

SAVE COLONG **bulletin**

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KNOWLEDGE WITHOUT PITY MAY WELL BE THE GREATEST DANGER THAT BESETS THE WORLD (*John Vyvyan*)

This is our last issue before Christmas. The conservation movement is facing a crisis in this country. The mining industry is set for another boom and the lottery philosophy of Australians is to get in and tear it out quickly, to make money while we can. Yet perhaps we only have ten years to preserve what we have left. Our natural resources are vanishing before our eyes. It is a tremendously serious position with the Liberal Government cutting back drastically on its aid to conservation, thereby alienating many of its supporters.

Just over two per cent of Australia consists of dedicated National Parks, and much of that is in desert country that nobody else wants. At present threats include logging on Mt. Werong, concern for the maintenance of Heathcote National Park, Kakadu, the Border Ranges, Myall Lakes, South West Tasmania, to name but a few.

Scientists and professors are crying out that forests will be gone and then it will be too late. Conservationists are not just bearded hippies anymore. In all people is the desperate need to have wilderness in which to recuperate and recover from the pushing of over-population. Why does the Forestry Commission go on rolling and never change?

Along with conservation of forests goes the conservation of species, not just threatened and rare marsupials but ordinary animals such as dogs, cats, monkeys, rabbits and rats who are submitted to suffering in the name of science. It should be stressed that at present nearly 70% of animal experiments are for commercial and not medical purposes. These include tests for cosmetics, fire-extinguishers, pesticides, food colourings, house-hold products and weapons. To give just one example out of thousands — a common test required before a new product can be released on the market is the L.D.50 in which it is observed how long it takes half the animals to die of a lethal dose. Rabbits force-fed with lipstick often die in agony over prolonged periods of time from ruptured stomachs. Their heads are held in boxes so they cannot move.

There are no government or state statistics available as to the amount of animals used in experiments, which indicates an extraordinary lack of supervision in this area. No independent inspectors are allowed into laboratories, and there is no law to prevent scientists from inflicting whatever pain they wish, although the man in the street would be prosecuted for a similar offence. This is an area where a governmental inquiry is urgently needed. (See Peter Singer's book, "Animal Liberation")

Let us all stop worrying about what we are going to buy for Christmas and put that energy into saving other non-human inhabitants of this earth. After all, we breed and manipulate whole species, wiping out some, genetically selecting others, and this management must bring with it greater responsibilities.

Let people help by writing letters to parliamentarians and newspapers, by reading to increase knowledge, and joining conservation and animal protection groups. Let people wherever possible turn their eyes off their own person towards the world, see what pangs it undergoes, what convulsions in which thousands and thousands are caught and suffer untold miseries, and let their hearts go up. Let each one of us realise that he or she is part of the great battle and has a role to play in it. Let him or her be fully aware of this and bear with joy his responsibilities.

\$3.25m. FOR PARKLANDS

The Colong Committee congratulates the Wran Government on its decision to increase the allocation for parkland acquisition and development by 75% from \$2m. to \$3.5m. The high priority given to the acquisition of land at Myall Lakes, is particularly gratifying. Other areas to benefit include Morton National Park, Brisbane Water National Park, Kosciusko National Park, Mount Kaputar National Park, Sturt National Park and Werrikimbe National Park.

The Committee also welcomes the Government's adoption of a goal of 10m. acres of parkland within seven years (a figure more than double the present area), provided a reasonable proportion of the additional parkland is located where it will be readily accessible. We believe that if this programme is completed it will rate in the future as the Government's greatest and most lasting achievement.

Large areas of scenic land ideally situated as parklands do not require any expenditure on acquisition because they are Crown Lands. We refer in particular to the northern and southern Blue Mountains and the Border Ranges. Both these areas would, however, be enhanced as national parks by the acquisition of some adjoining freehold lands.

The main obstacle to the creation of a Border Ranges National Park is not land acquisition costs, but employment for timber workers. Money spent on providing alternative employment for these workers would therefore be just as effective in providing parklands as money spent on land acquisitions, though little of it would be allocated to the N.P. & W.S.

We hope that the proposed Border Ranges Economic Inquiry will examine possible sources of such funds. The C.C. believes that alternative employment should be provided by means of a re-forestation programme to be funded by the allocation of Softwood Agreement and other funds available to the Forestry Commission. These funds could be augmented by State or Commonwealth Government grants. Some Dept. of Decentralisation and Development funds should also be available for stimulating employment in the district other than that provided by rainforest bashing.

The preservation of existing parklands is another step which will effectively increase the area available for public recreation and enjoyment without the necessity for additional expenditure on land acquisition. We refer to the revocation of mining leases in Myall Lakes National Park.

Mineral Deposits Ltd. completed the mining of 100 feet high forested hills behind SANDBAR at the northern entrance to Smith's Lake over three years ago. Inspection by some of our members two weeks ago showed that regeneration on large exposed areas has been a dismal failure. We are grateful for the recent inspection visits of Messrs. Hills and Landa for, obviously embarrassed, the company is now erecting protective fencing and has already planted over 1000 new native shrubs.

Our enquiries indicate that Mineral Deposits Ltd. employs only a handful of local people; most of the labor force on the two dredges operating at Bridge Hill are itinerant workers. We believe that as this Company has other leases outside the borders of the proposed 96,000 acre Myall Lakes National Park, they should be persuaded by the Government to transfer their operations elsewhere. We believe the lease states that should such an eventuality occur, no compensation would be payable by the Government. The Government.

The revocation of these mining leases requires no outlay of public funds, but simply the implementation of declared A.L.P. policy.

BIRDS IN PINE AND NATIVE FORESTS

A study has been carried out in Sunny Corner State Forest and the adjacent Winburndale Reserve on the Central Tablelands of the Great Dividing Range by H.J. de S. Disney and A. Stokes of the Australian Museum. "The survey clearly shows that the loss in diversity of species and actual numbers of individuals is very great when native forest is removed for pines. It also demonstrates the great importance to native birds of holes in trees for breeding, and that in general most native trees will not have suitable holes until they are fifty to one hundred years old. If eucalypts were planted instead of pines, and the stand was evenly aged with no holes or understorey, the breeding diversity would presumably be similar to that of pines. Although the number of breeding species would potentially be the same as in dry sclerophyll (17 species) perhaps the lack of holes would reduce this number to ten, similar to the pines.

"Our survey shows the urgent need for research into the size and heights of native forests that need to be left for the forest to retain its fauna. At the present time nothing is known about the size of the breeding territories of Australian birds in native forest."

EUCALYPT FORESTS: A RESOURCE OR A REFUGE?

More than half the forest in eastern Australia — the dry sclerophyll and Savannah woodland — has disappeared since European settlement. The tall open or wet sclerophyll forests were too heavy for manual clearing but the development of powerful tractors in recent years and the increase in population pose a serious threat to this forest cover and to some of the species of native mammals which inhabit it.

Dr. C. H. Tyndale-Biscoe, Reader in ANU's Department of Zoology, has done more than 20 years research in the ecology of wild-life both in New Zealand forests and the eucalypt forests of New South Wales and Queensland.

Dr. Tyndale-Biscoe says "About 10-20 of the species of indigenous mammals are wholly dependent on the forests for their survival and have evolved adaptations to suit a stable environment. The rest are less dependent and use the forest mainly for shelter and can tolerate changes to the forest."

With a group of students, Dr. Tyndale-Biscoe carried out extensive research in forests near Tumut over a period of eight years. Their studies showed that the wholly dependent species, like the greater glider and the mountain possum have evolved adaptations of behaviour and physiology which maintain their populations at low but very stable densities.

"As part of these studies we also followed the fate of the animals after felling. The area of forest chosen for our study was almost surrounded by pine plantations and cleared from land where gliders cannot live so the marked animals displaced during the first year had only the next year's block in which to find refuge."

"By marking every animal when caught after tree fall we were able to determine its short term survival if recovered in adjacent blocks during succeeding years. Very few animals were harmed at tree fall because they were able to glide free as the tree went over. Nevertheless, more than three-quarters of them were never seen again, and of those which were recaptured in the same season, 73 per cent were caught during the next eight days when most had lost weight and the females had lost their pouch young."

"Reliable and worthwhile information cannot be collected in a short time and the deplorable thing is that changes to the forests are going on at such a rate that society may not be able to exercise its rightful choice between eucalypt forests as a resource and eucalypt forests as a refuge."

— from the ANU Reporter, May 1975.

Cash for parks

OLD FAITHFUL, Wyoming

— President Ford has proposed that Congress spend more than \$A1,000 million during the next decade to expand the nation's public parklands. His proposal falls in line with his "quality of life" theme for his presidential campaign.

"Financial Review" report 31/8/76

On the Australian scale this would mean some \$70m. of Commonwealth Funds for parklands. This would be enough to finance a reforestation programme at Kyogle thereby providing employment for any forestry workers displaced by the creation of the Border Ranges National Park. It could provide a services corridor for the Blue Mountains, and substantial land acquisitions there for the creation of the Greater Blue Mountains National Park. It could enable the creation of Kakadu National Park, with an adequate park service. There might even be enough left over to provide some employment in Tasmania in projects that do not involve the destruction of wilderness.

PINE PLANTATIONS

We went up to the Blue Mountains because we thought we would find real forest there. But when we came round a corner in the road near Mt. Werong, suddenly there was stretched before us miles of bare landscape where all trees were gone. There was not one sapling, not one stalk, not one leaf in those endless acres of earth. Rows of dead burnt trunks had been bulldozed into lines which ran backwards to where the sky stopped them. There were no birds, no animals, no calling; there was no life, and no sound and no movement. Even the wind could not provoke action. It was like suddenly crossing borders into lands of warfare where incendiary bombs had inflamed whole landscapes, and denuded them until they were raw, and just wisps of flattened weed: and armies had come with sound and destruction, and then departed again, leaving the bare earth ringing. We were the follow-up witnesses.

"It's the Forestry Commission clearing native forests to plant pines," the experienced conservationist said.

"Why are they doing it?" I squeaked.

"When the Forestry Commission starts, they can't stop. If only they could use land already cleared, or import our timber from other countries. Reputable studies have shown that about ten species of wild-life are wholly dependent on eucalypt forest, and they just die when the trees are felled. And scientists have proved bird breeding is two or three times greater in native forests. There are less species found too, when the original trees are replaced by uniform stands of pines."

We stared in horror, our eyes popping like rabbits you trap in corners. If you could have imported the Public *en masse* to this site, there would have been instant uprisings and riots, waving of placards and blockades in front of Parliament House. People would have thrown stones in the windows of commissioners in the dead of night, but the destruction had been done in secret, the mad ploughing had been done and finished before people who paid for it knew of the warfare against their own earth.

The experienced conservationist said, "The Forestry Commission works in a fantastic way. Its a very efficient method that turns back on itself finally. Those that protest are eliminated early. If they don't agree with a job that has to be done, they're eradicated. That way, they breed a whole lot of yes-men, who snap to obey orders, and who are prepared to enact whatever tradition demands. The fiery ones are popped out back doors if they shake their fists at superiors. So its like balls that get bigger and bigger. In the end they do such outrageous things, the public sees. They get bolder and bolder, and people start saying, 'Why are you doing this?' Then can't answer. They don't know themselves why they are doing it. All they can say is that it has always been done before."

You could imagine them, against a wall, cornered, with no paper to scuffle in, and no official books to produce, with no more acts or ordinances to protect them, stripped of all defences, huddled and stunned as furious crowds shook fists and screamed abuse. But by then all the forests could be gone.

Eventually we drove on again, ruminating on the extraordinary qualities of systems which democracy engenders, while mile after mile of denuded landscape flashed past. Sometime you could see where baby pines were beginning to grow, quite soft and innocent, as though they did not know they were planted in the place of murdered victims.

Signs said, "1080 poisoning here". The lumps and gulleys of the native forests had gone. There were no trickling rivers, no secret caves, no cliffs, no ferns. Everything had been evened-out and made uniform. The surface soil had run down into valleys and was silting rivers, and changing the shape of the earth, promising future floods to generations not yet born.

Then we saw the real forest. There were birds, some with yellow colours, and some with bright red breasts. There were all varieties of finches making leaves bounce. On the ground there was grass and fallen twigs. You could hardly believe in the miracle, that the sun was real and not a super-neon advertising board. It was all surprises and magic, that so much silence and delicate arrangement could exist independent of nurseries, jiffy pots, and slow release pre-packaged pills.

Standing in the real forest, you could feel the rush and bubble of life. It was quite extraordinary that trees could actually come and be there out of ground, and that they could appear in tiers and layers, quite self-sufficient and organised, as though gardeners were not even necessary, and you did not even need pruning or fences.

But the ancient forest was being logged. We saw some men turn on the bulldozer. Just a key made the great machine burst into life. It stood roaring and shaking the earth which vibrated beneath it. The chains of its wheels began to turn and it moved forward in such outrageous proportions that just to turn, it had to plough whole trees into the mud.

Then I saw what it meant to end a forest. I sat halfway down the slope where once grand trees had grown. Now it was just flattened oozing mud. The bulldozer came sliding and churning down the path it had made by its own passage, knocking down saplings, grinding stumps into the earth, eradicating leaves and twigs and branches, as though they had never existed. Birds rose screeching.

The bulldozer roared on. I stood mesmerised in its path. The tiny man sat under his framed protection working at gears while its super-bolted, welded, jointed manipulations performed his wish. It came down with its great shining steel blade, with its turning, locking, spinning joints and chains, gripping and releasing the earth beneath.

Everything fell before it. It was unreasoning, just made for destruction, incapable of any other act, an extension of man's worst thought. It continued to come at me, and it seemed the world was falling beneath it.

The man gestured, and I moved away. He went on down the erased mountain crashing into the forest. I walked back up the hill again. It was alright for us, we could drive away. But trees could not move, and animals could not speak. We went back down the highway, while forests were being ended forever.

TOWARDS A WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS ACT IN N.S.W.

A number of rivers flowing out of the Great Dividing Range in N.S.W., although having considerable scenic and recreational value, are not in National Parks and lack any protection from development.

U.S.A., which led the world in Wilderness preservation (Public Law 88-577 of 1964) enacted a Wild and Scenic Rivers Act in Oct. 1968 — Public Law 90-542.

The preamble to the Act states that the established policy of dam construction needs to be complemented by a policy of preservation of selected rivers or sections thereof, in their free flowing condition "for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations".

All relevant State and Federal authorities were required within one year of enactment to establish detailed boundaries (including an average of not more than 320 acres per mile on each side of the river), to determine which of the following three classifications applied:—

- * Wild — "Vestiges of primitive America", free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail.
- * Scenic — Free of impoundments, some roads but water-sheds still largely primitive.
- * Recreational — Readily accessible, some development along their shorelines, may have had dams or diversions.

After detailing how submissions for inclusion in the national wild and scenic river system must be made and processed through the State and Federal government agencies, 27 rivers are described in the Act as potential components of the system. Close co-operation exists between the relevant agencies of the affected State and a determination is made "of the degree to which the State or its political sub-divisions might participate in the preservation and administration of each inclusion".

Both the Secretary of the Interior (who is responsible for the National Parks Service) and the Secretary of Agriculture (who is responsible for the Forest Service) are authorised to accept donations of private lands either during the lifetime of the owner, or on his death, or that of his spouse. Any owner may retain the use of improved property for a definite term not exceeding 25 years.

All public lands which are within one quarter of a mile of a designated river were immediately withdrawn from public sale or lease.

Once a river is designated under the system, the Federal Power Commission cannot construct a dam or powerhouse or transmission line, nor can any Department or Agency assist in "any water resource project" which would have a direct and adverse effect on the values for which such a river was established."

So much for U.S.A. Politically the timing is excellent for the initiation of a survey of potential rivers in N.S.W. with the stated intention of enacting legislation within two years.

J. G. Somerville
15.9.76

RESPONSIBILITY FOR KAKADU

The Commonwealth Government has announced the formation of a National Parks and Wildlife Commission which will amalgamate the Reserves Board and The Northern Territory wildlife section of the Department of the Northern Territory. In Senate Estimates Committee debate on 5th Oct. the following exchange occurred.

Senator MULVIHILL — If and when Mr. Justice Fox brings down a report which prohibits mining in the area of the proposed Top End National Park, who will follow up Mr. John Gorton's proposal for that park? Will it be the new commission?

Mr. Boden — This is one area which will be between the 2 Ministers.

Senator MULVIHILL — Which Ministers?

Mr. Boden — Between the Minister for Environment, Housing and Community Development and the Minister for the Northern Territory.

Senator MULVIHILL — Will they alone do it or could they be subject to pressure or resolutions from the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly?

Senator CARRICK — They would do it themselves. It may well be that the Northern Territory Assembly will want to state its views but in the end —

Senator MULVIHILL — It will rest with the Australian Government Ministers?

Senator CARRICK — Yes.

REPORT ON THE PROPOSED GREATER BLUE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

In May last year the Colong Committee adopted Myles Dunphy's proposed Greater Blue Mountains National Park as its number 2 wilderness priority. Until recently the Border Ranges and Kakadu have taken most of the Committee's time, but several other organisations have been formulating proposals for reservation of sections of the Blue Mountains. These organisations include the N.P.A., the Colo Committee, The Bindook Committee, and the Federation of Bushwalking Clubs. In August this year the C.C. sponsored a joint meeting of representatives of these organisations, with a view to composing a joint report on the proposed park. Several meetings have been held since, and it has been decided to present the report in a form suitable both for submission to the Premier and for reproduction in a special issue of the N.P.A. Journal.

The report will cover the historical and archaeological significance of the park, its geology, flora and fauna, economic and land use planning implications, and the case for its creation. It will contain descriptions of the sub-regions within the larger area. These descriptions will be furnished by the organisations represented on the Committee. A 1:250000 map of the whole proposals has already been prepared by Michael Bell. Lesley Hodges is drafting a map on the same scale depicting the developmental threats to the area. The N.P.A. commissioned Henry Gold to do a comprehensive photographic study which is now almost complete.

The preparation of the report will entail expenditure perhaps of the order of \$2,000, and supporting organisations or individual sympathisers will be asked to contribute. When the report is completed the Committee will submit it to the Premier who has expressed interest in a tour of the area, an itinerary embracing the principal features of the park.

REPLY TO PROLOGUE, THE NEWSPAPER OF THE SAWMILLING INDUSTRY OF N.S.W.

"The Border Ranges National Park proposal is being pressed very strongly at State Government level by a small Sydney based group called the Colong Committee Ltd.

They are pressing for more than 30,000 ha. including three State Forests to be dedicated as a national park.

At least three sawmills are dependent for log supplies on the area, which is being selectively logged under Forestry Commission control.

Two State Ministers have come out strongly in favour of continued logging of the area under the existing Forestry Commission policies and controls."

..... from Prologue, Aug/Sept. 1976.

The Colong Committee, although conscious of the honour, points out with all modesty that practically all the conservation bodies in N.S.W. together with the A.C.F. and the United Nations based I.U.C.N. in Switzerland, support the idea of preservation of this last sub-tropical rainforest. The Colong Committee claims only to be the Sydney representatives of the local people who have been pressing for a National Park since 1972. It does admit to political activism and lobbying, just as does the Associated Country Sawmillers (who submitted a monster petition complaining to the Government about the activities of a few uninformed extremists).

Membership of conservation bodies in Australia is greater than that of the Labor and Liberal Parties combined.

HOUSE PASSES PARK MINING BILL — GLACIER BAY AND DEATH VALLEY PROTECTED

Conservationists scored a major victory when the House voted on s. 2371 a bill to close to new mineral entry all units of the National Park System now open to it. Under the leadership of Representative John Seiberling (D.— Ohio), the House voted to protect all of Glacier Bay National Monument, defeating an Interior Committee amendment which would have left the entire outer coast of the monument open to mineral entry. The amendment, which was being strongly pushed by Congressman Don Young (R — Alaska) was knocked out of the bill by a vote of 251 - 110.

— *Sierra Club National News Report. September 1976.*

THE EFFECTS OF CLEAR CUTTING

(Forestry Commission please note)

The Federal District Court of Eastern Texas this week enjoined the United States Forest Service from clearcutting on the Sam Houston, Davy Crockett, Sabine and Angelina National Forests on the grounds that clearcutting violates the Endangered Species Act of 1973, the Multiple Use and Sustained Yield Act of 1960 and the Organic Act of 1897. The suit was brought by the Texas Committee on Natural Resources. Gordon Robinson, Sierra Club Forestry Consultant who testified for the Committee at the trial, reports that the Court found clearcutting (1) increases fire hazard; (2) impairs productivity of the land by accelerating erosion; (3) results in loss of top-soil and leaching of nutrients essential to tree growth; (4) destroys wildlife habitat; (5) results in even-aged stands of trees of the same species thereby increasing hazards from insects and diseases; (6) endangers the biosystem by reducing the many species of plants and animals whose subtle interdependence is essential to the vigor and security of the ecosystem; (7) destroys recreational value for long periods of time; and (8) results in hasty liquidation of high quality timber the continued presence of which is essential to the principles of multiple use management.

— *Sierra Club National News Report - July 1976.*

NEW BOOKS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

On display and for sale at Total Environment Centre, Third Floor, (The Argyle Arts Centre), 18 Argyle Street, Sydney. Six major Australian and overseas publishers display their best and newest publications on environment and conservation, alternate life styles and the outdoors. Posters and prints, with accompanying display by The Colong Committee on the proposed Border Ranges National Park, and the proposed Greater Blue Mountains National Park. 26th, 27th, 28th November, 1976 9am to 5pm. Profits to TEC (27.4714). Bring Your Friends.

LIST OF DONORS

At its Sept. 23rd meeting the C.C. decided to acknowledge gifts by publishing a list of donors in the Bulletin. It is regretted that because of postal difficulties, it has not been possible to commence this practice in the current Bulletin.

BEAUTIFUL WILDERNESS CALENDAR AVAILABLE

Wilderness is one of the earth's most rapidly diminishing natural resources. In Australia, most of the remaining major wilderness areas are remote from the main centres of population. The only exception is Tasmania's South-West.

A large, Tasmanian wilderness Calendar, 1977, has been produced in the belief that through a wider appreciation of the natural beauty of Tasmania will come a greater concern for its preservation. Thirteen beautiful colour photographs on high quality paper will make this production well worth sending for. You can procure one by posting \$3.50 (which covers postage and packing) to Peter Dombrovskis, P.O. Box 245, Sandy Bay, Tasmania. 7005.

TAXATION CONCESSION FOR DESTRUCTION OF FORESTS

"The return from selling culls from the forest (logs on a royalty basis) are added to the owners taxable income, whereas the return from logs sold on a "timber rights" basis (lump sum for all logs) is counted as capital gains and therefore not taxable, the result of course is the liquidation and wasting of a precious resource."

Ian Conley, H.D.A. writing in Hawkesbury Agricultural College Journal, June 1976

The Secretary
The Colong Committee Ltd.,
18 Argyle Street,
SYDNEY. 2000.

Dear Sir,

I enclose \$4.00 being my subscription to the Save Colong Bulletin for 1977.

I enclose \$.....being a donation to The Colong Committee's Fighting Fund.

NAME:
Mr. Mrs. Miss. (Block letters)

ADDRESS:
(Block letters)

Post Code:

SIGNED: Date: