

BUSHWALKERS OF NEW SOUTH WALES

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

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THE ETTREMA STORY

The Mining Warden's hearings of 1978 resulted in the creation of a reserve covering most of the Ettrema Wilderness, in which Mining Lease applications (of which there were several) were refused. But four small Claims remained at Jones' Ck., Tolwong and Yarramunmum Ck.

Our initial delight at the Minister's action gave way to dismay when it became apparent that the holder of the claims, Mr. Doyle, intended to proceed even without additional leases and applied for road access to these claims. FBW and other groups objected to these access roads in Feb. 1979, and the Mining Warden's decision has not yet been announced.

Meanwhile, Mr. Doyle had separately sued six groups of conservation bodies, initially including the Federation as joint defendant, \$20,000 each for defamation because of submissions opposing his Mining Lease applications. This fact is by now well known amongst bushwalking clubs, and members may be forgiven for fearing the worst in the absence of explanation from FBW office bearers. This silence has been due to our reluctance to aggravate the alleged defamation by republishing the paragraphs in question. Recent advice from our Barrister indicates that the writs, including the quotation, may be published if done so in full, without abridgement or comment. This will cost some, each being several pages, and we propose do to this in co-operation with the NPA, so members will be reassured of the responsible nature of our original submission.

To summarise court proceedings to date, FBW, as co-sponsors with NPA, SBW and South Coast Cons. Soc. of a formal Objection to the Mining Warden, were sued for \$20,000 in March 1978. Five similar writs were served on other conservation groups. Colin Ferguson, our solicitor and a member of NPA, briefed a barrister, Mr. Alloway, to defend all six actions at Wollongong District Court. At the first hearing Mr. Doyle failed to appear, and the writs were struck out, being not properly drawn up. But seven new writs were applied for, and a second hearing Mr. Justice Gee found that the case could go ahead to a full hearing. The amended writs in their final form have not yet been served, but in their draft form SBW and FBW have been dropped from the list of defendants, and so appear to be free of direct involvement. But Mt. Drutt Bushwalking Club and the NPA are still in it, and clearly we must support these member organizations, and that means financially.

The first hearing cost the six defendant groups together about \$900, but the plaintiff was ordered to pay. The second hearing cost

about the same, but the Judge has not yet ruled on who pays. If at the next hearing we are successful in having six of the new writs struck out, that will cost about the same again, but at least one writ seems likely to go to a full hearing, the cost of which, for barrister, subpoenaed witnesses and court charges, could run to \$4,000, which we may not be able to recover, even though we are confident of winning eventually. Colin Ferguson has to date given over \$2,000 worth of his professional service as our solicitor, free of charge, but can not be expected to do so indefinitely.

The issues at stake are important, apart from the seven times \$20,000. If conservation bodies should be found to have defamed Mr. Doyle and ordered to pay damages on account of responsibly worded letters to Ministers and formal Objections under the Mines Act, then PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN ANY GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKING PROCESS WOULD BE THREATENED. This must be of concern to the NSW Government, but feelers to date have given no promise of financial assistance. Like any other bloke in the street, lumbered with a law suit, we are on our own!

Please send cheques made out to "Federation of Bushwalking Clubs Ettrema Fund" or make a tax-deductible donation to the ACF, suggesting, by separate accompanying letter, that the funds be directed to the above Fund.

MURRAY SCOTT

WOLLEMI NATIONAL PARK

Recently, as most bushwalkers would now be aware, the Minister for Planning and Environment, Hon. Mr. Landa, announced the Wollemi National Park. Its boundary closely follows that of Federation's Northern Blue Mountains National Park Proposal.

When gazetted, it will be the second biggest park in the State containing the largest remaining wilderness area - the Colo Hunter. Securing this area as a national park has long been a goal, not only of Federation, but of the Colong Committee, Colo Committee and National Parks Association.

The protection of large wilderness areas is especially important for nature conservation. The Wollemi Park should not only be important for this but is also admirably suitable for passive outdoor recreation such as bushwalking rockclimbing and canyoning. These activities, indulged in by members of Federation Clubs, are usually not detrimental to the maintenance of natural eco-systems.

Gazettal of the new park will probably take place in several months. In that time boundaries will be sorted out.

This new park, together with the Vadbilliga and Tuross National Parks, represents excellent progress by the NSW Government in the field of wilderness conservation.

DAVID NOBLE

WHAT'S NEW

Noticed in the shops:

Algona Maps of Whites River - Jagungal, and Maddison Hut - Tom Groggin \$2.50 each.

Discover Australian National Parks by Robert Raymond \$4.95

Outdoor Gear You Can Make Yourself - M & B LaMoreaux \$5.00

New products now out in the freeze dry line now include Freeze Dried Yogurt "Orange Flavour".

If you can pick up a copy of Mountaineering 1979, published by MUMC (\$2.00), it has interesting articles on the Snowy River - Little River just over the Victorian Border.

F.B.W. Newsletter JUNE 1979, Page 1

Also Supplement to "The Sydney Daily News"

legal wrangling goes on.

I define the area as being bounded by the old Wool Road (Nerriga-Nowra), the Endrick and Shoalhaven Rivers, and Yalwal-Boolijang Creeks, all this being located some 70 km west of Nowra. Ettrema Creek is one of the streams that flow within this boundary - a tributary of the Shoalhaven.

Probably the first thing one notices about Ettrema is that it is so unlike the Budawangs on the other side of the road, so to speak. No double cliff lines, no outstanding peaks (Pigeon House), no unusual outcrops (like the Castle). What is there to draw one to this area? - If any comparison is to be made, then the Grose Valley would be the best example. To me, Ettrema means clear sparkling pools on warm days, good walking routes (except for that bloody hakea) and peace. Peace is what Ettrema means to me.

Most walkers to the Shoalhaven River know of the ruins that were Tolwong Mines. Located early this century, a company was floated and spent \$23,000 installing aerial cableways down the steep sides of the river, and one across the river itself. A machine power plant was installed to run the cable, as well as supplying power to the mines. Also constructed was a modern smelter and buildings. Unfortunately little time was actually proving the mineral outcrop.

It was found that despite all their work, the lead did not warrant all that expenditure. The ore (containing arsenic, copper and lead) also had a high proportion of tin, which made treatment difficult. Tin was also fetching a poor return on the markets, so it was not too surprising that the company went into liquidation (1912).

Over the years, other miners have looked at Tolwong Mines, but limited reserves of ore, difficult access and a complicated ore seem to have deterred development. This is one of the sites where the current application applies.

A second application has been held on Jones Creek - a tributary of Ettrema Creek. "Considerable interest was aroused" by the discovery in September 1907 of a lode which assayed 51 oz. of silver per ton. A company was formed to mine this lease. This outcrop was situated in a deep valley, and access was to be set up via a railway or an aerial ropeway.

By 1911, 400 tons of ore had been extracted but not treated. The previous rich value of the ore had not continued, and further assays had shown the principal metal as zinc. With the problem of access, it was decided to try for overseas capital to support the mine. The idea was to set up a flying fox up to the escarpment, then build a branch line out to the proposed Federal Rail Line (Canberra to Nowra).

From 1908 to 1913 work had been spasmodic. The capital situation was exhausted, so one of the company directors had gone overseas, but the outbreak of war stopped that idea. Leases have been taken out over the years, but all appear to have done no more than prospect.

Endrick River -

A track leads to Wileys or Willys Creek, where extensive gold workings were located. This was discovered when a bullock driver went looking for a stray. About 3 km downstream from the falls was a pinnacle of white quartz over 30 metres high (the only deposit in the neighbourhood) in which copper had been found (1847). Copper traces can still be found in the river but not the pinnacle.

Ettrema Creek -

It appears on Major Mitchell's map of eastern NSW in 1834 where it was also named. Most of its course appears recorded so that it would seem that at least it had been visited round that period. The Rev. W.B. Clarke looked at the district between Ettrema and the Endrick River in 1860.

Bundundah Creek -

There is carboniferous granite on Bundundah Creek near Yalwal which is considered to be the source of mineralisation on Jones Creek and Tolwong Mine.

In 1883 it was reported that a Capt. W.R. Reynolds had started a copper mine on the creek. Six years later, a silver lode (Silver Dell Creek) was being prospected, but returns were not encouraging.

The waters of Danjera dam cover the big mining town of Yalwal. Today it is a peaceful valley, and the only threats come after rain when brown water tumbles over the spillway and down to the Shoalhaven.

Gold had been found in the various streams, but the source of this alluvial remained undiscovered till August 1872, when Griffiths and party located the main lode. Soon leases were pegged on both sides of Danjera Creek. The main period of mining occurred between 1872 and 1890. It continued spasmodically till boosted in 1931-8 - the depression years. Initially, shafts were driven into the hills, but later were made into open cut mining.

The tranquil and unhurried way of life of today belies the thriving village that once lived, worked there - the batter of stamps worked 24 hours a day, stopping in a deafening silence at midnight on Saturday. A small over-

grown cemetery on a grassy hill records the deaths of the three Payne children from diphtheria - one, aged 1-year old, died 17th May 1911, the others, aged three and five, died the next day.

The great fires of "Black Saturday", 14th January, 1939, burnt nearly everything, and Yalwal was never rebuilt. The fields always had litigation problems, declining mineral supply and the depression tended to hinder any real progress.

Summary -

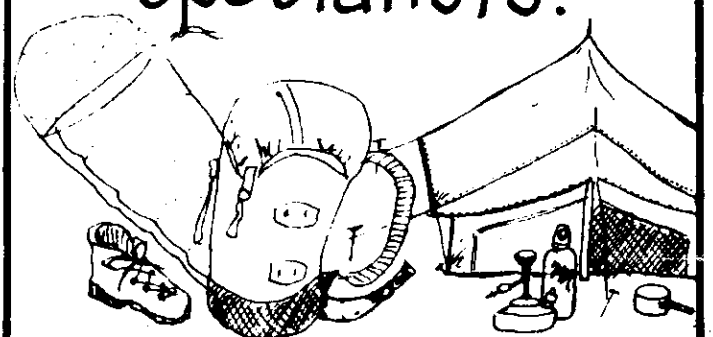
Most of the recorded history of the Ettrema area is mining. Probably there is still some wealth hidden, but every mining venture has ended as being overall uneconomical. An exploration company did a survey in the late 1960's of the Shoalhave and feeder streams. They were reportedly working for a very big mining company. It is probably significant that no leases were taken out to protect those sites mentioned above.

I personally don't find the actions of individuals to prospect objectional, but obviously large-scale mining, with road access and thundering lorries, is not what I want to see (or hear) in any park or park proposal. Previous mining operations tend to confirm - access very hard for poor returns.

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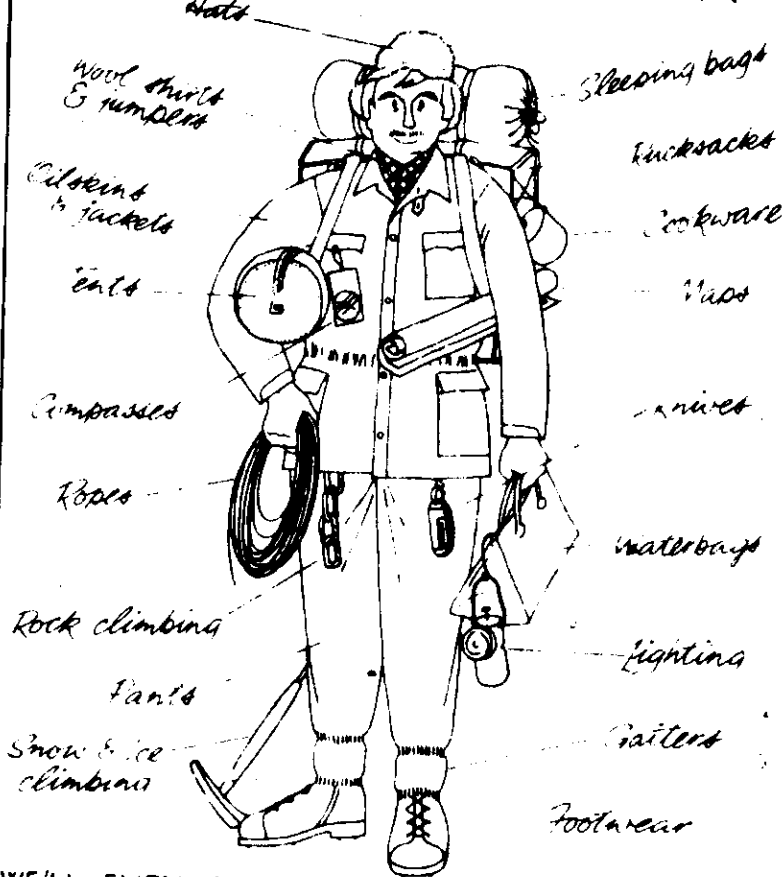
Values: The values of wilderness can be described as being both the PHYSICAL and INTANGIBLE attributes of each area.

The following items are extracted from the Federations submission to the Tasmanian Department of Environment in relation to the proposed HEC Gordon River Hydro-Electric Study. As such they are seen as an initial attempt to define wilderness value.

1. **PHYSICAL VALUES:** The physical values of wilderness are as follows:
 - 1.1 **Topography:** Wilderness areas are characterised by a diversity of landforms and climate, and by land types. Climate influences land forms, and in South West Tasmania, several clear types are represented. These are: alpine lakeland, heathland, moorland, mountain, rock, river systems, glacial lakes, coastline.
 - 1.2 **Earth:** The topography is basically determined by the earth (soil) history.
 - 1.3 **Water:** Wind and water action shape the landform. In no place is there a duplicate creation of landforms by these two elements.
 - 1.4 **Flora and Fauna:** The character of wilderness, and the wilderness values are enhanced by the representation of a diverse flora and fauna communities and species. Because of its size, wilderness usually provides suitable habitat for the protection of both common and rare flora and fauna. The natural life style can occur without unnecessary hinderance by Man and his influence.
 - 1.5 **Aesthetics:** These comprise of landscape design, historical sites (including aboriginal sites), and unusually attractive landforms which have a greater density of visitor-usage. (In South West Tasmania these would include Federation Peak, Frenchmans Cap, Precipitous Bluff, Gordon River, Western Arthur Range, The Spires, Denison Range, the South Coast, and the Cradle Mtn-Lake St. Clair National Park.
 - 1.6 **Atmosphere:** There are two types: (1) that which is usually the influence of climate on landforms, and (2) the challenge of recreational activity.
 - 1.7 **Financial:** The monetary worth of wilderness to a community, through the cost of visitation to a wilderness area for the national economy; the stimulation of employment through the tourist promotion of acceptable recreation types of activities. That is to say, wilderness values cannot be considered alone without some consideration being given to the affects of having such a wilderness, and its overall importance to providing revenue and employment through a variety of ways and methods. (For example, the Tourist Industry, Outdoor Wholesalers and Retailers, Recreational Guiding Services rely heavily in wilderness areas for income.)
2. **INTANGIBLE VALUES:** The intangible values of wilderness are more difficult to define, as they are strongly influenced by arbitrary feelings and motivations. They are as follows:
 - 2.1 **Quality:** The atmosphere of isolation and self-dependance which is experienced in smaller regions which are relatively untouched.
 - 2.2 **Recreational Attributes:** The perception of being a part of the natural cycle, and of being a part of nature; exposed to the challenge of the physical qualities and seeking inspiration from the intangible wilderness values. The main recreational values of wilderness are:
 - 2.2.1 Its solitude and therefore its spiritual refreshment.
 - 2.2.2 Adventure and challenge through self-reliance in a natural area.

- 2.3 **Scientific:** Social health is also achieved partially through viewing wilderness from its perimeters and also partly in the knowledge that large areas do exist where it is possible to escape the stress and pressures of life in a modern society.
- 2.4 **Aesthetic Qualities:** The intangible aesthetic wilderness values can be simply defined as being representative of an individuals beliefs and feelings in regard to wilderness areas. There is often an attachment by an individual to a specific wilderness area because of a challenge which has been overcome, or because of a desire to further educate himself in the physical attributes of that region.
- 2.5 **Scientific:** The scientific value of wilderness is also an intangible, and is defined as the potential which each wilderness area has for study into genetic diversity, gene pools, natural habitat, ecosystems, biology or other scientific study required to further general knowledge into natural laws, life cycles, medicine, disease, anthropology, sociology etc.
- 2.6 **Educational:** Simply the way in which wilderness areas benefit the education of the Australian community through natural laws. Many televised documentaries have stressed the need to conserve the scarce commodity of wilderness in order to conserve natural areas for recreation and wildlife habitat.

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ROGAINING POSTPONED

Well, May has been and gone but the 24 hour Orienteering (sorry, rogaining) event promised in last December's Newsletter hasn't. For various reasons it has been postponed to October 6th & 7th, and that is final and definite unless we get no starters at all.

There is something of a clash of dates in that the Federation Ball is on Friday, 5th October, but that shouldn't stop you entering the rogaining. To help make it easy a bus direct to the venue will depart from the Ball at midnight, and you will be able to sleep in late on Saturday before the next night's marathon. Of course there will also be buses going up on Saturday morning from Central.

Anyone who can survive a medium day walk without feeling exhausted should have a bash at rogaining. It's quite OK to feel exhausted after 24 hours of walking - you don't have to be a champion tiger walker to enter, just determined. Sure, you'll feel exhausted when its finished, but you'll feel great too.

We will very shortly be sending leaflets and entry forms to the clubs. Put the date in your diary or on your walks programme.

FINALLY, THE SOUTH-WEST BOOK!

A comprehensive work on all aspects of South-West Tasmania - history, natural environment, recreation and conservation. 300 pages, 400 black and white photos, maps and diagrams. The book has finally been released. The price is only \$11.70. The book can be obtained by mail order or in person from

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PADDY PALLIN FOUNDATION

The Foundation has announced the grants for this year. They are as follows:

The Budawang Committee for publication of "Pigeon House and Beyond"	\$1,000
The Colo Committee for studies in the Colo/Hunter Wilderness	\$ 600
Mr. Martin Curtis	\$ 25
The Colong Committee	\$ 500
South-West Tasmania Committee for the films on the South-West Tasmanian Wilderness Society	\$ 500
for salary of a project officer	\$1,500
The Federation of Bushwalking Clubs (N.S.W.)	\$ 800
for production of S. & R. pamphlet, member club lists and for other purposes	\$ 75
Rozelle Ramblers for equipment hire	

Applications for grants in 1980 close on 29th February.

REUNION REPORT

The 1979 Annual FBW Reunion was held at Gunderman Creek in Charug National Park. Attendance was a meagre 70 persons.

Mountain Equipment prize vouchers for \$25 and \$12.50 each were awarded for campfire acts (Mt. Druitt Bushwalkers 1st and 2nd) and the Tug'o'war (Ramblers 1st, Sutherland 2nd).

Three Paddy Pallin prize vouchers for \$25 each were awarded for the photographic print competition as follows:

ADRIAN TEAGUE - best picture any date
IAN OLSEN - best pre and post 1970
comparative pair
THE RAMBLERS - best nostalgic picture(s)
pre 1970.

Many thanks are due to the NP & WS for their site; Paddy Pallins and Mountain Equipment for their generous donations; to Catholic Bushies for arranging keys and parking; to the Ramblers for the loo; to Sutherland Club for firewood; Jan Winters for cutting the book and to those who brought or lent

HELICOPTERS & SEARCHING

Here are just a few comments from someone who was lucky enough to have a ride in Dick Smith's helicopter during the last Search & Rescue practice at Medlow Gap on 26th & 27th May. And many thanks too to Dick for his very generous provision of such a useful machine.

1. It is surprisingly difficult to spot walkers from the air even when the helicopter flies low and slow, and the bush is relatively open such as in the Wild Dogs.

2. By far the greatest single aid in spotting people is colour contrast - bright yellow, orange or red. The usual grey/green/brown clothes of walkers are almost totally invisible from the air. This applies even from only a hundred or so feet elevation and a couple of hundred yards distance.

3. Vigorous movement is also a great aid to spotting.

4. The only way to be sure you will be seen is to make a signal that will penetrate the tree cover, i.e. a big smoky fire. Smoke flares are no good because they don't have enough heat to carry the smoke above the trees.

5. If you are the object of a search and a helicopter flies straight over without seeing you, don't be surprised. Get out your bright coloured gear, find the clearest spot within a hundred yards, and work flat out building a big smoky fire so that he will find you when he comes back for a second look a little later. Conclusion: A helicopter, flying low and slow with skilled observers aboard (i.e. bushwalkers) can be a tremendous aid to searchers. But its chances of success are still slim unless the lost party makes a correspondingly big effort to be seen.

Remember: bright colours, vigorous movement and lots of smoke.

NAMOI VALLEY DOWN RIVER

Narrabri Bushwalking Club's annual canoe race will be held on 15th July. Various classes are included, such as opens and juniors, men and women. Entries close on 8th July.

For further information contact

GRAHAM NELSON,
P.O. Box 94,
Narrabri 2390
Phone (067) 92-1440

Entry fee is \$2 for open events and \$1 for juniors. Trophies will be presented on the day of the race.

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