

NEWSLETTER

of the

BUSHWALKERS OF NEW SOUTH WALES

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

ISSN 0313-2684

EDITORIAL: THE WINDY CREEK AFFAIR

Many bushwalkers, and most ski-tourers, will be aware of the controversy that has arisen over the proposed rebuilding of Windy Creek Hut in the Kosciusko National Park. The hut was about 2.5 m square with two bunks, and was built by the Snowy Mountains Authority in 1956. In 1974 it was destroyed by snow creep. Although the Kosciusko Huts Association has lobbied for its replacement, the Kosciusko National Park has stuck to its policy of no new huts in wilderness areas.

A couple of months ago Federation wrote to the K.H.A. opposing the rebuilding of the hut. K.H.A.'s response was to ask whether Federation's expressed opinion was really representative of N.S.W. walkers.

It may equally well be asked whether K.H.A.'s stand is truly representative of its own members' opinions." Because of the geographical spread of its membership general meetings are not easily held, and an overall consensus on the issue has never been taken.

K.H.A. has, to the best of my knowledge, never really tried to justify its position on this issue. Possibly the reason is that it is very difficult to justify except in terms of "recreational value". The hut was not in a strategic position; it was not on the route to anywhere in particular, and was very little closer to standard routes than Whites River Hut. It was also such a tiny hut that it would be foolhardy to depend on it without the back-up of a tent in case of overcrowding, and if a tent is likely to be needed why bother have a hut anyway?

K.H.A.'s "recreational value" concept is of very doubtful validity. People use the Kosciusko National Park for the sake of what the land has to offer, not because they are attracted to a particular structure, no matter how luxurious or loaded with character. Speaking of character, it is a quality which is acquired only with time, considerable time, and is notably lacking in huts built in the last two decades.

I, and Federation, do not advocate the removal of huts (with a couple of exceptions). The objection is to new huts, whether replacements or otherwise, in an area whose principal value is its wilderness quality. Huts indisputably reduce the wilderness value of an area — just imagine the Kosciusko area if Albina, Seamans and Rawsons Huts were absent.

The quality of the Jagungal wilderness would also be very greatly improved if it too had all huts removed. However most of the huts in this area — Mawsons, Tin, O'Keefes, Cesjacks, Pretty Plain, etc., — possess those other immeasurable qualities: historical value and character. Those qualities guarantee their retention, but should any of these huts be destroyed then those qualities would be lost and there would be no justification for a modern replacement.

ANNUAL REPORTS

TREASURER *Ray Alsop*

Income statements for year ending 30th June, 1976.

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. General Account | |
| Income. | |
| Affiliation fees | 535.60 |
| Interest on bank account | 61.52 |
| Reunion supper collection | 35.39 |
| 1975 Bushwalkers' Ball profit | 756.42 |
| Sale of "Bushwalker" magazines | 3.85 |
| Easter bus trip ticket sales | 1137.00 |
| Donation | 1.00 |
| Subscriptions to Newsletter | 6.00 |
| Advertising in Newsletter | 85.00 |
| | <u>2621.78</u> |
| Expenses. | |
| Affiliation fees | 114.00 |
| Secretarial expenses | 102.60 |
| Conservation committee expenses | 83.76 |
| Rent | 1.00 |
| Printing and stationery | 66.66 |
| Postage | 88.46 |
| Newsletter printing costs | 819.38 |
| Donations | 275.75 |
| Supper at reunion and meetings | 44.91 |
| Cost of Easter bus trip | 1059.43 |
| Post Office Box rental | 42.00 |
| | <u>2697.95</u> |
| CASH DEFICIT FOR YEAR: | <u>\$ 76.17</u> |

2. Search and Rescue Account

Income.

| | |
|---------------------|---------------|
| Donations | 127.00 |
| 1975 Raffle | 410.60 |
| Interest on account | 6.48 |
| | <u>544.08</u> |

Expenses.

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Phone allowances | 35.00 |
| S & R insurance | 94.00 |
| Radio licences | 108.00 |
| Registration of trailer | 12.15 |
| NSW Volunteer Rescue Assn. fees | 10.00 |
| Repairs and replacements | 148.46 |
| | <u>407.61</u> |

CASH SURPLUS FOR YEAR: 136.47

OVERALL CASH SURPLUS
FOR YEAR: 60.30

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Ian Olsen
- Convenor

At the adjourned Annual General Meeting in September 1975 Federation's need for a conservation effort was questioned but the meeting accepted that Federation has a conservative responsibility by virtue of its use of threatened areas.

Since then the Conservation Committee has tried to channel its efforts towards:

- Providing a field information service to conservation organisations
- Responding to threats to the quality and extent of the remaining areas in N.S.W. suitable for bushwalking.

The need for the Field Information Service is evidenced by the fact that all five organisations contacted made requests for assistance. There has been a weak response from bushwalkers to calls for help with the more simple recording tasks. Two of the more difficult requests have remained unanswered. However the urging of bushwalkers to report signs of adverse developments encountered during the course of trips did lead to a number of reports of such activities. Nothing has been saved yet but at least conservation organisations have been made aware of the problems and, where appropriate, authorities have been informed of our opposition.

The committee's efforts towards protection of the bushwalking resource have been spread thinly over the variety of issues listed below. Unfortunately the very limited man-hours available meant that probably no issue has been fully pursued.

- Park proposals for northeast N.S.W.
- University of New England wilderness survey
- Proposed additions to Heathcote National Park
- Name for the "Budawang's" National Park
- Clarence Colliery
- Mt. Budawang fire tower
- Bungonia State Recreation Area Management Plan
- Budawang fires
- Proposed rebuilding of Windy Creek Hut
- Proposed additions to Nadgee Nature Reserve
- Tianjara Firing Range
- Proposed airstrip at Bond Bay, Port Davey.
- University of New England National Estate study
- Land Conservation Council Victorian Alps study
- Border Ranges National Park proposal
- Eastern access to Yerranderie

- Culoul Range mining leases
- Blue Mountains developments
- Wallerawang-Sydney power line
- Myall Lakes plan
- Yadbora Flat sale
- "Funds for the Environment" campaign
- Tri-State Track
- Burra Korain Flat
- Blue Gum Forest camping

During the year representatives of Federation attended the Nature Conservation Council Annual Conference, and the National Parks Association's Eco-Fire Symposium on bushfire control.

Submissions were prepared for the following inquiries:

- Fraser Island Environmental Inquiry
- North Coast Woodchip
- Off-Road Vehicles
- Border Ranges National Park proposal
- Aero-Burning
- North Coast Regional Development Plan
- South-West Tasmania Draft Management Plan

Submission writing has been a time consuming and apparently unrewarding part of the Committee's work. It does however seem necessary to display interest and to present the bushwalkers' point of view.

The Border Ranges bus trip was the one excursion organised during the year. It was considered successful in that it provided about 50 people with an enjoyable weekend gaining a first hand appreciation of areas involved in the issue.

One of the failings of the conservation effort could be the lack of attention given to encouraging greater involvement by walkers. Bushwalkers are generally aware of the problems - they only need stimulation. In any case more workers are required if the present very humble level of activity is to be maintained and improved upon.

Editor's Comment: Federation's deep involvement in conservation has often been criticised on the grounds that we are specifically a bushwalking group, and not a conservation organisation. This charge can be countered simply by looking at the list of issues considered over this last year alone. Few, if any, were not closely related to the preservation of well known and well used bushwalking areas. To fail to become involved in the issues would be to sanction the constant shrinkage of the areas available for bushwalking.

FROM THE INFORMATION BUREAU

Wilf Hilder, - 622-3353

*New Maps. Only two new maps have been published by the Lands Department recently, both at a scale of 1:25 000 - Narrabarba (down near Nadgee) and Quorrobolong (near Wyee). Both these are included in the newly available catalogue of all Lands Department maps. The "Hawkesbury River" tourist map is nearly out of stock - rush if you want one.

*Magazines. The July issue of the Victorian magazine "Ski" is now available from newsagents; ski shops only seem to have outdated issues.

Also available, from Paddy Pallin's and possibly other shops, is the July/August issue of the Catholic Bushwalkers' magazine "Waysider", which is unusually good value this month. Three articles of particular interest are: a description of a week-long trip in the Blue Breaks, with route descriptions; "The Story of Konangaroo", part 1, by Claude Veyret, reprinted from about 1960; and an historical article on Royal National Park.

NEW OFFICE BEARERS

At the Annual General Meeting last month the following office bearers were elected or re-elected:

| | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|--------------|--|
| President | Bruce Vote | 399 9452 | |
| | | 31 7101 (w) | |
| Senior Vice Pres. | Nick Bendeli | 649 2178 | |
| Junior Vice Pres. | Keith Maxwell | 692 2735 (w) | |
| Secretary | Warwick Blayden | 42 6868 | |
| Treasurer | Ray Alsop | 646 1321 | |
| Minutes Secretary | Murray Scott | 520 0750 | |
| | Ian Crawford | | |
| Information Officer | Wilf Hilder | 622 3353 | |
| Conservation | | | |
| Convenor | Dennis Rittson | 95 6060 | |
| Tracks & Access | | | |
| Convenor | Ross Bradstock | 57 5670 | |
| Publications | | | |
| Officer | Peter Tuft | 85 7640 | |
| Public Relations | | | |
| Officer | Ted Hartley | 622 2416 | |
| Ball Convenor | Joy Scott | 520 0750 | |
| Nature | | | |
| Conservation | Roger Lyle | 949 2872 | |
| Council Delegates | Dave Darlington | | |

Search and Rescue Positions:

| | | | |
|-----------|------------|-------------|---------------|
| Director | Bob Pallin | 467 1334(h) | 26 2685(w) |
| Secretary | Sally Bell | 86 1201 | 88 9384 |
| Field | Warwick | 92 1598 | 29 8331 |
| Officer | Daniels | | |
| Rock | Fergus | 86 1201 | 218 9851 |
| Rescue | Bell | | |
| Radio | Bob Mead | 871 8462 | 232 2222 x529 |
| Officers | Mike | | |
| | Richter | 827 1546 | 25 1421 |
| Medical | Dr. Bob | 46 5938 | 929 2752 |
| Officer | Binks | | |

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Ted Hartley, Federation's recently elected Public Relations Officer, is concerned about the number of small, struggling, non-affiliated clubs which exist in Sydney's outer western suburbs. He would like to organise a pool of experienced walkers from the area who can give talks to embryonic clubs on subjects such as walking areas and routes, abseiling, navigational techniques, etc. Although he is aware of several small clubs, Ted would be interested to hear of any more. For anyone able to help in either way, Ted's phone number is 622 2416.

ERRATUM

In the Secretary's report published in the last Newsletter, the fourth line of the second paragraph should have read, " but which are now being looked at", not "not being looked at"

NORTHERN BLUE MOUNTAINS MAPS

It was reported last month that the National Parks Association's Reserves Committee had started work on the compilation of a series of sketch maps covering the Northern Blue Mountains area. This mapping proposal resulted in considerable dissent at the July Council meeting, and in consequence it is planned that the appropriate office bearers should discuss the matter with Greg Hutchison, who is compiling the maps.

Many people at the meeting felt that the availability of sketch maps showing routes, campsites, natural features, etc., would destroy much of the area's very considerable wilderness quality in much the same way that tracks and marked routes would. Others felt that such maps would open up the area to walkers who would not otherwise be capable of visiting it, and would do so without physically altering the area itself. Those opposed to the mapping believed that detailed maps removed much of the challenge from walking, and also that maps do, indirectly, physically alter an area — tracks rapidly grow where popular routes are indicated.

The issue is still open, and promises some lively debate.

FEDERATION DIARY FOR '76 — '77

16th & 17th October, 1976 — Search and Rescue Demonstration

26th & 27th March, 1977 — Annual Reunion

16th & 17th July, 1977 — Search and Rescue Practice

16th September, 1977 — 1977 Bushwalkers' Ball

15th & 16th October, 1977 — Search and Rescue Demonstration.

POLICY ON WILDERNESS USE

Some months ago a Draft Policy on Man Made Structures in Bushwalking Areas was published in the Newsletter. In the process of reviewing the comments on the draft, its author, Ross Bradstock, decided that the subject of the policy was really only a part of the much broader subject of wilderness use in general.

Accordingly, he has proposed a draft format, or series of headings, for a general Federation policy on bushwalkers' use of wilderness. There are two principal reasons for having such a policy: Firstly, so that Federation will have formalised guidelines for decision making on questions of wilderness usage; and secondly, so that bushwalkers in general will have guidelines for their personal behaviour in wilderness areas.

The suggested headings under which the policy can be formulated are:—

1. Garbage disposal and hygiene
2. Construction and use of navigational aids
3. Construction and use of permanent shelters
4. Resource usage (eg. firewood)
5. Flora, fauna and geology.

Activity in each of these categories has specific effects on wilderness. These effects will have to be evaluated as far as possible, and policy decisions based on them.

Much work will be involved before the final policy is completed. Comments and suggestions should be sent to Ross Bradstock (who is now officially Tracks and Access Convenor) C/- Federation, or phone 57-5670.

BUSHWALKERS' BALL

17th September - 8 p.m. - 2 a.m.
Chatswood Civic Centre - FANCY DRESS
"SHADE" plus "REEDY RIVER BUSHMEN"

Bring your own supper, drinks, glasses

\$5.00 Single

NOTE: The printing of tickets has been delayed. They will be distributed to Clubs, together with S. & R. raffle tickets, by 14th August. Tickets may then also be purchased from: Paddy Pallin's - city Mountain Equipment - Crow's Nest Southern Cross Equipment - all branches or by mail: send payment and stamped, self-addressed envelope to:-

F.B.W. Ball
4 Electra Street.,
Heathcote, N.S.W. 2233.
Enquiries - 520-0750

WHY-I-GO-WALKING

This is becoming embarrassing. The winning essay is still not available for publication. Two weeks ago it entered the postal system en route to the Publications Officer. Its fate is anyone's guess. We do know the winner's name - he is Trevor Quested of Greystanes - but we don't have his address. Congratulations Trevor - please come forward to claim your \$20.00. And by the way, do you have another copy of your essay?

THE BORDER RANGES - SAVED?

In a recent, little-publicised announcement the Premier, Mr. Wran, stated that the planned road onto Levers Plateau would definitely not be built. In addition, the government would set up a body to investigate many aspects of the whole border region, covering matters ranging from alternative employment for forestry employees to a possible national park for the Ranges themselves.

The Levers Plateau road, and the destruction it would bring, was the core of the Border Ranges issue. Thus for the time being, at least, the immediate threat to the Ranges has been removed. But the issue has not quite died yet - not until the Ranges are given the ultimate(?) protection of national park status.

REALLY!

At the Mountain Lagoon Search and Rescue weekend, some person or persons unknown destroyed the evening atmosphere with - a portable television! One wonders why they bothered to come - I mean, if a bushland evening is so unpleasant that it requires the synthetic drama of the TV in order to escape it, what possible pleasure could the television devotees get from the bush at any time?

OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

This article consists of a resume of a submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on the Environment and Conservation. It represents the findings and recommendations of the "National Symposium on Off-Road Vehicles in Australia" held in Canberra during February this year.

"Off-road vehicles: some policy, planning and management considerations."

The symposium decided that, "The use of vehicles off the road is a valid recreational pursuit which has to be planned for and strictly managed and controlled in defined areas," and hence that "roads . . . should be permitted in some natural areas, subject to special controls."

The use of ORVs is going to increase and it is apparent that remote areas are going to get the most increased use. The future is likely to see the greatest increase in small four-wheel-drives and two-wheel-drives with limited-slip differentials. The symposium played down bikes - possibly because of the limited bike representation. There is a need to broaden community concern to include any vehicle in any natural environment. There is a need to widely circulate the opinions expressed at the symposium, including among the manufacturers and distributors of ORVs. It is also important that advertisers and the media encourage responsible use of ORVs.

Those at the symposium would like to see a code of ethics for all users of natural environments formulated in conjunction with the users and the land managers. Any competitions organised should be run through clubs so that they are properly controlled and regulated. There is a great need for objective measurements of impacts by standardised techniques.

The symposium recommended the principle of multi-use zoning for any recreational areas, and land managers should consult all users when developing the zoning. Significant bushland areas should be left free of vehicular use and a list of such areas should be circulated. Land managers should ensure that carrying capacities are not exceeded. ORV users should pay in order to cover management and rehabilitation costs.

There is a need to explain the present laws and to bring in specific new laws for ORVs - after consultation with user groups. These laws should be uniform throughout Australia.

FOUND

At the Mountain Lagoon Search and Rescue weekend:
One Instamatic camera
Contact: W. Byrne - Phone Bilpin 67-1178
Sunnydeck Strawberry Nursery,
Mountain Lagoon Road.

This Newsletter is published monthly and is distributed free, through the clubs, to all members of affiliated clubs. Mailing list subscriptions: \$3.00.

The next issue will be available at the Council meeting on 21st September. The deadline will be Monday, 13th September.

All correspondence concerning the Newsletter should be addressed to the Publications Officer, who is:

Peter Tuft,
11/30-32 Ethel Street.,
Eastwood. 2122.
85-7640 (h) - 888-7227 (w)

All other correspondence should be sent to the Secretary at the address on Page 1.