



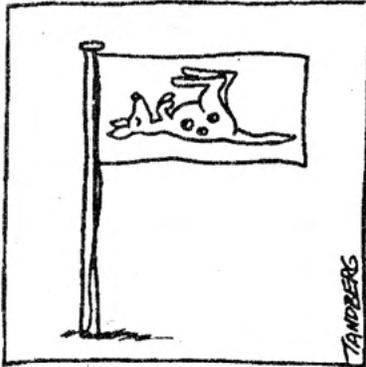
THE COLONG BULLETIN

Bulletin 155

THE COLONG FOUNDATION FOR WILDERNESS LTD.

February–March 1996

GLOUCESTER WALK, 88 CUMBERLAND STREET SYDNEY 2000 (ACN 001 112 143). TELEPHONE: 02 241 2702 FAX: 02 241 1289 ISSN 1325-3336



Tandberg's design for a flag with a roo.
SMH 27/1/96

A fashion has emerged, fostered by a few pundits of an extremist economic rationalist bent, to depict environmentalists as a new species of fundamentalist crank....But by and large we owe a large debt to those who have alerted us to the fragility of our eco-system and have aroused our consciousness about the damage inflicted on the environment by reckless development and sheer human vandalism.

Jim McClelland, S.M.H. 5/2/96

CONTENTS ...

Party Nature Conservation Policies	1
The Edge	3
Grose Wilderness	4
Blue Mountains World Heritage	4
Park Lands Abuses Stopped	5
Goodradigbee & Boyd Wildernesses	6
New Forest Parks	9
Meeting Dates	9

PARTY NATURE CONSERVATION POLICIES

The Colong Foundation believes that nature conservation and its concomitant, biodiversity, can best be achieved by the preservation of habitat and that the most important habitat is wilderness. The nature conservation policies of the political parties will be described from this viewpoint.

ALP Policy

The Prime Minister in his statement on Conserving Natural Australia states that the Government will expand the Natural Reserves Cooperative Program with an injection of \$80 million dollars over four years in order to enable State and Territory governments to purchase properties

with outstanding biodiversity and/or wilderness values for inclusion in the reserve system and will support community efforts for the acquisition and management of natural areas. It is stated that in 1992 the Prime Minister identified wilderness as a key priority in

◆ continued on next page ...

THE COLONG FOUNDATION FOR WILDERNESS

The Gloucester Walk, 88 Cumberland St., Sydney. Phone (02) 241 2702 Fax (02) 241 1289

PATRON: The Hon. Dr. Neville K. Wran, A.C., Q.C.

DIRECTORS: Pat Thompson, L.C.P. (Chairman); Peter Maslen, B.Sc.(Eng), B.Sc.(Botany) (Vice-Chairman); Milo Dunphy, A.M., A.S.T.C. (Vice-Chairman); Alex Colley, O.A.M., B.Ec., H.D.A. (Hon. Secretary); Albert Renshaw (Hon. Treasurer); Tim Cadman B.A. (Hons), M.A. (Cantab.); Phil Millard, M.B., F.R.C.S.; Keith Muir, B. Nat. Res. (Hons); Peter Prineas, B.A., LL.B.; Jim Somerville, A.M., A.S.A.

DIRECTOR: Keith Muir

HON. PHOTOGRAPHER: Henry Gold

HON. AUDITOR: Arthur Andersen & Co.

the development of the reserve system and that the Government will develop a policy to ensure that the actions of all its agencies are consistent with wilderness and wild rivers conservation.

- A **\$10 million revolving Nature Conservation Trust Fund** will be established to allow non-government organisations and companies to contribute to the protection of nature conservation values by land acquisition and other appropriate means. (whether the Colong Foundation's contribution will ever be considered "appropriate" remains to be seen).
- The Government will initiate a high level **review of the incentives and disincentives for biodiversity conservation**.
- A further \$10 million will be provided for the development of more consistent management arrangements for all **Australia's World Heritage sites**.
- The Endangered Species Program will receive an extra **\$13.4 million** over the next four years, with a focus on the preparation and implementation of Recovery Plans for endangered ecological communities.
- The Commonwealth **National Wetlands Program** will be given a **\$6 million boost**.
- The Government will provide an extra \$21.3 million to the Save the Bush Program.
- The Commonwealth will provide **\$8.1 million** to establish a **National Corridors of Green Program**.
- The Commonwealth will commit a further **\$13 million** over the next four years towards the national challenge of controlling **feral animals and weeds**.
- World Heritage listing for the **Blue Mountains** is supported.

Though the Prime Minister did not mention the future of our forests in his statement, in its December statement the Government allocated \$107 million to assist those forest industries and workers made redundant by the reservation of native forests and wilderness areas created under the National Forests Policy

There is no mention of population, which means that the Government does not consider an ever increasing population to be an environmental problem. Nor is there any mention of woodchip ex-

ports. The Government undertook to phase out exports by the year 2000, but this year they will increase, though not in NSW.

Coalition Policy

There is no mention of wilderness in the Coalition policy statement, though much of the policy has a bearing on wilderness. The central feature of the policy is the establishment of a \$1 billion Natural Heritage Trust to be devoted to protecting and rehabilitating Australia's natural environment. An additional \$1.15 billion will be committed to Environment and Primary Industry policies over the next five years. The policy includes:

- The National vegetation initiative to tackle the problems of land and water degradation (\$318 million over 5 years).
- The development of a comprehensive National Reserve System to preserve Australia's biodiversity (\$80 million over four years).
- Additional assistance for the Endangered Species Program (\$16 million over four years.)
- Implementation of a national strategy to control, and where practicable, eliminate feral animals (\$16 million over four years).
- Phasing out export woodchips from areas not covered by Regional Forest Agreements by the year 2000.
- A forest policy which will ensure a world class, scientifically based forest reserve system and a sustainable forest industry with an increased emphasis on plantations, farm forestry and downstream processing.
- The development of an off-reserve system by working to bring to an end environmentally unsustainable land clearing.
- A commitment to, where necessary, use the external affairs power as a measure of last resort to protect the environment.
- Support the addition of appropriate sites to the World Heritage List.
- Support the development of green national accounts that recognise environmental values.
- Maintain funding for the Grants to Voluntary Organisations Program.

- The addition of appropriate sites to the World Heritage List is supported. The sub-Antarctic Islands are considered appropriate but there is no mention of the Australian Alps.
- World Heritage listing for the **Blue Mountains** is supported.

Like the A.L.P., the Coalition does not consider ever growing population as an environmental problem. It would maintain the migrant intake at 100,000 people a year

The funding of this natural heritage program is dependent on the sale of 33% of Telstra. The Democrats and Greens oppose the sale and may hold the balance of power in the Senate.

The Australian Democrats

The Democrats want the phasing out of woodchipping, the establishment of a comprehensive reserve system and national land clearing controls. They support World Heritage listing for the Tarkine, Cape York, the Alps and arid lands in central Australia, but make no mention of the Blue Mountains. At the State election they fully endorsed the Colong Foundation's policies, including population stability.

The Greens

The Greens' policy features the preservation of biodiversity, the main feature of which would be an immediate moratorium on the further clearing of native vegetation. They call for an end to the export of woodchips from native forests this year and immediate cessation of logging in old growth and other forests of high conservation value combined with accelerated transition to wood and wood products from plantations. They want population stability to be achieved mainly by a reduction in net migration.

Australians Against Further Immigration

The AAFI claims to be the only party strongly opposed to continuing high immigration. It is strongly committed to the environment, claiming that less immigration means less pollution in our rivers, beaches and air, less pressure on wilderness areas, less pressure on soils and less pressure on fauna and flora.

Grose Wilderness Nominated

The Foundation has expressed its strong support for the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs' nomination of some 80% of the Grose River catchment. The Helman Report, sponsored by the Colong Committee, recognised the Grose as a wild and scenic river, a finding confirmed by a Wild and Scenic River Committee and again by Cameron MacNamara for the Department of Water Resources. Dr. Geoff Mosley, in his report for the Foundation on the Blue Mountains World Heritage proposal, states that "The Grose Valley meets all the criteria for wilderness." The wilderness is part of the World Heritage proposal.

The Blue Gum Forest is included in the proposal, though the constructed walking tracks from Perry's Lookdown and Govett's Leap and the camping ground at Acacia Flat are not.

Confederation is considering the closure, except for fire fighting purposes, of several roads. These closures would affect most of the Pierces Pass road and of the Mount Banks road, the Patterson Range/Browns Ridge road (south-east from Bilpin), the Burrumoko road (north of Blackheath) and the Mount Hay road. These mainly unserviced, unpaved roads cause creek sedimentation and erosion and admit rubbish dumpers, shooters, rock thieves and arsonists. Fire fighters who use them risk being caught in the fire.

The Grose wilderness, like the Kanangra Boyd wilderness, can be viewed and enjoyed by any visitor to the Blue Mountains without even leaving the train or the public roads. Its declaration would further enhance and protect the integrity of World Heritage values.

BLUE MOUNTAINS WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION

Our campaign for World Heritage listing of the Blue Mountains, launched in 1989, is now approaching the 7 year period which experience has proved is necessary for government acceptance of the appropriateness of our cause. As described in Bulletin 150 ("Assessments Assessed") it took four years for the State Government to persuade the Commonwealth Government to contribute \$30,000 to an assessment of the proposal. This assessment, carried out by the National Herbarium, was an expanded version, both in the data presented and the area recommended, of the submission prepared for the Colong Foundation by Dr. Geoff Mosley. The 473 page assessment, which described the Blue Mountains and surrounding plateaus as an "outstanding natural property of World Heritage status with universal values for science, conservation and natural beauty" was not enough for the former Minister, Mr. Hartcher, who ordered further assessments. The Foundation suspected that the reluctance to accept the National Herbarium report was inspired by the National Party.

We were very pleased to receive a letter dated Feb. 5th from Pam Allan,

Minister for the Environment, telling us that:

At its meeting in late 1995, the NSW World Heritage Properties Ministerial Committee, which I chair, resolved to establish a steering committee of NSW and Commonwealth officials to oversee the preparation of a nomination for the Blue Mountains to be submitted to the World Heritage Committee by 30 June 1996.

The NSW Government will be represented on the steering committee by two officers of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Russell Couch, Manager Sydney Zone Team and Ian Hunter, Principal Policy Officer, Environmental Policy Division.

The steering committee has already held its first meeting and agreed that an expert panel be established to scope assessment work already undertaken and set the direction for further assessment. Although the participants on the panel are still being finalised, they will have expertise in natural assessment, cultural assessment, geomorphology and World Heritage.

The World Heritage Ministerial Council also resolved that a reference group of

stakeholders should be established to advise governments on the proposal and act as a link with the relevant local communities. Whilst the membership of the reference group is still being considered, I would like to take this opportunity to invite the participation of the Colong Foundation for Wilderness. I would envisage that the reference group would meet once or twice to receive a verbal briefing from a member of the NPWS Executive and would be kept regularly informed of progress in the assessment of the proposal. Of course members would be invited to comment on any aspect of the assessment.

Obviously, the June 1996 deadline will be difficult to achieve. Nevertheless, both governments will do their utmost to meet the deadline and I welcome the support of the Colong Foundation in this task.

Though we question the necessity of more assessment of the assessments, we are pleased that a real effort is being made to frame the nomination and that we will have a voice in the process.

QUEENSLAND PARKS AT RISK

*from the N.P.A. of Queensland News
of January*

Our Minister for Environment & Heritage, Honourable Tom Barton, has made the headlines with a statement quoted in the *Tully Times* to the effect that he personally was not against logging of National Parks, "similar to that which we saw a few years ago, before World Heritage was introduced." The Minister went on to say that he made a similar suggestion at a conference in Townsville, which "had not been well received" by conservationists" who "nearly tore his head off". The Queensland Government has yielded to threats from the Carpentaria Land Council in declaring Lawn Hill National Park available for land claim.

The Council had threatened that there would be further "occupations" of the Park if ownership were not transferred to the Aboriginal people. Presumably such occupations would have resulted in the desecration of the Park and wanton destruction of facilities and native wildlife as occurred late in 1994. The damage done at Lawn Hill has as far as possible been made good during 1995, with much of the work in the Park being done by volunteers.

The Premier indicated that making the Park available for claim was intended to soften any Aboriginal objections to the establishment of the Century Mine nearby.

THE EDGE

The Edge is a film described as a 'destination' film – i.e. a documentary of the place where it is shown. But it is no ordinary documentary. It cost \$2.2 million to produce and is shown in a 'Maxivision' \$12 million theatre 150 metres from Katoomba railway station. It depicts the wonders of the Blue Mountains in a very realistic way, so realistic that the viewer forgets it's a film in a cinema and is at one with the scenery. This effect is produced because the viewer is seated directly in front of the 18 metre high 24 metre wide screen. Because the seating is on a steeply sloping floor there is no distraction from the film. The cinema is justifiably described as the most advanced in Australia, if not in the world.

The project was organised by Robert Whittingham. John Weiley was the director/producer and Tom Cowan the cinematographer. John Weiley, who became a member of the Foundation, sought our advice, which we were glad to give. We were gratified that the film paid tribute to our first Patron, Myles Dunphy, and was Dedicated to the pioneer bushwalkers of New South Wales who saved this place and opened our eyes to the wild beauty of the world.

A major difficulty in wilderness conservation campaigning has been that the authorities and politicians responsible for conservation cannot, or will not, visit wilderness areas. For this reason we have made extensive and very effective use of Henry Gold's photographs. Most visitors to the Mountains see no more than can be viewed from the mountain townships. The film takes them right into the remoter and least accessible places - beyond the road network and into the deepest canyons and valleys. The filming of these places involved much improvisation, much transport of equipment on foot and a considerable element of danger. We believe it will be a most effective means of promoting World Heritage listing.

We recommend the film to our members. The cinema is open every day from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m and screenings take place at 50 minute intervals. Phone bookings and information are available on (047) 828 928.



BUSHWALKERS SUPPORT FOUNDATION

The Colong Foundation has received a welcome donation of \$500 from the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs to assist us in the continuation of our conservation activities. The Confederation says that "The wonderful result that has been achieved in relation to walking in the catchment areas, to preserve the access that we have enjoyed for most of this century, was due in no small part to your efforts." We have thanked the Confederation, welcomed its increased involvement in conservation issues and expressed our support for its nomination of the Grose Wilderness, which is being included in the Red Index.

In accord with our arrangement with the Sydney Bush Walkers we sent them a cheque for \$325 for printing materials used during 1995. However they then sent us a donation of \$325. This donation, together with the use of their Gestetner printer, means that Bulletin printing costs are nil - a very substantial saving of costs. Thanks too to the Coast and Mountain Walkers, who donated \$130.

NPWS STOPS ABUSES OF PARK LANDS

Blue Mountains District Manager Geoff Luscombe reports that the National Parks and Wildlife Service has closed the abseil route on the face of Mount Banks. He says that the illegally constructed route was for the use of commercially guided parties. Unauthorised construction "involved the installation of about 50 bolts in the rock with a number of chains and the deliberate destruction of vegetation along hundreds of metres of new tracks in this previously pristine location....Tracks between the abseils are deeply eroded and unstable, spilling large quantities of silt down the cliff face. These impacts are clearly visible from popular Perrys Look-down across the valley and even from the road between Mt. Victoria and Bell, 10 kilometres away. Mount Banks has been devalued as a major visual feature in the very popular Grose Valley by these stripes of erosion. "Increased usage had resulted from the publication of the route in a privately-published guidebook. Unknown people have even created a second route adjacent to the first, adding more bolts and slashing through vegetation as thick as an arm." Full restoration of the impacts is not possible. Mr. Luscombe particularly encourages recreationists to contact the NPWS about issues and become involved in a constructive manner.

Ranger Paul Hardy reports the successful apprehension of another damaging activity. Tumut district experienced problems with people using dogs to hunt wild pigs. The dogs ran down the pigs, grabbed their cars and held them until the dog owners caught up and cut the pigs' throats. This activity tended to disrupt control programs and damaged park trails. When it came to the stage where visitors to the park were being harassed, action became necessary.

A base camp was set up at Currango Homestead, and vehicle patrols began at dusk on Friday of the chosen weekend. On the Saturday morning the patrolling helicopter reported a parked vehicle, then men and dogs were spotted. The contact point, on the Goobarragandra River, was at maximum distance from base camp, but all went according to plan. The helicopter landed and stopped their vehicle as they tried to leave the park. The ground patrols arrived and dogs and owners were taken into custody.

Two young offenders were charged with driving on a management trail and with possession of dogs in a park. Word soon got around the Canberra area that Kosciusko was using rangers, police and helicopters to combat pig hunting, and 'pig-dogging' activities in the park ceased. The operation will be repeated as required.

No doubt similar operations could stop the illegal use of vehicles and horses in wilderness areas.

OUR BALDING LEGISLATORS

■ **The Hon. I. Cohen** (Legislative Council 4th. Dec.) The Labor Government is doing to the forests of New South Wales what the French are doing to the people and environment of Polynesia. What is happening in the Pacific is just as great as the destruction that is occurring in this State.

■ **The Hon. R. B. Rowland Smith:** That is rubbish.

■ **The Hon. I. Cohen:** I would not expect the honourable member,

who talks so illustriously about racing, to be up to date. This would be an ideal time for him to retire and travel to the rainforests to have a look. It would do him a world of good.

■ **The Hon. Elaine Nile:** That is discrimination against the aged.

■ **Reverend the Hon. F. J. Nile:** And against white-haired people.

■ **The Hon. I Cohen:** My hair is rapidly going white - and after this debate it certainly will be. I am not

against white-haired people.

■ **The Hon Virginia Chadwick:** The Hon. R.B. Rowland Smith has more hair than you have.

■ **The Hon. I Cohen:** The Hon. Virginia Chadwick comments on my galloping alopecia. My balding head reflects the ongoing deterioration of New South Wales forests, which are suffering in exactly the same way.

■ **The Hon. J.H. Jobling:** But forests grow back.

GOODRADIGBEE AND BOYD WILDERNESSES REVISITED

The Mount Morgan area south-west of the Bimberi Range and the recent extension of the Scabby Range Nature Reserve are areas of outstanding wilderness quality (see photographs). The Boyd Plateau, an area that the Colong Foundation campaigned for seven years to protect, is another area that should be managed as wilderness in accordance with the wishes of our first patron, Myles Dunphy. It is surprising then that these areas were not identified as wilderness by the National Parks and Wildlife Service during the wilderness assessment process.

Mount Morgan is one of the most spectacular mountain tops in northern part of Kosciusko National Park. From its top distant views to Mount Jagungal and the Bogong Tops and nearby views of Mounts Bimberi, Namadgi, Kelly and the Scabby Range can be enjoyed. Many who visit the mountain spend the day. The distinctive 1.5 kilometre long mountain is covered with granite rock clusters and numerous copses of ancient snow gums. The area is in better condition than the declared Pilot wilderness as brumbies are less prevalent.

Mount Morgan is separated from the declared Bimberi wilderness by the Lone Pine Fire Trail, part of the Bicentennial (Horseriding) Trail. Horseriders using this Trail also ascend the steep unformed walking track to the top of Mount Morgan. Over the last twelve months this foot pad has expanded to a braided and eroding horse track.

Although it is now the practice of the Service to examine the wilderness quality of areas adjoining a nomination, the assessment of the Goodradigbee nomination apparently did not. For this reason the Scabby Range Nature Reserve extension and perhaps areas to the north in Buccleuch State Forest were left out of the wilderness identification process.

Early assessment reports also compromised wilderness identification procedures by the resolution of management issues. The wonderful Mount Morgan area, for example, was almost certainly excluded from the identified Bimberi

wilderness because of horseriding concerns associated with the Lone Pine Trail.

In the case of the Boyd Plateau, convenient park management apparently influenced the identified wilderness boundary. Almost the entire Boyd Plateau is excluded from the identified Kanangra-Boyd wilderness. The boundary more or less follows perimeter fire trails. The NPWS assessment report gives no reason for the excision of the Boyd Plateau apart from the road and visitor facilities.

The Boyd was logged over twenty years ago, but the rehabilitation of its wilderness quality is well advanced. Leaving the Boyd Plateau out of the wilderness will invariably lead to incremental development of vehicle and visitor facilities to cope with car based visitor use over this large area.

Separation of wilderness identification from the resolution of land management issues is essential if the reservation of important wilderness areas, such as Mount Morgan and the Boyd Plateau, are to be properly considered. The Government may be unwilling to declare wilderness over lands not previously identified as such by the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Unless the wilderness qualities of Mount Morgan and the Boyd Plateau are reassessed at this late stage, it may well be that the most sensitive, spectacular and accessible wilderness areas will not only be excluded from wilderness declaration but also subject to heavy use by horseriders or motor vehicles.

It is only a matter of time before the everyday Sydney resident "discovers" the Boyd. Then the Service will have a management nightmare on its hands as hundreds people go car camping on the open woodland flats made available by numerous two wheel drive access roads. The Foundation's solution to the problem is to close the Kanangra Road to private vehicles, retain as national park the road corridor that affects wilderness qualities. A bus service for tourists, including the bushwalkers, should be es-

tablished to Kanangra Walls.

The decline of wilderness at Mount Morgan won't be so spectacular. The relentless tread of shod horses upon thin alpine soils and fragile plants inevitably will ruin the place. Relocation of the Bicentennial Trail to the Murrumbidgee River Fire Trail and/or the Pendants Hut Trail would permit inclusion of this wonderful peak in the Goodradigbee wilderness, ensuring its long term protection.

A summary by the ACF of major party differences in forest and uranium policies

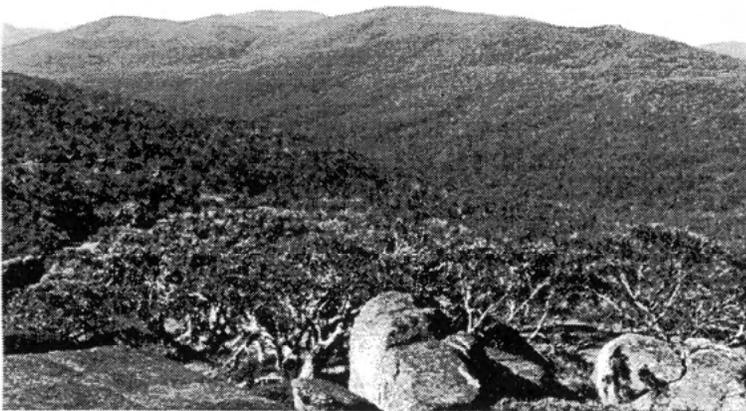
	Funding	Forests
Liberal National Coalition	\$1.15b over 5 years Major portion of funding is contingent on the sale of Telstra. Only \$150m appears to be from normal budgeted expenditure	Coalition supports conservation of 15% of all forest types, but not in NSW & Qld Coalition has not committed itself to Labor's old growth and wilderness targets NPWS to be fast-tracked, implying less-than-adequate regard for conservation values. Economic interests may be given a higher priority in establishing national reserve system
Australian Labor Party	\$469m over 4 years Funded from budget	ALP nominally committed to protecting 15% of all forest types, and to protecting 60% to 90% of old growth and 90% of wilderness. However, it did not meet 15% target for all deferred forest areas in northern NSW, citing unacceptable social disruption.

	Uranium & Nuclear
Liberal National Coalition	Three Mines policy will go, opening way for new uranium mines.
Australian Labor Party	Three mines policy unlikely to change at present.

UNIDENTIFIED WILDNERNESS AREAS



*Snow among the gums –
Boyd Plateau
(Photo: Henry Gold)*



*View from Mount Morgan looking
over the upper Goodradigbee
River valley to the declared
Bimberi wilderness in the ACT.*



*Looking from Mount Morgan
toward the recent extension of
the Scabby Range Nature
Reserve.*

New Forest Parks

On 22 December the Carr Government declared 72,479 ha of new national parks and nature reserves mainly from former state forest areas. One of the coastal parks declared, the Bongil Bongil National Park extension of 409 ha, more than doubles the size of that park. The area was a long standing Total Environment Centre proposal that was effectively saved from becoming a suburb of Coffs Harbour by Mr David Norrie, the Centre's former project officer.

The Goobang National Park of 32,700 ha is the largest of the new parks. It protects the Hervey's Range, reserving the most extensive forest area remaining in the south-west of the State. The second largest of the new parks is the Abercombie River National Park of 19,000 ha. Situated west of the Kanangra-Boyd National Park, near Oberon, it protects another rare fragment of old growth forest west of the Dividing Range.

Another notable new park is the Ben Halls Gap National Park of 2,500 ha situated at the junction of the Liverpool and Mt Royal Ranges. Whilst it is a relatively small park, it protects an important area of high quality old growth forests of messmate and mountain gum that have developed on the rich basalt soils. On the south coast, the Eurobodalla National Park of 2,180 ha now protects a section of coastline between Moruya and Tilba Tilba Lake.

Closer to Sydney, the popular Rocky Creek canyon area of 3,600 ha has been added to Wollemi National Park. The addition not only protects this magnificent canyon but also provides an essential link between the Gardens of Stone National Park and the Wollemi wilderness to the east. This addition completes the Colong Foundation's Gardens of Stone National Park proposal that was sponsored by Ms Clover Moore MP in 1994.

The promised 11,000 ha Coolah Tops National Park probably will be declared next Parliamentary session. The Government's 1995 proposal has been confirmed by the Resource and Conservation Assessment Council (RA-

CAC), despite strong local opposition. Mr Col Dorber wrote to Mr Carr on 17 August, 1995 promising that if the RACAC finds the decision to make the park was correct, then the NSW Forest Products Association and the owners of the Coolah Sawmill will withdraw all opposition to the National Park.

The North East Forests are in Trouble

Further north, however, the park declarations at this stage are somewhat more limited in extent with 11,600 ha being declared in four parks. The North East Forest Alliance reports that State Forests plan to log eleven compartments within the proposed boundaries of the promised parks in the next seven months. The parks on the Richmond Ranges were particularly reduced with the Cambridge Plateau, Yabbra, Mount Nothofagus and Mount Clunie rainforest areas contained in the election policy not being reserved, at least for the time being. The, Cataract and Sara River National Park proposals promised during the March 1995 election also failed materialise because of logging and mining conflicts. The Demon National Park is greatly reduced due to gold mining interests and the new Mount Jerusalem National Park of 970 ha west of Mullumbimby does not adequately protect old growth forests in the region. Key parts of the new Mt Jerusalem park in the Nullum State Forest containing koala habitat are scheduled for logging and a very rare rainforest tree *Elaeocarpus minyon* were excluded. The rare rainforest tree, found only in three areas, was recently felled during the development of logging roads in one area of the Nullum State Forest. We understand that logging in this area has now been put on hold.

Rainforest is supposed to be protected by a NSW Government policy of twenty years standing. State Forests are seeking to get around this policy. Forestry wants to fell what it describes as 'dead' rainforest trees and to perform 'salvage logging' during road construction in its logging proposals for the Casino and Urbenvale forest areas. Current forestry practice also requires logging roads to follow

ridgelines. Logging roads should not be located in rainforest areas on valley bottoms. State Forests' so called dead trees are the prime habitat of tree dwelling mammals. These trees and the ones that continue to get in the way of State Forests' road building bulldozers are more valuable than the timber felled by salvage logging.

There is another chance for park reservation through the forest policy process, based on future RACAC recommendations. Twelve further national parks are expected to be declared in the next six months, including the long awaited South East Forest National Park.

MEETING DATES

Meetings will be held on February 29th, March 14th and 28th, April 11th and May 9th.
AGM May 23rd.

Deferred Forests Illusion

The Victorian National Parks Association reports that the final 'Deferred Forest Areas' have been announced by the Federal Government with little withheld from logging in Victoria. A few areas in and around the Wombat State Forest and in parts of East Gippsland are the only real deferred forests resulting from this process. However in a sleight-of-hand, the final report has labelled virtually all forests not being clear-felled in the next three years as 'deferred'. Naturally the maps of the deferred forests resemble swiss cheese with the areas marked for logging coupe excluded.

WILDERNESS FIRST

The Garden of Eden was no doubt an open forest (described in the modern version of the Bible as a park) from which primitive man, like its other inhabitants, derived the necessities of life without destroying their source. God told man to be fruitful and multiply and gave him mastery over all living creatures and possession of every plant, but he also gave all the green growth to 'every living creature that crawls on the earth'. When man was expelled from the garden he was condemned to 'win food from the ground by the sweat of his brow'.

The only vestiges of the original 'garden' which now remain are the wilderness areas. As the forested lands have been developed for rural or other purposes, environmental degradation has been widespread. It is possible, given a realistic population policy and land usage which retains vegetative cover, to preserve the land from degradation, but over vast areas this has not been done.

Wilderness provides the most effective preservation of the natural environment. It comprises the last remnants of the ecologically complete environment that once covered the earth. It contributes to every essential phase of plant and animal survival. There is abundant evidence of this in the latest NSW State of the Environment Report, which outlines threats to biodiversity. The "threatening processes" it describes include the following:

Habitat loss, modification and fragmentation

Habitat loss is the inevitable consequence of the fragmentation of natural areas. The smaller the natural remnant the more it is exposed to modification or destruction by loggers, graziers, shooters, 4WD drivers, feral animals etc. Many species need to range over large areas and most of the natural fauna has disappeared from small remnants of bushland.

Over-grazing

Native grasses are eaten off, unable to seed, or replaced by introduced species and weeds. Shrubs and tree seedlings are eaten down. In severe cases there is soil loss and sand drift, leading to desertification.

Altered fire regimes

As described by the NPWS, few fires start in wilderness. The control of fires on the adjoining developed land would leave wilderness with much the same fire regime as that which existed during Aboriginal management. The frequent fires

which burn into isolated bushland are considerably more destructive than those affecting wilderness.

Introduced species

Rabbits, foxes, cats and dogs are plentiful in small natural areas, but seldom seen within extensive timbered wilderness. Pigs are probably the worst threat. Introduced weeds, such as lantana and blackberries, are usually restricted to the fringes of wilderness or clearings within it. Weed species follow streams in wilderness as in developed areas.

Dieback of native forests and shrubs

This is not a problem in wilderness.

Climate change

This will not be effectively countered except by politically difficult, therefore probably impossible measures, such as substantial reduction in the use of motorised vehicles and the sacrifice of a large range of electrical appliances. Even should this occur, land based carbon "sinks" will be required to absorb the remaining output of carbon dioxide. Land based absorption capacity will depend on vegetative cover. The most effective cover is forest. Forests which are cut down do not contribute, while the timber in woodchips is eventually oxidised in the form of burnt or rotting paper products. It has been estimated in Australia's Greenhouse Gas Inventory that land clearing may be responsible for up to 27% of total emissions.

Water regulation and extraction

Cleared land does not retard run-off. Less water is absorbed into the soil and floods are augmented. Forests retard run-off, increase rainfall, and contribute to a sustained stream flow. Wilderness is by far the most effective stream protection, and the most valuable catchments are the steep forested lands on the upper reaches of streams. The best protected area of the Warragamba Dam catchment is the Kanangra Boyd wilderness.

Pollution

No pollution originates in wilderness.

Hunting and illegal collection

Given the declaration of wilderness, its management by the NPWS, and sufficient allocation of resources, hunting and illegal collection can be controlled.

For 208 years, since the first trees were cut down on the shore of Sydney Cove in preparation for the flag-raising, wilderness destruction has been regarded as progress. Wilderness has been sacrificed to development such as logging, farming, grazing and urban uses. Only those fragments useless for these purposes remain.

Recognition of the value of wilderness in an over-developed country dawned in 1988 with the passage of the NSW Wilderness Act. But it has not yet been acknowledged that its protection is the most effective means of preserving the natural environment and the biological diversity it protects. Its essential role in catchment protection, a first priority in this dry continent, has not been recognised. Nor has its recreational value been recognised (except in the NSW Act). In view of the growth of tourism it may well be our most valuable asset. With some exceptions, such as Sydney Cove, Australian cities are much like most others. But our natural environment is unique and as population grows in already over-crowded countries, more and more tourists will come here to enjoy it. For both environmental and economic reasons wilderness should now come first, not last.

There has been some encouraging progress in wilderness recognition. As Mr. Keating said "No policy is going to satisfy everyone," but the protection of 90% of high quality wilderness is a good start, while the NPWS is assessing 22 nominations. The Colong Foundation believes that all wilderness remnants should be preserved, whether of high quality or not. Most of the areas in NSW worthy of protection, and many of those in other states, are described in our Red Index.

SUPPORT THE COLONG FOUNDATION

BULLETIN SUBSCRIPTION

Membership of The Colong Foundation for Wilderness covers Bulletin subscription fee.

Non-members of the Foundation may subscribe to the Bulletin for a fee of \$10.00 (covers all issues of the Bulletin to 31/12/96)

A BEQUEST

Please remember us in your will. The Law Society of NSW recommends the following wording:

'I bequeath the sum of \$..... to the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd. for its general purposes and declare that the receipt of the Treasurer for the time being of the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd. shall be complete discharge to my executors in respect of any sum paid to the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd..'

MEMBERSHIP

Membership fee of \$20 covers Bulletin subscription. If you are not personally known to the Foundation, the Secretary will nominate you and ask one of the directors to second your nomination. The signing of this application will be accepted as evidence of your support of the aims of the Foundation. Return to The Hon. Secretary, Colong Foundation for Wilderness, The Gloucester Walk, 88 Cumberland St, Sydney 2000



The Treasurer
Colong Foundation For Wilderness Ltd.,
The Gloucester Walk, 88 Cumberland Street
Sydney NSW 2000

The enclosed remittance or advice covers the item(s) indicated by a tick.
(One cheque sufficient to cover subscription and donation)

- Membership application (use form below) (N.B. Membership fee covers Bulletin subscription)
- Life Membership (\$500)
- Membership renewal (\$20)
- Colong Bulletin Subscription to 31/12/96 (\$10.00) (Non-members only)
- Tax deductible donation of \$_____ to the Colong Wilderness Fund (cheques to be made payable to the Fund).

NAME (MR, MS, MRS, MISS) _____

ADDRESS _____

POSTCODE _____

DATE _____

SIGNED _____

AMOUNT \$ _____

I hereby apply for membership of the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd.

I am nominated by _____ and seconded by _____

I subscribe to the Foundation's aim of preserving Australia's wilderness remnants. I accept the liability provided in the Colong Foundation's Articles of Association to guarantee \$20 should it be needed in the event of the winding up of the Foundation

SIGNED _____

AMOUNT ENCLOSED: _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

POSTCODE _____

DATE _____

The Colong Foundation originated as the Colong Committee, which was appointed in 1968 by a meeting of conservation societies to prevent quarrying of Colong Caves. Shortly afterwards the Committee extended its objective to cover the saving of the Boyd Plateau from becoming the site of a 15,000 acre pine plantation. Both objectives had been achieved by 1975, when three new objectives were adopted. The first of these was the creation of a Border Ranges National Park, an objective which escalated to become the rainforest campaign. The other objectives were the creation of a Greater Blue Mountains National Park and a Kakadu National Park. The rainforest parks and Kakadu are now World Heritage areas, the Greater Blue Mountains Park is in being in fact, though not in name, and the Foundation is campaigning for World Heritage listing for the Blue Mountains. Recent campaigns for "Gardens of Stone" and Nattai National Park have been successful. The Foundation's proposal for a Wilderness Act was accepted in 1987. It has been supplemented by the Red Index of Wilderness, now being updated and extended to other states. A more detailed history of the Foundation is available in its introductory brochure.

THE COLONG BULLETIN

SENDER THE COLONG FOUNDATION FOR WILDERNESS
The Gloucester Walk
88 Cumberland St.,
SYDNEY NSW 2000



Publications Available From The Colong Foundation

	Price posted \$
The Colong Bulletin, bi-monthly, per annum	10.00
Blue Mountains for World Heritage	16.00
The Colong Story	8.00
How the Rainforest Was Saved	8.00
Park or Pines	8.00
Nattai National Park Proposal	20.00
Nattai, Kanangra Boyd, Nadgee, Goodradigbee and Lost World Wilderness Nominations, each	4.00
Barefoot Bushwalker	27.00
The Growth Syndrome	3.00
Wilderness - The Future	25.00
Red Index - complete	100.00
summary brochure	2.00
listing of individual areas	5.00