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THE COLONG BULLETIN

"What I have seen today has left me totally aghast. From the air you can see the devastation. The forest areas where the woodchip companies have clearfelled now look like a moonscape. Whole shoulders of mountains have gone. In many areas where there was supposed to be re-planting, there is nothing, just waste and devastation. This is the face of the future if the woodchip companies and their handmaidens like Robin Gray get their way."

Senator Don Chipp on his return from a flight over Tasmania's woodchip forests, 12 April 1985

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE

The Annual General Meeting of the Colong Committee was held on April 18th. All the Directors and officers of the Committee were re-elected. Though change is often good the retention of the interest and enthusiasm of experienced helpers is perhaps even better. The officers elected are:

CHAIRMAN: Peter Geoffroy Maslen B.Sc. (Eng.), B.Sc. (Botany). Peter is a Mechanical Engineer employed by W.E. Smith Engineering Pty Ltd. He has been

a Director for 9 years, has attended meetings since 1973 and has been Chairman since 1976. He is a member of the Executive of the Nature Conservation Council of N.S.W.

VICE-CHAIRMAN: Rodney Alexander Falconer, B.Sc. (Ed.). Rodney is a science teacher in the Department of Education. He has been a member of the Committee for 8 years and Vice-Chairman for 5 years. He is Chairman of the Colo Committee and member of the Executive of the Nature Conservation Council of N.S.W.

VICE-CHAIRMAN: John F.C. Dillon, H.D.A. John is an editor, employed by the Department of Agriculture. He was a very active member of the Committee during the "Save Colong" days and re-joined some years ago. He has been Vice-Chairman for 2 years.

HON. TREASURER: Charles Arthur Culberg. Charles is a retired accountant, formerly, during his working years, AASA, ACIS, CIA. He is

THE COLONG COMMITTEE LTD A NATIONAL WILDERNESS SOCIETY

18 ARGYLE ST. SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA 2000
TELEPHONE: (02) 27 4714

CHAIRMAN: Peter Maslen
VICE-CHAIRMAN: Rodney Falconer
John Dillon
HON. SECRETARY: Alex Colley, O.A.M.
HON. TREASURER: Charles Culberg
HON. PHOTOGRAPHER: Henry Gold
HON. AUDITOR: Arthur Andersen & Co.

the longest serving officer of the Committee, having been Hon. Treasurer since 1972. Charles doesn't belong to any other conservation bodies - his work as Treasurer keeps him busy enough.

HON. SECRETARY: Alexander Gerald Colley, B.Ec., H.D.A., O.A.M., retired economist. Alex has been a member since 1969 and Hon. Secretary since 1976. He is a member of the Executive of the Nature Conservation Council of N.S.W. and of the Management Committee of the Environment Centre of N.S.W. He is Conservation Secretary and an Honorary Active Member of the Sydney Bushwalkers' Club.

It is no longer necessary to appoint auditors yearly but we are pleased to report that Arthur Andersen and Co., under the personal supervision of Graham Paton, are carrying on as our Honorary Aditors.

The annual accounts, duly presented by Charles Culberg and audited by Arthur Andersen and Co., reveal that our financial position remains good. They are summarised below.

Income and Expenditure for Year to 31.12.84

<u>Income</u>	\$
Donations for Investment	2,207
Donations - General	2,433
Subscriptions	850
Sales	265
Interest	<u>2,591</u>
	<u>8,346</u>
<u>Expenditure</u>	
Bulletin	1,358
Rent	1,750
Campaigns	1,400
General	771
Depreciation	<u>133</u>
	<u>5,412</u>
SURPLUS FOR YEAR	<u>2,934</u>

BALANCE SHEET AT 31.12.84

Members' Funds:

Accumulated Surplus	7,362
Investment Fund Reserve	<u>14,257</u>
	<u>21,619</u>

Money donated for investment (14,257) is in Government Loans.

The surplus for the year is mainly comprised of donations for investment. The Investment Fund, plus accumulated surplus, which also earns interest, now yields slightly more than we receive from donations.

The A.G.M. is usually a short and formal meeting, but not so on April 18th. Notice had been given of three motions, which were:

That the name of the Colong Committee Ltd be changed to Colong Wilderness Foundation Ltd.

That the Investment Fund be entitled "The Myles J. Dunphy Wilderness Fund".

That a sub-committee, comprising Charles Cluberg, Graham Paton, Peter Maslen, Jim Somerville and Alex Colley be appointed to report on the feasibility, cost, work entailed and desirability of opening the Foundation, or Committee, to membership.

The main aim of these motions was not to change the modus operandi of the Committee, which has proved remarkably effective, but to secure its continuance, enhance its status, and hopefully, expand its influence. Most of the administrative work of the Committee is done by four retired members - Charles Culberg, Dr. Phil Millard, Jim Somerville and Alex Colley, with help in collating and despatching the Bulletin from Dot Butler, John Scott (retired) and Larry Lake (retired). These directors and supporters are happy to continue, but the time will come, of course, when they can't. When this happens others may be found with the enthusiasm and time to carry on, but they may not be found. There are two reasons for this. The first is that the sympathy and publicity of the Committee's fight during the days of Colong, the Boyd and the Border Ranges is now mainly retrospective. We are now an accepted and respected conservation body, no longer denied access to the corridors of power. The second is that the range

of wilderness issues we are working for has increased, and with it the amount of administrative work involved. As with other voluntary organizations, the services of one or more paid officers will be necessary to co-ordinate the efforts of the volunteers and ensure that things get done. This would mean some expansion of our financial base, and the motions proposed could well bring this about.

The directors were loath to discard the name "Colong Committee" because of its association with campaigns which were landmarks in nature conservation progress, but it was agreed that the description "Committee" created the impression of a small esoteric group rather than a body representing a strong body of opinion. It was also agreed that the word "Colong" should be retained. It had been decided to retain it after the Colong campaign was won because of the publicity value it had acquired. Once again it was decided to retain it, even though some of its publicity value may be lost, because of the recognition the Committee has gained in conservation, political and departmental circles. Three amendments to the motion were discussed, one to call the Committee "The N.S.W. Wilderness Foundation", another to call it "The Wilderness Foundation" and a third "The Colong Foundation for Wilderness". After earnest discussion it was resolved, unanimously, that the name should be "The Colong Foundation for Wilderness". This name was a little longer than most would have liked, but it was agreed that, even when the description "Colong Committee" was no longer used (probably well into the future) the name would inevitably be shortened, in common usage, to "The Colong Foundation". The name change will not be effective until registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission. (In order to preserve the memory of the Colong Caves campaign, the Committee will soon be publishing a book entitled "The Colong Story".)

The second motion was amended, without dissent, to change the name of the investment fund to "The Myles Dunphy Fund for Wilderness". There are two reasons for the change. The first is that we were proud to have Myles as our Patron and would like to retain his name in association with the Committee. The second is that it emphasises the fact that we are working for the fulfilment of his proposals and ideals.

This might well enhance support for the Committee, particularly by his admirers and associates, and perhaps encourage bequests. For those in the higher tax brackets there is no more effective way of helping the Committee, thereby furthering Myles' work, than a gift to the A.C.F. expressing a preference that it be used for the purposes of the Colong Committee's Fund for Wilderness. A \$1,000 gift costs a taxpayer in the 60 cents bracket \$400. Invested at 13%, this yields 32½% on the net cost of the gift to the donor.

The proposal to open the Committee to membership, thereby enabling supporters to become members, would make no real difference to the functioning of the Committee. Supporters have always been welcome at meetings and eligible for nomination (and probable election) as directors. There have been a number of inquiries as to membership, and the term "member" imparts a sense of belonging rather than just supporting. We believe, however, that the lack of members (other than directors) probably disqualifies us for all the goodies, such as grants, C.E.P. workers, premises and tax deductibility handed out to many other conservation bodies. Such favours go a little way towards redressing the financial advantages enjoyed by our opponents, usually wealthy corporations or government authorities, funded by taxpayers or shareholders, whether they like it or not.

The membership proposal raises some organizational complexities, so it has been referred for report to a committee which includes three accountants. There is the possibility that the servicing of "members" might entail much unproductive paper work.

The first two motions should create no problems, nor should the third, which will be implemented only if it is feasible, cheap and readily serviced. The Committee will continue to function as before, with, we hope, enhanced status and increased support.

WILDERNESS POLICY OF THE NATIONAL PARKS & WILDLIFE SERVICE

At our meeting with the Hon. Bob Carr on March 8th, we were given a copy of the NPWS policy on wilderness management and the investigation and proclamation of wilderness areas. The

policy is as follows:-

The term "wilderness area" is used to describe a type of recreation setting for a number of outdoor activities, such as cross country, skiing, walking and canoeing. This setting is described in terms of:

- * remoteness: all wilderness management areas are accessible by foot or canoe only. Motorised vehicle access for recreation purposes is not provided;
- * size: a large area; but no defined wilderness management area has been determined;
- * evidence of humans: wherever possible, and consistent with the National Parks and Wildlife Act, wilderness areas have been identified over lands with the minimum of structures or other evidence of human activity. It is recognized that in some areas evidence of previous human activity may still remain but is of insignificant impact on the naturalness of the wilderness area as a whole.
- * its social setting: the frequency of contact between wilderness visitors is the major determinant of the social setting. The absence of vehicle access within the wilderness areas acts as a control on the number of people visiting these areas;
- * the managerial setting: the actions of the National Parks and Wildlife Service in managing national parks are an important determinant of the setting. Wilderness is characterised by the minimum of regulation, facilities and services.

Opportunities for wilderness experiences will be provided by designating wilderness areas over all or part of a national park. Such designation prescribes the recreation setting and the management emphasis as being to protect such opportunities for wilderness experiences as that area may have to offer. Any wilderness areas designated in a plan of management will be declared under subsection 59(1) of the National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974, as soon as possible following the adoption of the plan. They will

thereby be subject to section 61 of the Act, as well as to the provisions of the plan.

The prescription for wilderness management for an area has the effect within that area of adding the following objective to those specified for that park or part of a park:

- * to maintain the opportunities for wilderness experiences in relatively large expanses of land with essentially natural character.

Within designated wilderness areas, the following management guidelines will operate:

- * Wherever possible wilderness areas will include complete catchment areas to protect nature conservation values and viewsheds.
- * Activities that conflict with opportunities for wilderness experience of the highest possible quality will not be permitted.
- * Wilderness areas will be maintained as free as possible from signs, trailmarkers and other management devices.
- * Fire management practices in wilderness areas shall be in accordance with the adopted fire management plan.
- * To maintain the integrity of a wilderness area and the protection of adjacent areas, management operations in wilderness management areas will be on foot or skis.
- * Tracks other than those essential for management of wilderness areas themselves will be closed (Section 61(2)(b) of the Act refers).
- * Essential management tracks will be rehabilitated to as near to a natural condition as possible, consistent with the need to utilise them periodically for essential management operations.
- * Other sites of disturbance including those which arise because of management works will be rehabilitated to as near to a natural state as practicable.
- * The use by private or commercial interests of any form of motorised transport (including the landing of aircraft) will not be permitted.

* Motorised transport operated by any agency, except for essential management or rescue operations, will not be permitted.

Areas which satisfy the criteria for wilderness management exist adjacent to declared wilderness areas. The Service will seek to ensure management of these lands in accordance with these management guidelines.

The Corporate Plan of the Service has as a Corporate Direction the following:

"The review of areas having wilderness management potential should be completed during 1984/85, and a programme aimed at declaring not fewer than 3 such areas under the National Parks and Wildlife Act per year thereafter maintained.

Priority	Moderate
Target	Complete review by June 1985.
	Continuing programme thereafter until potential areas declared."

The following national parks are recognized as including potential wilderness areas and it is proposed to investigate these to establish boundaries for the purposes of declaration if this proves to be warranted.

Blue Mountains/Wollemi National Parks *
 Kanangra Boyd/Blue Mountains National Parks *
 Deua National Park
 Guy Fawkes River National Park
 Morton/Budawang National Parks *
 Barrington Tops National Park
 New England National Park *

Certain national parks in the Western Region of the Service may have wilderness areas worthy of declaration. The application of the wilderness concept to arid and semi-arid lands needs to be further considered but these areas will be investigated with the intention of recommending any such areas after such further consideration of the special problems of wilderness recreation in semi-arid and arid climates. This may require qualification of the management guidelines outlined above.

Willandra National Park *
 Sturt National Park
 Mallee Cliffs National Park
 Mootwingee National Park *

Many of these areas are within national parks which are currently subject to the preparation of a plan of management (indicated by an asterisk (*)). Wilderness areas proposed in a plan of management once adopted will be declared as wilderness under section 59 as a matter of high priority.

In those other national parks listed above which are not currently nor likely to be in the foreseeable future subject to the preparation of a plan of management, a comprehensive investigation will be undertaken of potential wilderness areas and suitable areas declared under section 59(1) of the Act.

The management guidelines accord closely with those adopted by the Colong Committee ((See "Wilderness in National Parks," Bulletin 73). The Committee has strongly advocated the protection of complete catchment areas, particular instances being Nadgee, Deua-Wadbilliga and Kakadu. "Activities that conflict with opportunities for wilderness experience" would no doubt include not only vehicular use but motor boats, helicopters, hunting and any other damaging activity. The closing and

rehabilitation of tracks is another management essential we have for long sought. By far the most significant guideline is the uncompromising exclusion of all vehicles. Vehicles, and the firearms and litter they so often carry, are undoubtedly the worst destroyers of the wilderness experience.

There are several aspects on which we would hope for more specific policy. The designation of wilderness under section 59(1) of the NPWS Act will take place as soon as possible following the adoption of the plan. Management plans take years to prepare and in the meantime roading, resorts and other development might take place in a wilderness. The object of section 59(1) is to preserve wilderness until the management plan has been approved. There also seems to be a contradiction between the commitment to "Management

operations on foot or skis" and the retention of tracks "essential for management". Which kind of management requires tracks and what kind of tracks? In these days a track is usually a vehicle track. Once a track is made it is virtually impossible to exclude unauthorized use. It provides access for destructive elements and probably gives rise to more fires than its use can prevent. Unless carefully maintained, at considerable cost, vehicle tracks become channels for erosion.

The guideline of "fire management practices in wilderness in accordance with the adopted fire management plan" begs the question rather than describes policy, though it if means that the NPWS alone determines fire management practice within the boundaries of national parks, this is a plus. A firm statement that wilderness, designated as such or not, will not be used for the creation of firebreaks, as it has been in the past, would have been more to the point. It is well proven that most fires start, not in wilderness, but in developed areas, and that is where the fire breaks should be made, though it may be impossible to avoid making some breaks on the wilderness margins.

The goal of declaring no fewer than three wilderness areas a year gives some assurance of progress, though we would like to see quicker progress. The rate of progress would not matter so much if section 59 were used before wilderness areas were designated in management plans.

THE OXLEY NATIONAL PARK (see map page 13)

On March 23rd the Premier, the Hon. Neville Wran QC, MP, announced the NSW Government's firm commitment to the establishment of Oxley National Park. The Park is at the headwaters of the Macleay River, where it is joined by a number of large tributaries entering from the north, south and west. These tributaries extend from beyond the Armidale-Kempsey road to the Oxley highway in the south, a distance of some 80km. They flow through a series of scenic gorges and are virtually unpolluted.

When making the announcement, Mr Wran said:

"This spectacular gorge country has magnificent wilderness, scenic, recreation and conservation values. My Government is firmly committed to the establishment of Oxley National Park to protect these values for this and future generations.

Australia is one of the most urbanised countries in the world. We must protect some of our wild and scenic land to be wilderness for all time. The value cannot be measured in dollars and cents - it is for the spirit of our people."

Although not frequently visited by Sydney based bushwalkers, this country provides some of the most pleasant river walks in the State, and some challenges too. Frank Leyden of the Sydney Bush Walkers led several walks along Kunderang Brook, the Apsley and the Upper Macleay in the sixties. Describing a trip down Kunderang Brook and back up the Apsley he wrote, in the Sydney Bushwalker Magazine of May, 1968

"The lure of Kunderang was its comparatively unspoiled remoteness, the jungle-skirted slopes with prospects of wildlife, and the giant forested ridges and numerous large side creeks. Frequent open flats and very few rough rocky gorges encourage cattle grazing along the valley. Giant casuarinas lined the banks. Yellow grass carpeted slopes descended through open forest to the closely cropped lawn-like green that often went right down to the water's edge. Apart from an almost overgrown rough road for the first few miles, there was not a break nor scar of erosion to be seen."

Another Sydney Bush Walker party climbed down to the Apsley River below the falls in 1967. This party was the first to follow the river through the gorge to the open flats below. One of the party, Dorothy Butler, in an article in the Sydney Bushwalker of May 1967, described the upper gorge as follows:

When we reached the river bed we found it even more rugged than it looked from the top. Huge dark grey block-up boulders lay crowded together in great heaps and over these we clambered for the rest of the afternoon. Those in the lead had plenty of time to admire the scenery while waiting for the tail-enders to catch up. The warm air

had a dream-like quality. The sun filtered down in a golden haze. The scene looked like a picture done in pointillism - that form of art in which the whole effect is achieved by little dots of colour. The thousand-foot high rock walls, dark grey and almost vertical, were spotted with palest grey-green lichen, the pale blue sky was a backdrop to countless thousands of lightly floating thistledowns, interspersed with long shining streamers of airborne spiderwebs, and the brown earth-stained water at our feet was flecked with spots of foam the size of golden guineas. Great casuarinas, their gnarled roots gripping the rocks at the water's edge, had entrapped thousands of the floating thistledowns and looked like a child's drawing of trees spotted with snowflakes. In the stark dead branches of a ringbarked gumtree on the skyline a flock of white cockatoos settled - live white flowers dotting its limbs."

At present the park is simply a mosaic, totalling 32,000 ha. in area, of existing small parks and nature reserves, together with the Crown lands in the area. It is intended to extend the park as privately held land becomes available. The Minister for Planning and Environment, the Hon. Bob Carr, said that it was understood that some privately held land is already on offer to the NPWS. It has been emphasised that there will be no forced resumption of land. The land to be added is partly leasehold and partly freehold. There should be no difficulty in adding the leasehold land when leases expire, but the acquisition of freehold will depend on availability of land, and finance will probably be a long process.

There is a high risk in this procedure that the wilderness, the third largest in the State, will be degraded by owners opposed to, or uninterested in the park, before their land can be acquired. This could be prevented by planning controls, but probably not without stiff opposition from anti-conservation landowners. Fortunately much of the terrain is too rough for profitable further development, and perhaps the main danger is the sale of timber rights. The policy announcement does however, reduce one of the main threats to the area - exploitation by Government authorities. Mr Wran has already

indicated that the Government is not prepared to dam the Apsley, as proposed by the Electricity Commission. The Government could stop logging in any State Forests within the wilderness area and could refuse prospecting and mining licences.

Mr Carr, however, has announced 'a "major resource study" of the area involving the Department of Environment and Planning, the NPWS, Mineral Resources, Natural Resources and the Electricity Commission. This procedure is suspiciously similar to the "referral" system, whereby proposed parklands are referred to every department and dedicated only if none of them object - in other words if the country is entirely useless.

Mr Wran's statement that "these wild and scenic rivers with magnificent waterfalls and rapids must be preserved" and that "The strength of feeling for the Franklin issue shows that Australians do care for these values" won't mean much if wilderness is placed at the bottom of the land use priorities scale, as so often in the past. Fortunately the Government's actions in recent years indicate that it now recognizes that wilderness is a scarce resource and will never be preserved unless we are prepared to forego the hitherto uneconomic resources it contains.

KAKADU - WHY THE DELAY?

On April 12th Senator Don Chipp called on the Federal Government to include the Gimbat and Goodparla leases in the Kakadu National Park. He said

I cannot understand the Government's delay in gazetting these areas. Before attaining government the Labor Party pressed the then Fraser Government to include Gimbat and Goodparla. In March 1984 the Federal Labor Government gave notice of intention to include these areas, and in his Address to Parliament the Governor-General announced the then Government would be extending the boundaries of Kakadu National Park. Some 13 months later, nothing has happened."

In response to the invitation of the NPWS, Canberra, the Colong Committee made a submission on the management of the park. This was published in full in Bulletin No. 86.

In March this year the ACF informed the Committee that it was alarmed that uranium mining interests wishing to keep their options open to explore and mine in the area had had the ear of the Prime Minister, and that a Hunters Union formed in the N.T. opposed the proclamation of Gimbat-Goodparla and were asking for it as a game reserve for shooting. In response to the ACF's request, we wrote to the Prime Minister on April 7th querying whether the delay was "occasioned by the decision of the Northern Territory Government, reported in November, to give mining and exploration companies access to national parks, or whether it is in response to the lobbying of the mining industry." It was pointed out that allowing mining or prospecting in Gimbat and Goodparla would contravene the A.L.P. policy of allowing no new uranium mines as well as its pledge to press ahead with the implementation plans for the park. We concluded by saying that "This Committee came into being to oppose mining, prospecting, pine planting and other economic exploitation of parks and prospective parks. We are pleased to say that this policy appears to have been accepted in this State. We hope it will be accepted by your Government too."

Mr Hawke's Principal Private Secretary replied that he had been asked "to let you know that the Committee's comments have been noted and drawn to the attention of the Minister for Arts, Heritage and Environment, the Hon. Barry Cohen, with a request that he arrange for you to receive a reply on behalf of the Government."

THE DAINTREE DISASTER

In Bulletin No. 85 we quoted the ACF Newsletter report of large landslips and erosion gullies up to 3½ metres deep on the road under construction from Cape Tribulation to Bloomfield. We commented: "It is obvious that a road in that terrain and climate will have to be thoroughly drained, graded and surfaced, and kept that way if it is to be usable. Simply pushing a bulldozer through the scrub is not only destructive but useless." In Bulletin No. 87 we described the bogging of numerous cars and buses when the first rain of the wet season fell on October 7th - the day the road was "opened" in

the presence of a large body of police and protestors. Visual evidence of the correctness of our forecast has been provided by recent TV coverage. Destroyed causeways, mud, landslides, (some covering acres) and other forms of erosion, have rendered the road unusable.

On February 2nd this year it was reported that the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority had "performed an about-face and decided to embroil itself in the controversy over the Daintree rainforest" (S.M.H. 2.2.85). The Chairman, Mr Graeme Kelleher, said "There is clear evidence there is a fair amount of silt coming off the road and it's time for us to find out if that is affecting the fringing reefs." Two weeks later Dr John Veron, principal research scientist at the Australian Institute of Marine Science, stated that: "there is not another fringing reef like that anywhere around Australia. It is very beautiful, very diverse." Dr Veron dived on a fringing reef about 50-100 metres off Donovan Range, where road works have gouged out a large side cut. He said that soon after it began raining visibility in the water dropped to zero. "I could not see my hand in front of my face. I have not seen any reef survive under those conditions (for prolonged periods). A plume of orange mud was pouring off the range as a result of those earthworks."

Dr Kelleher said that this was the only location in Australia where well-developed rainforest abutted such a rich series of fringing reefs. Dr Veron said there are probably only two other places in the world where reef and rainforest meet like this - one off Western Thailand and the other along the north coast of New Guinea. "Normally," Dr Veron said, "the conditions required for a rainforest preclude fringing reef." Whereas rainforests need plenty of fresh water corals die if they get too much fresh water. The Daintree corals may have survived the high rainfall - more than four metres a year - because the mountains are close to the coast and thus catchments and run off are relatively small.

On March 19th Senator Macklin (Austrian Democrats) moved the second reading of the Queensland Rainforests Conservation Bill. After quoting the

Australian Heritage Commission's report that "the wet tropics of North-East Queensland are of outstanding conservation significance and more than adequately fulfil the criteria defined for the World Heritage Convention for inclusion in the World Heritage List", and the opinions of four international experts who certified this report, Senator Macklin said:

"The Labor Government has done its utmost to do nothing to save Daintree. It has, I regret to say, succeeded admirably.

The Government proposed to nominate the North-East Queensland rainforests for the World Heritage list only with the agreement of the Queensland Government.

At the same time, this Government has openly admitted that the Queensland Government has no intention of assisting the nomination of any of this unique environment for the World Heritage List.

The Queensland Government has rejected any co-operation in putting the rainforests on the World Heritage List and turned down the Federal Government's \$1 million management plan. These outright rejections were contained in a letter from the Queensland Premier on 25 September, 1984.

These rejections, which further condemn the North-East Queensland rainforests, have not moved the Labor Government into action. It still remains idle while the environment is denuded...

The Democrats believe the Federal Government can and must intervene to protect North-East Queensland Rainforests. Under the World Heritage Properties Conservation Act 1983 the Government could proclaim the area to be part of Australia's natural heritage.

Senator Macklin described the Bill as an interim protection designed to overcome the Government's failure to act. The High Court or Federal Court could issue declarations of "natural heritage" status and grant an injunction restricting the doing of a specified act that would prejudice Australia's duty under Article 4 of the World Heritage Convention. Under this article Australia is obliged to ensure the identification, protection,

conservation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage. Each nation will do all it can to this end, to the utmost of its own resources. This obligation is not limited to properties included in the World Heritage List and would cease as soon as nomination for the nomination for the wet tropics of North East Queensland was undertaken. Once that nomination was under way the Government's World Heritage Properties Conservation Act would offer protection.

After pointing out that white Australians have already destroyed 75 percent of this country's rainforests, which now cover only 0.25% of our land mass, Senator Macklin concluded:

The environment must be preserved for this and future generations. While we inherit the earth from our parents we merely borrow it from our children. We have to recognize that the natural environment is a finite resource capable of being destroyed by careless and greedy policies.

Our view that the money spent on the Daintree road would be better spent on improving the abominable Cooktown (Peninsula Development) road further west, is strengthened by a joint submission to the Federal Government by Comalco Aluminium Ltd and the Cook Shire Council for the upgrading of this road. The submission makes no mention of the Daintree road.

On April 3rd, the Minister for Arts, Heritage and Environment, Mr Cohen, was reported to have said that one possibility of closing the road was that if the Douglas Shire Council conceded it had made a mistake the Federal Cabinet would probably then give financial aid to repair the environment. We have asked Mr Cohen for the text of any reply to this proposal.

On April 23rd Senator Macklin asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and Environment whether he was aware that the road through the Daintree Rainforest, reopened at the weekend, had again become impassable? "Is the Minister aware" he asked, "that after an American tourist's car was bogged on the edge of a cliff, the shire engineer is today supervising the withdrawal of all Council equipment and also the possible removal of stranded

private cars?" A full report of what is happening has been promised by the Minister.

Senator Macklin writes: "One sure way to help is for your members to write to all Labor Parliamentarians, urging their support." This would be particularly effective if adopted by Committee supporters living in Labor electorates. Copies of this Bulletin could be supplied to enclose with letters.

The Government's reluctance to act on rainforest preservation has been further emphasised by Michael Rae of the Queensland Branch of the Wilderness Society and a director of the Colong Committee. Documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act reveal that there was no reason for not submitting the N.S.W. Government's World Heritage Rainforest nomination. UNESCO was prepared to accept the nomination if the proposed site was merely moved, without details. This was not done.

FORESTS BURN: CO² INCREASES

It is known that the infusion of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere by the burning of fossil fuels exceeds the capacity of the world's vegetation to absorb it. In this exchange tropical rainforests play a vital role, but in the Amazon basin the process of absorption has been reversed by the burning of the forest. Smoke often becomes so dense that airfields have to be closed. Cattle are grazed on the cleared land, but in a few years carrying capacity of pastures sinks almost to nil. The main profits are made from land speculation. Dr Salati of the Centre for Nuclear Energy in Agriculture claims that only 20% of the region is suitable for cropping and the rest should be left as forest, because it could take between 300 and 1,000 years to regenerate, if ever. (This accords with the Colong Committee's estimates). Professor Hiradu Brudafski of Costa Rica estimates that 40% of the carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere is contributed by the burning of forests. The increase in carbon dioxide could increase the earth's temperature and produce "catastrophic changes in climate." Scientists who attended an international conference in Brazil

expressed deep concern with the need for more adequate information on processes which govern the ecosystem as a whole.

From A.B.C. Science Show report by Mike Carey

THE LEURA RESORT

The Committee has written the following letter to the Sydney Morning Herald. It may or may not be published in the Herald but at least it can make the Bulletin. This is it:

Trading Scenery for Development

The aim of State environmental planning is to prevent the approval by local interests of developments which prejudice the interests of the State and the nation.

The Government's approval, by special legislation, of the resort at Leura, to be built overlooking the Valley of the Waters, represents a complete inversion of this principle. No adequate environmental study or inquiry has been made. The resort will be situated in a scenic beauty spot which should continue to be preserved for the enjoyment of the public. The site overlooks the Blue Mountains' escarpment and is visible for considerable distances.

Many other sites were available, but the developers, Fairmont Pty Ltd, would not accept them. In approving a resort on this site the Blue Mountains City Council and the Government are trading a scenic attraction for a monstrous building complex. There is no doubt that if an hotel site were made available in Sydney's Botanic Gardens, all the economic advantages claimed by the company, the Council and the Government would be realised, but at the expense of our national heritage and our future appeal to tourists.

It is bad enough that the rights of local residents and environmentalists are being ignored, but the very process of law is being threatened by the legislation.

Opposition spokesman on Planning and Environment, Mr Tim Moore, M.P., who said he was "appalled by the Government's decision on the Leura resort."

KOSCIUSKO WILDERNESS INSPECTION
ON APRIL 29 and 30

Report by Peter Maslen

Pat Thompson and I accepted an invitation from Mr Ian Crook, Assistant Director, Management of The National Parks & Wildlife Service, to inspect the wilderness areas of Kosciusko National Park. This inspection was carried out in conjunction with Bruce Leaver, who is the senior officer for the South Eastern region of The National Parks & Wildlife Service, and Karen Alexander of The Wilderness Society. This resulted from our first meeting with Ian Crook on February 8th, following his appointment. During this meeting we continued our campaign to have the Bimberi and Fiery Range Wilderness Areas reinstated and managed as such under the Kosciusko National Park Management Plan. The purpose of the inspection was to enable The National Parks & Wildlife Service to explain fully the problems it experiences in dedicating and managing wilderness, with specific reference to the wilderness areas of Kosciusko National Park.

Leaving Sydney in the middle of the recent two weeks of wet weather, we had some reservations regarding how effective our visit would be. However, the weather cleared before reaching Canberra, where we picked up Bruce Leaver and then flew on over the Namadji Park in the A.C.T., the recently declared Bimberi Nature Reserve and Kosciusko National Park. The 2 former areas & the North Eastern corner of Kosciusko National Park form the Bimberi Wilderness Area. We continued south over the Jagungal Wilderness Area in the centre of Kosciusko National Park before proceeding west to China Walls and north over the Bogong Peaks and Fiery Range before landing at Tumut. This flight emphasised the desirability of the Fiery Range Wilderness area being managed as a complete block, even though half of this wilderness area is included in the Dubbo Hill Area, currently being managed by the Forestry Commission. This area is part of that excised from the Kosciusko National Park during the 1970's.

We were met at Tumut by other National Parks & Wildlife Service personnel and driven into Kosciusko National Park proceeding to the edge of the Bimberi

Wilderness Area via Rules Point and Long Flat, then to the Blue Waterhole. The main points discussed during this inspection were the removal of the Electricity Commission power lines to locations outside the wilderness areas, the closure of through roads and the closure of stock routes. On the way to Blue Waterhole we had the opportunity to visit the Coolamon homestead which the National Parks & Wildlife Service is currently restoring. This site dates back approximately 100 years and has significant historical value. The road to Blue Waterhole is closed at the waterhole and the camping area removed from the creek edge.

The Bimberi Wilderness Area, together with the adjacent Bimberi Nature Reserve (which adjoins Namadji Park in the A.C.T.) is to be re-dedicated as wilderness by an amendment to the Kosciusko National Park Management Plan. This should occur within the next 6 months. Hence, one of the aims of the Colong Committee will be achieved in the near future.

The only real problems which prevent the dedication of the Fiery Range Wilderness Area are the stock route which passes the north-eastern corner and the recreational use of horses. The National Parks & Wildlife Service rightly does not allow horses in areas managed as wilderness, and hence foresees a problem in dedicating the Fiery Range Area as wilderness. The Colong Committee still believes that the Fiery Range Area, excluding the north-eastern corner, should be dedicated as wilderness and horses prevented from using it. This should not force horse recreation in the park onto other sensitive areas. Ultimately, we can foresee the removal of the power lines and their associated roads, which divide the Bogong, Fiery Range and the Bimberi Wilderness Areas, and the closure of the Broken Cart Track, the northern part of Rules Point to Brindabella Road and the southern portion of the Goobarrangandra road. This would allow a total wilderness management area across the northern portion of Kosciusko National Park.

Together with adjacent Namadji and Bimberi Nature Reserve, this would make one of the largest and most scenic wilderness areas in South-Eastern Australia. Coupled with the Pilot and Byadbo wildernesses in the south of the Park, it would offset the Byadbo

preservation. While we are pleased to see that the Bimberly Area is to be reclassified as wilderness in the near future, the campaign to have the Fier Range Goobarragandra area so classified will probably continue for some time to come. We will continue to campaign for the dedication of wilderness areas throughout the State both within the existing National Parks & Wildlife Service estate, and in areas currently not protected. With the new National Parks & Wildlife Service Wilderness management policy, which still requires some improvement in the areas of definition, fire management and attitude to tracks, we can be reasonably sure that the current National Parks & Wildlife Service Management will continue to protect classified wilderness areas.

OXLEY NATIONAL PARK

A map of the Macleay River catchment area in New South Wales, Australia. The map shows the Macleay River flowing from the north-east towards the south-west. Key locations and features include:

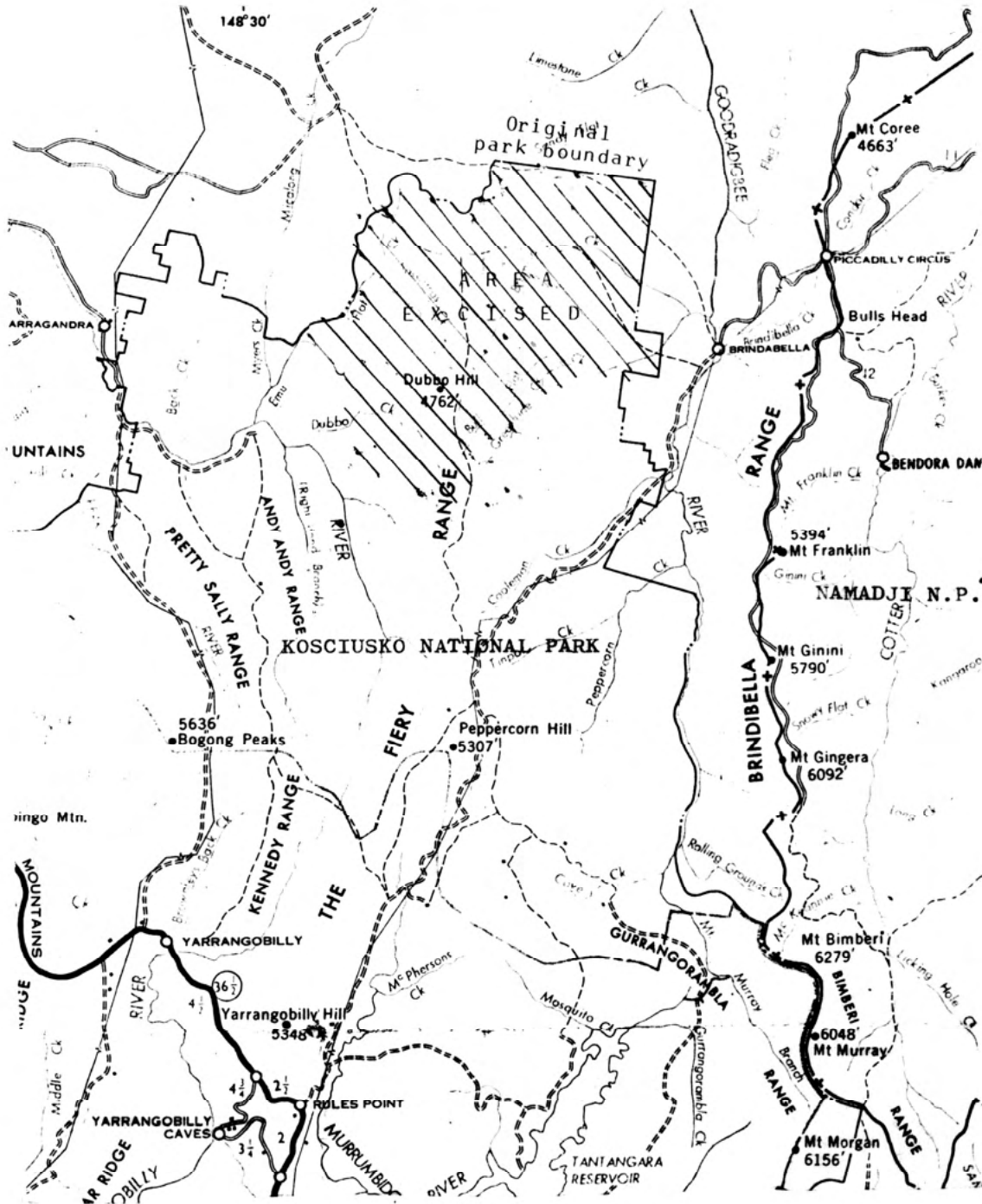
- Existing National Parks and Nature Reserves (hatched areas):**
 - THE HOLE CREEK NATURE RESERVE
 - ROWLEYS NATURE RESERVE
 - APSEY GORGE NATIONAL PARK
 - YARROWITCH GORGE NATIONAL PARK
 - WERRIKIMINE NATIONAL PARK
- Vacant Crown Lands (solid black areas):**
 - Rowleys Creek
 - Various areas along the Macleay River and its tributaries.
- Geographical Features and Towns:**
 - Rivers:** CARA RIVER, CHANDLER CREEK, BILBERS CREEK, MACLEAY RIVER, BLUE MOUNTAIN CREEK, APLEY RIVER, KUNDURONG BROOK.
 - Towns:** ARMIDALE, URALLA, SALISBURY WATERS, WALCHA, WERRIKIMINE.
 - Directions:** TO TAMWORTH (north-west), TO PORT MACQUARIE (south-west).

Legend:

- EXISTING NATIONAL PARKS AND NATURE RESERVES (hatched box)
- VACANT CROWN LANDS (solid black box)

In summary, it was a very informative two days, during which the Colong Committee and the Wilderness Society received excellent comment on the manner in which the National Parks & Wildlife Service manage wilderness areas. They are to be congratulated on their continuously improving approach and, in particular, the local officers for their dedication to wilderness

KOSCIUSKO WILDERNESS INSPECTION



SCALE OF MILES



FORM FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS

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Dear Sir

I enclose \$5.00 being my subscription for all issues of the Save Colong Bulletin to the end of 1985.

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DONORS PLEASE NOTE Gifts may be allocated either to the Fighting Fund, for current use, or to the Myles Dunphy Fund for Wilderness, a capital fund only the income from which will be spent. Please indicate whether you would like your gift allocated to one fund or the other, or would prefer to leave the decision to the Committee.

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