

Bushwalking NSW

NEWSLETTER

Edition 35

December 2016

Keep exploring, be amazed!



What character would landscape have without rocks!?! Cathedral Rock National Park. Image: Kirsten Mayer

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Season's Greetings from your Conservation Officer

Dear Bushwalkers, this is your friendly conservation officer here. I hope life in the intensifying heat has not left you too parched, sweaty and sunburnt. Remember sun safety. Go canyoning.

We all know campfires are a fantastic way to come together and share stories and delicious food on those warm summery evenings. However, are we always aware of the risks? Bushfire safety should be on everyone's bushwalking agenda, especially during the summer months of NSW's bushfire season. It is a busy time for our Rural Fire Service (RFS) and a prime moment for bushwalking adventures. The NSW RFS has a succinct online brochure to ensure that we bushwalkers stay safe and responsible.



An important message for anyone planning to visit natural areas this summer, is to check for warnings, closures, total fire bans and controlled burning on the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) website. You can also see the NSW RFS website [Fires Near Me](#) map for fires in the vicinity of your planned trip location.

A fire ban is serious. When a total fire ban takes effect, there is to be no open flames. The RFS fire ban information page states that you cannot use a gas or electric barbecue during a fire ban, unless all combustible material has been cleared within a two metre radius, and it is under the control of a responsible adult at all times. This is the rule for light bushwalking gas stoves. It must be noted that stoves operating on hexamite, or any other solid fuel are prohibited in Bourke area parks, which have a fire ban that extends from the 1st of October, 2016 until the 31st of March. By the logic of the no solid fuel request, shellite and other liquid fuel varieties would also be ill advised under the conditions of a total fire ban. This is not explicitly referenced in the RFS Total Fire Ban information page, but it is a logical extension. Feel free to submit your wisdom on this matter. The bottom line is that we are all working together to stay safe during fire season. Know the rules, know the fire danger status of the area you are walking in. This is part of being a responsible and safe bushwalker. Also, don't forget to carry plenty of water and wear a hat and protective clothing.



National Park & Reserve Plans

Many draft plans of management are currently on public display. Of particular concern are the numerous amendments allowing horse riding in wilderness including an amendment to Marramarra National Park has been adopted to provide horse riding access to some management trails. Please comment on these if you can, if only to report on the social and environmental impacts of horse riding in wilderness. The draft plans of management can be found on the [Office of Environment and Heritage \(OEH\) website](#).

To make it easier for you to locate the ones on display, set the filter to plans on public exhibition. You will then be shown a list of plans that you can read and comment on. Expertise is not required for public consultation, as it is important to gain perspective on what interested parties think about the plan of management.

Bushwalking NSW encourages you and your club to make comment on the plans of management in light of your concern for conservation and wise management of ecological and heritage assets of the wild places we care so much about. Don't forget to let us know if your club does make a submission. We love to celebrate good news with you!

Sierra Classen – Conservation Officer, Bushwalking NSW | E: conservation@bushwalkingnsw.org.au

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From the Executive Officer

As this is our last edition for the year, I'd like to thank you all for your fantastic contributions to our clubs and the bushwalking community this year!

The Bushwalker

Last month we asked all our clubs, subscribers and recipients of The Bushwalker for their thoughts on just publishing The Bushwalker in digital format. The response we have received to date is that the majority would continue to read The Bushwalker if it is provided online and indeed most have signed up to receive The Bushwalker via email.



If you'd like to have your say on distribution and anything else to do with The Bushwalker, complete our survey at: <https://survey.zohopublic.com/zs/16yjom>. You can also sign up to receive The Bushwalker via email.

Would you like to be published?

Also a big thank you to all our article contributors, the survey responders love to read your stories and see your great photos! Keep sending in your articles, all our members are welcome to contribute. Just you're your photos and copy to: editor@bushwalkignsw.org.au.

Bushwalking Australia Conference

In November I had the privilege of attending the Bushwalking Australia Conference hosted by Bushwalking Tasmania in Hobart. Representatives from all over Australia attended and discussed bushwalking in Australia and each state, the changing face of bushwalking, and the role of Bushwalking Australia. A new president of Bushwalking Australia was appointed: Andrew Davey, from Tasmania. And our insurance broker, Rob Richard attended in person and gave us an extensive overview of the services JTL Sport provide. See the next section.

Our response to the Australian Adventure Activity Standards (AAAS) was also a significant topic and the group have since been working on a policy document and response to the changes currently proposed.

It is NSW's turn to host this annual conference on 10 - 12 November 2017 so let me know if you can help out!

Insurance

We will make insurance a regular feature of our newsletter as there is always more to know about this topic! The first thing to note is that all enquiries concerning insurance matters should be directed to JLT Sport by phoning 1300 574 980 or emailing bushwalking@jlta.com.au. Also, do note that a claim should be submitted as soon as possible after an injury is sustained, even if you are uncertain whether or not you will incur out of pocket expenses arising from the injury. There is a 120 day lodging period for claims, and you can find the claim form here: [Insurance claims and enquiries](#)

I've also asked our broker for some specific advice on behalf of club members:

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Some of our clubs offer joint club trips, and most clubs are very happy for members of other clubs to join their activities without paying a membership fee, for example, when the members are visiting different areas in the state or country. However, some of our clubs don't pay for Personal Accident (PA) insurance for their members. So, if a club member attends a trip with another club, do they have the cover their club has paid for? Or do they have the cover that the hosting club has paid for?

Our broker, Rob Richard has said: "a member who has paid for PA cover, via their club, would be covered whenever they are involved in what is deemed 'sanctioned activity' under the Bushwalking Australia insurance program. Therefore, if that 'sanctioned activity' is being conducted by another Bushwalking Australia affiliated club, then the individual's PA cover would still apply." The 'sanctioned activities' are the "Activities Covered" listed here: <http://www.bushwalkingaustralia.org.au/insurance/insurance-overview>

If your club doesn't pay for PA cover, see the ever-helpful Bushwalking Australia FAQ: http://www.bushwalkingaustralia.org.au/images/docos/Insurance/Insurance_FAQs.pdf

Have your say coming your way!

I've been chipping away for months on a questionnaire that will ask you all what you want Bushwalking NSW to be doing. That's an important question and the exciting news is that we are almost there!

We will be asking you what you want from us, what our mission should be, and what projects we should be doing next year. We will also be asking you about your clubs: what challenges you are facing, the ages of your members and, the date your club was formed – we want to celebrate your big anniversaries ☺ Once we have received all your feedback, we will feed your thoughts back to you.

In the meantime, I hope you all enjoy a safe and relaxing end of year break our beautiful natural places!

Kirsten Mayer – Executive Officer, Bushwalking NSW

P: (02) 8003 5545 | E: eo@bushwalkingnsw.org.au | OFFICE HOURS: Monday Wednesday Friday

Volunteer of the month: David Morrison



David Morrison is much more than our volunteer of the month. David has been our webmaster since he retired from his position as our President. Just as when passing through a forest of grass-trees like these, David always wholeheartedly embraces every task. In addition to ensuring our website and IT systems are maintained, David has generously provided regular and outstanding insight, vision and support.

David is now stepping down as webmaster and will be sorely missed. Do contact Kirsten if you are interested in taking up this important role.

Tracks and Access

The Great South Coast Walk: a new long-distance walking trail for NSW?



There are several well-known long-distance walking trails in Australia, e.g. Bibbulmun Track, Heysen Trail, Australian Alpine Walking Track, and, while the first two have some coastal sections, none of them could be thought of as a coastal trail. The Great South Coast Walk, stretching 660 km down the south coast of NSW, from Bundeena, on the southern rim of Sydney, to Mallacoota, just over the Victorian border, could fill this niche. It passes through a diverse range of landscapes, from urban fringe to forest, wetland, heathland, cliffs and beaches.

While the walk traverses some developed areas, such as coastal towns and holiday villages, it crosses several National Parks in the process and offers true wilderness experience to those who seek it. This makes it suitable to both novice and experienced walker, to the end-to-end walker and those who prefer to do it in stages. Importantly, there is not a lot to do to develop this walk – much of the infrastructure exists and people have already walked it from end to end.

A website has been set up at <http://greatsouthcoastwalk.net> to show the trail route, describe the walk and, importantly, seek feedback and suggestions through an on-line forum. If you are interested in helping with the development of Australia's newest long-distance walking trail, you are invited to check it out and add your ideas and comments.

David Briese – Canberra Bushwalking Club

Conservation

The fight for nature isn't over yet!

The NSW government has passed the new land-clearing laws but conservationists are not given up yet. Efforts to combat these new laws have not been in vain. Together, those who fought for our wildlife have:

1. **Impacted the laws** by securing important improvements such as excluding some areas like high conservation value grasslands, and critically endangered ecological communities; and ensuring that the Office of Environment and Heritage will be responsible for enforcing the law – not the Department of Primary Industries;
2. **Encouraged the Labor Party to commit to scrapping Mike Baird's disastrous laws** when they are next in government; and
3. **Supported thousands of people to stand up for what we believe in**, growing the number of wildlife defenders who will continue to be a voice for nature.



Image: Nature Conservation Council

With the new laws due to take effect from July, conservation work is far from over. Over the coming months the Nature Conservation Council, the National Parks Association and other wildlife crusaders will be exposing illegal land clearing, and making sure the damage caused by the laws is exposed in the media, to decision-makers and to law enforcement.

What is the best thing you can easily do every day to combat land clearing?

What if there were an easy way that you could improve your health, ensure more forests survive for nature and bushwalkers, and combat climate change which threatens us with more extreme weather events? It's something that is almost as good as going bushwalking!

While we're often encouraged to switch to more energy efficient light bulbs, take public transportation and offset our carbon-heavy jet setting, the largest contributor to our environmental footprint has been largely ignored. The meat, dairy and eggs that form substantial portions of our daily diet are unfortunately responsible for the majority of our individual contribution to environmental degradation.



Farms and pastureland carve their way into tropical forest in the Brazil. *Photograph: Planet*

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As George Monbiot's fascinating article, [I've converted to veganism to reduce my impact on the living world](#) reveals; livestock farming amplifies alarmingly, our presence within the environment. Monbiot identifies the land, usually forests, which are cleared to make room for the crops grown for animal feed, as one of the greatest concerns. He argues that by eating a plant based diet of grains, legumes and an abundance of fruits and vegetables, anyone can cut out the energy inefficiency that is implicit within industrial animal production and take a stand for those forests that could thrive in its place.

Paradoxically, if you want to eat less soya, eat soya directly: eating animal products tends to mean consuming far more of this crop, albeit indirectly. Almost all the soya grown where rainforests once stood is used to feed animals. Replacing meat with soya reduces the clearance of natural vegetation, per kilogram of protein, by 96%.

Coerced into negligence by lobby groups, governments struggle with addressing industrial animal production as the largest contributor to anthropocentric climate change; however individuals can take a stand for the environment by supporting an empowering alternative. As more people come to understand the environmental and health benefits of consuming a plant based diet, our remaining forests stand a growing chance for survival. What's more, you'll also feel an easing on your hip pocket – a win, win, win!

You can comment on the NSW Koala Strategy

On 4 December 2016, the Minister for the Environment, Mark Speakman, [announced](#) the development of a whole-of-government NSW Koala Strategy to stabilise and then start to increase koala numbers in NSW. 10 million dollars will be used to purchase and permanently conserve land that contains priority koala habitat. Members of the community are invited to [make submissions](#) by **3 March 2017**.



Image: Nature Conservation Council

The [Saving Our Species Iconic Koala Project](#) will inform an important part of the NSW Koala Strategy. View documents and make a submission at <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedspecies/ProposedPASAmendments.htm>.

Aussie Backyard Bird Count

The Rainbow Lorikeet has topped the Aussie Backyard Bird Count for the third consecutive year—but not in every state—after nearly 1.4 million birds were counted across Australia last month. Click [here](#) for the full results.

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BWRS doesn't need heroes

Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad (BWRS) would like to welcome more new members but we are not after 'heroes' just bushwalkers. BWRS is well respected by NSW Police as a remote area search & rescue squad. As we are affiliated to BNSW, NSW Police regularly give BWRS bushwalking type tasks that others might find challenging.



It is an easy media story to describe search & rescue personnel as "heroes". Ultimately, members of BWRS are expected to bushwalk safely. The safety of every search and rescue person from every emergency service is just as important as the missing / injured persons.

Clubs of BNSW train people in the necessary outdoor skills to become bushwalkers, therefore BWRS does not train members in bushwalking we just want you for your special skills. To those skills we add training in modern communications (UHF and HF radio), First Aid and search techniques. BWRS is affiliated with and represented to NSW Government by the Volunteer Rescue Association of NSW (VRA; see www.rescue.org.au for more details). The VRA has a number of specialist squads. Within the VRA BWRS is respected as a specialist squad in remote area search & rescue.

BWRS has a simple system of induction and training days / weekends to help you gain the competencies required by modern search and rescue personnel. Thus bushwalkers don't become heroes in BWRS but very special search & rescue personnel of a valuable community asset known as BWRS.

Vertical rescue training is offered, however, not all BWRS members choose to progress to this level of expertise. Members must have good 'personal mobility skills' to abseil down / ascend / cross knots & change between ropes. As a team, each member must be able to perform every role from leader to stretcher out rider to haul team etc. The systems taught can easily be adapted for more or less mechanical advantage to suit the numbers and strength of the haul team. In recent years BWRS vertical rescue personnel have been used on cliffs of the Blue Mountains in several searches.

The BWRS website at www.bwrs.org.au has information for men and women bushwalkers (of all sizes) on how to become valued members of a valued community resource; Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad. So BWRS is not after "heroes" just bushwalkers willing to learn the ways of remote area search & rescue.



Keith Maxwell – President, Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad | W: <http://www.bwrs.org.au>

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Grant opportunities for community organisations

Community organisations like our clubs can now apply for grants, of between \$1000 and \$5000, to buy much-needed equipment such as computers, train volunteers or improve fundraising efforts. Funding priority will be given to organisations working in disadvantaged communities or those affected by natural disasters. Community organisations from regional areas are strongly encouraged to apply. For more information and to apply visit <https://www.dss.gov.au/grants/open-for-application>.



Download your December edition of Bushwalk Australia

In the December edition of Bushwalk Australia online magazine, we are showcasing two wonderful and vastly different walks, and a last-minute addition details the Falls Hotham Alpine Crossing status. There are also articles on sun protection, rewilding, a club's adventures, photos that will inspire you, a free bushwalking book to download and so much more.

<http://emag.bushwalk.com/BWA201612.pdf>

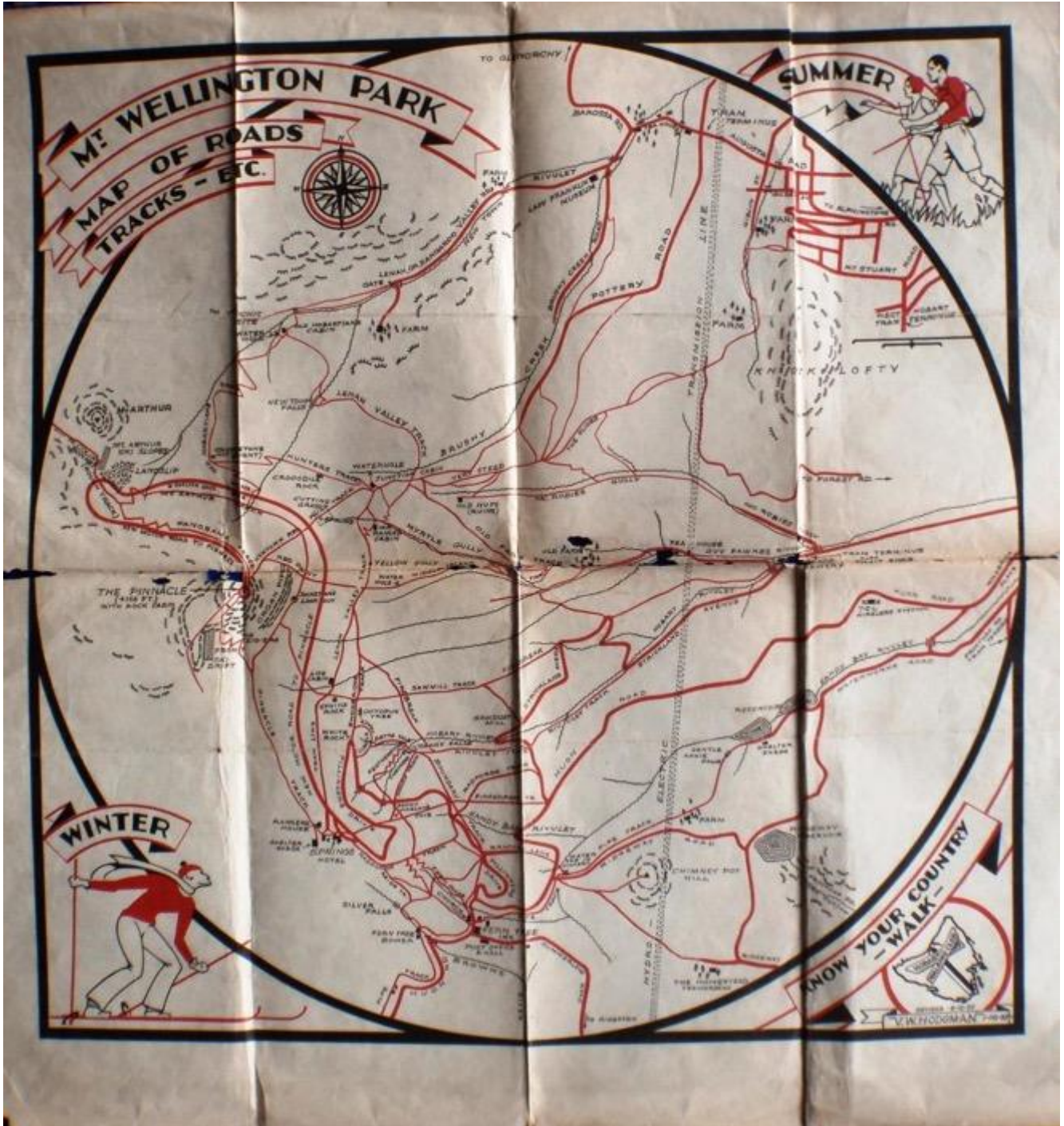


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Mt Wellington Tracks Map



Map by V.Hodgman for Hobart Walking Club ©1930