendly atmosphere and a dry roof over your head! Fully equipped kitchens mean you can leave your camp oven at home and save even more by cooking your own meals. Larger groups can be catered for at a low YHA price.

Why not get your club together and check out the National Parks accessible from the following YHA's:

- ★ Pittwater - Ku-ring-gai Chase NP
- ★ Girvan - Myall Lakes NP
- ★ Garie Beach - Royal NP
- ★ Scone - Barrington Tops NP
- ★ Bundanoon - Moreton NP

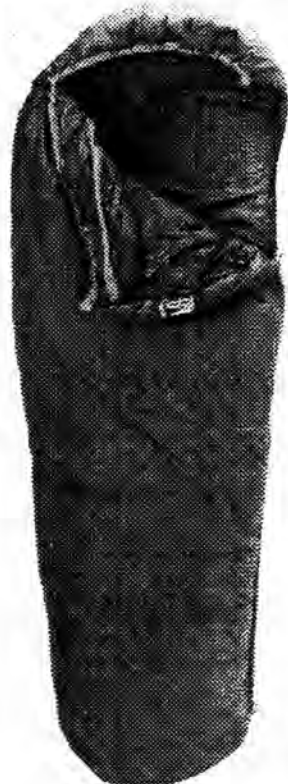


- ★ Merimbula - Ben Boyd NP
- ★ Tenterfield - Bald Rock NP
- ★ Thredbo - Kosciuszko NP
- ★ Armidale - New England NP
- ★ Katoomba - Blue Mountains NP



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Conservation News

by Andrew Cox, Conservation officer

NSW Election Environment Conference

On Saturday, March 11, the Nature Conservation Council of NSW will host a special conference to review the environmental performance and promises of the parties and candidates contesting the State Election.

After considering the results of a comprehensive questionnaire and listening to and questioning representatives of the political parties/candidates, the conference will formulate a response.

Any participant of an active environment group (including Confederation and approved bushwalking clubs) can attend. Contact NCC on (02) 241 2052, fax (02) 247 5945 or write to NSW Env. Conf., 39 George St, The Rocks 2000.

Royal Plan of Mismanagement

Submissions to the Royal National and Heathcote National Park Plan of Management closed on 20 February despite a request for an extension of time from Confederation. Confederation is concerned over

the lack of information in the plan and the shift of policy to give major emphasis to preserving cultural heritage in the park.

Confederation and its member groups are strongly opposed to private huts in the park, the removal of which has been made more difficult recently due to past Government delay in removing huts on the death of the original owner/lessee, the age of many of the huts (now legally qualifying as heritage items) and the publishing of an expensive report praising their historical values.

Requests for a site visit or supplementary information to the plan were ignored by the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Hear the Forests at your Next Meeting

Bushwalking clubs, or any other group - now is an urgent time to hear about what's happening in the forests and other wilderness areas.

A newly prepared slide show compiled by the Wilderness Society education group takes a close look at various wilderness areas in Australia and the impacts human activities are having on these areas.

To arrange for a 45 min to 1 hour slide

presentation at your club, contact Margaret, Sacha or Paul on (02) 267 7929.

Walk for Biodiversity - Along the Kowmung

The Blue Mountains Rare and Endangered Species Group is organising an expedition along the entire length of the Kowmung River over the Easter break to survey the area's plants and animals.

No detailed study of this magnitude has been completed. With parts of the Kowmung threatened by the Warragamba Dam raising and outbreaks of feral animals, the survey is timely.

Join either the entire walk or participate in a section. The walk begins on Good Friday, 14 April and ends eleven days later on Anzac Day. Participants can assist experts with rare plant surveys and animal studies (vertebrate and invertebrate). The walk will provide valuable biodiversity information to the National Parks and Wildlife Service (a walk supporter) and also aims to raise funds for the group's research programs.

For further information or to register, contact Ben Correy (BMRESG) on (063) 55 2386, Wyn Jones (NPWS) on (047) 87 8877 or write to Blue Mountains Rare and Endangered Species Group, PO Box 20, Blackheath NSW 2785.

Book Reviews

Barrington Tops - A Vision Splendid - by Dulcie Hartley RRP \$15. Available from the author, at 46 Turnbull St, Fennell Bay. 2283 - add \$5 for postage.

You may have been walling in the "Tops" or have heard of the remote alpine plateau, which rises to 1500m above the Hunter valley. You may know of its primeval beech forests, snowgums, waterfalls and of its deep snow in winter but what do you know of its diverse and interesting history?

Dulcie has put together a wealth of information in a well researched book covering many aspects of this area but particularly on its history since the first white men ventured up its steep slopes.

The impetus for the work was a collection of photographs taken between 1915 and 1925 by R J E Marceau a schoolteacher, photographer, adventurer and conservationist.

Although originally intended that they be published as part of a tourist brochure promoting the Tops these photographs now form an integral part of this book.

The wilderness experience or simply to know what was "up there" has drawn adventurers to the tops for over 100 years. Beginning with the earliest known expeditions into the area it covers such diverse activities as bushwalking, hut construction, gold mining, skiing, horse riding, cattle grazing, caving and scientific expeditions.

Over many years great plans have been laid to make it the health resort of the

Hunter, the Kosciusko or Katoomba of Newcastle but fortunately it remains, by and large, as it always has been - a wilderness area. Conservation of the area has been a burning issue for most of its history and is no less so in the present day. All this makes for a very readable book which should find its way onto many of our shelves.

Arthur Radford. Newcastle Ramblers.

Wilderness - The Future - Edited by Will Barton. Published by Envirobook (June, 1994). Available from Tower Books (02 975 5566) and Envirobook (02 247 6036) as well as at environmental bookshops. \$24.95, 294 pages.

This book is the proceedings of the Fourth National Wilderness Conference, held in October, 1993. It consists of four parts: Identifying and Reserving Wilderness, Guarding the Future of Wilderness, The Enduring Values of Wilderness and Wilderness Management.

As bushwalkers, we experience first-hand the wilderness of Australia. We take little convincing of the need to save these areas for the future. However, public decision-making is influenced largely by politicians' perceptions of the majority view. We need to be able to convince others of the value of wilderness, and to do that we need factual and background information to support our arguments. This book provides that in a way that is surprisingly easy to read.

The authors of the papers take various approaches in their presentation. Some are essentially factual, others emotive, while many are discussions of current wilderness issues. The fact that the book is collection of conference papers naturally leads to some

lack of cohesiveness. However, most important subjects have been treated fairly comprehensively. Several of the key issues are covered particularly well: the implications of Native Title claims on Wilderness, details of the legislation covering wilderness, fire management in wilderness areas and the National Red Index for Wilderness. The references to most of the papers are comprehensive and will be useful for following up many issues.

Wilderness - The Future - would make excellent reading for anyone seeking to be an informed general wilderness campaigner or anyone who just needs to know a bit more when talking to friends about wilderness issues.

Douglas Bock (SUBW)

Map Review - Topographic Image Map

A new style of map has been prepared by the NSW Department of Conservation and Land Management known as a Topographic Image Map. Basically it is a combination of a LANDSAT Image with an overlay of topographic information.

The prototype map is known as the CAMDEN SPECIAL at a scale of 1:25000.

According to the information supplied on the cover of the map it is a prototype map for product development and assessment purposes only. (There may be other prototype maps existing as the borders indicates that the supplied map joins other maps labelled A, B, C and D).

Specific features such as roads, railways and suburbs are highlighted. Topographical contours are lightly whited in over the photographic image making it sometimes difficult to distinguish the contour from the background. The contour interval is 10 m. Paddocks, dam and vegetation information is understandably more detailed than the normal topographic map, however the specific naming information of some features is missing.

The supplied map subtends an longitude angle of 7'30" compared to the normal topographical map angle of 15'0". The latitude angle is the same on both maps. Thus the image map is half the size of the normal topographical map.

The paper used to produce this map is a high quality coated paper. A four colour process is used to achieve the high resolution of printing required for the Landsat picture.

From a personal perspective, the map may be highly useful as an aid in orienteering, rogaining and other navigation exercises. The vegetation detail can aid in deciding the easiest route through dense scrub.

Although I do not believe that this type of map will supersede the larger topographical map, it is useful. It will supplement rather than replace the existing CALM maps available at map resellers.

Michael Maack (Springwood B C)

Walks Notice

The Tops to Myalls Heritage Trail

Dr Hanns Pacy and David Bye of the Myall Subbranch of the National Parks Association of NSW have organised a medium grade 11 day walk along the entire length of this trail that stretches from Barrington Tops to Myall Lakes. The walk will begin on Saturday 23 September. The party will leave from Tea Gardens and travel by small bus to Lagoon Pinch and then walk to Carey's Peak, Gloucester Falls, Mountaineer, Upper Karuah Rainforest, Craven to Myall River State Forest, Boolambayte and Broadwater Lakes, Tamboy Palmforest then beach, relics, mangroves and heath to Hawks Nest Surfclub. There will be a limit of 18 participants. Phone 049 970212 for more details. Dr Pacy is the Director of the Tea Gardens Lions Clubs "Top of the Myall's Heritage Trail Project" and was a major contributor to the guidebook that is available that covers the trail.

The Bushwalker

Contributions, letters to the editor, original cartoons and suggestions are welcome. They should be sent to the address below. Except for short notes or letters, all contributions should be accompanied with a text file on a three and a half inch floppy disk in either Macintosh or MS DOS format. or Email to: dnoble@nexus.edu.au
Advertising rates are available on request. Ring John Clarke on (02) 744-1916
Distribution is through the affiliated clubs and through major retail outlets.
Address all correspondence to
The Editor, The Bushwalker
The Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs NSW Inc. GPO Box 2090, Sydney 2001
The Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs NSW Inc represents approximately 55 clubs with a total membership of around 5000 bushwalkers. Formed in 1932, Confederation provides a united voice on conservation and other issues, runs training courses for members, and provides for the public a free wilderness search and rescue service. People interested in joining a bushwalking club are invited to write to the Secretary of the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs at the above address, for information on clubs in their area.



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