

NEWSLETTER of the BUSHWALKERS OF NEW SOUTH WALES

The N.S.W. Federation of Bushwalking Clubs
G.P.O. Box 2090, Sydney, 2001.

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BLUEGUM FOREST

People who have visited Bluegum Forest in the last year or so will be aware of Bluegum's sad deterioration due to its overuse as a campsite. Because of this the National Parks and Wildlife Service has decided to close the area to camping and picnicking for an indefinite period from December 1st. Access to Bluegum has not been prohibited however, so parties may still walk through it.

For those wishing to camp or picnic the Service is developing three new areas with facilities such as fire places and toilets. These are:

*Victoria Falls

*Acacia Flat, 500m up Govetts Creek from Bluegum

*Burra Korain Flat, at the junction of Victoria Creek and the Grose River, 8km up the Grose Valley from Bluegum and 1.5km from Victoria Falls.

The manner in which these areas are being developed is causing Federation some concern, and is mentioned elsewhere in this Newsletter.

A bush camping permit will be necessary to camp anywhere in the upper Grose Valley or Govett Gorge. Permits can be obtained from the Ranger Station at Glenbrook, or the Park Office at 244 Great Western Highway, Blackheath (Phone 047 87 8877). The N.P.W.S. has maps and leaflets available with further details of the restrictions.

FROM RECENT COUNCIL MEETINGS

The somewhat strained relations between Federation's Search and Rescue, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Police were brought to a head by events at a recent search at Medlow Gap. Federation has written to the Minister for Police, Mr Waddy, requesting an interview to discuss liaison with the Police and N.P.W.S. Possibly relations with the Police may be improved a little following the search at Rookwood cemetery on November 22nd, when about 80 walkers turned up to help about the same number of police search for a missing baby girl.

Federation has decided to present copies of "The World of Olegas Truchanas" (a magnificent book on South West Tasmania) to Bruce Postill and Phil Butt in recognition of their contributions to Federation.

The Australian Standards Association has invited Federation to send a delegate to a committee on walking track signs. Although most bushwalkers tend to prefer routes of a non-signposted type, we will send along our Tracks and Access Convenor so that we can at least keep in touch.

Federation is likely to be negotiating with the Metropolitan Water, Sewage and Drainage Board regarding access to the present prohibited area around Lake Burragorang. We would like to be allowed to walk through much of the prohibited area in general, and in particular would like permission to cross the Wollondilly Valley near Jooriland and the lower Nattai Valley. Camping would still be forbidden, of course. Comments on this would be welcome.

The Tasmanian Government has given a grant of about \$30 000 to Tasair Pty Ltd to build an airstrip at Bond Bay, on the north western side of Port Davey. This is a most serious intrusion on the South West wilderness. Federation will request all N.S.W. walkers, and interstate bushwalkers' federations, not to use Tasair for air-dropping or transport if the company goes ahead with the airstrip.

COMING MEETINGS

Council: Tuesday, 20th January.

Conservation Committee: Thursday, 18th December.

Both meetings are at 6.30 pm in the N.S.W. Environment Centre, 263b Broadway.

OFF ROAD VEHICLES

Federation's submission to the House of Representatives inquiry into the environmental effects of off road vehicles was completed shortly after the last Newsletter was published.

The submission commenced by recognising that off road vehicles of all types are a legitimate and enjoyable means of recreation. Federation does not question the rights of the users of such vehicles, but expressed its concern at their impact on natural areas, and national parks in particular.

Laws to protect national parks do exist but are ineffective due to a lack of rangers, a lack of appropriate warning notices, and the off road vehicle user's knowledge that he risks little chance of being caught.

Off road vehicles have two main effects on the environment. Firstly, there is the physical damage to fire roads and tracks, with which all walkers will be familiar, as well as the damage done to natural vegetation when the vehicles leave the road altogether. Secondly there is noise, with which walkers will also be thoroughly familiar. The sound of roaring engines carries far enough to destroy the peace and isolation of large tracts of otherwise remote country.

The submission next discussed the problem of finding areas where off road vehicles may be used without causing damage or offence. Bodies responsible for large areas of land, namely the Forestry Commission, Water Board and Lands Department, are in general not kindly disposed towards off road vehicles in the areas under their jurisdiction. The only remaining areas are Crown lands, which although not yet categorised are frequently of a character suitable for inclusion in national parks. It is obvious that areas which are suitably challenging but otherwise relatively valueless will have to be set aside for use by off road vehicles.

Federation recommended firstly that legislation protecting natural areas be made more effective by increasing penalties, providing more information on legitimate areas, registering off road vehicles, providing more rangers, and encouraging the public to report misdeeds.

Secondly, limitations on the advertising of off road vehicles were called for, stating that claims of unlimited vehicular access are false, and suggesting the inclusion of warnings on the use of national parks.

Finally it was recommended that areas suitable for off road vehicles be quickly delineated in order to reduce the impact on natural areas. Further, permission should be necessary for the use of such areas and should be refused to, say, unsilenced bikes. On the same lines, natural areas which should be preserved and are at present unprotected should be identified and signposted immediately.

The submission concluded with a statement that off road vehicles have the potential to destroy the State's last vestiges of wilderness, and hence effective restrictions must be imposed to protect the few natural areas that remain to us.

NEXT YEAR'S EVENTS

Put the dates of these weekends in your diary, and make sure you keep them free:

| | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Annual Reunion | 3rd & 4th April, 1976 |
| S & R Practice | 17th & 18th July, 1976 |
| S & R Demonstration | 16th & 17th October, 1976 |

There is likely to be another S & R Demonstration earlier in the year, perhaps sometime in May.

THE "TRI STATE" TRAIL

Following discussions with the National Parks and Wildlife Service on 2nd October, Federation has received a letter from the Service detailing the proposal so far. The letter was too lengthy to reproduce in full, so its major points are summarised:

The main theme was that the N.P.W.S. agreed completely, as far as we know, with Federation's own ideas on the track. In particular, the standard of the track would vary according to the nature of the area, ranging from zero or minimum marking in wilderness regions, to, presumably, a well built path in tourist areas.

Further, wilderness regions will be avoided altogether if at all possible. The letter states that the Service agrees with Federation policy on wilderness areas, and that "... entry to these by either experienced or inexperienced walkers should not be deliberately encouraged..."

So far the N.P.W.S. has only identified the general corridor, and considered the problems of traversing urban and rural sections. They have also contacted bodies such as the Lands Department and Forestry Commission for assistance and advice.

Their next goal is the determination of the precise location of the track, together with specifications for its construction. When a tentative location for each section of the trail has been decided on, the Service wishes to consult Federation for our general opinion, and to allow interested walkers to inspect the actual route and offer suggestions. "In this way we will ensure that the final location of the trail is decided in the best interests of both park management and those most likely to use it," the letter states.

It is intended that a committee be established to advise and assist with several aspects of the track, and Federation will be invited to send a representative when the committee is formed.

Finally, it was mentioned that although some clubs have made direct enquiries about the trail (specifically Y.M.C.A., M.M.S., Kamerukas), the N.P.W.S. would prefer to deal with a single representative body, namely Federation, and has thus not replied individually to the clubs concerned.

Enclosed with the letter were several maps showing the general route of the trail. Naturally the maps, like the letter, cannot be reproduced in the Newsletter. However, the proposed corridor connects the following points:

Nungatta National Park (NSW/Vic border), Bemboka, Mt Kydra, Bendethera Trig, Nelligen, Corang Peak, Fitzroy Falls, Tahmoor, Mt Colong, Kanangra Walls, Katoomba, Mt Hay, Bilpin, Upper Colo, Dharug National Park, Mt Yenga, Howes Valley, Jerrys Plains, Mt Royal, Salisbury, Barrington Tops, Nowendoc, Yarrowich, Kunderang Brook, Chandler River, New England National Park, Ebor, Guy Fawkes River, Gibraltar Range National Park, Washpool Creek, Richmond Range, Mt Lindesay (NSW/Qld border).

A branch route to Kosciusko National Park leaves the main trail at Mt Kyndra and passes through Nimmitabel, Maclaughlin River, Snowy River and Black Jack Mountain.

Federation would like to hear your comments on the proposal as it is described here. What about a name for the "Track"? Politics being what they are, it appears that the description "tri-state" will be something of a misnomer.

BUSHWALKER REPORTING

Walkers are often the first to see signs of development that may have a serious impact on the quality of a bushwalking area. Eg. New road construction, upgrading of existing roads, land clearing, mineral prospecting, invasion of an area by off road vehicles, etc. Conservation organisations are often hampered by lack of early information. If too much time is allowed to elapse before the appropriate authority or conservation group hears of the problem it may be too late.

If you encounter any developments that might be of interest please let us know by ringing the Conservation Convenor (Ian Olsen - 84 6845 (H) 92 0319(W)), your club delegate, or one of the executive. **DON'T BE DETERRED BY THINKING THAT THE PROBLEM MAY BE KNOWN - IT MAY NOT BE AND IT COULD BE QUITE IMPORTANT!**

If necessary mark up your map to show the area of concern and/or take photographs. Federation will reimburse you for your map or photos.

Refer to the previous Newsletter for a list of specific areas for which information is required. Additions to the list are:

Pine plantations in the area north of Newnes Junction. Federation would like photographs of the clearing carried out, and details of the extent of the area cleared.

The new bush campsites being developed in the vicinity of Bluegum Forest (see separate item in this Newsletter). Photographs are needed of the clearing and tree-felling being carried out at these sites.

TIANJARA FIRING RANGE

The Army has advised that the range boundaries have been adjusted in conjunction with the National Parks and Wildlife Service. The western boundary now lies approximately 1 to 2km west of the Newhaven Gap road.

The Army recommends against entry in to the actual impact area at any time. This is the central region of the range, and is a rectangular area of approximately 48 square km, bounded by the following coordinates on the Tianjara 1:50 000 sheet: 270, 530, 270 620, 340 620, 340 530.

The range is closed when in use, so check with the Army Liaison Officer on 31 0455, extn 591 before attempting to enter the area.

(These references are based on a yard grid. If your map has a metric grid the references may be 990 050, 050 050, 050 970, 990 970. However there are other metric and yard grids which may have different references again. The references just quoted should fit the common maps.)

BORDER RANGES TRIP

Federation is interested in proposals for a Border Ranges national park (on the N.S.W.-Qld. border) and concerned at various threats to the area.

Because a number of people wish to get to know the Border Ranges area better, Federation is considering organising a trip there next Easter. Transport will be by light aircraft in order to save time. There will be about 10 places available, at a cost of around \$50 each.

Not only should the visit to the Border Ranges be most interesting, but the flights up the coast and back should be well worthwhile in themselves. Contact Bruce Vote if you are interested.

24 HOUR WALK

A number of people would like to see the introduction of an annual 24 hour walk in N.S.W. As Federation is the obvious body to organise such an event, we would like comments and suggestions from clubs and individuals.

There are several ways in which a 24 hour walk can be run, but all versions are basically an orienteering event on a grand scale. The Interservice Orienteering type of event is a good model:

A team consists of 2, 3 or 4 competitors, each of whom is issued with a detailed topographical map, a list of checkpoints, and any necessary instruction. Master maps are also available from which accurate checkpoint positions may be copied. Each checkpoint is given a point score ranging from, say, 1 to 10 according to the navigational and physical difficulty of reaching it.

The object of the event is simply to score as many points as possible within 24 hours. There is no fixed route, and each team must decide on the combination of checkpoints and the route which they think best. It is not possible to reach all the checkpoints within the time available.

The event begins around midday, when teams start at intervals of a few minutes. The finish, and sometimes the start, is at one of two or so "hash houses" which are set up to provide food and drink for the competitors. Depending on terrain, a winning team may cover up to 60 miles, but most people would not walk nearly that far.

Some walkers are known to object to events such as this, on the grounds that any competitive element in bushwalking should be discouraged. However the challenge of a 24 hour walk lies not so much in winning, although that is the nominal goal, but in simply seeing how far you can walk and how well you can navigate. It is, in effect, a rather elaborate tiger walk.

Naturally, not all members of associated clubs will be interested in what is undeniably a fairly demanding event. On the other hand, it is hoped that it will not be seen as so strenuous that no-one will enter at all. A 24 hour walk is as hard as you want to make it. Extreme fitness is quite unnecessary - a couple of moderately hard walks on consecutive preceding weekends is ample training, and fun as well.

In other words, it is not intended to run a competition of Olympic class, but an event in which the average N.S.W. bushwalker can try his or her ability, and feel satisfied with his or her performance.

It seems likely that if an annual 24 hour walk is established it will replace the present "Paddy Pallin Orienteering Contest", which is organised by Paddy on behalf of Federation. This event is very poorly attended by members of walking clubs. Paddy and Bob Pallin seem quite interested in supporting a 24 hour event, although the task of organisation is much too great to be left to them alone. If the concept is accepted a committee will have to be established to handle course setting and logistics, both of which are tasks of some magnitude.

Federation would like to know what you think of the basic idea of a 24 hour walking event, and any modifications or suggestions that may occur to you. For the time being, send any comments to the Publications Officer.

BAREFOOT

Recently the Australian Government has introduced quotas on imported footwear. These quotas are intended to protect local footwear manufacturers. Bushwalking boots are included in these quotas, and imports are being kept well below demand. As a result it is difficult to obtain quality boots.

Quota assessors have said walking boots are equivalent to desert boots, and declined to lift the relevant quotas.

To maintain a reasonable supply of quality boots it is necessary to convince the Minister for Manufacturing Industry of our needs. You can help improve the supply of walking boots by writing to:

The Minister for Manufacturing Industry,
Parliament House,
Canberra, A.C.T., 2600

as well as your local Federal member.

In your letter indicate that no local boots suit your requirements, and that the quotas that penalise you are to no good effect.

FIRE

Addendum to National Parks Association Policy on Fire Control in Natural Areas:

"Prescribed burning of large areas is regarded as inadvisable and irresponsible at the present stage of knowledge of its total effects on native environments and ecosystems."

Federation adopted a motion supporting this statement at the October meeting.

While there is probably widespread support among bushwalkers for N.P.A.'s opposition to broad area control burning we may find some difficulty in coming to a consensus of opinion on other aspects of fire in natural areas. For instance:

*Should all wildfire be extinguished as rapidly as possible?

*Should some areas be left unburnt for aesthetic reasons?

We need your opinion so that Federation can develop a fire policy. Refer to N.P.A. "Policy on Fire Control in Natural Areas", 1972, National Parks Journal, January 1073, plus addendum.

GOVERNMENT GRANT UNLIKELY

Federation has written to the Minister for Sport and Recreation, Mr Barraclough, enquiring about the possibility of State Government support, as mentioned in the minutes of the A.G.M. in the last Newsletter.

A reply has been received stating that a fund has been set up from the proceeds of football pools, among other things, but that it will be some time before the fund reaches a useful size. When that time arrives organisations will be approached and invited to make applications for grants. Federation is not very hopeful about the prospects of receiving State funds, as the tone of the letter seemed to be, "Don't call us, we'll call you."

INFORMATION REPORT

New Maps:

The Lands Department has issued the following 1:25,000 maps since the June 1975 Catalogue: Pottsville, Casino, Tatham, Byron Bay, Whiporie, Backwater, Brunswick Heads, Forster, Dungowan, Portland, Vittoria, Freemantle, Eden, Timbillica.

Coorangoola, Doyles Creek, Widden, Wollangambe, Mount Morgan.

These last five have very poor quality 20 metre contours and very few names used by walkers. The southern part of the area which they cover is more accurately shown on the old Wallerawang 1:50,000 maps, which have the same 20 metre contours but cover twice the area for the same cost.

Tim Lamble's Jagungal Wilderness map is now on sale at \$1.50 per copy. The map is in colour with a scale of 1:31:680, 50 ft (15 metre) contours and a 1 kilometre grid. Roads, huts and names have been thoroughly revised by extensive field reconnaissance. It is recommended as the best map of the Jagungal area for walking or ski touring.

The other new map in the Kosciusko area is:

The other new map in the Kosciusko area is the Lands Department's Snowy Mountains Tourist Map, which is a re-hash of existing maps. It may be a reasonable road map but cannot be recommended for walking. Its price is \$1.30.

There are also some new Lands Department 1:25,000 orthophotomaps: Wilberforce, Riverstone, Prospect (to be issued shortly) and Liverpool. This block of orthophotomaps covers some useful orienteering areas on the outskirts of Sydney.

Recently Deceased:

Roy Rudder, one of the three foundation members of the Mountain Trails Club, passed away at the end of October. Rudder's Rift on the Kowmung River was named after him.

Gordon McKern of the National Parks Association, Coast and Mountain Walkers and the Warragamba Walking Club passed away last June.

These two stalwart walkers and conservationists were a valuable link with the early years of bushwalking club history.

Wollangambe Pollution:

The Blue Mountains National Park Advisory Committee is most concerned at a proposal to establish a coal washery at Newnes Junction. The washery is designed to recycle all water used, but the committee is worried that after flood rains the effluent could be washed out of the proposed settling tanks and discharge into the waters of the Wollangambe River (near the sand quarries). This new threat to the Wollangambe water follows the committee's success in forcing the sand miners to recycle their water.

Wulf Hilder, 622 3353
(Information Officer)

PUBLICITY

Federation's Public Relations Officer, Roger Lyle, is looking for original ideas on ways of bringing about greater awareness of Federation among the general public.

Naturally we need better press coverage for Search and Rescue operations, but there must be many ways of publicising ourselves that do not need someone to be lost or injured. For instance, Roger is (or will be) negotiating with the Public Transport Commission to arrange combined rail and walking day trips, with the P.T.C. providing advertising (and of course transport) and Federation providing experienced leaders.

If you can come up with a similarly original idea that will help promote Federation, then let us know. Tell your club delegate, write to Federation, or, best of all, contact Roger directly on 669 4088.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Extracted from the Environmental Impact Statement for A.G.L.'s proposed Plumpton (Sydney) to Newcastle Natural Gas Pipeline:

"On the basis that this pipeline is necessary for overall environmental reasons, the safest location for it is in a national park or area of public recreation as this is one safe from outside interference which may danger the pipeline." (P.4-26)

Shouldn't we then put all our important services and industries in national park and recreation areas?

(A.G.L. plan to lay 8 miles of the 85 mile pipeline through proposed national park land - Marra Marra National Park and an extension of Brisbane Waters National Park.)

NEWSLETTER MATERIAL

The Federation Newsletter is not intended to serve the same purpose as a club magazine, and hence detailed descriptions of trips are inappropriate material. Nevertheless, brief resumes of the highlights of epic or unusual trips would probably be of great interest.

You may, for instance, have been walking overseas, or interstate or in some previously unvisited corner of N.S.W. You may have done a canyon backwards (ie. going upstream), or something like the Kalang Falls - Katoomba - West Wall "Triathlon" (abseiling - tiger walk - rock climbing).

If it was something more than the average bushwalk we would like to hear about it.

Provided that space permits, we may also print private advertisements for such things as secondhand gear for sale, or requests for people to join, say a trip to the Andes. Unless we are swamped with them, private advertisements will be inserted free.

JANUARY NEWSLETTER

The next Newsletter should be available at the Council meeting on January 20th.

As your usual Publications Officer will be in New Zealand during December and early January, please send any material for the January Newsletter to:

Ross Bradstock,
12 Cronin Ave.,
Penshurst, N.S.W. 2222
Phone 57 5670.

The deadline will be Friday, 9th January.

ERRATUM

The second sentence of the second paragraph of the Information Report should read:

"The southern part of the area which they cover is more accurately shown on the old Wallerawang 1:63,360 map with its 15 metre contours. The northern part of the area is covered by Department of National Development 1:50,000 maps, which have the same 20 metre contours but cover twice the area for the same cost."