

NEWSLETTER of the BUSHWALKERS OF NEW SOUTH WALES

The N.S.W. Federation of Bushwalking Clubs
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WILDERNESS PERMITS

As a follow on from Minister for Lands Mr. Crabtree's announcement of intention to introduce a wilderness permit system we received last month from the Assistant Director (Management) N.P. & W.S. details of the proposed system to be introduced on a trial basis in Kosciusko from January 1st, 1978. Geoff Armstrong (Ass. Dir.) will attend the F.B.W. meeting on 13th December to discuss the proposal.

The reasons given for introducing the system are:

1. To protect the wilderness
2. To protect the user.
3. To assist the user to constructively enjoy the wilderness.
4. To accumulate data of value for future management.

The system outlined below is proposed.

1. A "wilderness permit" system should be introduced on Kosciusko National Park from 1st January 1978.
2. Use of the system should be voluntary.
3. Centres for distribution of permits should be Saw Pit Creek, Thredbo, Khancoban, Smiggin Holes, Yarrangobilly offices and Head Office of N.P. & W.S.
4. Permits should be numbered and only issued on a face to face basis.
5. At time of issue attention should be drawn to a book on "wilderness use and enjoyment" setting out regulations and ethics.
6. No return of permits is proposed. A copy can be left with the transport vehicle for S & R purposes or carried by the user.

The proposed form asks for name, address, size and experience of party, proposed trip, entry and exit points, and type of transport to park.

The proposal was discussed at the November Council Meeting and further at the Conservation Committee meeting a week later. So far the consensus of views is as follows:

We have no disagreement with the reasons given for introducing the system.

However, we do not agree that the first reason is valid at this time and that a permit system should be introduced until there is obvious over use by walkers.

As far as protecting the user is concerned we agree that a form of notification of intended trips should be encouraged but at no time should the notification allow any possibility of refusal of entry. In short drop the "permit" and its implication of refusal and call it "Notice of Use". There are bound to be inexperienced and irresponsible people use parks but will they be screened and what is the cut off on experience and who makes the judgement.

As to assisting the user to enjoy the wilderness, yes, by all means improve the interpretive work in any park. Its one area where our service falls behind their counterparts in N.Z. and U.S.A. By all means use the "Notice" system to acquaint users with wilderness values and advice on routes but at the same time improve interpretive work to attract all park users.

There was no objection to data accumulation in fact we would like to widen the intake by making notices available from unmanned stations and by posting of forms to clubs in anticipation of trips.

BRUCE VOTE

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

At the November General Meeting, delegates voted to support a motion put by Peter Harris that Federation hold an annual conference along the same lines of the Nature Conservation Council. The conference would be the main arena for Federation to discuss and formulate policies.

Section 7 paragraph C of Federation Constitution allows such an annual conference and would comprise all affiliate associations. It also allows the conference to be called at any time if so resolved by a majority of delegates at a monthly general meeting. The Constitution however limits such a conference to a purely advisory capacity.

A date for such an annual conference was not decided but the following ideas were brought out in discussion.

1. Dave Noble - Should be two days long and replace the present reunion - remember the meetings of walk secretaries?
2. Warwick Blayden - We should consider a Newcastle site to attract the North Coast.

To resolve the matter could all affiliate clubs please discuss this at their general meeting.

THE RED ROCKS

A recent party of Kamerukans have commented on the noticeable effects of heavy usage of the escarpment watershed between the Wolgan and Capertee Rivers, the area becoming known as the Red Rocks Traverse (between Baal Bone Gap and the Red Rocks).

Heavy tracks are being beaten on route and many fragile and unique sandstone formations such as those around Mt. Dawson are being damaged. This is in marked contrast to the country as it was at the time of the Barry Higgins' trips of about 4 years ago that awoke interest in the area.

The Kamerukans have decided to voluntarily restrict themselves to one trip a year into this area, and we would ask other walking groups, whether club or not to do the same.

If all the affiliated clubs restrict themselves to one trip per year, and they do not represent all those walking in a given time, it still averages out to almost one trip per week in the area, which is still a fair usage.

Please co-operate in the preservation of this unique area.

DENNIS RITTSON
K.B.C. Pres.

COAL MINING IN THE NORTHERN BLUE MOUNTAINS

Many bushwalkers have become alarmed over recent announcements in the press concerning coal mining developments in the Northern Blue Mountains. The purpose of this article together with the accompanying map is to inform bushwalkers just where these coal leases are and point out some of the effects. The coal mining leases of concern are:

1. Joint Electricity Commission of N.S.W. - Japanese Lease.
This covers a large portion of the plateau forming the catchment of the Eastern and Western Branches of the Wolgan Rivers. Coal mining could cause damage to the Wolgan Escarpment as well as pollution to the Wolgan River. Possibly the most alarming feature is that this area is the site of a possible new power station.
2. Proposed Clarence Colliery - Coalex - B.P.
This covers an area immediately to the west of the Wollangambe Wilderness. It includes the headwaters of Wollangambe, Dumbano and Bungleboori Creeks. As well as the development of a coal mine, a washery is planned. After heavy rain acidic waste products from the colliery could pollute Wollangambe Creek. Many bushwalkers visiting Wollangambe Canyon last summer may have noticed the yellow brown silt suspension in the water. This was caused by the exploratory drilling. (In previous years sand mining near Newnes Junction has also caused serious pollution to Wollangambe Creek).
3. Proposed Wolgan Colliery (Coalex)
This is the most serious proposal lying almost entirely within the Colo-Hunter Wilderness Area. During the last year many miles of new roads have been built and drilling carried out. A dam is planned on Deanes Creek. The lease area contains Constance Gorge, Tiger Snake Canyon, Heartattack Canyon, Surefire Canyon, the catchment of Galah Canyon and probably some other canyons.

At present Federation along with a number of other Conservation bodies is objecting to the Electricity Commissions lease. However because the other two proposed collieries come under an earlier coal mining act there is no provision for the public or interested bodies to object to mining.

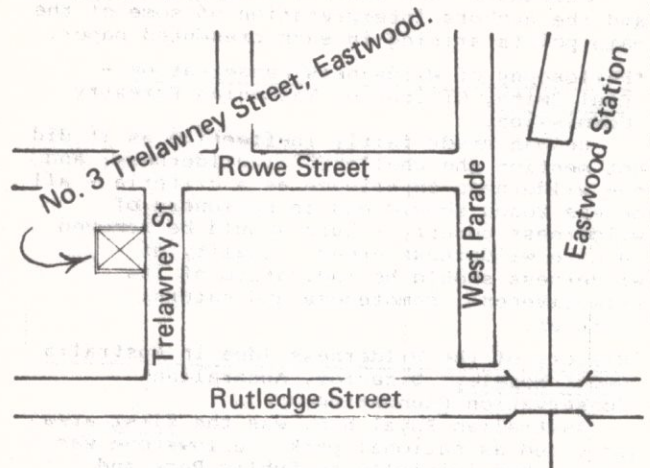
DAVID NOBLE

EASTWOOD CAMPING CENTRE

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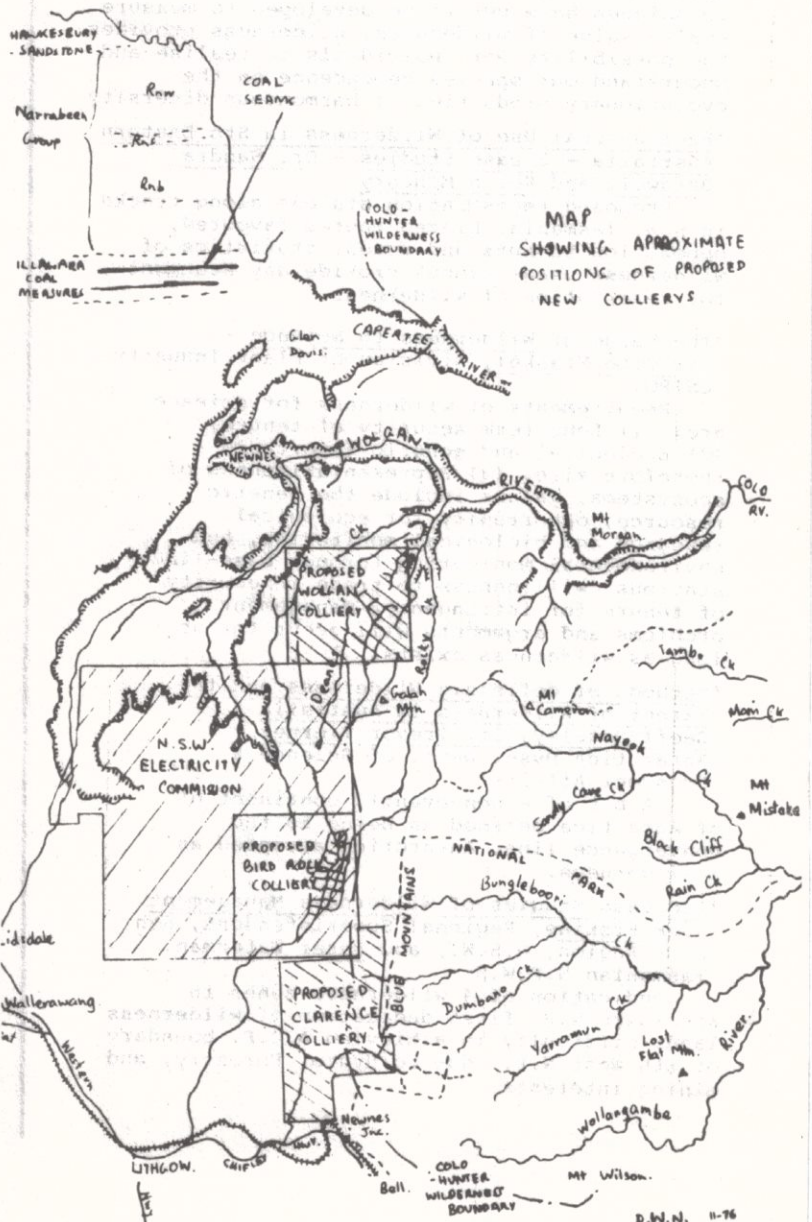
Fairydown sleeping bags, abseiling gear, parkas, packs tents, boots, groundsheets, lightweight food, AND MUCH MORE.

Agents for Lands Department and Division of National Mapping topographical maps.



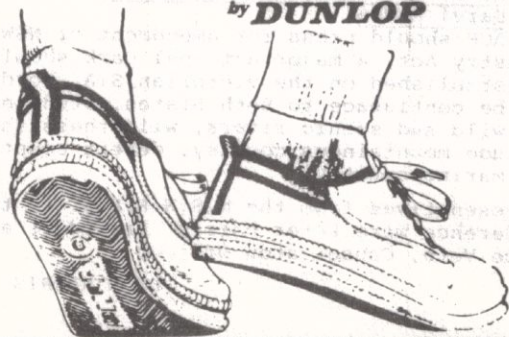
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WHERE THE COAL IS LOCATED



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CONSERVATION BITS

COLO DAM

We have had a deal of correspondence and discussion with Public Servants and Ministers on the likelihood of a dam on the Colo. The opinions expressed range from "no immediate plans" to "we're keeping our options open".

The trouble with this vague response is that one day it will be too late like it was with the Cox Valley Power Line.

What we must do is make such a public issue of the possibility that will force Government plans into the open.

Here's some suggestions:

Introduce a friend to walking via the Colo.

Contact Dennis Rittson and Dave Noble to show their Colo slides at your Club meeting or anywhere;

Plan a Lilo trip down the Colo this summer.

Distribute bumper stickers and posters.

Support the Colo Committee (27 4714).

Unless we see the likes of a Colong campaign, one day we will have a dam, pipeline, roads and power line in the heart of the wilderness.

OFF ROAD VEHICLES

From the Dept. of Environment, Housing and Community Development we have received the following draft code of behaviour for ORV use. Although only a draft at this stage we understand it is generally acceptable to ORV clubs.

If you see ORV clubs breaking the code as has recently happened at Tuross and Ettima quote their code to them or refer the matter to me, the Wildlife Service or the E.H.C.D.

PRELIMINARY WORKING DRAFT OF CODE OF ETHICS FOR OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

As off-road vehicle owners we derive considerable pleasure from our vehicles as well as using them to help others. However, our machines can also annoy other people and damage the natural environment we seek to enjoy.

This code of ethics shows how we, the ORV users, can avoid adverse effects of our sport while still gaining pleasure from it.

1. Obey the laws and regulations of Commonwealth, State and Local Governments.
2. Join a club.
3. Seek permission of the relevant authority before you drive on public land.
4. Seek the landowners permission before you drive on private land.
5. Keep to public roads in national parks and other restricted areas.
6. Recognise the right of others to solitude and peace. Do not disturb picnickers, bushwalkers and other recreationists.
7. Walking tracks are for walking, bridle tracks for horses - keep them that way.
8. Keep to defined vehicular tracks. If impracticable minimise and make good any damage.
9. Alpine areas, swamps and vegetated sand dunes are easily damaged. Take special care in these areas.
10. Challenge your vehicle against the terrain only in areas specially set aside for the purpose.
11. Keep the environment clean; carry your rubbish home. If others have left a mess, consider doing the right thing by cleaning it up.
12. Respect the wildlife. Stop and look but never chase animals in your vehicle.
13. Have a sound muffler system, keep your noise to a minimum.
14. Keep well away from settlements and recreation areas where your noise will disturb others.
15. ORVs can be very useful in search and rescue or to fight bushfires. Help the authorities when you can.
16. Encourage other users to abide by this code; ensure that participants in your sport are seen as responsible citizens.

Recently reports of a new RV road down the Worgan have come in. Thanks to Timothy Hager of C.B.C., we now have maps, slides and a full report on the illegal road building. Unfortunately this group is not a club so commitment to an ethic can not be expected. However we have passed the information onto the Wildlife Service and Lands Department.

COLO - HUNTER - PLANNING CONTROL

The Wildlife Service and the Planning and Environment Commission are seeking gazettal of an interim development order over all their park proposals in the Northern Blue Mountains. This includes Blue Mountains Northern extension Wollemi (Colo), and Hunter & Tayar (Tayan Pic) and if approved will mean that no development can take place without Crabtree & Landa's approval. A similar situation to Mayall Lakes before the recent Park Dedication except that the time span to park dedication may be much longer and there's more money in coal than mineral sands.

HELIPADS

The Blue Mountains National Park Advisory Committee is suggesting the creation of further helipads in the Grose Valley.

They state that there should be more care with their installation than there was at Acacia Flat or Burra-Korain and that the pads are a way of keeping out roads.

With all the care in the world, a helipad needs a large clearing and that's not on. Why are pads the alternative to roads?

Is it too much to expect rescuers, fire fighters, or garbage collectors to walk the maximum of one hour from either of the existing pads to any point in the Upper Grose.

BRUCE VOTE

NOW INTO HIGH GRADE CAMPING EQUIPMENT

Tents

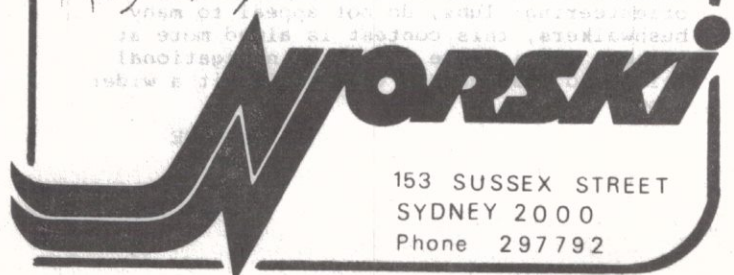
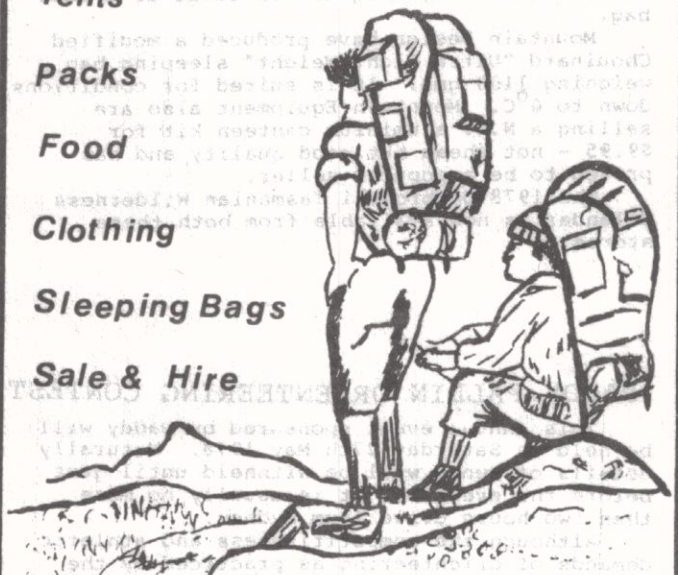
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