

NEWSLETTER of the BUSHWALKERS OF NEW SOUTH WALES

The N.S.W. Federation of Bushwalking Clubs
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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Another reminder of the A.G.M.: Tuesday, 19th July, immediately following the Council meeting commencing at 6.30pm at the NSW Environment Centre, 399 Pitt Street, Sydney. Presidents and secretaries of all affiliated clubs are requested to attend.

CONSERVATION PIECES

A rush insert, unfortunately, due to our imminent departure to Kakadu in the Northern Territory. Just time to apologise once again for another holdup on the Northern Blue Mountains Proposal. I was set to bind a large number of copies yesterday (1st June) only to find that the binding machine was broken. There just wasn't enough time to make alternate arrangements, so I'm afraid early July is the soonest I can get started on these again. Limited numbers are in circulation in the C.B.C. and K.B.C. so if you have friends in these clubs sneak a peek.

I want to sell the report as fairly as possible to the clubs due to only 130 being printed in the first edition. I'd appreciate club secretaries finding out how many members of their clubs want copies and sending me numbers. I will be distributing to clubs on the basis of membership numbers.

On the conservation front: keep an eye on the Culoul Range. A State Pollution Control Commission environmental enquiry is in progress and may be favourable due to the quick and competent preparation of a submission against Autobric, who want to remove brick shale, by an ad hoc committee formed within Federation and chaired by Bruck Vote. Rapidly assembled field information, superb photos by Henry Gold and expert botanical studies by walkers such as Ian Olsen are arguing a strong case for preservation of the Culoul Range. This is typical of what we can do as a body of bushwalkers.

Dennis Rittson
Conservation Convenor.

HUTS POLICY

This is the remainder of the draft policy on huts in the Kosciuszko National Park. It is again stressed that this is only a draft which can be discussed and modified if necessary before its acceptance at the August Council meeting.

Additional Definitions

2.7 Maintenance. Maintenance of a hut consists of repairs to minor damage, and work done to prevent deterioration of the hut's condition. Maintenance does not include repairs which would involve reconstruction of a significant portion of a hut.

2.8 Restoration. Restoration of a hut consists of repairs which endeavour to return the hut to the condition in which it existed not long after its original construction.

2.9 Improvements. Improvements to a hut consist of modifications which increase its comfort or capacity, and which cannot be classed as either maintenance or restoration.

5. The Nature of Huts.

5.1 General Policy.

It has been accepted as inconsistent with the concept of wilderness for huts to exist in a so-called wilderness area; it is doubly inconsistent for such huts to provide luxurious accommodation. If the existence of huts in a certain area considered as wilderness is accepted, there must be a compromise between those who desire the comforts of home and those who want no huts at all. The point of compromise is clearly that at which a hut is a simple shelter with minimal facilities.

This, then, is the basic policy statement concerning the nature of huts: a hut should provide basic shelter and nothing more.

Just as historical value was the justification for retaining huts where stringent application of the wilderness principle required otherwise, historical value again provides grounds for exceptions to the basic shelter concept. Thus it is not considered desirable or necessary to strip all furniture and facilities from existing huts, since to do so would in many cases largely destroy the historic "character" of a hut. In other words, there is no need to take action to degrade the standard of existing huts. However there must be some controls on the upgrading of existing huts.

5.2.1. Maintenance

All huts may be maintained in accordance with the definition of paragraph 2.7. It is difficult to accurately define the borderline between maintenance, as defined, and more substantial work. The key phrases "minor damage" and "reconstruction of a significant portion of the hut" can only provide rough guidance. As an indication, broken windows and doors, or a collapsed or burnt chimney, could be considered as minor damage, whereas replacement of an entire roof damaged by strong wind would be significant reconstruction. Similarly replacement of a few decayed foundation elements would be acceptable, while complete renovation of the entire understructure of a hut may not be.

5.2.2. Restoration

Restoration of a hut implies much more significant modification than maintenance. Restoration of a hut which is presently uninhabitable is, to all practical purposes, construction of a new shelter. Since this is in direct contradiction of paragraph 4.1.3, no restoration work should be carried out on huts which are not in a useable condition. This restriction should not be a serious limitation on architectural preservation since a building must be in a fairly advanced state of neglect before it becomes unusable as practical shelter.

Huts which are habitable may be restored to a state approaching their original condition provided that i) The basic shelter policy is not seriously infringed; and ii) there is genuine historical merit in doing so (ie. historical value is increased). This second condition is intended to provide double protection against the unlikely possibility of "restoration" work being carried out on one of the modern huts, which in their original condition contained numerous modern conveniences totally incompatible with the wilderness concept.

5.2.3. Improvements

Improvements to a hut are by definition inconsistent with the wilderness principle. Thus, barring the exceptions discussed below, no improvements may be made to any hut.

The one exception which applies to all huts relates to sanitation. Construction of a toilet is an improvement which may be justified on management grounds at a heavily used hut where fouling of the surroundings is becoming a health hazard. Installation of a toilet at a lightly used hut must be considered a convenience rather than a necessity, and is not justified.

The other exception relates to the two special areas defined in the Appendix: The Whites-Schlink Corridor and the Snowy Headwaters. Reasons were given in section 4.2 why there is no objection to the existence of huts in these regions. For the same reasons there is no objection to improvements to huts in these regions, provided that the improvements do not infringe the basic shelter policy. Effectively, this limits the acceptable improvements to those which increase hut capacity, where this is justified on management grounds. Improvements which increase comfort are contrary to the basic shelter concept, and should not be permitted.

Any improvements should be designed using the same guidelines as apply to new huts, as set out below.

5.3 New Huts.

It has been declared earlier in this policy that no new huts should be built except within the areas defined in the Appendix. However it is possible that the Park management may not accept the views put forward in this policy, and may permit construction of new huts in other areas of the Park. Wherever a new hut is built though, it should be designed with the basic shelter concept firmly in mind. That is to say, a hut should consist only of walls, roof, floor, windows and doors,

plus such features as allow more efficient use of the available space. By providing simple work benches (beneath which packs can be stored) and full-width, two tier sleeping platforms (instead of individual beds or bunks) the overall size of a hut can be kept to a minimum. It would be difficult to justify facilities other than those just mentioned.

No fireplace should be included in a new hut. Above the treeline there is no need for a fireplace; below the treeline the demand for firewood can prove (and has already proved) damaging to the surrounding vegetation. An exception to this guideline may be acceptable in the White-Schlink Corridor, provided that the Park management is genuinely committed to providing absolutely all the fuel required.

If a new hut is justified on management grounds in one of the areas defined in the Appendix, then there is also especial justification for a toilet. If a new hut is built outside those areas (in conflict with this policy) then a toilet is justified only if usage is such that lack of a toilet constitutes a health hazard.

Appendix

A1. The Whites-Schlink Corridor.

Bound on the east by: The road from Guthega Power Station to the eastern aqueduct and the aqueduct itself; the road through Schlink Pass to a point about 5km beyond the pass.

Bounded on the west by: The penstocks; the western aqueduct; a line about 500m west of the Whites River, up to Schlink Pass; a line about 500m west or south of Dicky Cooper Creek from Schlink Pass to the creek junction at map reference 223849 (Kosciusko map, sheet 8525).

A2. The Snowy Headwaters.

Bounded by the watershed from Dead Horse Gap to Mt. Townsend, and by lines connecting Mt. Townsend, Mt. Twynam, the saddle at the head of Trapyard Creek, and Dead Horse Gap.

BUNGONIA

You remember a few years ago there was a campaign to save Bungonia (Gorge). Several weekends were devoted to showing and educating the public to encourage its preservation. The result has been that the original reserve has been increased greatly (approximately six fold) And the extra area has been designated as a camping area to remove most of the wear and tear on the limestone. There are in excess of 18000 visitors per annum. Water tanks will be installed shortly and a ranger will be appointed in about three months.

Caving parties will be required in the future to check in with the ranger who will examine equipment to ensure that accidents due to poor gear can be cut down. The ranger will also advise a party whether a cave can be entered or not. This is designed to protect certain caves and cavers from over-use and inadequate equipment and experience.

A second and ecologically more important reason for the restrictions is to protect the hibernating and maternity caves (for bats that is). Hibernating bats and nursing females accumulate body fat in order to withstand the long period of inactivity. Abnormal disturbance will disburse the bats thus using the stored fat as energy. Death through starvation or harsh climatic conditions searching for replenishment of food can follow. Bats are now apparently protected species.

VOLLEYS

At present there are some members of the YMCA Ramblers wandering through the mulga wearing mismatched sandshoes. If you see them you may laugh as they are quite mad, but also they are trying to see if there is a difference between the wearing abilities of the old Volleys and the new. Three pairs of Volleys were donated by Dunlop for this purpose. From their own testing Dunlop claim there is no difference between the shoes.

Further on Volleys, Dunlop have received the following letter which they passed on to us. We print it with no further comment:

The Dunlop Company,
Footwear and Rainwear Divisions.

Dear Sirs,

Here are three ways in which Dunlop footwear and rainwear have proved their reliability, durability and comfort to us:

1. During 1975 I undertook and completed a Walk Round Australia, on which I got through seventeen pairs of Volleys and Internationals. My wife Marygai, wore Internationals when she joined me in walking Tasmania. She is now writing a book about the Round Australia experience. As you remember, the footwear was kindly supplied by you at Dunlop. We enthusiastically acknowledged them as the best possible footwear for outback use.

2. Last dry season up in Arnhem Land, members of the Coast and Mountain Bushwalking Club chose Volleys and Internationals for their arduous walk following the course of the Alligator River.

3. At the beginning of this year, Marygai and I used Internationals and Dunlop rainwear in extremely difficult walking conditions on Cape York Peninsular. It was both cyclone and monsoon time, and both the heat and rain were terrific. However, practically the only items of our equipment that never let us down in the Peninsular area were our Dunlop Internationals and our Dunlop rainwear.

One again, my wife and myself would like to thank you for supporting us with your excellent products.

Sincerely,
Marygai and Tom Hayllar
(President fo CMW Bushwalkers)

On a different note, Dunlop are also on the verge of releasing a lightweight boot aimed at all general uses, factory, farming, sporting, etc. The boots weigh 1580g and are expected to sell for around \$25. Dunlop wish to know if this boot is suitable for our sport and for this purpose have supplied one pair of size 9 and have asked for a report on their suitability.

To this end would a size 9 bushwalker who: knows something about boots, is prepared to record mileage and intends to walk regularly, like to try them out?

Ray Alsop
27 9951 (w)

ON BOOKS AND IDEAS

A friend of mine has been walking for many years and used to be a very active walker. Now he has slowed down a bit and has responsibilities — so that he does not get out in the bush so often now. He still, however, buys every bushwalking book, magazine, guide, etc., that comes into the market. When asked why he continues to buy these publications, his reply was that if he does not buy them now, they soon will be unavailable.

That set my mind in motion, that Gundungura book that I purchased a few years ago, it is now, I realise, a collectors item. No more field trips for it — it now lies securely in my library. What else do I have that I should take special care. Those Tasmanian Tramp magazines best be included in my special collections library. And what about that "Bushwalkers Guide to South East Queensland", "New England Tablelands", they both don't appear to be ready for reprinting either. Those Alan Fairley books, they had best be placed securely away also (who wants to pay \$11.95 for a replacement book).

Its a pity that the publications showing suitable walking come onto the market, are bought up, and then disappear forever. Consider Wilf Hilder's 1000001 walks in the Blue Mountains (I'm cursing the fact that I gave my copy away). That Budawang Map and Bushwalking near Canberra had both best be kept in mothballs.

Whilst I don't wish to enter into the pro and con of bushwalking books, I feel that the Federations Publicity Officer Ted Hartley would have an easier job if he could refer the small and newer clubs to these publications. Ted has to rely on the help of the established clubs for their old walks programs to give these fledgling clubs, and to date this help has not been good.

I accept that time, money and enthusiasm are factors in the printing of any information and that there are problems, especially amongst some organisations to even reprint their publications. But I feel that all efforts should be made to keep our fellow walkers and the public informed on our countryside. I have on occasion had overseas enquiries and have had to be shamed into replying that walking guides/publicity on walking areas of New South Wales is just about NIL.

In the pipeline, I understand, there are in progress the following publications, a Budawang Book, a Warrumbungles Book, an updating of the Budawang map. Disallowing for these items, go to your nearest bushwalking shop and see how many books there are on walking in N.S.W. — there aren't many at all.

Somewhat akin to bushwalking are the publications that deal with our walking environment — historically, geologically, botanically, etc. At the moment the market appears flooded with books covering most spheres, all costing a great deal. The collector of information can do four things, buy the book at its market value, borrow it from a library, drop hints around Xmas/birthday time or wait for a sale. Sales occur once, perhaps twice a year, by which time the book in mind may not be reduced, or available. A book store in Liverpool Street, just up from Paddy is selling a number of these books at reduced prices e.g. Coggers book on reptiles (down by \$7), other examples are Slater's Field Guide to Aust. Birds (Passerines and Non-passerines), Flowers and Plants of N.S.W. by Bloxell, Briggs and Carolin.

Second hand book shops also offer older books and real bargains for those who are prepared to search the shelves. I have personally found two old bushwalking books plus numerous other akin books. This particular type of shopping has the thrills of exploring a new area, much joy is taken in a "find."

For those who consider the bush a place to learn as well as relax, there are several groups who run courses in various fields that can be applied to bushwalking. One such group is the W.E.A. of courses in botany, biology, geology and astronomy etc. The N.P.A. also run a series of lectures during the year to encourage a better understanding of the countryside.

A better understanding of the bush, yes I guess this is the aim of this article. Any fool can walk indian file, following the pack in front, but it takes an enthusiast to understand and learn about the field of his sport.

WELBY

CLASSIFIEDS

For Sale

Bushwalker selling all gear due to illness — bush walking, skiing, rockclimbing, alpine. Sleeping bags, tents, rucksacks, skis, ropes, pitons, etc. Karrimor "Orienteer" frame (no sack) - Contact John Campbell, 84 1996 (h), 44 1728 (w).

Trips

Cape York — Ray Alsop is madly modifying an F100 truck into a minibus intending to go to the tip of Cape York and return via the Birdsville Track for 28 days in August and will soon be looking for starters. 646 1321

Happenings

At last, final details of the 1977 BUSHWALKERS BALL.

26th August
Chatswood Civic Centre

\$6.00 Single BYOG & food & glass
Fancy dress by club themes Two bands
Tickets available from club delegates after 19th July.

S & R Practice Weekend — 16th-17th July, at Mt. Wilson. This is very much a **practice** weekend: no talks, no demonstrations, no lessons, no training sessions. Just two, hard, one-day practice searches in the Woilangambe Creek and Bowens Creek areas. The S & R Committee wants 8 or so **experienced** walkers from each club. Meet at the picnic area on the Mt. Irvine road in time for an 8am start on Saturday.

S.W. Tasmania Committee is running two film and/or slide nights shortly: i) Tuesday, 5th July, 7pm, NSW Environment Centre, 399 Pitt St. Slides on the Central Plateau; Gordon River rafting; forestry in the Picton and Weld Valleys; New Zealand wilderness.

ii) Friday, 19th and Saturday, 20th August, 7.30pm, Law School Theatre, cnr. King and Elizabeth Streets. "A Night in the Wilderness" — the third annual film and slide presentation from the Launceston Walking Club. Those who have seen previous productions will need no further invitation.

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WARRAGAMBA CATCHMENT AREA

The Warragamba Catchment Area occupies most of the southern Blue Mountains, the traditional stamping ground of Sydney-based bushwalkers. Despite this, many walkers seem ignorant of the purpose of the Area and the regulations which control it. This article tries to answer a number of common questions, plus a few others. Thanks are due to Mr. Max Wooten, Senior Forestry Officer of the Metropolitan Water, Sewerage and Drainage Board, who spent much time answering questions and providing the information on which this article is based.

What is the purpose of the Proclaimed Catchment Area?

The Proclaimed Catchment Area is simply a region in which the Metropolitan Water, Sewerage and Drainage Board has fairly broad powers to prevent pollution of the water supply. These powers control such things as the disposal of garbage, human waste, and wastes from industry and mining; the removal of timber, rock and soil; the keeping of livestock; construction activities, and various recreational activities. The Board can control these activities because they affect the water quality.

Since the Warragamba Catchment Area does not include the whole physical catchment, how are its boundaries determined?

They are actually two classes of proclaimed catchment area. One class, the "outer catchment", does usually include the entire physical catchment of a reservoir. In the case of Lake Burragorang this would extend to the headwaters of the Wollondilly south-west of Goulburn. The "inner catchment", which is what is really being referred to when the "Warragamba Catchment Area" is spoken of, is a rather arbitrarily defined area in which possible pollution is more serious. The Board has much wider powers in the inner catchment.

Most walkers know that the Cox and Wollondilly Rivers are often polluted to the point of being unsafe to drink. Why bother protecting the lake when the major rivers carry such pollution?

One of the best ways to purify water is just to let it sit in a large body, exposed to the air and sun. Thus the water leaving Lake Burragorang is often purer than when it entered. However contaminants coming from the inner catchment may have a shorter residence time in the lake than those carried in the rivers entering at the lake's extremities, and could be more serious if uncontrolled.

Does the Board actually own the Catchment Area?

No. With the exception of a narrow strip of land bordering the lake (and one or two other areas) which the Board does own, the land tenure in the Catchment Area remains more or less as it was before the dam was built. As long as they do not breach the Board's regulations the landholders are free to carry out their usual activities. This includes grazing on the Bindook Plateau and the Wollondilly Valley, coal mining on the lake's eastern shore, trail bike riding at Byrnes Gap and everywhere else, farming in Kedumba Valley and other places, and so on. Of course much of the more rugged part of the Catchment Area remains vacant Crown Land, for which the Board is Trustee.

Who owns the cattle found in almost every valley of the Southern Blue Mountains?

In areas such as the Wollondilly Valley and the Bindook Plateau the cattle are privately owned and legally grazed on freehold or leasehold land. In more rugged valleys, such as the Cox or Kowmung, which are Crown Land, the cattle are probably released there deliberately but illegally. Although from the Board's point of view they do little harm, the Board usually endeavours to locate the owners to have them removed. There are probably

a few cases of genuinely wild cattle in some of the more remote valleys (eg. in the Blue Breaks) but most are likely to be the property of some nearby landholder who knows where they are and can get them when he wants them.

What restrictions apply to access to the Catchment Area?

The answer to this one should be well known to most walkers, but it is worth repeating. There is no restriction on travel along proclaimed roads, although there is no easy way to knowing if a lesser road is proclaimed or was just put there anyway. Otherwise, the general public cannot enter the Catchment Area without the Board's permission, except to walk along Narrowneck. No-one at all is allowed to go within 3km of the top water level in the lake.

What exceptions are there to the access restrictions?

The answer to this one, too, should be well known. Members of clubs affiliated with the Federation are allowed to walk anywhere in the Catchment outside the 3km limit, provided that they carry evidence of their membership (eg. club badge, fees receipt). It is also permissible for such walkers to enter the 3 km limit near the Cox/Kowmung junction, so as to walk from Medlow Gap to Scotts Main Range via White Dog Ridge and Mt. Cookern. Non-members of clubs can walk in the same areas if they obtain a permit from the Board, but these permits are valid only for a specified route on specified dates.

Are further exceptions possible in future?

The Federation is (or shortly will be) applying for blanket permission for its members to enter the 3 km limit at a few nominated points. These include the vicinity of Sheehy's Creek on the Nattai, Baloon Pass between the Nattai and Wollondilly, "The Sheep-walk" road from Jooriland to Yerranderie, and possibly others. Later this year or early next year much of the Catchment Area will be taken over by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, and it would be reasonable to expect that there will then be no access restrictions outside the 3 km limit.

Why have the 3 km limit anyway?

The precise background to the 3 km limit is somewhat hazy. Its origin was in 1960 when the Board's Chief Medical Officer of the time recommended that entry within 2 miles of the lake be prohibited. The purpose of the ban was purely to prevent pollution. The fact that contamination of the lake by walkers, would seem to be miniscule is highly unlikely to have any effect on possible relaxation of the ban.

Will the 3 km limit change when the area becomes a national park?

Nobody knows yet. Rumour has it that the Board does not mind where the border of the park is (the east side of the lake has been suggested) as long as the 3 km limit remains in force. Other rumours from NPWS suggest that the Service is not interested in land to which access is banned, but would prefer to rationalise the access limit by placing the park boundary on natural barriers such as the clifflines west of the lake. The concept attributed to the NPWS would give increased access, but the Board appear determined that they retain some sort of prohibited region around the lake.

What other regulations concerning the Catchment Area could affect walkers?

Strictly speaking there is a long list of prohibited activities, a number of which could effectively prevent bushwalking by implication: no cutting timber or bush (firewood), no bathing, no picnicking, no camping, fishing, lighting fires, etc. etc. And especially, no excreta to be deposited "except in receptacles provided for the purpose upon land set aside by the Board for picnicking, recreation or other like

purposes." That would stop all but the shortest walks, wouldn't it? Fortunately the agreement between the Board and the Federation concerning access for walkers also clearly implies exemption from these regulations.

Is the Catchment Area a nature reserve?

There are regulations which protect the native flora and fauna. Shooting is prohibited and the Board's rangers enforce this ruling strictly. Likewise gathering flowers is explicitly banned, and it is also forbidden to destroy, cut, damage or remove any tree or shrub without the Board's permission, except on private land. Thus, even apart from its isolation the wildlife of the Catchment Area is well protected by law. As evidence of the effectiveness of this protection there are of course innumerable kangaroos and wallabies, lots of wombats and smaller animals, and even a large colony of koalas. The location of the latter is a well kept secret, for obvious reasons.

WRECKAGE

A recent item in the Sunday Herald mentioned that "Bushwalkers in the Burrator area have been on the lookout for the wreck for years". The wreck referred to is a R.A.A.F. de Havilland Dragon A34-17 which was used for ambulance transport. On April 14, 1943 the plane took off in cloudy conditions and was last seen heading south. The theory is that the plane crashed in the mountains near Burrator, as they lay hidden in heavy fog.

The bushland around Sydney has been the subject to many searches over the years — mainly for lost walkers. However there have been occasions when searches have been called out for missing planes. Back in 1937 a search was conducted for a Stinson aircraft missing after a storm. This plane actually crashed in the Lammington (Qld.) area and its discovery can be read in Bernard Reilly's "Green Mountains and Cullenbong".

Probably the only aircraft wrecks that bushwalkers are likely to see are the publicised R.A.A.F. crash at Cowombat Flat on the N.S.W. — Vic. border and the melted remains of the Southern Cloud near the Khancoban — Cabramurra road. The Blue Mountains does have at least one known wreck which lies on the way to Guouogang. Another missing aircraft is supposed to have crashed in the coastal ranges south of Batemans Bay (about 1971/2) and has not been.

Whilst I don't wish to be labelled a ghoul, people do however have a morbid curiosity to stare at accidents. There is the added factor of the investigation, research and the challenge of the search to be gained. We all look at ruin buildings, why not ruin planes.

S.M.H. 10/4/68 "Solo Pilot Crashes in Mountains". — a single engined Cessna 182 crashed into a mountain in heavy cloud near Jenolan Caves. Another pilot flying near Warragamba Dam saw a whisp of smoke through a break in the clouds, and flew over the investigate it. Wreckage was seen 20 metres below the top of the ridge and some of the surrounding scrub was alight.

S.M.H. 1/4/1969 "Four Survive Mountain Plan Crash" — around 7am a single engined Cessna crashed into the Weddin Range (which was covered with mist and low cloud) 17 km west of Grenfell. The plane hit the highest peak, Weddin Mountain, some five metres short of the summit.

WELBY