



THE COLONG BULLETIN

Bulletin 157

THE COLONG FOUNDATION FOR WILDERNESS LTD.

July 1996

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



NPA mourns the death of our Honorary Life Member, Milo Dunphy. Milo's dedication, drive and vision, and that of his father before him, have left us with a rich legacy of parks to celebrate. NPA pays tribute to a very special person, glad for his sake that his body is at rest, but challenged to ensure that his spirit lives on.

Anne Reeves, NPA President, NP Journal, June 1996

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT

In writing the last Annual Report I referred to it as arguably the worst year for wilderness in the Foundation's twenty seven year history. If last year was our *annis horribilis*, the present year could be described as a year of hope.

To date the Carr Government has taken its first step in fulfilling its election promise of declaring sixteen wilderness areas with eight areas being announced amounting to about 350,000 hectares bringing to over one million hectares the wilderness protected in New South Wales. However in making this there has been further concessions to the anti-wilderness lobby. It will be necessary to address these concerns in the future.

The second ray of hope comes from the forestry reform programme. Here the Government will consider protecting further wilderness partly under its obligations with the Commonwealth to create a comprehensive, adequate and representative (CAR) forest reserve system and partly under its own initiative to bring to an end the long running forest conflict. The danger is that the government will give in to demands of

the timber interests for resource security whilst failing to protect the CAR and other identified areas in secure national park and reserves. How successful the outcome will once again largely depend on public support.

The year also ended on a sad note as reported in the last issue with the death of one of our founders, Milo Kanangra Dunphy. His loss is a great one to the cause of wilderness conservation and the environment of this country. Amongst all of Milo's many achievements he regarded his work with the Colong Foundation to be among his most important because above all Milo was a wilderness man first.

There was a matter of concern that Milo raised with many of us during his last year and that was the decline in the numbers of volunteers as the environment movement has become increasingly professionalised. It was largely through Milo's own efforts in persuading the National Estate Inquiry in 1973 to recommend to government the giving of grants to provide central offices and

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THE COLONG FOUNDATION FOR WILDERNESS

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

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DONATIONS

We gratefully acknowledge donations from supporters during the six months to June 30th. The donations were from not only our long-time supporters from the early days of the Colong Committee and many subsequent supporters, but from many individuals and institutions in answer to Milo Dunphy's request to send donations to the Foundation rather than flowers. The donations were made at a very opportune time, enabling an augmented campaign at a very critical time, when old growth forests and wilderness areas are under government consideration. The donations were from:

The Australian Association of Bush Regenerators, M. Alexander, J.D. and E.J. Alexander, Animal Liberation, V. Attenbrow, Mr. and Mrs. C. Austin, R.L. Badgery, J. Barnard, E. Bell, M. Bell, C.G. Benjamin, J.S. Bentley, J.W. and K. Blanche, G. Borschmann, M. Bouman, P.E. Boyd, J.C. Brown, M. Bull, Bushlanders Club.

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LETTER TO THE DIRECTOR

Dear Sir,

I refer to the article in *The Colong Bulletin* No. 156 of May 1996 titled *The Battle to Preserve Wilderness* and which quotes from my paper *Feet and the Forever Game*. I hope you can publish the following comments which clarify a few matters in relation to the paper:

1. The paper represents my professional view of the issues as a national park manager, but does not necessarily represent the official views of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.
2. The paper was based on the situation in the national parks of the Blue Mountains, the area in which I work and with which I am most familiar.
3. The paper was prepared and presented, by invitation, to the 1996 NSW Outdoor Education Conference. It was therefore aimed at a particular constituency; a constituency which represents a significant recreational sector and which uses the natural environment of the national park as its basic resource.
4. A major point of the paper which was not mentioned in the *Colong Bulletin* is that the management of recreational impacts is not only aimed at protecting the park environment, but also as ensuring that the recreational opportunities enjoyed by the present generation may still be available into the future. The primacy of conservation therefore also benefits recreation in the long term. [This is the first priority of the Foundation. Ed.]
5. In the Blue Mountains, the unusual situation exists where two of the state's largest and most natural wilderness areas lie within day trip range for the 5 million people of Australia's largest population centre. The Blue Mountains also host a large part of the state's tourism industry. The inevitable recreational pressure and impacts, in the absence of positive management, will cause wilderness-type environments to drift inexorably towards a more disturbed and modified condition. Whilst also acting on the larger threats to the natural systems of the region, the NPWS in the Blue Mountains is determined to control the recreational causes of environmental deterioration. All those who value the wild qualities of the parks will need to share and work for this vision if it is to be realised.

Thank you for the opportunity to clarify these points.

Ian D. Brown, District Operations Manager,
for Director-General NPWS.

Continued from page 1

employ full-time staff to keep the continuity going but he believed in the end that may have turned out to be a two-edged sword.

As part of our renewal in the coming year the Foundation will embark on a programme to encourage a return to volunteerism. In this regard it is pleasing to welcome Guy Dunphy and Andrew Wilkins as new directors of the Foundation. Both have been long time supporters. I also note our honorary photographer Henry Gold has been able to find the time for increased involvement and Terry Stern, another invaluable assistant of the past, has announced his return to Colong activism.

The Foundation continues on a sound financial footing and our thanks goes as

always to our supporters. Some special thanks also to Keith Muir for his untiring work as our part-time director, Alex Colley as secretary and *Colong Bulletin* editor, Albert Renshaw as Treasurer. It is in the spirit of volunteerism that has built the Foundation into the force it has become. Through the efforts of such people among others we are assured of continuing success. Last year we were faced with a proposal of raising Warragamba Dam wall some 23 metres which would have led to periodic flooding of over 50 square kilometres of our Blue Mountains wilderness. Vigorous campaigning by the Foundation and the Kowmung Committee saw the defeat of that proposal. The cost of safeguarding our wilderness is eternal vigilance.

Patrick Thompson, Chairman.
31 May, 1996

Wilderness Protection Scheme

At the 1995 election, the Carr Government pledged to create a world class reserve system that would protect native forests. The Resource and Conservation Assessment Council (RACAC) was set up by the Government to implement this forest protection proposal and facilitate timber industry restructuring (including granting resource security over the forests not protected).

RACAC has prepared a draft report seeking to provisionally identify areas needed for a national system of forest reserves. The various proposed protection areas made by RACAC, however, are considered inadequate by conservation groups.

Conservationists involved in forest conservation campaigns along the eastern seaboard of the state have prepared the **Forest Reserve Plan**. This Plan contains three key elements, aimed at facilitating a sound forest reserve system:

- proposals for immediate moratoria where forestry operations are banned pending further assessment;
- proposals of immediate declaration of national parks and wilderness areas;
- proposals to fast track final assessment and protection of provisionally identified wilderness.

Wilderness promises

Labor's Wilderness Election Policy promised to declare sixteen areas in the first year of government. Thirteen of these sixteen areas have been subject to a special round of public consultation since March 1995.

Fifteen of the sixteen areas are within the study area currently subject to a detailed forest assessment by RACAC. The protection of known forest wilderness underpins the Forest Reserve Plan's (FRP's) aim to establish a world class reserve system. The FRP recommends the immediate protection of those wilderness areas currently on exhibition, and the Etrema extensions and the Coolangubra wilderness.

As of 25 June, 494,787 ha in these sixteen areas have declared of which NSW Labor has declared only 224,029

ha (or 16%) of the possible area that could be protected. The 125,000 ha Kanangra-Boyd wilderness area announced on 2 April is yet to be declared.

Table 1 reveals the scale of the wilderness challenge. Table 1 shows the extent of inadequately protected forest wilderness in the IFA study area.

To meet this challenge, conservation groups have requested that the Carr Government:

- immediately protect about one million hectares of wilderness in state forests, vacant or reserved Crown land and national parks;
- place the Deua, Wollemi, Pilliga and Levers wilderness nominations on exhibition immediately;
- establish and fund with an annual allocation of \$5 million the *Dunphy Wilderness Fund* to acquire private and leasehold land in wilderness areas;
- stop the rapid loss of Provisionally Identified Wilderness (PIW) areas by imposing an immediate logging moratorium over all PIW areas;
- protect PIW areas as wilderness in national parks via a fast track process of assessment and declaration under the Wilderness Act;
- give priority to protecting wilderness inside national parks by reexamining during this round of wilderness decisions wilderness identified inside national parks;
- ensure that the Bicentennial National Trail is relocated to prevent adverse environmental impacts on identified wilderness.

Threatened wilderness forests

About a quarter (283,306 ha) of the threatened wilderness captured by the Government's Wilderness Policy is in state forest and most is subject to a logging moratorium (a major exception is the 125,000 ha Pilliga wilderness that is currently being logged). This moratorium represents about one twelfth of the 3.3 million hectares of state forests in NSW. A further 163,461 ha is Crown land, most of which is leasehold land.

So far, most protected wilderness in

NSW occurs on land useless for resource development and not desired by horseriders or off-road vehicle recreationists. These declared wilderness areas are to date essentially opportunistic reserves in steep terrain that are inaccessible to motorised transport. These reserves do not adequately sample the State's forest biodiversity.

Threatened identified forest wilderness typically adjoins declared wilderness areas. Protection of these identified wilderness will add manageable samples of different forest types to the wilderness estate. For example, the Chaelundi State Forest adjoins the declared Guy Fawkes wilderness. Its declaration as wilderness would secure an area described by Justice Stein as a "veritable forest dependent zoo, probably unparalleled in south-eastern Australia" (Stein, J. 40169 of 1991).

Wilderness provides the most effective means to preserve the natural environment by ensuring threatening processes, such as altered fire regimes, habitat modification and fragmentation, do not interfere with the life processes and continued evolution of plants and animals.

The biological principles adopted by RACAC specify that providing for species in large habitat blocks is superior to providing small blocks; and that species are more secure from extinction if individual animals in local populations are able to move unhindered through the landscape (RACAC 1996, pg 31). Rabbits, foxes, cats and dogs that interfere with the functioning of natural ecosystems are also less frequent in extensive timbered wilderness.

Leasehold wilderness must be protected

The extent of protected wilderness indicated in the Draft Forestry Assessment Report is greatly exaggerated. Crown leasehold lands were included by RACAC in the "protected" area layer can be subject to grazing, roading, mining, firewood collection, subdivision, disposal as freehold land, and many other forms of development.

Table 1: FOREST RESERVE PLAN — WILDERNESS AREAS

| Name | Nat Parks | State Forest | Crown Lands | Freehold Land | Wilderness at risk (ha) | Wilderness Declared |
|--|----------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 16 ALP PROMISED AREAS FOR DELARATION | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | (Carr contrib. 25/6) |
| Warrazambil | 1,375 | 625 | — | — | 2,000 | (7,000) 7,000 |
| Washpool | 225 | 29,956 | 6980 | 967 | 38,128 | (NONE) 30,975 |
| Mann | 3,973 | 20,027 | 2,983 | 1,034 | 28,017 | (NONE) 25,398 |
| Guy Fawkes | 13,939 | 24,076 | 49,480 | 4,196 | 91,691 | (NONE) 29,625 |
| New England | 1,596 | 25,680 | 100 | 2,116 | 29,492 | (NONE) 28,000 |
| Macleay Gorges | 40,833 | 4,489 | 63,081 | 6,989 | 115,392 | (50,000) 50,000 |
| Werrikimbe | 16,194 | 20,602 | 3,242 | 102 | 40,140 | (26,500) 26,500 |
| <i>Pilliga</i> | <i>42,000</i> | <i>83,000</i> | <i>?</i> | <i>?</i> | <i>-125,000</i> | <i>(NONE) NONE</i> |
| Barrington | 5,900 | 23,737 | 1,310 | — | 30,947 | (32,033) 32,033 |
| <i>Wollemi#</i> | <i>420,000</i> | <i>9,000</i> | <i>300</i> | <i>3,230</i> | <i>432,530</i> | <i>(NONE) NONE</i> |
| Kanangra-Boyd | 126,823 | 270 | 9,512 | 3,555 | 140,270 | NONE NONE |
| Ettrema | 2,088 | — | 11,834 | 59 | 13,981 | (4,380) 64,380 |
| Budawang | 2,550 | 11,714 | 789 | 470 | 15,473 | (69,700) 69,700 |
| <i>Deua*</i> | <i>34,780</i> | <i>24,750</i> | <i>3,600</i> | <i>300</i> | <i>63,430</i> | <i>(670) 34,570</i> |
| Nadgee | 3,341 | 2,920 | 50 | — | 6,311 | (NONE) 13,775 |
| Goodradigbee | 8,733 | 2,620 | — | — | 11,353 | (33,746) 83,921 |
| subtotal | 724,300 | 283,466 | 153,261 | 23,018 | 1,184,045 | (224,029) 495,877 |
| OTHER AREAS FOR DECLARATION | | | | | | |
| <i>Levers</i> | <i>15,422</i> | — | — | — | <i>15,422</i> | <i>NONE</i> |
| <i>Macdonald#</i> | <i>83,900</i> | — | — | <i>5,700</i> | <i>89,600</i> | <i>NONE</i> |
| Coolangubra | 15,580 | 8,784 | 40 | — | 24,404 | (NONE) NONE |
| subtotal | 114,902 | 8,784 | 40 | 5,700 | 129,426 | NONE |
| PIW ADDITIONS (RACAC AREAS FOR FAST TRACKED PROTECTION) | | | | | | |
| Macleay Gorges | — | 5,776 | — | — | 5,776 | NONE |
| Werrikimbe | 3,736 | 13,758 | 3,735 | 1,245 | 22,474 | NONE |
| Mann | — | 3,097 | — | — | 3,097 | NONE |
| New England | — | 408 | — | — | 408 | NONE |
| Barrington | — | 1,572 | — | — | 1,572 | NONE |
| Budawang | — | 1,276 | — | — | 1,276 | NONE |
| Brogo | <i>?</i> | 219 | — | — | 219 + <i>?</i> | NONE |
| Ettrema extn | 16,965 | — | — | — | 16,965 | NONE |
| subtotal | 20,701 | 26,106 | 3,735 | 1,245 | 51,787 | NONE |
| PIW NEW AREAS (RACAC AREAS FOR FAST TRACKED PROTECTION) | | | | | | |
| Chaelundi | — | 14,112 | — | — | 14,112 | NONE |
| Mummel Gulf | — | 12,277 | — | — | 12,277 | NONE |
| Bungonia | 15,726 | 4,494 | 1,123 | 1,120 | 22,463 | NONE |
| Monga | 2,360 | 16,503 | — | — | 18,863 | NONE |
| Brindabella | 20,934 | — | — | — | 20,934 | NONE |
| subtotal | 39,020 | 47,386 | 1,123 | 1,120 | 88,649 | NONE |
| TOTAL | 898,932 | 365,742 | 158,159 | 31,083 | 1,453,907 | (222,939) 495,877 |

NOTES:

All figures are NPWS identified or Provisionally Identified (PIW) wilderness (except areas in *italics*).

This table represents most of the wilderness in the IFA study area (essentially the coast and tablelands of NSW). The NPWS estate contains several other wilderness areas that are yet to be investigated (eg Grose wilderness in the Blue Mountains National Park and Brogo wilderness additions in the Wadbilliga National Park).

Areas shown in *italics* have not been officially identified and have either been nominated under the Wilderness Act or are subject to an internal assessment by the NPWS.

Wilderness declared by the Carr Government is listed as a subset of the total area declared.

Macdonald and Wollemi tenure data based on the 1986 Wilderness Working Group report.

* The Deua wilderness includes an 18,000 ha addition and a 5,000 ha addition in the Donalds Creek area, the result of a nomination by the Canopy Committee of TEC.

It is not possible to achieve the Commonwealth 90% reservation target for wilderness without acquisition of leasehold land.

Conservation groups seek an annual allocation of \$5 million to the promised but not yet established *Dunphy Wilderness Fund*. These funds must be used to purchase private and leasehold lands within the sixteen promised wilderness areas as a matter of high priority. Leasehold areas must remain reserved from conversion to freehold title. A notice should be placed on all leasehold land titles within NPWS identified wilderness so that the NPWS is automatically notified of any pending sale so that voluntary acquisition of leases can be expedited (s. 20 of the Wilderness Act). A list of priority acquisitions should be drawn up and approved by the Minister for the Environment, and regularly reviewed so acquisition opportunities are not missed.

Protection of PIW areas

Provisionally Identified Wilderness (PIW) areas identified by RACAC are not subject to a mandatory logging moratorium. Recent logging and roading in the S2 and N2 regions has reduced PIW wilderness in these regions (RACAC 1996, pg 28). Over 140,000 ha are in PIW areas and well over half are separate new wilderness areas (eg Mummel Gulf).

It is not possible to achieve the Commonwealth 90% reservation target for wilderness without protection of Provisionally Identified Wilderness, even if all previously identified wilderness is protected. In northern NSW, these is 59,000 ha of PIW but only 68% is protected by logging moratoria in the conservation criteria outcome and much less is protected in the industry preferred outcome.

Conservation groups supporting the FRP have requested that in order to stop the rapid loss of PIW areas, an immediate logging moratorium should apply to PIW areas. Protection of these areas as wilderness in national parks should be via a fast track process of assessment and declaration under the Wilderness Act. Failure to do so will result in the rapid loss of wilderness qualities on lands excluded from the moratorium.

NPWS argues – more roads, less wilderness

Apart from the limited extent of wilderness recently declared by the Carr Government, a detailed NPWS information package explained that major concessions [to] 4WD and vehicle touring interests fulfilled in [the 12 April] wilderness declarations include the exclusion and maintenance of some popular trails in the Warrazambil, Macleay Gorges, Werrikimbe, Barrington, Kanangra Boyd, Ettrema, Budawang and Goobarragandra localities. Of legally accessible trails mapped within these identified areas, more than 350 km (or about 65%) have been retained.

Conservation groups strongly oppose giving priority access to off-road vehicles in the remaining 5% of NSW that is wilderness. The off road vehicles lobby already has priority access to 95% of NSW.

The State Pollution Control Commission inquiry (1979) into the recreational use of off-road vehicles found that "the use of vehicles in areas of high wilderness value, jeopardises wilderness qualities. The desire to explore and trailblaze areas of virgin country can cause immeasurable damage to flora and fauna, cutting deep impressions as vehicles can tyre-spin their way to gain traction over rough terrain. Narrow trails are widened, hillsides are rut scarred, erosion is initiated, reserves become and remain scarred, front-end winches ropescar and ruin vegetation, archaeological relics are damaged and the possibility of fires is increased from vehicles and the activities of users of vehicles." (pg. 32).

In response to this new assault on parks, conservation groups including the Foundation have sought the reexamination of threatened wilderness identified inside national parks by the Government.

Conservationists were also disappointed to read that in the NPWS information package major concessions [to] horseriders in [the 12 April] round of wilderness declarations include the exclusion of the Bicentennial National Trail in the Macleay Gorges, Werrikimbe and Barrington Tops areas. The wilderness in Kosciusko National Park was improperly assessed and reduced in size to accommodate horseriders.

The Bicentennial National Trail passes through about 85 km of unprotected wilderness bisecting several wilderness areas. This represents only 1.6% of the total Trail. These concessions damage identified wilderness by encouraging weed invasion, soil erosion and stream sedimentation. The environmental impacts of horseriding will increase park management costs and still not prevent irreparable damage. In Kur-ring-gai National Park, the NPWS spends \$4,000 a kilometre each year to maintain eroding horseriding trails.

The Bicentennial National Trail should be relocated to prevent adverse environmental impacts on wilderness from horseriding. The Trail organisers pledged to avoid existing and future wilderness areas when seeking Government support for the proposal (Allan, M. 5 May, 1988). The Government should hold the Trail organisers to that commitment.

As a further compromise in the last round of wilderness decisions, the NPWS has introduced for 'special groups' a controlled access system in order to allow continued vehicle access. Also the "NPWS is currently investigating an improved mechanism for allowing commercial activities in declared wilderness".

The Conservation groups consider these decisions by the NPWS compromise the sound management and integrity of wilderness areas in NSW. The Carr Government's poor performance on declaring the first eight areas in the Wilderness Policy has triggered a major campaign by conservation groups. The next round must not repeat these mistakes.

Why Wilderness?

Definition

Wilderness is a substantial remnant of the natural environment. How substantial? It must be large enough and compact enough to provide safe habitat for a wide range of native flora and fauna. Small natural areas are subject to intrusion from surrounding developed lands and may not support some species which require an extensive range. An area of some 5000 ha upward is required. In the NSW Wilderness Act it is defined as an area which

- is, together with plant and animal communities, in a state that has not been substantially modified by humans and their works or is capable of being restored to such a state.

- is of sufficient size to make its maintenance in such a state feasible.

- is capable of providing opportunities for solitude and self-reliant recreation.

In this definition the clause "is capable of being restored" is of crucial significance. There are few places in the world, except in the polar regions, that have not been "substantially modified by humans." Without this provision, there would be few wilderness areas.

The Environmental Significance of Wilderness

Wildlife

Wilderness is the most complete habitat of native flora and fauna. Because fertile and productive lands have already been developed, it is now found only in rugged areas left in their natural state because it has not been economically rewarding to exploit them. In New South Wales these areas are found mainly in the mountainous country east of the Great Dividing Range. West of the Dividing Range, most of the land, with the exception of the Pilliga wilderness, has been cleared, grazed, mined or otherwise modified by humans. Most of the native flora and fauna, with the exception of some of the larger wildlife such as kangaroos and emus and some vegetation remnants, has been eliminated. Wildlife can be preserved only by fencing in these easily accessible areas, eliminating introduced species, and introducing

native species.

Because of the forbidding cost and difficulty of fencing natural areas (The National Parks and Wildlife Service estimates that 40,000 km of fencing would be required to fence its parklands) wilderness affords the most effective protection for endangered species, which will survive only if their habitat is preserved. It is therefore essential for the preservation of biodiversity,

Soil retention

The clearing of vegetation, which is essential for agricultural and pastoral development, exposes soil to erosion. This can be arrested by enlightened grazing practice, which avoids overstocking and retains grass cover, and by agricultural practice which retains vegetative cover in the form of stubble or green manure. The upper river catchments, where most wilderness areas are located, consist mostly of steeply sloping land prone to disastrous erosion unless protected by adequate vegetative cover. It is essential to retain vegetative cover if erosion and the siltation of streams and dams is to be avoided. Wilderness provides the most effective counter to soil erosion. The declaration of the Kanangra Boyd Wilderness will ensure maximum protection for a large section of the Warragamba Dam catchment.

The greenhouse effect

The greenhouse effect, now acknowledged by the International Committee on Climate Change, is due to the inability of the earth's flora and oceans to absorb the carbon dioxide and other gases emitted by our fossil fuel consuming society. Forests are the most effective absorbers of CO₂ and wilderness is the most effective form of forest, because none of it is returned to the atmosphere in the form of decaying garbage.

Medical

It has been known, ever since homo sapiens appeared and probably long before, that many plants have therapeutic properties. Wilderness contains the most complete range of flora and its



preservation is therefore essential if many plants, the medical properties of which have not yet been recognised, are to be preserved.

Recreation

The concluding clause of the Wilderness Act definition, which states that wilderness must be "capable of providing opportunity for solitude and self-reliant recreation," clearly recognises that recreation is a principal objective of wilderness declaration. Such recreation, if it is to be self-reliant, must be independent of motorised or equestrian access.

The reservation of areas in which bushwalking can be enjoyed is in itself an adequate reason for wilderness preservation. The value of lands reserved for football and cricket fields, golf courses, tennis courts etc runs into billions of dollars. Most people cannot play football and many cant, or wont, play other forms of sport. A "Daily Telegraph" survey established that bushwalking is the second most popular form of sport. The reservation of some of the most economically useless land for the recreation of bushwalking costs little.

Economic significance

Tourism is now not only the fastest growing industry, but one of the largest and a major component of the balance of payments. Unlike mining, logging and much of rural industry, it is environmentally benign. The main attraction to overseas tourists is the natural environment. Except for some scenic attractions such as Sydney Cove and the Swan River, our cities, which lack antiquity, are much like cities elsewhere. It is our unique natural environment which is the the principal attraction. It is therefore a very valuable economic asset and should be preserved from degradation.

Threats to Wilderness

Population pressure

In the densely populated old world countries wilderness no longer exists. In many overpopulated third world countries wilderness remnants and the flora and fauna they contain are rapidly diminishing. Despite the paucity of economic resources, other than some mineral deposits, within wilderness, there is constant pressure to exploit them. Inappropriate recreational activities, however, are now the principal threat. Pressure for the exploitation of resources within wilderness areas is mounting as population increases beyond the point of sustainable development.

Rural and Urban Development

In 1788 the entire state was wilderness. Clearing, mainly for grazing and agriculture, has reduced wilderness to an archipelago of areas covering some 5% of the state. Pressure for grazing these remnants surfaces during droughts. The effects of grazing are exemplified by the recovery of alpine flora in Kosciuszko National Park after stock were removed.

Logging

The trees within wilderness areas have been a prime target of logging interests. Woodchipping in the south east forests is the outstanding example. The future of old growth forests in wilderness areas is now under consideration. They will be protected within wilderness areas

The new Queensland State Government has decided to put power into the Daintree, giving the go ahead for a new suburbia. There are 12,000 subdivision blocks in the middle of the Daintree, ready and waiting for 3000 people to move in and switch on their lights and dish-washers, wanting pets, needing sewerage disposal bigger and better roads, a bridge over the Daintree River...

identified by the NPWS and may be protected in some unidentified areas. The State Government has promised resource security to the timber industry. The logging of areas so designated will mean the removal of mature trees. Many of these trees have taken centuries to grow and if cut down will not be replaced for centuries. It is therefore of the utmost importance that conservation of old growth forests is effected before resource security is given.

Burning

Although most bushfires start not in wilderness but in developed areas, wilderness is frequently targeted for the burning of fire breaks. The burning of "scrub" in order to provide grazing for stock is a practice dating back to Aboriginal days, when burning was a means of providing grazing for native animals.

Off road vehicles and horse riding

Off road vehicles are now the most damaging threat to wilderness areas.

The off road vehicle lobby makes the following untrue claims;

- That access is denied because the areas are "locked up." All wilderness areas can be reached by road or rail. Anybody can enter them. It is not people, but vehicles which are denied entry.
- That only the fit can enjoy them: It is true that a measure of fitness is necessary for overnight walks, but anybody who can walk can do short or long day walks in wilderness.
- That family use is denied: This is equivalent to a claim that families can't walk. National park lands not managed as wilderness provide adequate scope for family outings.
- That wilderness areas are overrun by feral animals and weeds. Unfortunately feral animals and weeds are state wide. They do not favour wilderness and are considerably less prevalent in well preserved wilderness areas than in many other parts. Under NPWS management, control measures, not previously available, will be introduced.

Horse riding churns up tracks, which are then exposed to erosion, and introduces weeds and manure. Flora is destroyed within corrals, which are often constructed of saplings.

Mining

There is constant pressure from mining interests to prospect and mine wilderness. In Kakadu the Jabiluka uranium deposit has been excluded from the park. Development of the Koongarra deposit will create another large scar within the park and pollute the South Alligator River. The already rejected Coronation Hill mine is once more proposed. The earth-contained tailings dams will not give lasting protection to the streams within the park. In NSW there is pressure for allowing mining in the Blue Mountains parks, which have already been degraded by surface subsidence and cliff collapses. Coal mining interests claim that half the state's coal resources are within national parks and other non-available areas. It is difficult to reconcile this claim with the Joint Coal Board's estimate that the state's coal resources total over 500 billion tons. Mineral resources are not confined to national parks and there are undoubtedly a great number of deposits in the 95% of the state outside national parks. Extensive gold mining on the Sara River threatens the Guy Fawkes Wilderness.

Summary

All the wilderness areas listed in the Colong Foundation's Red Index are subject to one or more of the above threats. The most common threat, which is present in all but two of the listed areas, is from off road vehicles and horse riding.

Future Threats

As population increases the demand for water will necessitate the raising of the Warragamba Dam and dams on other wild and scenic rivers such as the Colo, the Grose and the Shoalhaven. Pressure for mining the most accessible coal resources in the Blue Mountains will increase, as will river pollution. If the new airport is located at Badgerys Creek or Holsworthy the protests of citizens in nearby suburbs will lead to the direction of flight paths over the Kanangra Boyd and Nattai Wildernesses. The possibility of directing flight paths over national parks has already been mooted as one of the advantages of the Holsworthy site.

Conclusion

Until recently the protection of the last substantial remnants of the natural environment has been at the bottom of the scale of land use planning priorities. It should now come first, not, as before, last. If it is not preserved now it never will be.

GARDENS OF STONE NATIONAL PARK

In November 1994, after a ten year campaign initiated by our then Vice-Chairman and David Blackwell, the Gardens of Stone National Park was declared. It contains habitat for endangered species Koala, Yellow-bellied Glider, Powerful Owl, Regent Honey Eater and Turquoise Parrot. The NPWS is now engaged in rehabilitation of the area. Geoff Luscome reports that -

Since Gardens of Stone National Park was gazetted in 1995 the NPWS has commenced weed and feral animal control programs to consultation with park neighbors, placed signs on park boundaries, removed dumped vehicles and conducted a biodiversity survey in the park. These efforts exceed any land management or conservation initiatives undertaken on this land over the last decade.

In response to a spate of vandalism, including the forcing of a gate at Baal Bone Gap, installed to stop firewood and bushrock collection and logging, the Service will be increasing ranger patrols.

MEETING DATES
Meetings will be held
on August 1st, 15th, and
29th, and September
12th and 26th.

MARIE - JO VOIGT FINE ART



invites you to an exhibition of paintings by

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COMMERCIAL EXPLOITATION OF PARKS

Following the approval of buildings up to 5 stories high to house 1000 extra beds in Kosciusko National Park, the Nature Conservation Council of NSW has called on the NSW Government to amend the NPWS Act to prohibit development of private dwellings in parks and review the 1000 beds proposal.

Development Within Warrumbungle National Park

In response to the Planning Officer's invitation we have made a submission on the New Plan of Management for Warrumbungle National Park. The general objectives of the plan accord with the NPWS definition of a park as "an area set aside for the conservation of nature," and for compatible recreation activities.

The conservation of nature requires that visitor facilities be restricted to essentials, such as toilets, parking and a visitor centre. The plan provides for 9 development sites dispersed over an area of some 40 sq. kilometres, including three camp sites and 2 cabin sites and a further camp site 5 km away at Camp Pincham. A considerable area of the park will therefore be affected.

The main purpose of the plan is to provide increased overnight accommodation within the park. All overnight accommodation could well be provided by private enterprise outside the park, which is only a little over a quarter of an hours drive from Coonabarabran and cabins are available at other locations.

It appears that the main purpose of the plan is to raise revenue. This could be raised by charging an entrance fee. The accommodation will not be provided by the park service, but by commercial enterprise. The sorry story of Kosciusko illustrates the damage introduced by such a policy. In 1980 the NPWS described its first "overriding consideration" in Kosciusko N.P. as the limitation of development. It stated that "the community will not accept continued disturbance of the Park's fragile environment." Kosciusko is now the site of a large winter city with unsolved sewerage problems - a far cry from the Service's definition of a park as "an area set aside for the conservation of nature."

The release of the Federal Government's unfunded National Heritage Trust Bill is a transparent attempt to drum up support for the part sale of Telstra.

The Government's poor response on Greenhouse gas emissions and its imminent plans to increase woodchip exports are the real measure of its environmental credentials and the community will not be blackmailed into backing the Telstra sale.

If the Government genuinely believed issues such as revegetation, water quality and Murray-Darling rehabilitation were serious, then it would not have set up the trust to fail by linking it to the part sale of Telstra.

The Trust is an empty shell.

Dr. Carmen Lawrence, Shadow Minister for the Environment 18/6/96.

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 31/12/97)

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)
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- Tax deductible donation of \$..... to the Colong Wilderness Fund (cheques to be made payable to the Fund).

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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:

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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



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