Mountains And Tourism: Meeting The Challenges Of Sustainability In A Messy World

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Abstract

The power of mountains to inspire, enhance our spiritual well-being, and excite and challenge serves as the foundation for a growing tourism industry worldwide. The decisions to develop and sustain this tourism industry—to say nothing of determining what it is that tourism should sustain—require multiple actors, acting in a variety of roles seeking somewhat overlapping, sometimes conflicting goals. Tourism management situations are increasingly confused and contentious, with not only multiple goals, but differing perceptions of sustainability, inequitable distributions of political power, structural distortions in access to information and changing paradigms of protected area planning. Traditional planning processes are not particularly well-suited for making decisions in this “messy” situation. Other approaches combining scientific and technical knowledge, learning, accommodation of interests and consensus building offer some optimism for those interested in managing mountain landscapes for tourism.

Escalating Challenges and Emerging Opportunities

The power of mountains to arouse our dreams, to enhance our spiritual well being, to stir our imaginations, to empower our passions, to excite our senses and challenge our capabilities serves as the foundation for a growing international tourism industry. Largely, the foundation for this industry is not just the overwhelming magnificence, beauty and serenity of mountain landscapes, the infinite combination of geology, topography, water and vegetation that are found in them, but also the meanings and symbols that people attach to mountain environments. An important set of those meanings and symbols deals with the attraction of mountains as places to sustain our lives through recreation.

Mountains, as we have heard from other speakers here, are the source of legends and myths, they are at the heart of unnumbered tales and fables, they are often the underpinning of spiritual traditions, but perhaps more significantly, these narratives enrich our experiences as tourists and expand our lives as residents. Mountains provide the perfect blend of spectacular topography, awesome beauty, and distinctive culture, a mélange that local communities can build upon as they seek to enhance economic opportunity, preserve their heritage, and advance their quality of life.

Against the background of increasing attention to the cultural wealth of mountain landscapes lies the traditional way in which contemporary society has viewed their physical attributes. The techniques we use to measure these attributes communicate how society views their value: cubic meters of timber, animal unit months of forage, tons of minerals and cubic meters per second of water. Yet, these measures
are now increasingly substituted by such terms as visitor-days, skier nights, user-days or recreational visits, terms that reflect the accelerating value of mountains for recreation and tourism development.

The collision of long-standing approaches to defining the utility of mountain landscapes with emerging values and changing meanings, largely symbolic in character, also suggests that we need to reflect on how we frame mountain landscape planning and decision-making processes. This is no small problem: significant institutional barriers exist to effective, equitable, and efficient resolutions to the planning challenges typifying contemporary landscape management. These processes are important in selecting futures and finding the means to achieve them.

And yet, development of tourism in mountain landscapes provides a number of opportunities, not only for visitors to experience the splendors these settings offer, but also for local communities to reap some economic benefit through employment, tax revenues, and infrastructure development, for residents to boost their quality of life, and for local people seeking respectable prospects for protecting their natural and cultural heritage. These opportunities emerge only with sensitive, skilled stewardship of mountain landscapes and communities.

In this paper, I examine a few of these developing challenges and opportunities and suggest several dilemmas in managing tourism. I initially discuss the attributes of mountains that make them attractive to tourism. These attributes serve as the context for understanding the more substantive nature of the challenges of managing tourism in mountain environments within contemporary society. The ensuing section contains a brief description of several dilemmas confronting society as it seeks to sustain the cherished values of mountain landscapes. The paper concludes with a discussion of opportunities presented by developing an ethic of sustainability as it applies to tourism development in mountains.

**Tourism and Mountains: An Attractive Mix**

We in this conference, of course, are not the only ones that understand the strength of mountains to shape our cultural essence, appreciate their ability to evoke our imaginations, recognize how they provide escape and refuge from the pressures, chaos and fast pace of urban areas and evade, at least temporarily, the warm, humid and often uncomfortable climates of coastal and subtropical regions. Tourists come in increasing numbers to mountains and their valleys with expectations of what they may encounter, with anticipations of what they may experience, and with illusions and beliefs about mountain landscapes. These visitors bring with them behaviors that may or may not be very desirable.

The extremities of climate, topography, and geology not only are the cause for much of this tourist activity, but also mean that mountain landscapes are sensitive to impacts.

Moreover, given the relatively short growing season in many mountainous regions, their ecosystems tend not to be resilient, thus exacerbating the impacts that come from human activity. Mountains are difficult environments for tourists, resorts, development, and day-to-day living. Their very nature means that they are challenging settings in which to survive, they are difficult topographies to traverse, and they can provide taxing experiences for us to endure. The vagaries of weather that occur within their boundaries require us to be ever alert, lest our survival be uncertain.

The attractions of mountains for recreation—as “pleasuring grounds”—have long been recognized institutionally. The first national parks in the US (Yellowstone), Canada (Banff National Park), New Zealand (Tongariro National Park) and Australia (Mt. Buffalo) embraced mountains, and the rivers, streams, lakes, forests, meadows and unique features they contain. To 19th century civilization, these wild and remote landscapes stood in stark contrast to the domesticated, cultivated and manicured ones of the European homeland. They provide opportunities for recreation that are not found elsewhere. Perhaps John Muir (Muir 1901) said it best:

> Camp out among the grasses and gentians of glacial meadows, in craggy garden nooks full of nature's darlings. Climb the mountains and get their good tidings, Natures peace flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves. (p. 56)
It is these very characteristics that continue to make mountains attractive as vacation destinations, as settings for ever more extreme sports and recreational experiences, as locales for learning about how cultures interact with natural environments and as places to challenge our physical and mental capacities. As these demands accelerate within the context of other demands for the goods and services mountain landscapes provide, conflicts among competing uses and values themselves multiply.

But ... A Recipe for Messiness

These subjects cause us to take pause about the future of mountain landscapes. If they are so cherished, but are so sensitive to impacts and lacking in resiliency, how can we ensure that the values they provide will indeed be available for future generations? In the 19th century, those who asked these types of questions relied primarily on gazetting of national parks to sustain these values. However, we are now into the 21st century, with challenges much more complex, with problems more enduring, and with questions more tortuous than in the past.

It is not that the physical landscape will not exist: mountain ecosystems and geomorphologic processes occur on simply too large a scale for humans to impede significantly their evolution. However, there are doubts about mountain landscapes continuing to provide all the values, goods and services in the quantities that humans seek; to supply all the minerals, water, timber, forage and other physical substances that a growing world population demands; and to meet all of our expectations for tourism. Largely, our concern about mountains is generated by the apprehensions ensuing from such expectations that without serious, sustained and effective intervention, their ability to meet these growing and diversifying demands will be constrained; their role as sources of inspiration may be lost; and their capability to inspire and motivate may quickly evaporate. In addition, there is a sense of urgency surrounding these misgivings: with 4 billion more people being added to the world’s population over the next 40 years, the time to institutionalize sensitive, thoughtful stewardship is short.

In many ways, this concern is the moral principle of sustainability—the obligation we have to ensure that future generations have access to the same set of opportunities that we do today. Sustainability, and its kin, sustainable tourism, are indeed complex topics: while their source lies in moral philosophy, the principal practical value of these concepts lies in the way they transform the positioning and framing of the issues associated with stewardship of mountain landscapes. Three specific aspects of this transformation are important and salient to this conference.

First, stewardship of mountain landscapes has largely been dominated by the technical language of economic development specialists and environmental protection experts. This language excludes the knowledge locals hold about mountain landscapes, it marginalizes the public’s ability to participate in decisions about their future, and it makes constructing the public interest difficult. The concept of sustainability moves this discussion from one of the technically best means to achieve a goal to one of redistribution of political power and economic wealth, from a debate about efficiency to one of equity, and from an argument about technical expertise to appeals for public engagement.

Second, the planning processes we used in the past to make decisions about the future have implicitly assumed that a consensus among stakeholders exists about the desired future and that scientists agree about cause-effect relationships, two assumptions that most of us could easily challenge (see (Thompson and Tuden 1987) for a discussion of decision-making contexts). Planning is the process we use to determine what future we want and how to get there. However, there are often many possible futures; sometimes these visions are competing; some of them may even be undesirable. Figure 1 shows that the future is very much a function of the pathways and choices we make today. From the range of potential futures, planning selects one that appears to be desirable. Once we select this desirable future, we implement policy (interventions) to ensure that it actually transpires. Thus, a sustainable tourism plan documents the chosen desired future, and the general policies selected to arrive there.

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See Williams and Matheny (1995) for an excellent discussion of the limitations of the “managerial” language in constructing the public interest in environmental issues.

1 I note here that the very purpose of planning is to respond to perceptions that the current course of events leads to a future that is unacceptable. We plan because we feel the need to change the ongoing unfolding of events to those that will lead to a desirable future.
Unfortunately, there is often little consensus on which future is the desirable one. In the pluralistic political systems with which most of us are familiar, there are a variety of such desirable futures. Conflict, contention, and controversy are as often over which future is favored as they are about what management actions are preferred. Society is highly fragmented about the roles mountains and the stewardship institutions that protect them should assume. Various stakeholders and interest groups may hold differing preferences for goals and values. Frequently, enabling legislation or decrees appear intrinsically conflicting (e.g., the mandate to preserve while providing enjoyment that is often stated for national parks). The interests of local communities and national governments may deviate. Preferences over different social scales (neighborhoods, communities, states) may diverge. Failure to agree on and accept specific objectives is a major reason why plans fail to be implemented.

The role of science and technical knowledge is limited in situations where goals are contested because conflict centers on different values rather than the “how to’s” needed to solve a particular problem. Thus, the issue of restoring predator populations in some American parks and protected areas, such as wolves in Yellowstone, deals more with the conflicting ideologies of the role of parks in society than the actual science of restoration. While science can inform planners of the consequences of alternatives in this type of conflict, its role is limited because the issue is one of disagreement over goals—a conflict that is properly within the domain of public policy.

Situations with varying amounts of agreement on goals and scientific uncertainty are depicted in Table 1. This table shows, simplistically, four planning situations in which we may find ourselves. Situations characterized by agreement on goals and agreement on cause-effect relationships may be termed tame problems. Tame problems occur when there is a consensus as to what future is desired and we know what actions will achieve that future. Planning processes for tame problems are well developed and form the backbone of how planners routinely tackle policy issues.

Situations where goals are not contested but cause-effect relationships are disputed may be termed mysteries. These mysteries require additional emphasis on science because it is unclear whether a particular management action will lead to an expected outcome. Science is as much about uncertainty as anything else, but we need ways to address this uncertainty in building our futures. For mysteries, science would play a very important role in providing planners with the information needed to select among specific alternative actions and policies.

Where there is disagreement about goals but scientists agree on cause-effect relationships, wicked problems result. Such problems generally represent the value conflicts mentioned earlier. Here, planning processes would emphasize identifying the values and ideologies in conflict and then negotiating resolution of the conflict through some type of accommodation of interests. Science is not involved, except perhaps in identifying and displaying the values in conflict.

Finally, messy situations occur when there are both disagreements about goals and cause-effect relationships. In this situation, there is a high level of uncertainty in the planning situation; it is likely to be fluid, dynamic and highly contentious. There are multiple, competing goals, power may be inequitably distributed, and scientific uncertainty exists. It is my contention that most significant decisions about tourism in mountain landscapes are messy problems (Friedmann 1973).

A third aspect related to how stewardship issues are transformed relate to how planning processes are applied. Traditional approaches to planning based on science and expert opinion are appropriate only for tame problems. The character of the planning challenge for messy situations is such that it is not so much a problem of information as it is of values, not so much an application of modeling as it is an application of learning, and not so much a test of expertise as it is a process of human interaction and deliberation. In messy situations, scientific and technical information may play a role, but one that informs not dictates; problems are dealt with successfully only through negotiation because they deal more with conflicting values not necessarily a lack of credible science. In such messy situations, planning processes emphasize dialogue, mutual learning, accommodation and consensus building over scientific expertise, technical information, and expert opinion.

Confusing a messy problem with a tame one has two fundamental consequences: (1) the problem is not resolved, perhaps only its symptoms are addressed but not the underlying causes; and (2) because of the resources committed to addressing an inappropriate casting of the problem, the capacity to resolve the
messy situation is reduced. Capacity to resolve the messy problem is reduced because the institution has lost its credibility as an effective agent of social policy; resources are no longer available to address the problem; or options for resolution have been eliminated or narrowed.

This transactive model of planning (Friedmann 1973) does not ignore the traditional approach to resolving socially significant issues. Rational-comprehensive planning has its place, but is inadequate for messy situations; it must be combined with interpersonal, collaborative efforts that effectively engage the public in a discussion about futures and means to them. In this sense, planning is a process owned by the public and the technical experts facilitate the discussion, not direct it.

**Pitfalls and Hazards**

These three aspects of sustainability in mountain landscapes lead to several pitfalls that can as easily trap the unwary sustainable tourism advocate as a pre-monsoonal storm on the flanks of Mt. Everest can snare an inattentive climber.

First, tourism development occurs primarily at the local level—the level where investment decisions are made, the point where government regulates many land use activities and the scale at which residents and tourists interact and experience impacts. Both government policies and private investments affect residents, but in different ways depending on whom you are. Thus, these activities have significant distributional effects in terms of income, quality of life, access to resources and political power. The sustainable tourism literature argues strongly and persuasively that community and citizen involvement in government decisions is a fundamental characteristic of sustainability. Indeed, constructing the public interest in mountain landscapes is as much a task for the citizen as it is a study for the scientist.

Yet, local governments are susceptible to excessive influence from the private business sector, primarily because of the threat of the flight of capital to other jurisdictions (Williams and Matheny 1995) “…state and local governments are not responsive to those segments of the population that control private investment. The mobility of capital across state and local political boundaries drives … interjurisdictional competition” (p. 72). This threat means that local governments are challenged in dealing with the distributional consequences of tourism policy, regulation, and investment, which are often the focus of citizen concern and doubts. This is a recipe for frustration for engaging the public in planning, particularly in capitalist societies where the private sector makes the principal investment decisions.

A second pitfall concerns how we frame the question of sustainability. There are potentially three ways of looking at sustainability in a tourism context (McCool, Moiesey et al. 2001). As with its larger context, the meanings attached to sustainable tourism have varied significantly, with little apparent consensus among authors and government institutions.

Sustaining Tourism: How to maintain tourism industry businesses over a long time frame. This view suggests that the primary task is to build and manage a set of tourism businesses that can maintain themselves over a long period. This view of sustainable tourism would emphasize maintaining promotional programs that ensure that the number of tourists visiting an area continues to rise. In this sense of sustainable tourism, the more tourists, the better.

This view is narrow in the sense that the objective of sustainable tourism is the tourism (and recreation) industry and included business firms. While maintaining the health of industries and individual businesses may be viewed as a worthy social goal, this perspective does not necessarily recognize tourism as a tool to enhance economic opportunity, protect a community's cultural and natural heritage, and maintain a desired quality of life. This view neglects to see tourism as an input, as a method of enhancing social and economic welfare.

Sustainable Tourism: A kinder, gentler form of tourism that is generally small in scale, sensitive to cultural and environmental impact and respects the involvement of local people in policy decisions. This view comes from an argument that there are finite biophysical and social limits to tourism development. It recognizes that tourism, as any other economic activity, can overwhelm a community with negative social and environmental impacts. Thus, sustainable tourism in this sense is closely allied with the notion of eco-tourism it is small in scale, designed to benefit local peoples and communities, and protect
environmental attributes upon which the tourism and recreation industry is built. Within this view, there remains considerable divergence of opinion, with some authors suggesting that sustainable tourism represents the conduct of individual tourists, others maintaining that it is ethical behavior on the part of tourism and recreation based businesses, and still others suggesting it focuses on the amount of social and environmental impact.

What should tourism sustain? Tourism as a tool for development. This view sees tourism as a tool of social and economic development, as a method to enhance economic opportunity, not as an end itself. This question is similar to Gale and Cordray's (Gale and Corday 1994) question of "what should be sustained?" in a natural resource management context, to which they replied nine different answers, primarily focusing on various ecosystem characteristics. In this sense, tourism is integrated in broader economic and social development (Hunter 1997); (McCool and Moisey 2001) programs and can be viewed as a method--similar to many definitions of eco-tourism--to protect the natural and social capital upon which the industry is built. By asking this question, we view tourism as a tool, which at times may be important to a community and other times not so important. In this sense, we are not speaking of protecting cultures for their value to the tourism industry, but because of their value to their peoples (Robinson 1999).

Another dilemma is related the above: there is little evidence that meanings of sustainability are widely shared. Sustainable tourism constitutes what is termed a "guiding fiction": guiding fictions serve socially valuable functions as long as definitions remain vague; they stimulate and organize social discourse around problematic issues, but when individuals seek the more specific definitions needed to guide action, this function breaks down as groups argue over the meaning of terms (Shumway 1991). The challenge here is to maintain the pathway to sustainable tourism while providing secure venues for public deliberation about meanings and actions.

Agreement on meanings is a necessary, but not sufficient condition, for making progress on socially problematic challenges. Action in society requires a variety of actors performing in concert (Friedmann 1973). In tourism development, this includes promotional agencies, governmental planning and zoning institutions, community development groups, local residents, transportation planners, private entrepreneurs, security agencies, health and safety services and others. This lack of consensus on meanings is becoming a significant pitfall in the search for sustainability, for the different meanings result from significantly different perceptions of tourism and its role in society. There are at least three different meanings that relate directly to the notion of sustainable tourism that are used in the literature.

Prospects and Opportunities

While the world is a messy one, it is this very messiness that is the source of enormous opportunities to provide skilled, informed stewardship of mountain landscapes. There are three specific such opportunities that I mention here. First, sustainability is about the distribution of political power, the sharing of economic wealth, and the application of environmental justice. In particular, the redistribution of power provides great opportunity to stronger, more environmentally literate citizens. Because a sustainability model reframes tourism development from the technical to the value arena, full engagement of informed citizens is needed for planning to achieve its potential. This opportunity can lead to stronger democracies, to enhance citizenship beyond voting to meaningful engagement and deliberation on complex, socially problematic issues. Through the debate about sustainability, we might advance the notion of governance to new levels and expectations.

Second, there are significant prospects for a tourism industry that does not make the mistakes of other industries dependent on natural resources and environments. Tourism has the advantage of the experience of other environmentally dependent industries; it should incorporate the lessons of dependency, diversity, stewardship, strategic planning, economic development, and sustainability in planning and decision-making processes.

Third, there is the prospect of real and positive change in people’s lives, through economic opportunity and through enhanced understanding of other cultures. Tourism is often criticized for offering only low wages to unskilled laborers, such as desk clerks, maids and dishwashers. While these jobs do exist in the tourism industry, there is a lot of opportunity for vertical advancement, and immense potential for entrepreneurship in the industry. There is also the prospect of public service for those with a more
altruistic outlook on life. Through interpersonal interaction, we can come to better understand the values, beliefs and viewpoints held by other cultures. Through sensitive, nature-based tourism we can also come to learn how different ecosystems function, and how cultures deal with those systems.

Table 1. Tourism planning may occur in one of four situations, depending on the amount of agreement on goals and cause-effect relationships. Each of the situations leads to a different type of planning problem, as indicated in the cells. Each type of problem requires a different approach to planning.

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<th>Scientific Agreement on Goals</th>
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Figure 1. There are many possible futures for tourism in mountain landscapes. These futures are a function of the actions we take today and in the near future (arrows). Of the futures that are possible, only a few may be desirable. Those desirable futures may themselves represent competing visions. Planning is the process we use to develop socially acceptable futures and the means to attain them.

Messiness and the Future

When tourism is combined with mountains and overlaid with a sense of sustainability, we have the perfect recipe for a messy situation. Alternative, transactive oriented planning frameworks, using science and technology with an emphasis on learning, accommodation and consensus building provides positive prospects for resolving the troublesome issues found in many mountain landscapes.
Are our political and economic institutions up to task with respect to many of the messy questions that tourism in mountains confronts us? This question engenders a number of others that will continue to confront us: How does one conserve the environment, provide a more equitable distribution of income among those living at the present, and ensure that there is equality in access to quality of life? Can we optimize all three goals, or are there tradeoffs involved? If so, what are they? How does one provide for the needs of the present while preserving options for future generations? Who represents future generations and their needs in these decisions? What is the role of ethics and science in sustainability policy? How can development be sustained? Can sustainability be achieved within existing institutional and political-economic frameworks and processes? How does one develop and apply a science of sustainability while promoting more public participation in government decision-making?

Those mountains are powerful: they are not only symbolic physical entities, they also represent the challenges before us as we seek to protect the important values they hold, enhance economic opportunity for the people that live within their valleys and on their slopes, and strengthen the quality of life for residents and tourists alike. As with hiking in mountains, our struggle with sustainability will be confronted with canyons and gulches, boulders and trenches, dense forests and open meadows. To the extent that each represents a barrier or an opportunity is a function of how we frame the challenge. For seeking sustainability through tourism, the questions that are before us are as much one as the other.

**Literature Cited**


Mountains Of Memory

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Introduction

The title of this paper is stolen from an autobiographical work by the great Arnold Lunn, the pioneer and founder of skiing as a sport, in the Swiss Alps. In his dedication of the book, he notes that its publication synchronises with his golden jubilee as a skier - he started at Chamonix in 1898. Well this conference almost coincides with my golden jubilee as a skier - my first serious ski trip was to Mt Feathertop, as a 9 year old in 1947, the year before Arnold Lunn’s book was published.1 Dad gave Mountains of Memory to Mother while she was in hospital in 1949, and I read it soon after she brought the new baby home. I was hooked on the mountains already.

The conference calls for, inter alia, papers to address the question ‘How do we identify heritage values in mountains?’ I would like to use the diverse experiences of this family, over more than 100 years and 5 generations, in ‘the experience of living, working and playing in mountain landscapes’in Victoria, NSW and occasionally Austria, to illustrate some of the heritage values which are inherent in our mountain landscapes and ski resorts. These values, and their tangible physical expression in the mountain environment are often overlooked in the rush to preserve the natural world in its pristine, ‘untouched by human hand’ form.

Skiing is thought to have had its origins in Scandinavia over 4,000 years ago, to tend herds, hunt game and travel in winter. Organised, competitive skiing and recreational skiing didn’t begin until the 19th Century - specifically, around the 1850s to 1860s in Norway, among the goldminers of California and in Australia, at Kiandra in NSW and at Mt St Bernard, near Mt Hotham in Victoria.

The history of skiing and mountain recreation that I will present is a very personal one. It is a history of my family’s involvement with mountains in general, and skiing in particular. I have been able to use my family archives almost exclusively to illustrate it. My parent’s mountain memories permeate this essay, and have deeply affected all of us, down to the fifth generation, now experiencing club skiing with Grandpa and Grandma (my partner and me).

Those who are born and bred among the mountains accept with composure their heritage of beauty, and those who never see the hills do not realise all that they are missing. Some of those who are introduced to the mountains in their childhood or youth become passionate about the annual pilgrimage to the snows and at home live ….. with months of gnawing homesickness for the hills.2 The love of mountains is a strange disease, which strikes some members of a family, but leaves others untouched. The father of the great Arnold Lunn was struck in mid-life. He became a passionate afficionado of the Swiss Alps and, to ensure

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1 Lunn, Arnold, Mountains of Memory, pub. Hollis and Carter, London, 1948
2 Lunn, Arnold, The Mountains of Youth, pub. OUP 1925
he could afford to spend the maximum time there, started a tourist bureau specialising in holidays in the Alps for clergymen and their families. Consequently, his son virtually grew up in Grindelwald, where he first put on skis as a child in 1898. Arnold Lunn became the father of ski racing in Europe, and his son, Peter, became a British champion downhill racer. My mother, travelling with her father D.B. Ferguson in 1933, met Arnold Lunn, I think in Murren, where he had organised the first world downhill ski championships two years before.

In my family, and my partner’s, the disease alights randomly, but in those afflicted it directs their lives. My mother, who first came to our present mountain home at age 82, and in the early stages of dementia, could not remember what day it was, but when I pointed out to her the Alpine peaks on our horizon, she could still tell me stories about her adventures on them in her youth and in her prime. Among her papers I found a small album of her most precious photographs. These included memoirs of her adventures with my Dad on the Bogong High Plains and elsewhere, but also photos of her other love, the Austrian ski instructor Franz Skardarasy, who worked at Mt Buffalo in the late 1930s. Franz later had a part in my life and in my daughter’s also and he has a significant place in the history of skiing in Australia.

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It would have been impossible to produce this story without the hundreds of photographs, newspaper cuttings, letters, certificates, pamphlets, books, journals, diaries and ski club histories found among my family papers, an extraordinary archive taking up at least a hundred metres of shelf space at our farm. I am dedicating this memory of mountains to my parents, Joan (nee Ferguson) and Neville Haughton, who had the foresight to keep all their papers, even the ephemera.

My family’s interest in and involvement with mountains began more than 100 years ago. In going through family records, I discovered a print of a photograph of skiers at Mt Hotham taken by a great-uncle in 1899. William Hamilton Ferguson was a surveyor and geologist who worked on the geological survey of Victoria, producing beautiful maps of large areas of the State and discovering the first dinosaur fossil and the only black coal deposits found in Victoria. He loved the Victorian mountains and named several. Like many explorers, his glass plate camera and tripod went everywhere with him. Throughout 1899 he was working in East Gippsland and no doubt took his camera on a winter trip from the Omeo goldfields to Mt Hotham. Here he recorded people on skis, and probably tried them himself. Will’s photograph is the earliest recording I know of any recreational skiing on Mt Hotham itself. Mt St Bernard, north of the Divide, had been visited in the 1880s, but I have seen no photos earlier than 1911.

Mt Hotham 1899 - William Hamilton Ferguson

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Figure 1: Will Ferguson’s photo of friends skiing at Mt Hotham in 1899.
Mt Aconcagua 1905 - David Buchan Ferguson

Just a few years later, Will’s young brother David (DB) Ferguson was employed as Sales Manager by H.V. McKay for his fledgling Sunshine Harvester Works in Ballarat. The family had barely settled in at Ballarat when they were uprooted in 1903 and sent off to Argentina to take on the development of a South American market for McKay’s harvesters. In March 1905, DB set off on a business trip to Chile, an epic journey by train and coach across the Andes. DB was no photographer like his brother, but his series of wonderful letters to Will and his two sisters at home have been carefully preserved, along with many others sent from around the world for the next 40 years.

His first Chilean letter, titled In this chapter David crosses the Andes describes the trip from Buenos Aires across the pampas to Mendoza, then by narrow gauge rack railway to the head of the River Mendoza. Near Puerta del Inca, a man got on the train who had been trying to scale Mt Aconcagua [6960 metres] and nearly perished in the attempt. His hands and feet were frost bitten and his nose and ears ran blood. Then later - At noon we had the only view of Mt Aconcagua that is obtained on the trip. We were lucky to get a clear look. It is a terrible big mountain - with great glaciers on its sides and many sheer precipices of thousands of feet. It is about 21,000 feet high (sic) - but we were already 9,000 feet above sea level ourselves. At the head of the river the passengers changed to horse-drawn coaches for the trip over the Bermejo Pass to the Chilean railhead. Nearing the top we went between walls of solid ice or frozen snow. It was a beautiful day .... Am told it is rare to get such a passage. Right on top is El Christo de Los Andes’ an immense bronze statue of Jesus Christ, on the border line between Chile and Argentina.

DB was mightily impressed by his first alpine experience and thereafter, in his many world trips, sought out mountains and alpine scenery. Although he never skied himself, he always encouraged his daughter Joan’s enthusiasm.

Snow Sports - 1920s And 1930s

My fathers family joined the Ski Club of Victoria (SCV) when it was founded in 1924. Its first annual report includes a full page ad. for SNOW SPORTS EQUIPMENT and FASHIONS -- at MYERS, with a charming drawing of a model wearing the latest ski gear for ladies. In another package I found a c1926 photo of my Grandma Jessie Haughton at Mt Buffalo, posed on a toboggan, and wearing a very similar outfit. The children were encouraged to take up skiing as a sport, and my father Neville's first substantial encounter with the snowfields was on a c1927 Ivanhoe Grammar School trip (escorted by their enlightened Headmaster Mr Buckley) to Charlotte Pass Chalet. In a postcard photo of himself on skis, sent to a friend (and returned by the friend to Mother after Neville’s death in 1989) Neville, on skis, is wearing his school blazer, tie and cap with the breeches and leggings he usually wore for horse riding. He was about 15 at the time.

Neville’s older sister Vera, already a trained nurse when he was still at school, was a strong and enthusiastic skier. We have a lovely photograph of her in 1930, teaching her little sister Jessie (the youngest, then 7) to ski. Vera wears 1930s high ski fashion woollen trousers, bum-freezer jacket and a tricot headband with an SCV badge. Jessie is on skis made for her by Neville, with a leather strap across the toe-iron bindings and leather straps that clamped around the heels. She wears a short overcoat and thick woollen gaiters, strapped under the boot soles and with buttons all up the sides.

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*I have so far found only one photograph of DB in Chile, unrelated to his mountain crossings, but thought to have been taken at a high altitude. The Argentine Embassy provided illustrations of Mt Aconcagua and the Christ statue [erected in 1904, the year before DB's trip, to commemorate a peace settlement between Argentina and Chile].*
In 1930 Neville was in his first year at Melbourne University and organising a trip with friends to the new SCV Cope Hut on the Bogong High Plains. I found a file with letters, a typed list of the Standard Tin of stores to be sent up to the High Plains in April, an invoice from a Heidelberg grocery store with a list of additions to be sent up with the rather spartan SCV diet (note: 5 dozen eggs at 9 shillings and 7 pence and Keepeg at 1 shilling and 9 pence), a detailed travel itinerary from Melbourne via Bairnsdale, Omeo and Fitzgerald’s Hut, a budget and list of money outlaid, and an SCV test certificate for passing a First Class Jump Test at the Bogong High Plains, 20th August 1930.

Neville soon joined the Melbourne University Ski Club (MUSC), with childhood friends and new friends over the years, many of whom remained friends all their lives. Some of the best died in WW2, some became my mentors and friends as I grew up. In 1931 his friend Ivor Whittaker beat him in the club’s Osborn Trophy at the first MUSC races at Mt Hotham. Whittaker recorded their adventures in the pen-and-ink Hotham Herald, which was framed and hung in every house we lived in. Whittaker was one of those who died. Neville was more fortunate – as an Australian artillery officer, he managed to fit in a few months with the British Ski Troop in the Lebanon in c1941.

Keen skiers in those days searched for any way to improve their style out of season. The Haughton’s home on the steep hills of Eaglemont (a Melbourne suburb near Heidelberg) was then surrounded by open paddocks, and the SCV experimented with grass skiing there, with ski lessons for beginners. I only half believed this fable and often wondered how they got their skis to slide. I still don’t have that answer, but found an envelope with newspaper cuttings from a feature story, showing young Jessie on skis, Neville being towed by a man riding a motorcycle and Vera posing in a crouched racing position, with skis, stocks, boots and leggings but wearing a dress and pearls!

In 1932 Neville was back at Mt Hotham for the third MUSC championships and the first inter-varsity races, against a Sydney University team. Neville seems to have spent his time as an official for the inter-varsity races, but was highly successful in the MUSC championships, winning the 4-event Faul trophy for slalom, downhill, jump and langlauf (cross country). He was there to meet Vera when she arrived at Hotham to prepare for the first women-only winter crossing from Hotham to the Bogong High Plains with two friends. This was a notable achievement and was re-recorded in a newspaper feature in 1982, fifty years later.4

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Travelling To The Snow, 1930 To 1960

Just getting as far as the Mt Hotham Chalet could be a major ordeal in the days before snowploughs. It involved a train trip from Melbourne to Bright, a charabanc or car trip up to the snow line, which could be miles below the Mt St Bernard Hospice, then on foot or skis, carrying all your luggage on your back, for at least 6 miles up hill and down dale and around the steep and often icy face of Mt Blowhard and following the snow pole line over the summit of Mt Hotham. If you were lucky, the sky was blue and sunny, if not, there could be blizzard conditions and zero visibility, and you carried reels of string to find your way from snow pole to snow pole. A few years later, it was possible for a large party to by-pass the dangerous Blowhard crossing by riding horses from Harrietville, up the Bon Accord Spur to the snow line, along the Razorback, and thence over the summit again to the Chalet. One had to be tough and determined. It was possible to come in from the south, but this involved a longer train ride to Bairnsdale, a much longer and rougher car trip via Omeo to the snowline, and a very long, if less dangerous, walk in. This situation prevailed well into the 1950s, when I began skiing at Hotham with Dad.

Mt Buffalo Chalet Life

The Mt Hotham experience contrasted starkly with the fashionable Railways owned holiday resort at Mt Buffalo. My Grandma Jessie visited the Chalet there several times in the 1920s, with her beautiful and chic oldest daughter, Eugene, a notable horsewoman, but never a rough and tough mountainy type like Neville or Vera. At Mt Buffalo, you dressed for dinner - long frocks for women and dinner suits for men. Skiing was just one of a number of outdoor recreational pursuits that included horse riding, tennis and gentle bush walks. My aunt Jessie remembers a trip to Buffalo in 1936 with Grandma Jessie, escorted by my mother - then still Miss Joan Ferguson, she having just announced her engagement to Neville. Young Jessie, aged 13, was very proud of her special pink evening dress, but mortified to be told by Joan that her dirty fingernails didn’t match the dress. Here the glamorous Austrian ski instructor, Franz Skardarasy, first entered our lives. Mother kept in touch with him throughout WW2 (he was in New Zealand) and visited him at his hotel in Zurs in 1957. I skied with him at Zurs in 1983, and our daughter, Little Jessie, skied with him in 1992 (he was then 84 and still a consummate charmer!).

Figure 3: Clockwise – The MUSC Osborn Trophy finish, the Hotham Herald, Neville and Joan on the Bogong High Plains in spring 1934.
Mt Buffalo, also, could on occasion cater to the rough and tough brigade. The University Ski Club (USC), morphed from MUSC in 1934, organised a club trip to the Horn Hut in 1939. Joan and Neville took young Jessie along and she remembers her dear Bruv carrying her pack when she struggled on the seven-mile walk on skis. The Railways undertook provedoring and far exceeded expectations. Arriving at the Chalet, the advance guard was greeted with several enormous wicker hampers containing crisp, white table linen, china and cutlery as well as food. There was much weeding out as only the bare essentials could be carried in rucksacks to the Hut.\(^5\) I was aged 18 months at the time and was left at home with a nanny.

**The Rest Of The Year In The Mountains**

Spring, summer and autumn could be a wonderful place at Mt Buffalo, with wild flowers and splendid scenery, formal dining and dances, but after WW2 the dress code was somewhat relaxed. I remember a family trip in 1946, when tweed jackets were OK for dinner, but there was still a fancy-dress ball (my 3 year old brother and I were dressed as an Arab and his donkey - I was the donkey!). The Bogong High Plains were a favourite place for camping in summer. Joan and Neville (both Agricultural Science students) and a friend spent the whole summer vacation in 1934/5 wandering around the Plains with a packhorse collecting botanical specimens for Joan’s thesis on the Flora of the High Plains. Joan and Neville even spent their December 1936 honeymoon on horseback, travelling from Merrijig, near Mt Buller, across the mountains to Mt Bogong. In the 1950s they did another horseback trip together, to explore Wonnangatta Station, in the southern reaches of the Alps, and several times the whole family (six of us by then) spent the holiday season on the Dargo High Plains, looking after Jack Treasure’s house and cattle.

Lodge building was an important summer occupation and was a great part of the huge popularity of club skiing after WW2. Dad helped build the USC Lodge at Mt Hotham (1949) and the first USC Cabin at Mt Buller (1950), and as a teen-ager in the 1950s I tagged along to USC Hotham with a male friend/club member, helping with painting, plumbing, installing the generator and, even then, cooking for the troops. Work parties continue to this day, and our son Simon (a third generation club member) recently built a much needed retaining wall outside the Hotham Lodge.

**Winter Again, And Skiing Unto The 5th Generation**

My initiation to the rough and tough school was a trip to Mt Feathertop on horseback from Harrietville in c1947 with Dad/Neville. We let the horses go at the snowline to find their own way home, camped in the Feathertop Hut until our food ran out, and walked back to Harrietville. In 1950 I stayed with Dad at the new Hotham Lodge in its first season. In later years I did the arduous trip into Hotham many times, in the days when if you wanted to ski downhill, you had to climb uphill. I was very glad when ski-tows were invented!

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I met my partner at Mt Buller in 1960. He joined USC then, and the club community became like an extended family to all of us. I finally joined the club in 1998, with two of our children (Simon and Little Jessie), and celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the USC Hotham Lodge (and my 50th Anniversary at Mt Hotham) by cooking (with Simon’s help) a special dinner for the full Lodge party, including two of our grandchildren. We presented a framed photograph of Joan and Neville, at Charlotte Pass as captains of the 1936 Melbourne University women’s and men’s intervarsity teams, to be hung in the Lodge.

My partner Carl Doring wrote a postscript to my paper. It goes:

*Mountains are not just big rocks, they are focal points for memories of people who lived, worked and played there. When you think about conserving mountain heritage, do not just think about the landscape, flora, fauna and man-made structures. Think also about collecting, conserving and commemorating those intangible and fragile memories that give mountains their cultural meaning.*
Mount Franklin is one of the peaks in the mountains west of Canberra, the northernmost part of the Australian Alps. The story of European activities there is one of persistence, ingenuity, hard work and government and community co-operation that created and has retained a place for recreation, initially skiing, but now a variety of pastimes. The Canberra Alpine Club has been associated with activities there for more than 65 years.

The mountains have been used for recreation such as horseback expeditions, brumby running and fishing almost since the beginning of European settlement. An early photograph shows members of the Franklin family, then living at Brindabella, at the summit of the mountain that now carries their name; and Terence Murray of Yarralumla records an expedition to Pabral Peak (now Mount Coree) in 1841 that was partly exploratory, but also recreational. Before the Europeans, the gathering of the tribes in the bogong moth season probably had an element of recreation also.

The establishment of Canberra created a population centre 20 km from the foot of the mountains, and groups such as rover scouts began to walk in them. They were not the first to do this - the old survey beacon on Mount Tidbinbilla had the names of four Royal Military College cadets and the date 6 April 1912 scratched on it.

For those early walkers, the effort of getting to the start of the walk sometimes was comparable to that of the walk itself. Few people had cars, so transport was usually in the back of a truck, over rough dirt roads. Some rode bicycles (doubtless ordinary roadsters with only one gear) extraordinary distances over those roads, did the walk, then cycled back to a railway station or to Canberra.

Some walkers were attracted by the snowy transformation of the mountains in winter. If people could walk there, surely they could also ski there instead of having to travel to Kosciuszko or Kiandra or even further to the Victorian snowfields. These people were the prime movers in founding the Canberra Alpine Club in 1934.

An early decision by the new club (indeed one of the reasons for forming it) was to establish ski-fields in the mountains close to Canberra. However, possible sites were many kilometres from the only road, the one from Canberra over the range to Brindabella. Undeterred, by emphasising the potential for tourism the club persuaded the government to build a road 20 km along the range to Mount Franklin. In return it offered to build skiing accommodation. Work on the road began a year after the club was formed. Australia was slowly emerging from the Great Depression and the government would have hoped that tourism would help the languishing economy of the national capital; and the road construction meant some work for otherwise unemployed men.

With the prospect of access to the snowfields, club members made exploratory trips south along the range in both summer and winter to find a suitable site for skiing and accommodation. With the equipment
available at the time, some of these journeys must have been quite arduous; a participant in a June one recalled that the uncooked breakfast eggs would not fall out of the shells when broken because they were frozen. The success of these exploratory trips was well reported in newspapers and the tourism potential of the “new ski-fields” extolled.

After much discussion about sites the club decided to develop skiing facilities on Mount Franklin and build accommodation on the mountain’s southwest shoulder. At that time very few ski clubs had their own accommodation, so the decision to build, at a remote place, was an ambitious one for the new club, especially in the economic conditions of the time. As the club had very little capital, members set about raising funds through social functions, donations and loans.

Although funds were still short, a building contract was let in the autumn of 1937. The road was not completed, so the club arranged for the government to move materials to the building site on a tractor-drawn sledge. However, an early snowfall stopped this movement and the contract had to be cancelled. A member and Canberra contractor, Warren McDonald, came to the rescue by agreeing to build the chalet. Work began early in 1938 and the chalet, a two-story wooden building with bunk accommodation for 30, was opened in July 1938.

Meanwhile, members had been clearing ski runs on the wooded upper slopes of the mountain. This was done by hand, men and women cutting down trees, grubbing or blasting out the stumps, and crowbarring the timber into heaps to be burnt. Runs were extended and new runs cleared after World War II, again largely by hand, but with the occasional more-or-less official assistance of a government bulldozer - not always operated by the government driver.

An early club president, Charles Lane-Poole, was head of the Forestry School in Canberra. He was keen to develop uses for Australian timbers and organised ski-making classes. Many members, particularly the less-affluent ones, were willing pupils, encouraged by ski-making competitions with worthwhile prizes such as a week at the Hotel Kosciusko. Nearly 200 pairs of skis are known to have been made by members before and after World War II; some are still in existence.

The chalet was built and the runs cleared without the Canberra Alpine Club having any lease over the site. The survey was not done until November 1939 and the lease was not signed until May 1947, an indication of the informality of the arrangements between the government and the club. Indeed the relationship between the two seems to have been a defacto partnership to open up the mountains for recreation.

Despite its skiing activities, the club did not forsake its bushwalking roots. It continued to organise frequent walks of varying length and difficulty up to the early 1960s. After this period most people joined because of its skiing facilities; this and the advent of other, primarily bushwalking, clubs meant that bushwalking became a minor but still traditional part of the Canberra Alpine Club’s activities which has continued to the present time.

The club went into recess during World War II, but the chalet (or clubhouse, as it was called until the mid 1950s) was used by a few individuals, and also for recreation by members of Netherlands air force squadrons stationed in Canberra.

Club members had always known about better snow on the higher parts of the range south of Mount Franklin. By the mid 1940s the road had been extended another 10 km south to Mount Gingera. The club decided to build a second clubhouse closer to this snow, but did not pursue this idea. Some members therefore decided to build their own accommodation. Half a dozen took out a lease and built a small hut on Mount Ginini, 5 km south of Mount Franklin. This was acquired a couple of years later and greatly enlarged by the cadets of the Royal Military college at Duntroon. The building was demolished in 1969 as the cadets were no longer using it and it was in the Cotter River catchment, Canberra’s water supply. Another group built a rudimentary hut in a secluded part of Stockyard Gap, south of Mount Ginini; the frame was timber collected around the site, the walls pine offcuts, and the roof bituminous sheeting. A patch of debris still marks where it stood.

The emphasis on the tourism potential of snowfields close to Canberra and the club’s offer to build accommodation suggests that both the club and the government envisaged the chalet being used frequently by non-members. After World War II the skiing facilities were advertised through tourist...
agencies, but sadly for both the Canberra economy and the club's finances the optimistic hopes for numerous visitors were never realised. Some did stay in the chalet, but the steep ladder-like stairs to the upper floor, the small bunkrooms with hessian partitions and curtains instead of doors, a wash basin in an open cubicle, a bush shower, outside pit toilets and lack of electric light, together with the arduous journey in and unpredictable snow could not compete with the relative comfort of long-established places like the Hotel Kosciuszko or The Chalet at Charlotte Pass. Nevertheless, it was used for recreation and educational activities by other outdoor groups and schools until the early 1980s.

An unavoidable aspect of skiing at Mount Franklin was the effort involved getting there. Few people had their own cars, so the club arranged transport. This usually was on the back of a truck; it was not heated, but passengers could warm up by pushing the truck through the deeper snow drifts. Later, as members used private transport more, they tended to travel together so they could push one another when necessary. When the snow is good for skiing it is hard to get there, even now, because of snow on the road. Skiers often had to leave their cars by the road and ski to the chalet. They skied on the runs for what was left of the day, walking back up the slope after each run down; they did some more downhill skiing next morning then skied back to the cars and drove along the narrow, winding, muddy road to Canberra - and they looked forward to more skiing the following weekend! In contrast to expectations today, skiers spent only a small part of their time actually skiing downhill. They had to walk a kilometre and climb 100 metres at the start of the day to the top of the main ski run; and without a tow they had to climb laboriously back after each run down. Physical fitness for skiing was achieved quickly, if not painlessly!

The Canberra Alpine Club has always had a diverse membership with a wide range of skills and experience. Utilising these, members built a woodshed onto one end of the building using timber which had been left beside the road after a truck mishap (they had added a drying room to the other end before World War II). The hessian bunkroom partitions were replaced by wood and wooden ceilings added so sleepers were no longer covered by snow blown in under the eaves. An electrician member made a 12 volt wind generator from a car generator, carving the propeller himself, so adding the convenience of electric lighting; this replaced pressure lamps collected by an enterprising member from South Coast seaside townships after electricity reached there. Members added to the convenience of skiing by building a day shelter beside the main run, carrying all materials except the concrete piers to the site, and then linked it to the chalet by phone, using disposals army field telephones.

The club had considered buying a ski tow, but could not afford the cost. So some members designed and built a rope tow powered by a Harley Davidson motorbike. This Brumby Tow, as it came to be called, worked successfully for several years, saving skiers the arduous plod back up the run. With an eye to further improvement a car was bought, driven from Canberra to the top of the mountain, and put in place on the run. However, it was not a success. Even in low gear, the rear wheel driving the rope of the tow rotated too quickly (the Brumby Tow was geared down by an ingenious arrangement of chainwheels), and cranking a 4 cylinder engine was harder than kick-starting a motorbike engine. The remains are still at the top of the run.

The club's diversity was increased by European migrants who joined it after World War II and were again able to take up skiing as a recreation. Some were expert skiers, and their skiing and ski-jumping ability was a revelation to many members, most of them self-taught. The Europeans quickly became part of the club and through it the wider community. For years some gave lessons to other members in an attempt to pass on their own skills; and they introduced members to other arts, like making gluhwein.

From its beginnings, because of the isolated site and lack of money, the club has had a strong culture of self-help to get things done. Work parties to clear runs and keep them free of regrowth, to fill the woodshed for winter, and to maintain the chalet and its environs were a regular part of its activities. The work party weekends were hard work, but also recreation for people, most living in hostels, who spent their working week at a desk.

This attitude of doing things themselves, the need to make their own after-ski entertainment, the singing and talking to relieve the slow cold journeys in the back of a truck, and helping push cars through snowdrifts created a strong sense of camaraderie between members which helped mitigate the lack of facilities.
Mount Franklin is the northernmost site of organised skiing in Australia, and has always been recognised as marginal for skiing. The amount of snow and when it falls varies greatly and unpredictably from year to year. Several interclub competitions were held there in the 1940s and 1950s, but others had to be moved elsewhere because of lack of snow. The club organised weekend trips to the Kosciuszko area and these became more frequent as the snowfields there, with their more reliable and longer seasons, were developed. Recognising the changing circumstances, the club decided to build a lodge in Perisher Valley. It was built almost entirely by members over five months. Lack of finance again was overcome by various means, and the building was opened in June 1961 by Warren McDonald, whose generosity had made the Mount Franklin chalet possible.

The club intended that activities should continue at Mount Franklin, but inevitably members favoured the more comfortable accommodation and better snow and facilities at Perisher. They still used Mount Franklin occasionally, as did other outdoor groups, and club races were held there when the snow was good enough. The club continued to maintain the building and keep the runs clear, but vandalism and theft became a continuing problem.

The Canberra Alpine Club's leases at Mount Franklin expired in 1963 and were replaced by a tenancy-at-will. This was withdrawn when Namadgi National Park was declared in 1984, and the chalet and ski runs no longer belonged to the club.

The initial management proposal for the chalet was to leave it open but close off the upper floor. The club, with its experience of increasingly serious vandalism since the early 1960s, thought this would result in the eventual destruction of the building and objected strongly. Also, many members with fond memories of times spent at Mount Franklin were loath to lose all contact with it. After prolonged negotiations, the Canberra Alpine Club and the ACT Parks and Conservation Service (ACT PCS) signed a Memorandum of Understanding in October 1989. Through this MOU the Service recognised Canberra Alpine Club's links with the site and the club's former role in maintaining and managing it; and it "sought the support of CAC in providing expertise and information in the preparation of the maintenance and conservation plans". The club was to draft these plans in accordance with guidelines. The Service also suggested that the club might be able to assist it by providing expertise and labour during work days at the chalet. Public access to the chalet was to be restricted to day use and overnight camping would be discouraged; however club members engaged in work parties might be allowed to stay overnight.

Thus began a new era in the Canberra Alpine Club's connection with Mount Franklin, and a great change in the recreational use of the site. Club members have contributed about 300 person-days during work parties and at other times. Most participants have stayed overnight and have re-experienced or experienced for the first time the atmosphere of the place. The club has been able to hold a special function each year for junior members as an adjunct to a work party so they can get some idea of the club's early days. The chalet, which had received little attention for 10 years, has been completely repainted and much minor maintenance done to the building and site. Probably because the place no longer looks abandoned and the access road has been closed, vandalism has become only a minor problem. The heritage importance of the site has been recognised by listings on the Register of the National Estate and ACT Heritage Register and by the National Trust.

The club obtained funding through the ACT Heritage Grants Program in 1996 for tracking down and documenting photographs relating to skiing activities in the Mount Franklin area and preparing an album of selected photos; the album is now displayed in the chalet. Club members and friends have donated old skis (some hand-made before World War II) and other equipment which are now displayed in the ski room of the chalet. Visitors are intrigued by the kind of skis used 50 years ago and the development of ski technology since the 1940s illustrated by these skis.

During 1997 and 1998 ACT PCS and the club developed and implemented an extensive interpretation strategy for the site. This consisted of photographs selected from those identified by the 1996 project and interpretation signs in and around the chalet and along the track to the summit and top of the main ski run. The project is intended to encapsulate the history and human experiences of Mount Franklin as seen through the pioneering spirit of Canberra Alpine Club members. It helps visitors understand the determination and ingenuity of the people who developed skiing there and the great changes in skiing, expectations and social attitudes since then. It cost about $37 000, funding being provided by the club, a private trust, and national parks and heritage agencies.
People out for a day in the mountains who arrived at the site during work parties were delighted to find the chalet open and to be able to talk to members about the history of the place and life there in its heyday. Because of this interest by the public, ACT PCS and Canberra Alpine Club signed a second Memorandum of Understanding in June 1998. Its aim is "to build on the strong partnership arrangements between CAC and the Service in terms of the CAC hosting open days at Mount Franklin". The club's involvement is seen as an integral aspect of the overall strategy of enriching visitors' experiences. Open days with club members present are held roughly monthly except during winter. In winter the chalet is a popular destination after snowfalls for family groups if road conditions allow access. In those circumstances rangers endeavour to open it at weekends as shelter, and it is then that visitors can really experience the true atmosphere of the place.

The co-operative arrangements between the Canberra Alpine Club and ACT PCS (through Namadgi National Park) have been very successful. Through them the site, which was falling into disrepair, has been restored. The club has retained a tangible link with its early days and the source of the self-help attitude and camaraderie that are still part of its culture; and the public can get a glimpse of recreational and social activities as they were a couple of generations ago.

The Mount Franklin ski-field began as a means of recreation for the residents of early Canberra and a potential destination for tourism. It brought together people with a wide range of backgrounds who were willing to put a lot of effort into following a common interest. It is now the source of a different kind of recreation: a unique window on the past, a record of a time of different expectations and social attitudes, and a memorial to those who over the years have had the vision and persistence to create and look after a means of recreation for themselves and others.

In preparing this paper, I have drawn on information accumulated over the years during conversations with club members; the book Skis on the Brindabellas by Matthew Higgins also was a valuable source and memory check. My thanks to all of them.
The Australian Alps Walking Track has had a long and chequered career since its beginning many years ago. In that time it has grown to become, in my view, the premier long distance walking track in Australia. In many ways it can hold its own with long distance walking tracks throughout the world. What it may lack in spectacular scenery is more than adequately compensated by its isolation and wildness. Now I know that there will be people who would say that Tasmania’s Overland Track or South Coast Walk to be the best long distance walking track in Australia but, in my book, a 50 to 80km 4-5 day walk does not constitute long distance. We are talking about 4-6 weeks here – this is serious walking. Across its entire length there are but 3 or 4 ski resorts offering minimal services outside the ski season and road access to major supply centres is long and tortuous.

More importantly, the Australian Alps Walking Track is significant in that it connects three major National Parks in three States and Territories. Transcending artificial borders, it reinforces the notion that the Australian Alps must be viewed and managed as a single entity. The idea of long distance recreational walking tracks is certainly not a new one. Whereas many of the alpine walking tracks in use today were originally cut to serve cattlemen and miners, some were made for the use of recreational walkers. An early example in Australia’s alpine regions was the Baw Baw Track, opened in 1906 complete with three accommodation huts. This track, which traversed the Baw Baws along the route used today by the Australian Alps Walking Track, provided tourists with a walking track from Warburton to Walhalla.

It is a little uncertain as to the exact point in time that the idea for this long distance alpine walking track was born. Because the track we know today as the Australian Alps Walking Track had its beginnings in Victoria it is often thought to be a Victorian enterprise. But similar ideas were formulating in NSW. As early as 1954, Alan Strom reconnoitred a route through the high country from Mt Tidbinbilla near Canberra to Mt Erica in the Baw Baw Mountains along a route that was probably not too far removed from the Australian Alps Walking Track of today. Alan’s report, published in NSW, received little response there and none at all from Victoria and the idea lapsed back into obscurity. At that time bushwalkers, the people who could make the best informed case for such a track, did not want it. They viewed the wild un-roaded highlands as a rugged, untracked wilderness and wanted it to remain that way.

Although it had certainly been considered earlier it was Maurice Harkins of the Victorian Tourist Development Authority who expressed a desire to see a long distance walking track from Mt Wellington in Victoria to Mt Kosciuszko in NSW. In the 1930s, Harkins, then a senior officer of the Victorian Government Tourist Bureau, had promoted the Skyline Tours, a scheme whereby up to 25 men (only) would spend about 10 days over the Christmas Holidays walking and riding across the Victorian Alps. These all-male trips ran successfully for about 10 years prior to the start of the Second World War and covered some impressive routes. From these walking experiences, Harkins saw a potential for a long distance walking track and set the wheels in motion but the Second World War put an end to the idea.
In 1963 Maurice Harkins, now Director of the Victorian Tourist Development Authority, pushed for a walking track over the Viking and across the Barry Mountains to Mt St Bernard with two shelter huts at strategic points. A modern development of the Baw Baw Track, this first tentative idea was to develop into the Alpine Walking Track. Whilst there had been overtures for a long distance walking track from as early as the 1940s, the general feeling amongst the Victorian walking fraternity was still that wild areas were best left the way they were. However, since the end of the Second World War very little remained the way it was with bulldozers laying their trails into the most remote places. Harkins again raised the idea of a long distance track and in 1968 the Ministry of Tourism sent out a letter indicating its interest in a walking track through the alpine regions of north-east Victoria and requesting support. At this time there was no attempt to seek coordination with New South Wales authorities in establishing a track that would cross the State boundary and the issue was still a contentious one for Victorian bushwalkers. Eventually the Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs (FVWC) came round to the idea and in 1969 prepared a report and offered the Ministry of Tourism suggestions as to a proposed route.

Harkins, always enthusiastic towards the idea, drew in the Forests Commission of Victoria (FCV) with the promise of tourist funds if it would act as the construction authority. The FVWC consolidated their ideas and presented Maurice Harkins with two outlines, one starting at the southern end of the Baw Baw Mountains and the second along the Howqua River to meet the first route at Mt Howitt. The trail would then continue on through the Victorian Alps via Mt Hotham, Mt Misery and the Cobberas to end at Forest Hill, the source of the Murray River. By the spring of 1969 the report was in the hands of the Alpine Resorts Development Advisory Committee (ARDAC) and the project then began to gain impetus. Funding was granted for each stage of the route to cover signposting, snow poles, water supplies and track cutting.

Originally named the Alpine Walking Trail, its name was changed in 1970 to Alpine Walking Track in an attempt to keep the project as Australian as possible. At this time virtually none of the track passed through land with National Park status or anything like it and an ongoing battle commenced between the FVWC and the Forest Commission of Victoria (FCV). By now logging operations in the heart of the Alps was reaching its climax as seemingly every last stand of alpine ash was hunted down in a relentless search and destroy mission. The FCV stipulated that logging be kept to a minimum of 20 chains from the Alpine Walking Track so that it could thread its way at least through a forest a shade over 750m in width. The FCV would not accept this limitation and insisted on a corridor only 10 chains (less than 400m) in width. For many years this unfortunate override left the Australian Alps Walking Track walker a thin strip of forest through which could be seen the depressing mess to which the rest of the country had been reduced. Only now, with much of the route of the Australian Alps Walking Track protected deep within National Parks, is the bush returning to something of its original majesty. Unfortunately there is still a substantial section of the track between the Baw Baw and Alpine National Parks that is still subject to the depredations of uncontrolled road and forestry activity.

Other problems had to be fought off by an ever vigilant FVWC. The construction of the Dartmouth Dam in NE Victoria sundered the Alpine Walking Track in two, forcing the track to be re-routed around the waters of Lake Dartmouth. Then the vast Thomson Water Storage created yet another problem. This time it wasn’t the track itself that was threatened, rather the question of access to the entire Thomson Catchment, including a large portion of Baw Baw National Park. Final agreement permitted walker access to the catchment but with a restriction to three overnight campsites. Unfortunately much of the Australian Alps Walking Track is constrained to following roads throughout the catchment and beyond until the boundary of the Alpine National Park is crossed.

Major streams, too, presented their own difficulties. The Thomson River near Walhalla was bridged in 1976 with the re-decking of an old timber tramway bridge, an historic structure that will soon be in need of further restoration. Further east the ford across the Mitta Mitta River at Taylors Crossing was often too deep for a safe crossing and with no other bridge close by, the only answer was to build a suspension bridge. The first two were destroyed by floods before a third bridge was built recently at a new site a little further downstream and hopefully above the floodwaters.

By the mid 1970s construction of the Alpine Walking Track had been essentially completed. The only major change from the original concept was to end the track on the Alpine Way at Tom Groggin since it was deemed inconceivable that it could end anywhere other than on a road and, at the time, interest in continuing the track into Kosciuszko National Park was at an all time low.
It was also about this time that I became more involved with the Alpine Walking Track. Over the previous 15 years I had gained a considerable knowledge from bushwalking in the alps and was now employed in a store selling walking gear to an ever-increasing number of walking enthusiasts. While working in the gear shop I was approached one day by a customer who required information about the Alpine Walking Track. On being told that not only were there no track notes in any form but that the track was not even marked on the maps of the day and that furthermore, in some cases there wasn’t even any decent topographical maps available, he stormed from the store uttering exclamations of disbelief. This opened my eyes to the need for some reasonable information and set me on the first of many excursions along the Alpine Walking Track and, finally, to the first edition of my guide to the Australian Alps Walking Track.

In the mid 1980s when I was again traversing the Alpine Walking Track for a major revision of my book I got to thinking of the original vision for an Alpine Walking Track as a tri-state trail linking the best of the alpine country of Victoria, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. Unfortunately this vision had remained little more than a dream. The Alpine Walking Track was born, but only as a truncated shadow of what it should have been. Over ten years, in the process of writing the first edition of this book and during the revision of the second edition, I twice walked the Alpine Walking Track. Each time, as I approached the end of the track at Tom Groggin, my eyes were drawn across the immense valley of the Murray River to the Snowy Mountains, and in particular to Australia’s highest peak, Mt Kosciuszko. Instinctively I knew that the Alpine Walking Track could not be worthy of its name until it led through these magnificent ranges.

As I prepared to walk the track for this third and major revision, I decided that this time the Alpine Walking Track must be taken across the Snowy Mountains of New South Wales and into the Australian Capital Territory. I was further prompted to proceed with this rather daunting 700km walk by the thought that the Alpine Walking Track should be a link to further understanding of what each State and Territory has to offer. It should be an incentive to tempt the ardent bushwalker to explore further afield for it has been my experience that few Victorian bushwalkers are familiar with the mountains beyond Mt Jagungal in the Kosciuszko National Park and, similarly, few hardy souls from New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory seem to venture south of the Victorian border. What better incentive than a track leading onward to new country.

Also by the mid 1980s much of the Alpine Walking Track was protected from unwanted development by three new Victorian National Parks – Wonnangatta Moroka, Bogong and Cobberas – Tingaringy with a strong movement to link these three into one contiguous National Park adjoining Kosciuszko National Park. This finally occurred with the formal declaration of the Alpine National Park in December 1989.

With the approach of the bicentennial year of 1988, the Bicentennial Authority funded the creation of a tri-state alpine walking trail from Victoria through New South Wales to the Australian Capitol Territory. Incorporating much of the existing Victorian Alpine Walking Track from Walhalla, a new route was established through to the Cobberas in East Gippsland thence northward to Mt Kosciuszko and through the Snowy Mountains to Tharwa an the outskirts of Canberra. Following fairly closely to the route I selected for my unofficial version a year or two earlier the Australian Alps Walking Track was born at last. But it still has a little more to grow before its story is finished. From Rawsons Pass beneath Mt Kosciuszko to Schlink Pass some 50km to the north the Australian Alps Walking Track presents the walker with a boring walk along a road heavily trafficked for part of its length. In so doing it takes him or her away from some of our finest alpine country, passing instead along hard, dusty roads through over-developed alpine ski resorts – the very things that walkers come to the mountains to avoid.

The Australian Alps Walking Track presents a challenge to bushwalkers to discover mountains that lie beyond the immediate horizon of their own knowledge. Along its length it climbs over the highest mountain in Australia as well as the highest peaks of Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales and Victoria. It traverses country covered by snow for much of the year, traces lonely ridges far from water or descends to rivers that can become impassible when in flood. It follows solitary roads, fire access tracks, foot tracks both well-defined and poorly marked and at times heads into bush without any track or sign at all. It can be a pleasant stroll under clear blue skies or a battle to survive as the elements seemingly vent their fury upon innocuous travelers. It can be a race to see how fast the entire distance can be covered or it...
can be a leisurely trip undertaken in sections at different times of the year. For the Australian Alps Walking Track is alive, its character constantly changing with every visit, every season and through the eyes of every visitor.
When Clement Wragge established his weather station on the very summit of Mt Kosciuszko in December 1897, howling blizzards were only one of the many challenges facing him and his staff. Government parsimony, professional rivalry and personality conflicts were additional challenges for this most engaging of Australian meteorologists. Yet due to Wragge’s energy and imagination, and the enthusiasm and dedication of his station observers, the Kosciuszko observatory survived five years on the Australian mainland’s highest, coldest and windiest point.

The observatory’s story is a fascinating chapter in Australia’s meteorological history. It also represents what was probably the first detailed recording of an intimate relationship between a group of people and the very special environment of Australia’s high country. And elements of the story bear comparison with some of our Antarctic achievements.

Clement Lindley Wragge, dynamic, unconventional, to a degree eccentric yet respected by many of his scientific peers, was born in Stourbridge, England in 1852. Dropping out of law, he studied navigation, then sailed the world and worked as a surveyor in South Australia in 1876. Returning to England he became actively involved with meteorological stations in Staffordshire.

In 1881 the Scottish Meteorological Society decided to place an observatory on top of Britain’s highest peak, Ben Nevis (1343m), together with a correlative or comparative sea-level station at nearby Fort William. The principle here was that important ‘upper’ atmosphere studies could be made and compared (through simultaneous readings of instruments) with the findings of the sea-level station. All of this, it was believed, would significantly aid forecasts. Voluntarily Wragge established the summit observatory and daily for five months during 1881-82 he ascended the peak to take recordings. British scientists welcomed the results and Wragge was awarded a gold medal by the Society.

Financially aided by an inheritance, Wragge came back to Australia and in 1887 was appointed Queensland’s Government Meteorologist. He established an extensive network of weather stations in the colony and offshore, and soon started publishing Australia-wide forecasts. His weather reports were colourful, and it was Wragge who began the practice of naming cyclones. His public lectures were well received for their ‘rare combination of profundity and humour’, and some journalists dubbed him ‘the great weather profit’.

Unfortunately, Wragge’s zeal was combined with a lack of tact. He criticised the other colonies’ meteorologists (H.C.Russel in NSW, Charles Todd in South Australia, and R.L.Ellery in Victoria) for not always adhering to the methodology of the Royal Meteorological Society. He further inflamed inter-colonial sensitivities by calling his Queensland office the ‘Chief Weather Bureau’. Sometimes he named cyclones after politicians of the day, displaying a naïve grasp of political realities. This intemperate
element in Wragge’s character – some called him ‘Inclement Wragge’ – was ultimately to play a part in his downfall.

A vegetarian, interested in eastern religions, green in environmental views, Wragge was hardly the typical Victorian-era man. This lack of orthodoxy would not have helped his professional and political relationships either.

Wragge was not long in Australia when he started pursuing the principle of high level/sea level weather stations here, firstly in South Australia (with stations on Mt Lofty and near the Torrens River) then in Tasmania (where stations were erected on Mt Wellington and in Hobart). At the 1896 International Meteorological Conference in Paris Wragge was congratulated for his Tasmanian work. He then unveiled his pièce de résistance, plans for a station on Australia’s highest point, Mt Kosciuszko. British, European and American scientists applauded Wragge’s vision. But his fellows in the other Australian colonies were sceptical.

It may seem slightly ridiculous to many of us today for Wragge to have believed that upper atmosphere studies could be carried out on a mountain as modest as Kosciuszko. For decades now meteorologists have used high altitude balloons in the course of their work, aircraft have been utilized for many years, and much use is made today of satellites way above the atmosphere. But we should not judge Wragge’s endeavours by today’s standards and practices, but rather by the context, knowledge and limitations of his time.

The Kosciuszko project involved a summit station on Kosciuszko and a comparative station at Merimbula on the NSW south coast. Recognising that the summit station would initially be temporary, Wragge hoped the NSW Government would come to support the work and fund a permanent structure, enabling his observers to stay on the peak year round.

With private sponsorship Wragge prepared the expedition. A Brisbane company manufactured an Arctic tent of hurricane canvas, sheepskin sleeping bags and other items. By November 1897, with instruments packed, Wragge and his companions were ready for Kosciuszko. Transport was arranged by Charles Kerry, well-known Sydney photographer and Snowy Mountains publicist. Only four months earlier Kerry had led the first ever recorded winter ascent of the peak. Guide for the Wragge trip was renowned mountain stockman James Spencer.

On 4 December Wragge and part of the expedition reached the summit. Toasts were drunk, the billy boiled and some tents were erected. Soon a gale was blowing and that night the temperature dropped below freezing – the word ‘summer’ can mean very little on Kosciuszko. Unfortunately the Arctic tent, sleeping bags and the instruments were delayed on the expedition dray which was bogged below the mountain. Before the dray arrived a few days later, one of the Queenslanders went to bed one night wearing no less than 29 items of clothing!

On 10 December the thermometers, barometers and other instruments were functioning, with regular readings being taken of pressure, temperature, humidity, wind, cloud mass, precipitation and surface ozone. According to the Sydney Daily Telegraph journalist who accompanied the party, despite the icy winds Wragge was ‘perfectly happy’, the inauguration of observations being ‘one of the proudest days in his life, marking as it did the accomplishment of something very dear to him’.

Wragge left the summit next day to establish the Merimbula observatory. For the next five years he rarely got back to the mountain top, but directed the stations from Queensland. At Kosciuszko the observatory was run by the series of generally young men (including Wragge’s sons at times) who pursued their science in one of the harshest environments in Australia. The weather that they had come to study was to shape almost every aspect of their secluded lives.

Initial observers Captain Charles Iliff, Bernard Ingleby and Basil de Burgh Newth settled into the routine of instrument reading and life under canvas. But the tent observatory stood unscathed for only two months. In February 1898 a terrific storm hit Kosciuszko and 160 kph winds shredded the tents. The three men abandoned the summit and, in an epic retreat graphically reported in the Sydney press, narrowly avoided drowning in the flooding upper Snowy River and got to Jindabyne.
When the weather cleared, the three returned and resurrected the station. Clearly, if the observatory was to continue, the NSW Government would have to fund a permanent building. Premier George Reid obliged and 336 pounds was voted for a hut. Wragge and the observers were elated.

Early snowfalls delayed construction but by April 1898 the hut was standing. Built by brothers Arthur and Herb Mawson, and their partner D.McArthur, all Cooma builders, the two-roomed hut measured eight metres by four metres. Described by the *Sydney Morning Herald* as ‘designed rather as a protection from the wind than from an architectural point of view’, the hut had a number of adaptations to the severe summit weather. The skillion roof offered less wind resistance than a steeply pitched one. Between the weatherboard outer cladding and the pine inner cladding, the 13 centimetre gap inside the walls was filled with loam for insulation. Windows were glazed with 2.5 centimetre thick storm glass. Outside, boulders were piled against the walls to prevent the place being blown away. And there was an all-important lightning conductor to save the building in case of direct strikes on the totally exposed summit.

Despite the fears of locals who deemed it utter madness to try to live on Kosciuszko in winter (one local wit actually presented Newth with a coffin catalogue!), observers Ingleby, Newth and H.I.Jensen saw out the season and proved the critics wrong. They did have to adapt the building though. During that first winter the hut’s door was often snowed under, so an ingenious enclosed stairway, with a hatch at the top, was built to provide roof-level access. Although the observatory is now long gone, this form of access can still be seen today at Cootapatamba Hut, built for the Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric Scheme in the 1950s, just a little south of the summit.

The routine of the observers’ lives was dictated by the twenty-four hour schedule of instrument readings that Wragge had ordered. An evocative description of a midnight winter reading was written by Wragge’s son C.Egerton Wragge. The rostered observer, wrote Egerton, was awoken by an alarm clock. He left his sleeping bag and:

> Lighting a lamp and peering out through the window, it is seen to be a dirty night. The wind is blowing in a furious tempest from the north-west, shaking the hut to its very foundation, and making the lightning pole creak as it tries to tear it from position, and hurl it away over the side of the mountain. Occasionally great icicles [that have] formed on the pole are torn off, and fall with a crash upon the roof.

The observer dresses and places a lamp near the window; this will guide him back to the hut through the dense cloud outside. Meanwhile, the other two men ‘snug enough in their sleeping bags, remark that they are glad it is not their night’. Our man climbs the stairway and opens the hatch:

> which is no easy matter under the circumstances. Waiting for a slight lull in the fury of the tempest, he exerts all his strength to force it open, while the wind is trying to force it down on his head. After some moments he succeeds in getting out. As the fury of the blast strikes him, he is seen to stagger, and is almost blown to the ground... Breathing is difficult, and it is necessary to place the hand over the mouth in order to do so. Snow and sleet driving across the mountain at a furious rate almost blinds him, and cuts his face. The light from the lamp at the window is thrown in a great yellow streak out against the fog bank.

He reaches the thermometer screen and, breaking away ice from the door, opens it and reads the instruments. All the while he is trying to ignore the fine snow ‘that has found its way down his neck and over his gum boots’. Numb, gloved hands close the door and the observer hastens back to the hut:

> As he goes, the light from the lantern perhaps flashes on a [ski-] brake-pole stuck in the snow, now covered with long white icicles, standing like some ghastly spectre against the fog. The sudden sight of this chills his blood, and floods the mind with a dread of the supernatural, and he makes a bound for the hatch. In his hurry to get into the hut he slips on the steps covered with ice, and goes tumbling to he bottom, cursing meteorology and meteorological instruments in general. This performance must be repeated again at 4am, and although unpleasant at the time, is extremely fascinating.
When the weather was just too foul to venture out in, the weathermen relied on clockwork-powered graphs which made automatic recordings.

The psychological impact of being incarcerated in the hut by winter weather for long periods – with the wind shrieking and the hut groaning – would have been severe. The men turned to music and song at times like these.

In summer of course the work was easier. In summer too, tourists came to visit the observatory and were warmly welcomed by the society-starved observers. Horses could be used for transport in summer, enabling ready communication with the outside world. In winter, communication was very difficult, yet remarkably the observers did maintain the link to Jindabyne. Every few weeks one or a pair of weathermen would ski over the alpine plateau, descent from the Rams Head Range to the Thredbo River valley and ride to Jindabyne where they would post data to Wragge snr and purchase provisions. Newth was the first man ever to do this winter journey solo. In 1899 he and Rupert Wragge saved Egerton’s life when Egerton became hopelessly lost during a return trip from the town – the 19-year-old narrowly survived hypothermia.

For the observers, the hardships of life at the top were offset by their devotion to science. More particularly though, the beauty and wonder of nature at Kosciuszko more than made up for the privations. The views, whether of wildflower-strewn slopes in summer or almost endless snowscapes in winter, inspired all. Ingleby wrote of a fine winter’s day: ‘Away to the north-east and south-west... were mountains rising tier upon tier, clad from base to apex in a mantle of purest white...nothing but an interminable line of virgin snow as far as the eye could scan’. And when cloud descended into lower valleys, surrounding peaks rose like little islands. ‘To the westward the cloud ocean assumes the most gorgeous hues...’

Natural phenomena were many. Refraction turned the sun into wierd shapes at dawn and dusk. Luminous electrical discharges (St Elmo’s Fire) were another curiosity; observers waved metal objects about in the highly charged fogs and watched the sparks jump. Jensen remembered seeing Newth take a crosscut saw outside and ‘each tooth of it became a living flame’. Then there was anthelia, known also as ‘Spectre of the Brocken’ or ‘Glories of Light’. Here the observers would stand outside and watch their shadows grow more distinct on a distant cloudbank. ‘As we stood up’, wrote one, ‘we noticed around each of our [shadow-] heads an aureole of the most beautiful colour, reminding one of those old mediaeval paintings of the blessed saints, fashioned, however, not like them by human hands, but by the great divine artist, Nature. The entire group was also encircled by an enormous arch, likewise glittering with prismatic colours, the red being external’.

Much of the men’s winter leisure time, when not reading, or cooking on the station’s primus stoves, was spent on skis (known as show-shoes at the time). Jensen wrote that as soon as a fine day arrived:

> We donned our snow-glasses, fur caps and snow-shoes and raced wildly down the mountain side like dogs let loose from the chain. Sometimes, when the moon was bright, we would indulge in this sport by night, and the element of danger incurred lent a special charm to the proceeding. We had many a terrible ‘buster’ before we became experts at the game.

Modelling their technique on that of Kiandra skiers of the time, the observers had races to Lake Cootapatamba and built jumps. They toured the Main Range, and made the first known ski tours to Mt Townsend (and thus the first winter ascent of Australia’s second highest peak) and to Blue Lake. The station’s two St Bernard dogs, Zoroaster and Buddha, bounded through the snow behind the men on some trips. The adventurous and inventive observers also mounted a sail on the station’s sled. Their winter activities at the station, meanwhile, were captured on film by energetic Wagga photographer Donald McRae, who climbed to the station during the 1899 winter with his heavy glass plate camera. He was only the second person to do the winter trip solo – the first having been the indefatigable Basil de Burgh Newth.

Although NSW had funded the construction of the hut, the worry about continued government assistance was a constant one for Wragge snr. He installed a donation book at the observatory to obtain supplementary funds from summer visitors. With the other colonial meteorologists remaining sceptical
about the whole endeavour, Wragge feared the government would cut off funding and by 1900 he was appealing publicly for finance. There was not even enough money to have Newth prepare data for publication, and two years later only one month of Kosciuszko readings had been published. Although some of the observatory information was supplied to British and German Antarctic expeditions, there was no telegraph or telephone link between Kosciuszko and Merimbula. So with no speedy transmission of data from the summit the station’s forecasting ability was crippled. Scepticism increased.

In June 1902 the NSW Government announced that its support for Wragge’s observatory would cease and demanded that the instruments and stores be brought down from the mountain. It was mid winter. Egerton Wragge, observer Davies and a third man Harris loaded three hundredweight (about 150 kg) of gear onto the station sled and descended. At one point the sled lost control on ice and dragged Egerton and Davies some distance before Harris could slow it down. Eventually the job was done. Only thirteen years later, Egerton Wragge was killed at Quinns Post, Gallipoli. His name is on the Lone Pine Memorial, signifying he has no known grave.

Meanwhile the Queensland Government found it could no longer fund a weather bureau and Clement Wragge left his position in 1903. His belief in Federation left him disappointed. In 1906 when the Commonwealth set up a federal bureau, Wragge was beaten to the job of Commonwealth Meteorologist by H.A. Hunt, Russell’s NSW successor and a man no doubt more diplomatic than Wragge.

Wragge settled in New Zealand in 1910 and pursued long range forecasting. He also followed his other interests, particularly botany: his Waiata Tropical Gardens in Auckland were admired by many visitors. While giving a lecture in November 1922 he collapsed from a stroke. He died at his Birkenhead home on 10 December – precisely 25 years after that cold, windy day when the first instrument readings were taken on Kosciuszko’s summit.

The Kosciuszko hut was finally destroyed by lightning in 1914, following the loss of the lightning conductor. For the surviving observers, their experiences stayed with them for the rest of their lives. Newth, who spent a total of 27 months on the top of Australia, was still writing about it 50 years later, feeling he was ‘well repaid in interest, experience and adventure… One could write a book about it all’. There is no memorial on the summit today, but visitors still travel across signposted Wragge’s Creek (just below Smiggin Holes) on their way to Mt Kosciuszko.

Of what significance was Wragge’s Observatory? Given that little data was ever published, it is difficult to assess the station’s meteorological importance. As mentioned above, the endeavour should not be judged by the knowledge and methods of today’s meteorologists, but rather by the context of the time. Wragge’s work on Kosciuszko was well supported by his international peers. Importantly, Wragge’s work was one of a number of scientific thrusts into the Australian high country during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Wragge was part of a long line of scientific endeavour starting with Dr John Lhotsky in 1834, followed by Count Sir Paul Edmund de Strzelecki in the 1840s, geologist Rev W.B. Clarke in the 1850s, botanists Baron Ferdinand Von Mueller and J.H. Maiden, geologists Richard Helms and Professor Edgeworth David and others. David and Maiden were contemporaries of Wragge, and Maiden in fact called in to the observatory during his Kosciuszko researches.

The observatory also played an important part in opening the summit area to tourism. The project helped to focus public attention on Kosciuszko, and although people had been making summer trips for some years prior to 1897, the observatory was a catalyst in increasing visitor numbers. There were soon calls for a railway and for hotel accommodation in the area. NSW Premier Joseph Carruthers took the initiative and by 1909 both the Kosciusko Road and the stately Hotel Kosciusko were open.

Another aspect of the weather station’s importance was in terms of the history of journeying and exploration in the high country. The observers made the first winter trips ever recorded to various points on the Main Range, and they pioneered ski and sled travel across large areas of the range. Newth in particular deserves mention here, especially for his solo trips during a period when the Main Range was incredibly isolated.
Perhaps the major achievement of all was the fact that the various observers survived in total for five years, winter and summer, on Australia’s highest point. Prior to the day that Clement Wragge set foot on the summit, few people in Australia would have thought such a thing possible.

Sources
Sources are contained in the footnotes to the author’s article on Wragge’s Observatory which appeared in the *Canberra Historical Journal*, September 1987. Some of this material was also used in the author’s article in the *Canberra Times* on World Meteorological Day 1997.
Day Three – Mountains For Tourism
Mountains Of Science – The Cultural Heritage of Scientific Research in the Alps

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Abstract

Scientific research is as much part of the cultural history of the Australian Alps as the well-recognised history of the gold miners, mountain cattlemen and the dam builders. We need to recognise the scientists' historic contributions, protect their research sites, and tell their stories so that their history is valued in the community.

The objective of the report 'Mountains of Science' was to develop a thematic interpretation strategy for the scientific sites of cultural heritage in the Australian Alps.

Introduction - The Cultural Standing of Alps Science

Scientific research is as much part of the cultural history of the Australian Alps as the well-recognised history of the gold miners, mountain cattlemen and dam builders. These latter histories have received considerable attention in recent years with the ‘Man from Snowy River’ films and the Mountain Cattlemen’s rallies in downtown Melbourne, along with the 50th Anniversary celebrations of the Snowy Mountains Scheme and its published history. These activities have left historic relics in the AANP that are easily recognised and often interpreted onsite and in interpretive centres and published materials.

What of the scientists? Their commitment and activities have not been broadly recognised and their stories are left untold to Australians generally. Those who visit Mt Kosciuszko may be aware of Clement Wragge’s meteorological station but are unlikely to know of the work done by scientists to expand our knowledge of the very ecosystems they are passing through – the scientists who looked to discover the glaciation history of the high mountains, those who set up long-term monitoring of the vegetation changes once grazing was removed from the slopes of Kosciuszko, of the researchers who continue to look and experiment with ways to repair the extensive damage caused by roading, hydro development, grazing and contemporary visitor impacts.

These scientists and their research have their ‘stories’ and there is the romanticism of ‘the hard life against the elements’ while seeking knowledge of the mountains. In some cases there are even relics of their work. These relics are not as obvious as the structures from other human activities in the mountains. The scientists themselves do not wave a flag for their history. All these factors allow the scientists’ stories and places to blend into the background.

We don’t celebrate this important scientific history which will continue to inform our knowledge of the Alps. Unlike the dam builders, gold miners and the mountain graziers the work of scientists in the Alps is
a tradition that will continue long into the future. We need to recognise their historic contributions, protect their research sites, and tell their stories so that their history is valued in the community.

**Background of Study**

Recognition of the cultural heritage significance of Alps scientific research and its associated sites was raised early in the life of the Australian Alps Cooperative Management Program (The Scientific Heritage of the Australian Alps conference, 1988; The Cultural Heritage of the Australian Alps Symposium, 1991). In 1994 historians Tom Griffiths and Libby Ronin produced the report ‘Science in High Places: the cultural significance of scientific sites in the Australian Alps’. The next step in recognising scientific cultural heritage is to promote it through interpretation. In 2001 this study was initiated to develop an interpretation strategy.

**Context of Study - Three Stages of Alps Science**

The life of science in the Alps has passed through three stages so far. The first stage was “the science of exploration, a traveller’s and discoverer’s science mostly done by individuals” and provided the foundation for the next stages. It is exemplified by internationally recognised scientists such as Meuller (botany), Lhotsky and Strezlecki (survey) and David (geology/geomorphology).

The next stage was that of the ecologists who established experimental science that was problem-oriented and sustained over repeated visits. It was institutional (i.e. government initiated) and required interdisciplinary teamwork, with fieldwork that was often tedious and repetitive. This research was charged with identifying any processes that might compromise human requirements from the Alps – particularly water for irrigation and power. Maisie (Fawcett) Carr and Alec Costin stand out as representatives of this stage in the history of Alps sciences.

The next and current stage is that of ‘conservation science’ which is informed by a conservation philosophy and recognition of the uniqueness of the Australian Alps. There is a recognised need to understand and to know the resource and how it works in order to conserve it. Such scientific studies seek to enhance our knowledge of species/systems so that there is adequate knowledge for making judgements concerning possible impacts on them.

These last two stages, and the science resulting from them, form the body of the interpretation strategy.

**Criteria for Assessing Cultural Heritage Significance of scientific sites**

Firstly, what do we mean by the cultural heritage of a scientific site? Griffiths and Robin (1994) used this definition:

> A culturally significant scientific site will have important historical associations with key individuals, events, debates or scientific findings.

We have taken this definition, with the relevant Criteria for the Register of the National Estate (AHC 1990), to arrive at a set of 8 criteria for assessing the cultural heritage of scientific sites. These criteria are:

1. **The site has important historical association with key individuals.**

   Places may be sites for collecting, survey, research or monitoring of the natural environment, including but not restricted to the following disciplines: paleoclimateology, geology, geomorphology, soil science, botany, zoology, ecology. In general, the association between person and place needs to be of long duration, or needs to be particularly significant in the person’s productive life. For a place to be eligible for its association with a prominent scientist the importance of the scientist must be established, scientifically or historically; and the place must have a clear, direct and important link to the work of that scientist – it cannot be simply a campsite or collecting locality. The scientist may be an amateur naturalist, providing that person does have a confirmed historical standing.

2. **The site is associated with important historical events.**
Places associated with the development of theories in geology, geomorphology, botany, zoology, ecology, archaeology, anthropology or other sciences associated with the understanding of the natural environment and human interaction with the environment. A place eligible for its association with a significant scientific theory must have a clear and important relationship to the development of that theory or its early application in Australia. A place eligible for its history of science associations must have a strong connection with the work of an historically significant figure or with an historically significant scientific exploration/undertaking or methodological development.

3. The research findings from a site were important in key scientific debates.
4. The site is associated with key scientific findings.
5. The site is associated with research that was of a pioneering nature.
6. The site is a long-term monitoring site that is likely to add to the knowledge of biological sciences.
7. The research site is a reference, benchmark or prime site for a particular field of research.
8. The site demonstrates a high degree of creative or technical achievement.

These criteria were applied to state-based lists of sites/projects. Sites that met two or more criteria were deemed to be culturally significant and were grouped into themes for purposes of interpretation. Sites that met only one criterion (often #6) were included if their claim was considered strong.

Interpreting the Sites – How, What, When, Where, Why, and to Whom?

Has interpretation of scientific heritage occurred on regional scales elsewhere in Australia? The answer is basically “no”. Why is this so? A passage of time is usually necessary to gain perspective on cultural significance. Science, especially experimental science using objective methodology, is only just coming of age in Australia in terms of the impact of its findings. It is no surprise that the cultural heritage spotlight is shining first on Alps science due to its long history, volume, variety and importance in “one of the most studied biophysical regions in Australia” (Good 1992a). Kirkpatrick (1994) states that none of the World Heritage Areas in Australia has received as much scientific attention regarding ecosystem dynamics as has the Australian Alps, and none has been subject to such long term monitoring.

What need to be interpreted are the compelling stories embodied in the themes and the key scientific sites. Why they need to be interpreted is a function of the importance of science as a human activity in the Alps. And not just its scientific importance, but its romance, its hardships, its battles and its victories – in short, its cultural heritage. Griffiths and Robin (1994) point out that scientists have triumphed over cattle graziers when it comes to science, but have lost out on heritage. Interpreting culturally significant Alps science is a necessary step in raising its profile.

The when of site interpretation has much to do with having a good story to tell. It goes without saying that the site must be culturally significant, but the assessment of cultural heritage is a dynamic process. Even after a site has been identified as culturally significant, its value may lie in its potential, as with the recently established network of fire-specific monitoring sites. Where today there may not be much of a story to tell, there will inevitably come the time where significant changes to vegetation communities can be shown – all the better if photographs are available and if there are interesting or controversial management implications. Then is the time to interpret!

How we interpret the sites – or which media we use – is closely related to where we interpret and to whom (which audiences) we are trying to reach.

An audience of primary importance is the park visitor. At present visitors pass by (most) scientific sites without knowing of their existence. The most powerful interpretive experiences relating to a place are available when your audience is there in the flesh. And the most powerful form of delivery is person-to-person, face-to-face – for example ranger-guided activities. There are many face-to-face techniques available other than the basic ‘talk’. These include role plays, artistic expression, and hands-on sensory
investigations which provide experiential insights into the significant features/findings of a site. In the case of Latrobe University’s annual Alpine Ecology Course in Victoria participants have the opportunity to partake in active scientific research at culturally significant sites.

Face-to-face interpretation will of course only reach a small fraction of park visitors therefore there is a definite place for on-site signage. Many sites however are inappropriate for on-site signage for a range of reasons. Where signage is inappropriate (yet the site is still considered appropriate for visitation) a brochure may be considered. The brochure may be specific to a site, or the site information could be added to a more general brochure such as that for a walking track.

A brochure will provide the above mentioned on-site interpretive experience but only if the visitor has obtained it in advance. This drawback can be balanced against the fact that a brochure can function as off-site interpretation thereby reaching a wider audience such as visitors at information centres, potentially attracting them to the site. For those who do visit a site with a brochure, the brochure has added value as a take-home keepsake.

Some sites are managed so as to be off limits to visitors, usually by the expediency of no location-specific promotion. There may be an existing interpretive node (or one could be established) where the site (or indeed a group of sites) could be interpreted nearby. Where such a node is adjacent to a major road or at a place developed with substantial facilities, a ‘tourist’ audience can be reached as described below.

Other off-site possibilities include AANP agency visitor centres and regional visitor centres, and periodic AANP agency publications such as the seasonal Kosciuszko Today. Interpretation via these means will reach ‘tourist’ audiences often less informed about national park values than those who venture into the parks beyond developed areas. These audiences are important to reach if we are to elevate science in the general community’s cultural image of the Alps. There are several options for Alps science at visitor centres. Scientific sites in the area served by the centre could be interpreted by static and/or interactive means as part of a ‘permanent’ exhibition. A more Alps-wide approach would be a travelling AALC exhibition that could tour the various visitor centres and also be available for selected conferences and workshops.

A related recommendation to the one above would be to raise the profile of Alps science by inserting it into more general park planning processes.

The big picture of Alps science covering all themes and the key researchers could be presented in a book or booklet, on websites (AANP agency or AALC), or by other digital means. A hard copy publication or a downloadable website would act as both ‘armchair’ interpretation and as a field guide to appropriate sites. While this report was tasked with creating a framework for the interpretation of individual sites or ‘places’, the heritage of Alps science is also worthy of a single cohesive ‘big picture’ presentation. Given the importance of the Alps science story in its entirety, we recommend a higher priority be given to an overall production than to the interpretation of individual sites.

There will be opportunities to piggyback Alps science onto more general publications where appropriate. For instance a new edition of the Australian Alps Education Kit (AALC 1992) would be a prime medium for the treatment of culturally significant science. Reaching influential audiences like teachers can have a ripple effect in raising the profile of Alps science.

The options for interpretation outlined above are not mutually exclusive.
Themes For Interpreting Australian Alps Science

The major themes relating to Alps science revolve around:

- Grazing
- Fire
- Rehabilitation
- Geomorphology
- Hydrology
- Meteorology and Climate Change
- Palaeoecology
- Native Fauna
- Native Flora
- Arboretum
- Exotic Species

Some of these themes were not examined in full, due to time constraints. This does not indicate that those particular themes have any lesser importance than those that were more fully explored.

Each theme was presented with the following structure:

- An overview of the science relating to the theme.
- A section on interpreting the theme comprising:
  - constraints and considerations,
  - the thematic statement,
  - key messages for interpretation, and
  - key sites for interpretation.

The key messages for interpretation were drawn from the overview. Together they provide material which is useful for the generation of interpretive text, including references to other sources. The overview and key messages are important as they cover all the significant sites/projects, not just those that have been selected as key sites for interpretation. The key sites for interpretation are chosen for their potential and propriety for on-site or near-site interpretation – they are not necessarily the ‘best’ sites for interpretation, many of which are inaccessible, sensitive, or have other constraints. Therefore the overview and key points should be drawn upon in any non site-based forms of interpretation.

Example. Rehabilitation

Overview (Summary - full overview of Rehabilitation is in report on Mountains of Science)

Rehabilitation is one of the great stories of the Australian Alps. Engineering activities, fire, grazing, mining and forestry caused tremendous damage to soils and vegetation in the period before conservation-minded regulation was put in place. The need to repair the damage was already apparent in the 1930s prompting the establishment of soil conservation agencies in NSW and Victoria. The need was backed up by the great scientific investigations spearheaded by Fawcett and Costin.

Alps rehabilitation began in 1957 in the alpine area of Kosciuszko where grazing and fire had removed the fragile ‘skin’ of vegetation triggering massive erosion that carried away soil to a depth of 60cm and created gullies in drainage lines. The magnitude of the damage imparted urgency to the work.
The major broad scale rehabilitation works began at Carruthers Peak and moved on to Mt Twynam continuing into the 1980s. Many workers were involved and they faced great hardships due to the difficulty of the terrain, the harshness of the weather, and the challenges of transporting supplies and equipment. One violent storm destroyed the workers’ tent camp forcing a hazardous pre-dawn evacuation to the shelter of the Spencers Creek weather station.

The results are there to be seen on the Main Range. The results are so good that most people take what they see as a pristine natural area for granted. The research resulted in knowledge of fertiliser requirements, appropriate species and mixes (moving to entirely native species), mulching techniques and water spreading techniques for bogs. Returning former pine plantations to local native species has also been a significant area of rehabilitation research in the Alps.

More recent rehabilitation work in the Victorian Alps has featured the use of native species. The work has benefited from the lessons of 50+ years of grazing research, and from trials established (1993) and monitored under the leadership of Warwick Papst.

A current focus for rehabilitation in the Alps is the impact of recreational activities such as walking and horseriding – activities that boomed with increased leisure and mobility in the late 20th century.

**Interpreting Rehabilitation**

The thematic statement for rehabilitation is:

*Healing the Wounds: scientific rehabilitation of the Australian Alps.*

Key messages for interpretation are:

- The Main Range was not a pristine natural area at the end of the grazing era.
- Massive erosion was halted and vegetation restored by large scale decades-long heroic effort.
- The rehabilitation was supported by scientific trials and experiments.
- Today applied research is returning native species to damaged areas.
- Australia’s largest pine plantation rehabilitation projects are taking place in the AANP.
- Rehabilitation is increasingly focusing on the impacts of recreation (walking, horseriding, etc) as the historical impacts (construction, mining, grazing, etc) are controlled.

**Key Sites For Interpretation: Rehabilitation**

**Rocky Valley Alpine Rehabilitation Project.**

*Cultural Significance (as per criteria)*: 1 - Papst; 4 - Identification of native species and techniques for alpine rehabilitation; 5 - Pioneering applied research into the use of native species in alpine rehabilitation; 6 - Monitored since 1993; 7 - Reference site for alpine rehabilitation.

This site is located in the narrow strip between the Bogong High Plains Road and the northeastern arm of Rocky Valley Dam (Plates 2 and 3). There is already a sign with some interpretation but it could be improved upon. This accessible and interesting site, well worth interpreting in its own right, can act as a central point for interpreting the various rehabilitation trials and works around the High Plains, details of which are largely unpublished but are available from Warwick Papst. A sign is vital here regardless of any other treatment, however rehabilitation should be included in any ‘Science on the Bogong High Plains’ brochure.
Twynam/Carruthers Soil Con Works, Other Rehabilitation Trials/Investigations, Native Species Rehabilitation Investigations.

Cultural Significance 1 - Roger Good; Walter Bryant; 2 - Alpine grazing in the Snowy Mountains. - its damage and repair; 4 - Alpine/subalpine soil conservation/rehabilitation techniques; 5 - Pioneering research in alpine soil conservation/rehabilitation techniques; First ecological assessment of the potential of native species for alpine rehabilitation 6 - Monitored long term (63-74) and Roger Good continues to photo monitor these sites annually; 8 - Successful application of research over a large fragile area; Development of a fertiliser mix for alpine/subalpine rehabilitation.

This research centres on Mounts Carruthers and Twynam on the Main Range of the Snowy Mountains. The area is accessible via the Lakes Walk from Charlotte Pass. While rehabilitation is covered on one quarter of one of the many interpretation panels at Charlotte Pass, the science of rehabilitation is not mentioned.

Rehabilitation science should be flagged on updated panels at Charlotte Pass and then interpreted fully on a sign at the old Soil Con Hut site on the Lakes Walk several hundred metres west of the Blue Lake turnoff. This site, as well as having been the base for much of the rehabilitation work, looks across to still-visible contour banks on the flank of Carruthers Spur. Dramatic before and after photos are held by the NSW Soil Conservation Service. Any interpretation in the Main Range area should remind people to stay on the track. Any sign must be constructed with snow load in mind (the snows of 2001 destroyed the sign at the Blue Lake lookout).

Jounama Pine Plantation Rehabilitation

Cultural Significance 4 - Optimal techniques for native rehabilitation of pine plantations; 5 - Research associated with first project in Australia to rehabilitate a large pine plantation to native vegetation; 6 - Various plots monitored in the 1980s with potential for revisiting; 7 - Benchmark sites for pine plantation rehabilitation

The plantation area stretches along the north side of the Snowy Mountains Highway directly across the road from the Yarrangobilly Village site, now a picnic and camping area but still featuring the historic Cotterill’s Cottage. The existing interpretation bay at Yarrangobilly Village mentions Jounama but not in the context of science. The Tumut office of NPWS is planning to develop (over the next few years) interpretation of the historical aspects of Jounama in text and photos (Mick Pettitt, pers comm). An update of the interpretation bay at Yarrangobilly Village would provide the ideal opportunity to present the science and history of Jounama.

Summary Of Interpretation Recommendations

- Consider as a priority the production of a book or an electronic version of the entire Alps science story which could act as a field guide to appropriate sites.
- Include training in the cultural heritage of Alps science as part of cultural heritage training programs for Alps staff.
- Fund onsite/trail head interpretation of identified culturally significant scientific sites.
- Encourage the treatment of Alps science in visitor centres and in AANP periodic publications.
- Identify forthcoming publications appropriate for the inclusion of an Alps science component.
- Encourage AANP agencies to take account of scientific heritage in forthcoming management plans, interpretation plans, and recreation plans.
- Nominate key sites for State and national heritage listing.

References: Please see original report: Macdonald, P and Haiblen J (2001) ‘Mountains of Science: a thematic interpretation strategy for the scientific sites of cultural heritage in the Australian Alps. Vol 1.’ (Australian Alps Liaison Committee: Canberra). Copies may be obtained through the Alps Coordinator.
Mountains – Changing Educational Perspectives

Helen Rhodes

Snowy Mountains Grammar School

Our view of mountains has changed. Once it was simply a scholastic exploration of a curious landscape. Today mountains are recognised for the myriad of values they hold and the need for careful management. In a nation as urbanised as Australia, the first encounter of a mountain for many young people is in the context of a classroom. Curiosity is aroused and subsequent studies build on knowledge and understanding.

Learning about mountains today goes beyond the acquisition of information. Education has a crucial role to play in increasing community awareness of the importance of mountains. It is this opportunity to arouse an appreciation of mountains that will foster more responsible visitation.

The approach taken by educators in investigating mountains has shifted. In many ways, this has mirrored changes that have occurred in the community in the perception of the value of the mountains and subsequent responses in management. Each decade has been characterised by a certain approach to the study of mountains.

Lessons in the 1950’s:

Courses were formulated to give students an appreciation of the ‘varied aspects of the face of the earth’. Scholastic exercises were aimed to satisfy the curiosity people felt about ‘foreign places’ or ‘what lies over the hill’. Students were encouraged to explore the structure of landscapes. It was anticipated that this training would last into and through adult life and greatly enrich post-school experiences in reading and travel.

In studying the distinctive landscapes of the world, the emphasis was on landforms. In studying a specific region consideration was also given to climate, soil, vegetation, wild life, human landuse, population distribution and density. It was emphasised that that it was not the separate elements that was important, but rather their association in typical landscapes and on the altitudinal and latitudinal differences between them. From the list of suitable regions given, there should be selected for study one plain, one plateau, one hill, one mountain area in each of the climate groups: equatorial; tropical; temperate and cold temperate or polar.
As most students were studying mountains from a distance, they were dependent on recorded information in the form of literary and photographic material and maps. One of the skills taught was the visualisation of mountains through such material by imagining accurately what the area would look like and what it would feel like to be there.

**Evaluation:**

*Geographic education was aimed at making people aware of the diversity of landscapes in the world and thereby enhancing their life experiences. A study of regions provided the framework.*

**Lessons in the 1960’s:**

The study of distinctive landscapes of the world dominated the 1960’s. This introduced students to different parts of the earth’s surface, in each of which the character of the landscape was due to the dominance of a particular element, or a combination of closely related elements. Mountain landscapes were easily recognisable because of their obvious landforms.

A ‘landscape’ was characterised by dominant types of vegetation, landforms or occupation. Each landscape was divided into geographical regions for more detailed study. As each landscape was studied, the emphasis was placed not only its most outstanding visible feature, but also on the combination and interrelationships of features which gave it a distinctive character and were responsible for the unique nature of each geographic region.

Studies of mountains concentrated on the special assemblages of physical features. Building an understanding of the processes responsible for the characteristic features of such areas was fundamental, while consideration of human occupation focused on the adaptations made to the set physical conditions. The focus for study was essentially one of ‘Physical Geography’.

The study of the Mountain Landscape was set out very specifically in the syllabus. With landforms being the dominant feature of this landscape, it was considered necessary to introduce systematic material relating to the description and analysis of landforms and other elements of the environment, and in particular, the relationships between landforms and man’s occupation. In the study of mountain landscapes, the following aspects were treated.

**Introduction:** the description of landform; landform classification by appearance and origin; the identification of landform on topographic maps.

**Systematic Geography:** major types of rocks; deformation of the earth’s crust by tectonic forces; gradational forces affecting the appearance of mountains; the geographical significance of altitude, aspect and slope; the representation of surface features on formline and contour maps; vertical differentiation of climate, vegetation and occupation in mountain areas; limits to settlement; contrast between mountain areas in low and middle latitudes; isolation of mountain communities; transport and communication; problems of economic development of mountain areas.

**Regional Geography:** a selection was made from
- The Central Highlands of New Guinea
- The New Zealand Alps
- The Hawaiian Islands
- The Himalayas
- The Andes of Peru and Ecuador
- The Highlands of Japan
- The Canadian Rockies
- The Sierra Nevada Mountains.
**Evaluation:**

The pursuit of knowledge of the physical world was paramount. Mountains were seen as a distinctive landscape and were systematically studied as such. It is significant that all of the mountain regions stated in the syllabus are overseas, indicative of the perception that Australian mountains were considered less spectacular.

**Lessons in the 1970’s:**

The 1970’s witnessed a ‘scientific’ approach to mountains, clinically studying them as a system with inputs, process and outputs. This systems approach was applied universally to both natural and built environments. It was essentially a cause and effect view of the world, a study of process. Humans were seen as an input and consequences of their actions as an output.

The systems approach was seen as a valuable innovation that provided a more structured framework for students to observe the interdependence of geographic phenomena. This was the basis for the operating forces and interacting processes.

The syllabus specified the study of three themes: the water cycle, human organisation systems (consisting of agricultural, manufacturing and urban systems) and the synthesis of interacting systems.

Mountains were studied as a natural system as part of the terrestrial aspects of the water cycle. Specifically it was an investigation of the development and character of landform systems in humid and glacial terrains.

By adopting the systems approach and its associated terminology in the study of Geography, a framework was presented to organise all thinking. There was an increased emphasis on the need to integrate the various sections of the course to develop an overall appreciation of man/land systems and of the varied pattern that the operation of these systems produced on the surface of the earth. In other words, all topics of study were considered not only as functioning systems, but also as parts of a wider and more complex man/land system.

The deliberate implementation of a systems approach involved the appreciation of four distinguishing features of systems:

- The manner in which a system is a combination or complex of elements which are usually termed variables (components), since the degree to which each element may affect the system can alter.
- The manner in which the interdependent, interacting variables of the system are held together by linkage mechanisms or flow processes. Changes in one variable can have repercussions throughout the system.
- The manner in which most systems are self-regulating, whereby changes to input set in train changes through the system which tend to restore the original balance.
- The manner in which any system can be considered as a complex of subsystems – the greater the complexity of the system, the greater the number of subsystems that might be identified and studies within it. This generally means that the linked components of a system and its subsystems generally exhibit a definite structure or framework which is commonly hierarchic.

**Evaluation:**

There seems to be more concern with neatly fitting everything into the systems framework and examining it’s functioning rather than the subject matter being studied.

**Lessons in the 1980’s:**

With the growing wave of environmental concern, the focus shifted in the late 1980’s to mountains as ‘fragile environments’. This approach persisted for over a decade. Student’s emotions were stirred by the images of global threats to the environment: ozone depletion; deforestation; desertification and the extinction of species. Mountains were another environment that humans were presumably spoiling. Educators felt a responsibility to increase peoples’ awareness of such issues and the thrust of study tended...
to be a fairly negative one. There had been real shift in the focus, with the actions of humans now receiving attention and the underlying physical environment being largely ignored in detailed study or taken as assumed knowledge.

Senior Geography was an holistic study of Australian and global environments with a focus on people. It emphasised the interdependence of people and the biophysical elements of their environment over the face of the earth. It also required an understanding of the significance of interrelationships at different scales including local, regional, national, and global.

Really the only opportunity for studying mountain in this course was at the higher 3 Unit level in the option of ‘The Fragile Planet’. It could have been chosen as a sample study of a fragile environment subject to severe natural stress or widespread change as result of human activities.

_Evaluation:_

Many teachers felt that this course did not provide students with adequate knowledge of the biophysical environment that was necessary for them to understand the impact of human induced change and the fundamentals of sustainable management.

**Lessons into the New Millennium:**

The current perspective in Geographical education seeks an understanding of the interactions within the biophysical environment and how humans can impact on these. Fundamental to such studies is the importance of management in terms of ecological sustainability.

There are many places for the studies of mountains, in particular studies of the Australian Alps. The aim of senior Geography is to study the spatial and ecological dimensions of biophysical and human phenomena in a changing world. In the Preliminary Course (Form 11) topic ‘Biophysical Interactions’, students investigate biophysical processes and how an understanding of these processes contributes to sustainable management.

Students are able to learn about the nature and functioning of the various components of the biophysical environment of the Australian Alps. They also study the interactions between, and the human impacts on, the functioning of the atmosphere, hydrosphere, cryosphere, lithosphere and biosphere. A case study investigates how an understanding of biophysical processes contributes to sustainable management.

Students are presented with the view of mountains as ‘ecosystems at risk’ and mountains for cold destination tourism in the Higher School Certificate Course.

The focus for the topic ‘Ecosystems at Risk’ is the study of the functioning of ecosystems at risk, their management and protection. This entails recognition of factors that place mountains at risk and the importance of management. Students examine the biophysical interactions within alpine ecosystems and assess their vulnerability. The importance of ecosystem management and protection considers the maintenance of genetic diversity, utility values, intrinsic values, heritage values and the need to allow natural change to continue in the mountains.

The mountains are most important in the regional economy of NSW as they support cold destination tourism. Students also undertake a geographical study of an economic enterprise operating at a local scale. The case study of one of the ski resorts explores both its ecological dimensions and sustainability. It is important for students to appreciate the significant role these resorts play in environmental protection. Perisher Blue Pty Ltd is an excellent example of responsible environmental citizenship in its efforts to save endangered species.
Monitoring at Mount Blue Cow since the mid 80’s has shown that the activities in this area have not had a
detrimental impact on the Burramys parvus. In fact Perisher Blue Pty Ltd is committed to saving this
species by undertaking:

- to prohibit disturbance in prime habitat by excluding skiing as vibrations cause distress.
- to construct ‘love tunnels’ (small mammal crossings) under ski runs so that compaction doesn’t occur and
  the Burramys can move about freely.
- to push snow over critical habitat areas in the boulder fields when the cover thins in a poor season. PB is
  able to do this by ‘snow farming’ (the passive collection of snow by strategically placing snow fences to
  catch drifts which can subsequently be moved to areas of thinning cover). Maintaining this snow cover is of
  paramount importance to the Burramys so that it maintains a constant temperature in the habitat whilst they
  are hibernating. Otherwise they start to wake up each time the cover thins, which chews into their reserves
  of body fat and when springtime comes they have no reserves and fail to breed, or at worst, die.

Perisher Blue believes that it is not doomsday for the Burramys and they may be able to provide a
window for its survival. So long as they are able to continue to make snow, and they can keep it on the
mountains, it may give the Burramys a chance to come back.

If we are globally able to turn greenhouse around in two generations and keep the snow, then it gives the
threatened species a chance to come back. So it is important to keep the boulder fields, pools and bogs
safe. Perisher Blue is so big that this is not a constraint, and they are able to work around such areas.

Evaluation:
The current syllabus provides a more balanced approach in the study of mountains by recognising that an
understanding of the underlying ecological processes is necessary for sustainable management.

Support for education in the mountains:
The Kosciuszko Education Centre, which is operated by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service at
Sawpit Creek, has developed a number of programs for Senior Geography.

1. Kosciuszko – A Special Place:
   This slide/lecture presentation highlights the unique natural and cultural features of the area,
   interaction of the four spheres, human impact and park management. Students have the
   opportunity to have their questions answered by National Parks and Wildlife Service staff.

2. Going Up the Mountain:
   A field trip featuring the soil, weather, flora and fauna in montane, sub-alpine and alpine zones,
   the impact of grazing and ski resort development, park planning and management strategies.

3. Strategic Planning Meeting:
   This is a role play activity in which students work in teams of ‘expert’ soil scientists,
   geomorphologists, climatologists, botanists, historians, pest species officers, park planners and
   legal advisers. Their task is to gather information from a variety of sources, including audio tapes,
   centre displays, books and scientific papers, and report back to the group on the unique features of
   the alpine area and the impact of a hypothetical ski resort on the alpine area. Student presentations
   are video taped and all research notes are taken back to school.

Snowy Hydro, in conjunction with the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and Thredbo
Alpine Village also offer a two/three day educational package titled ‘Learning With Altitude’. This
incorporates visits to the Kosciuszko Education Centre (NPWS), the Snowy Region Visitors Centre
(NPWS) at Jindabyne and the Snowy Mountains Scheme Information and Education Centre at Cooma.
Students also have an Alpine Ecology Day Excursion (Kosciuszko Walk) departing from Thredbo.

Snowy Hydro is very committed to education. They have produced many resource and teaching kits and
provided them free of charge to schools throughout NSW. The Snowy Region Waters kit is particularly
useful for the Preliminary Course as it examines the interactions within the biophysical environment of the alpine area the importance of understanding ecological processes in the sustainable management of the mountains.

Snowy Hydro and NPWS are also working together to save the Burramys. Snowy Hydro is committed to helping the NPWS through corporate sponsorship and environmental initiatives. All the proceeds of the combined sales of soft toys of the pygmy possum and the corroboree frog (which are very popular with visiting students) are given to the NPWS. Thus far $30,000 has been provided, which will significantly contribute to the preservation of these species.

**Evaluation:**

*Such involvement in education by the NPWS and Snowy Hydro is to be applauded as it enables students who live great distances from the mountains to study them under the guidance of experts. The emphasis on understanding ecological processes and sustainable management of the mountains is appropriate.*

**A fundamental shift:**

Geography has moved beyond curiosity. Today it aims to develop student’s knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes. This is essential for an appreciation of geographical phenomenon and also to prepare students for informed and active citizenship in a changing world.

**Bibliography:**


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This talk is about getting to the top of mountains and small hills. It asks the question, *How important is it to provide the experience of getting to the top for visitors to national parks, state recreation areas, accessible state forests etc.?*

**Introduction**

From the carpark at the Torrington Nature Reserve, north of Glen Innes, signs direct the visitor to Thunderbolt’s rock. The walk is about 15 minutes to the base of the hills and then there is a short walk, followed by a climb on specially constructed steel ladders – to a platform that covers part of the top rock and provides a prospect of the surrounding country, especially to the south.

The prospect is very appealing, but a similar view (not quite so splendid) could be had from lower down. The presence of the steel ladders, and their contrast with the granite boulders, made me question (not for the first time) – *How important is it to get to the top?*

I asked my companions their opinions about the ladders and the experience – was getting to the top worth the constructions and their impact on the rock? The discussion was lively!

From a park management point of view the track already existed before the NSW National parks and Wildlife Service became the custodians. It was logical to use the funds provided when the land was gazetted to The Service to upgrade the track and to provide a safe route to the top. If the path didn’t go to the top, or stopped short of it, people would scramble up to the top anyway, with the resultant risks public liability issues.

In general, my companions, the management Planning sub-Committee of the National Parks and wildlife Advisory Council, would have preferred to avoid the metal ladder solution, and to see other methods of managing the people such as a different track and signs.

Issues about public access and the management of people are not easy, especially if the route involves a degree of difficulty.

The visit to Torrington State Recreation Area was one of more than seventy excursions to national parks and nature reserves made by the author whilst a member of the National Parks and Wildlife Service Advisory Council from 1991-1999. The visits were part of a process for considering submissions made to exhibited plans of management. The Advisory Council provided recommendations to the minister about the submissions and the finalisation of the plan of management. Each park was visited so that the issues could be understood. This also provided the opportunity to learn about the area and its values, and to meet with local people. [These excursions were a wonderful experience, which I thoroughly enjoyed.]
On many occasions I was conscious of the difference in approach between the draft Plan of Management—with its technical language and its emphasis on natural values—and the experience of visiting the place itself—where we traveled along roads - invariably built for prior uses (such as logging), we walked along tracks many of which predated the gazettal of the park, and we spent a lot of time visiting lookouts and walking to the top of hills to look at the view.

The walk to the top is a major component of the experience at many parks and nature reserves. In park brochures the height of mountains and the view are often the first things mentioned.

In ‘walking to the top’, people (usually in groups) follow close on the heels of one another, looking at the path and travelling quickly. Often, the experience is more an exercise in exercise, than an interpretation experience! But at the top, people stand and experience the reward, surveying the prospect.

But what are the benefits of walking to the top and why do we do it?

Why is it such an ingrained part of our (Australian) culture?

For places where there is no established track to the top, should a track be established when the area becomes a national park?

Gundabooka

A case in point is Gundabooka National Park, gazetted in 1997 with recent major additions. The land was formerly part of several pastoral holdings.

The visit to Gundabooka was a great experience, particularly because of the opportunity to hear about its significance to Aboriginal people and to visit some of the important cave painting sites and hear about the experiences and disruptions caused by European people from traditional owners.

The Gundabooka range is a major feature in the flat to undulating landscape south west of Bourke. The range is very important to many Indigenous people – in a similar way that Uluru is to the people in The Centre. There are many important sites in and around the base of the Gunderbooka range, including art sites.

The significance of the park to Indigenous people is a major part of its significance – if not the major significance.

The NPWS land includes most of the Gunderbooka Range, the nearby Little Mountain and surrounding pastoral land. Pastoral use commenced in 1850s.

There is no established walk to the top of the range and the existing road system would need to be extended to provide access to an area from which a walk could begin.

There are other interesting places to visit in the park including the walk to Little Mountain which provides a fine view of the range itself.

NPWS research and oral histories with Indigenous people shows that the two major groups used the land in this area in different ways:

- The Paakantji people were associated with the Darling River and its tributaries – they lived in and around the river;
- The Ngiyambaa people (closely associated with Gundabooka) are ‘the stone people or ‘the people who stay out back and don’t camp on rivers’.

The significance of the land to local Indigenous people means that they are actively involved in planning the management of the major areas with important sites and there are plans for a continuing Aboriginal presence nearby using one of the former homesteads.
NPWS has discussed other proposals for the park with local Aboriginal people and there are no objections to the proposed walk to the top.

But how will this walk fit in with other experiences of the Gundabooka National Park?

If the walk is constructed, with its necessary road and carpark, will it become the main experience of the park for visitors?

Are there other opportunities for interpretation that might have a higher priority?

Could the cultural history of the area, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, and their relationships with the land, be the focus of interpretation?

Could a walk along the creek be a possible feature of the park?

It is useful to examine how the emphasis on walking to the top of mountains developed as background to considering these matters.

Walking to the top is a practice developed in the 18th and 19th centuries, encouraged by the enthusiasm for scientific enquiry and discovery.

The ‘walk to the top’ could be described as an ‘explorer’ mode of interpretation, or an appreciation of ‘the sublime’.

Research over the past ten years or so about historical art work in Australia has shown that paintings by many of our most famous artists such as Eugene von Guerard were not art for arts sake, but art in the cause of science and conservation. Von Guerard’s famous paintings of Kosciuszko were undertaken when he was part of a scientific expedition in 1863. The detail in his paintings was to depict the nature of the place.

Lots more could be said of this.

**Suggestions and predictions**

I mentioned earlier that interpretation should have regard to timely interests and issues.

I suggest (or predict) that the interpretation of hills and mountains will:

- more actively involve Indigenous people – not merely for consultation but as determinants of the course of action;
- consider the changing knowledge and perceptions through art and other documents, with art being a prompt for scientific data- for example, visitors to Kosciuszko (or other mountains) may be given a post card of a painting (such as a von Guerard) with details of the mountains on the reverse side;
- mountains and hills may be interpreted more from the human use and experience (rather than their geological or biodiversity characteristics). The way they were used and lived in by Indigenous people;
- in some place, the walk to the top will not be promoted: possible, but not the major experience. The feel and smell of the place may become the primary experience rather than the view.
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The Mountain Festival was a regional sense of place festival centred around Mt. Wellington in southern Tasmania. The festival, held in March 2002 celebrating International Year of Mountains, created links between arts, science, community, environment and cultural history. Important considerations in development of the festival were the role of arts and celebration in environmental education, and the contribution that Mt. Wellington makes in the SE Tasmanian region to a sense of place. The Mountain festival may be perceived as a model for community based sense of place celebration.

The relationship of the people of Hobart to Mt Wellington, often unstated, is an intrinsic part of their physical and cultural milieu. The mountain creates a physical connection between the southwest wilderness and the city of Hobart and as such forms a powerful link between the urban and the wilderness. The mountain vista is a major landmark for the southeastern area of Tasmania marking a region through both its topographic power and cultural value. This cultural significance cannot be understated. It creates a sense of place, which pervades the understandings of community identity and cultural richness. With regard to environmental education the work of nurturing a community environmental ethic is fundamental to all aspects of environmental management. What we have learned to love and appreciate we will protect. Attitudes towards species conservation, habitat protection and indeed environmental management are derived from the valid experiences of individuals within the community.

The Mountain Festival was conceived and organised over a period of three years by a voluntary community committee. Committee members included some of the most significant Tasmanian artists and community based professionals working in various environment and arts fields. The inaugural mountain festival attracted over $80,000 in cash sponsorship. The diversity of support for the festival was outstanding ranging through major sponsorship from the Hobart City Council, Australia Council for the Arts, Wellington Park Management Trust, Arts Tasmania, Hobart Water and WIN TV through to in-kind support from small business. Attendance at events was in some cases unprecedented with capacity participation at many events.

Important developmental processes which, led to production of the festival included development of the initial proposal, partnership formation, community consultation and the forum process, identification of community resources, and a call for community expressions of interest.

**Partnership Development**

Partnership development was a key aspect of the festival’s development occurring at both a committee and event level. Partnerships were formed with environmental, community and arts organisations.
Organisations represented at a committee level were the Wellington Park Management Trust, Tasmanian Regional Arts, Tasmanian Environment Centre, Fern Tree Community Association and United Nations Association (Tasmanian branch). Each organisation provided important expertise and support for the festival.

The Wellington Park Management Trust (http://www.wellingtonpark.tas.gov.au) is the regional management authority for the Wellington Park. “The Trust aims to provide sustainable opportunities for recreation, tourism and education, whilst conserving the environmental, cultural and water catchment values of the Park”.

WildCare Inc is the volunteer partnership organisation which co-ordinates people volunteering in Tasmania's Parks and Reserves. WildCare Inc works closely with the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service, but also co-ordinates volunteers caring for Reserves managed by other agencies such as Forestry Tasmania, and volunteers for agencies which have more general conservation responsibilities, such as the Tasmanian Heritage Office. Thousands of Tasmanians are registered with WildCare as volunteers and many tens of thousands of hours are donated each year to undertake conservation works and provide visitor facilities.

Tasmanian Regional Arts (www.tasregionalarts.asn.au) is a network of regional arts organisations that are active in arts making throughout Tasmania. They support regional communities in the development of arts and cultural practice by running a number of funding programs. They also tour visual and performing arts, provide training for volunteers in the cultural sector, and facilitate arts and cultural networking throughout regional Tasmania.

The Tasmanian Environment Centre Inc. is a community-based, not-for-profit organisation, which promotes and encourages education within the community for the appreciation, enhancement and protection of the environment. It runs an environmental resource centre and coordinates community education activities such as the Tasmanian Environmental Home Expo.

The Fern Tree Community Association represents a community of about 250 households on the southern slopes of Mt Wellington, within the boundary of the City of Hobart. Fern Tree is somewhat separated from Hobart, by altitude, climate and forest, and retains a village atmosphere in spite of being only 12 km from the CBD. All adult residents are members of the Association, which owns and operates a Community Centre. They have a long history of active involvement in environmental and planning issues to do with Mt Wellington.

The United Nations Association in Tasmania promotes the values and policies of the UN through hosting events and public forums. The Tasmanian branch has strongly supported past UN international years. In 2002 they facilitated the important links to the International Year of Mountains and were part of the development and support for festival projects and events.

**Community Consultation**

The community consultation process was an essential part of the festival’s development. A public forum brought together scientists, historians, composers, writers and other community leaders with expert knowledge about Mt. Wellington. The forum included a mechanism for ideas input from the public. Other consultation process included public meetings and direct consultation with individuals, local community groups and arts organisations.

**The Festival**

Key values and strategies of the festival included a thematic approach to programming, development of a science consultancy, schools involvement, and the development of projects with longevity beyond the life of the festival. Mountain festival events were selected on the basis of relating to 1. sense of place 2. relevance to Mt. Wellington including the relationship between mountain and urban space and 3. the innovative, creative and collaborative nature of the projects. Events were categorised into three main types. Meet the Mountain talks, walks and tours were unique formulations that provided opportunities to present information directly to the public. The exhibitions program included a photographic competition organised by the Wellington Park Management Trust and a school’s exhibition. The arts events program...
was imaginative and bold allowing the development of some international links and participation by all levels of the community. The festival opened with a welcome to country and healing ceremony conducted by members of the Tasmanian Indigenous community. This was held at the female factory historic site in South Hobart under the gaze of Mt. Wellington.

Exhibitions

The exhibition program was intended to provide the public with an opportunity to view inspirational images of the mountain environment. The photographic competition Perspectives…, presented by the Wellington Park Management Trust, in addition to an open section had a number of entry categories to encourage participation by children. The Schools Exhibition was also designed to allow children and schools an opportunity to participate in the festival. The exhibition inspired new poetry and artworks from schools throughout the Hobart region. “The Other side of the Mountain” presented by the State Library of Tasmania included contemporary photographs plus images and stories from the heritage collection.

Meet the Mountain

A series of environmental walks, tours and talks held over the ten day period of the festival focussed on providing opportunities for the community to learn about their local mountain environment. Walks covered a diverse range of subject matters including marsupials, birds, fungi, Australian bush food and Aboriginal culture. The Earthwalks were designed specifically to provide children with an opportunity for environmental interpretation. The seminar presentations included Elements of the Mountain in which leading scientists gave inspiring presentations relating to earth, air, fire and water on the mountain. The presentation relating to water examined the Mountain as a habitat for different species by following a watercourse from its source to the foothills. Collinsvale, a small mountain community ran a mountain market and science expo. Local scientists presented information on species and habitat conservation.

Arts Events

The events in this category were designed to provide uniquely creative and inspirational arts events. The major community arts / environment event was Alive on the Mountain held as the festival Grand Finale and designed to maximise community involvement. Major sponsors for this event were the Community Cultural Development fund of the Australia Council for the Arts, WildCare, Arts Tasmania and Tasmanian Regional Arts through East Derwent Regional Arts. A key feature of this project was the integration of scientific and cultural knowledge into the arts process. Community artists met initially with the volunteer Science Consultancy whose members had expert knowledge about rare and endemic species and the overall ecology of the mountain environs. The science consultancy was available to the artists for consultation, one on one meetings, and field trips during the project’s development. The depth of the available information provided unique opportunities for the community to learn about the ecology of place through arts. Artists also had available a collection of taped oral histories some of which was incorporated into the performance.

Community artists worked with diverse community groups to build artworks in the form of giant puppets, shrines, banners, silk flags, masks and other procesisonal art. These artworks were directly related to the botany, zoology, geology, natural elements and cultural heritage of Mt. Wellington. Giant puppets created for the performance included the Tasmanian Mountain Shrimp, plants, Southern Snow Skink, Swift Parrots, Black Currawong, Blue Wren, Forest Raven, Beautiful Firetail, Golden Whistler, and Tasmanian Cave Spiders. Images of other animals and plants were presented on over 60 silk flags, banners and artworks associated with the shrines and masks. Participating community groups included the Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club, Fern Tree Community Association, Women Tasmania, several local Primary and High Schools, COSMOS (a support organisation for disabled people), Migrant Resource Centre, Phoenix Centre, and Bellerive Community Arts Centre.

The Alive on the Mountain performance included the Mountain Orchestra. This is an ongoing community project where the participants have built their own instruments, many of which are large and sculptural. There is a horn section with pipes up to six metres long, a carillon of bells made from old gas cylinders and log drum sculpted from a 1.8 metre piece of Tasmanian blackwood. The orchestra has a
permanent professional conductor, engages professional composers and is involved in ongoing performances and composition of music about Mt. Wellington.

**Sirocco and Luminate**, involving an event partnership with the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, was an image and sound spectacular which combined performance of a musical composition commissioned by the festival committee inter-woven with a presentation of environmental images. The music was composed by Sirocco and Ron Nagorcka who works with natural sounds. The images, including the Mt. Wellington collection of the world-renowned photographer Peter Dombrovskis, historic photographs and contemporary images by Greg Lehman exploring the mountain urban interface, were presented on a giant screen. Greg included a spoken word and image presentation expressing an Indigenous perspective. **Poets and Scientists** involved a partnership with the Tasmanian Writer’s Centre where eight of Hobart’s best poets were commissioned to write new poems in collaboration with eight of Hobart’s leading environmental scientists.

**The Mount Wellington Sculpture Trail** explored the urban wilderness interface through the presentation of site specific and environmentally low impact ephemeral sculptures. This event had major curatorial and management input from Contemporary Arts Service Tasmania. Locations were chosen to provide a sense of movement from the city to the summit. Many of the sculptors chose to use water as a theme in locations along the South Hobart Rivulet which runs off Mt. Wellington. Sculptors were also given an opportunity through a consultative meeting to dialogue with scientists and cultural heritage experts.

**Science Consultancy**

The science consultancy was formed to provide expert environmental knowledge to artists and community groups participating in the festival. The consultancy included experts from the University of Tasmania, Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, and the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. Key members of the consultancy included Professor Jamie Kirkpatrick (Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Tasmania) and Professor Roy Swain (Zooology Department, University of Tasmania).

**Community Impacts and Benefit**

The Mountain Festival provided people with opportunities to be involved in both arts and the environment through a community celebration. The Alive on the Mountain project gave participants a broader contextual understanding of species diversity in the region. A group from Geilston Bay High School classified as “Girls at Risk” joined the Alive on the Mountain project and performed on the mountain having contributed to the conceptual development of their own performance. The festival inspired further development of International Year of Mountains projects. Children involved in various events had ongoing opportunities to expand on their involvement and the Teacher’s Seminar led to the development of projects in schools. The festival initiated international links through 1. Poetry on the Peaks (http://www.dialoguepoetry.org/mountain_mt_wellington.htm), and 2. with Hobart’s sister city Yaizu by making giant puppets of insects found on Mt. Fuji. The images were provided by staff from the Yaizu local council.

**The Future**

Long-term aims of the Mountain Festival include presentation on a biennial basis, broadening of schools involvement, further development of international links, continuation of the community consultation process and partnership building, and development of a broader regional base for the festival. The committee is committed to the development of projects, which will directly involve community members and additionally benefit the broader community through innovative arts projects.
Joint Management Arrangements
For Namadgi National Park

Matilda House, Dr Maxine Cooper, Terence Uren

Matilda House – Interim Namadgi Advisory Board (Aboriginal Joint Chair)
Dr Maxine Cooper – Environment ACT (Executive Director)
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Abstract

In April 2001, Namadgi National Park became the first of Australia’s alpine national parks to be subject to joint management arrangements, following the endorsement of an agreement between the ACT Government and a number of local Aboriginal groups. The agreement provides for the granting of a Namadgi Special Aboriginal Lease and for the participation of the Ngunnawal community in the management of the park.

The paper considers the progress that has been made to date in the implementation of joint management and considers the prospects for effective joint management in the future.

Joint Management Arrangements for Namadgi National Park

Aboriginal Australians have had an association over many thousands of years with the region around and including what is now known as the Australian Capital Territory. Since colonisation of the region, this association has been constrained, to the detriment of Aboriginal people.

In the spirit of reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians, the Australian Capital Territory Government has entered into an Agreement with members of the Ngunnawal Aboriginal community that provides for joint management of Namadgi National Park by the parties to the Agreement.

The Agreement was signed on 30 April 2001.

Under the Agreement, the Ngunnawal community has been offered a Special Aboriginal Lease over Namadgi National Park. The term of the Special Aboriginal Lease will be 99 years with an option for renewal at the end of that term.

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1 Namadgi National Park is the Australian Capital Territory’s largest protected area. With an area of 106,000 hectares, it represents 46% of the Territory’s land area.

Negotiations on the detailed terms and conditions and the grant of the Special Aboriginal Lease are dependent on the resolution of a native title claim over the Territory that is currently before the Federal Court. The claim is by a group that has declined an invitation to be a party to the Agreement.

The parties to the Agreement have agreed on interim arrangements that apply until the native title claim is withdrawn or determined. Under these interim arrangements, the Aboriginal parties to the Agreement:

- have been acknowledged as people with an historical association with the area that is now Namadgi National Park;
- have the right to participate in the management of Namadgi;
- have the right to be consulted on specific regional cultural issues; and
- have the right to be consulted on the development of any legislation that will impact on Namadgi National Park.

**Interim Namadgi Advisory Board**

The most important element of the interim arrangements has been the setting up of the Interim Namadgi Advisory Board. The Board consists of five Aboriginal and five non-Aboriginal members. The Aboriginal members represent the interests of the parties to the Agreement. The non-Aboriginal members are appointed in an individual capacity because of their specific expertise. Initial appointments to the Board were made in August 2001.

The role of the board is to provide advice to the Conservator of Flora and Fauna:

- in the preparation of a new draft Plan of Management for Namadgi National Park
- in relation to consent decisions by the Conservator made in accordance with the provisions of the Nature Conservation Act 1980
- at the request of the Conservator, in relation to emerging and current issues related to the management and protection of Namadgi National Park.

The board also provides a forum for its Aboriginal members to raise issues of interest and concern to the Ngunnawal community that they believe may be able to be addressed through joint management.

The board’s terms of reference require it to meet at least six times each year. The board is able to form working groups with membership drawn, in part, from outside the board.

In preparing advice for the Conservator, board members are expected to achieve consensus on the issues being addressed. In the event that the board cannot reach agreement, the views of each member would be set out separately. To date, consensus has been reached on all issues addressed by the board.

**Participation in the Draft Plan of Management for Namadgi National Park**

The board’s primary task is to work with Environment ACT on the preparation of a new plan of management for Namadgi National Park. The plan will replace the existing 1986 Plan of Management.

In April 2002, the board released a discussion paper that addressed the park’s values and sought community views on the relative importance of these values and on key issues that need to be addressed in the new plan. Some seventy community submissions were received in response to the discussion.

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3 At November 2002, members of the Interim Namadgi Advisory Board were: Matilda House (Aboriginal Joint Chair); Geoff Butler (non-Aboriginal Joint Chair); Roslyn Brown (Aboriginal member); Valda Cornors (Aboriginal member); Fred Monaghan (Aboriginal member); Agnes Shea (Aboriginal member); Dr Sue Briggs (NSW NPWS Senior Research Scientist); Dr Michael Pearson (Heritage Consultant); Di Anne Thompson (representing Conservation Group interests); and Geoff Wells (representing the interests of the ACT Conservator of Flora and Fauna).

4 The position of Conservator of Flora and Fauna, established under the provisions of the Nature Conservation Act 1980, is currently held by the Executive Director, Environment ACT.

5 Environment ACT is the ACT Government’s environment and cultural heritage management agency.
The board has subsequently considered issues raised in the submissions with a view to facilitating public workshops on issues identified in the submissions as being of most interest or most likely to lead to conflict between park users. The board is expecting to release a draft plan for community comment in mid-2003.

**Ngunnawal culture – acknowledgment, respect and celebration**

Environment ACT has taken the view that for joint management to be successful, it must not only involve the exercise by the parties of rights set down in the Agreement but also acknowledgment, respect and celebration of Ngunnawal culture.

Non-Aboriginal board members and Environment ACT staff who work with the board have all undertaken intensive Cross Cultural Awareness Training that gives them a better understanding of Aboriginal history and heritage, including issues of identity, racism, cultural difference and protocol and communication. The training is designed to be emotionally challenging rather than intellectually comfortable.

Environment ACT has replaced all of Namadgi’s entry and interpretative signage with new signage that properly acknowledges the long association of Aboriginal people with the area that is now national park. The signs include statements of welcome from the Ngunnawal community and introduce Ngunnawal language to visitors to the park. They also introduce Ngunnawal elders and their families to the park’s visitors with brief statements by elders and others about what Namadgi means to them.

The project has involved close consultation with the Ngunnawal community, the Ngunnawal Language Centre and local Ngunnawal artists.

Joint management has also resulted in an increased emphasis on Aboriginal culture in Environment ACT’s activity programs. Aboriginal musicians, dancers, artists, crafts practitioners and story tellers actively participate in regular public events held at Namadgi National Park and Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve and in one off celebrations such as the Festival of the Bogong and the ACT Mountain Challenge. Ngunnawal presenters regularly run ranger guided activities and school holiday programs based around aspects of their culture and heritage.

**Economic benefits of joint management**

The grant of the Namadgi Special Aboriginal Lease will not confer or create any lease or licence within the meaning of the Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991 and there will be no payment of rent to the leaseholders.

However, the ACT Government is committed to provide opportunities for the Ngunnawal community to gain economic benefit from joint management.

Aboriginal members of the Interim Namadgi Advisory Board receive sitting fees at a level determined by the ACT Remuneration Tribunal.

An Aboriginal cultural heritage specialist has been recruited to take responsibility for Environment ACT’s interpretation and education programs, for the proper integration of cultural heritage and land management practices and for developing initiatives for employment and work experience for Aboriginal people.

A number of young Aboriginal people have been recruited to work as Trainee Rangers or Park Workers or in Environment ACT’s Visitor Information Centres.

Environment ACT has also provided part time employment to local Aboriginal people to assist with the running of ranger guided and schools activities. These activities are in great demand from the broader community, keen to receive information about Aboriginal culture presented to them by Aboriginal people.
To allow Environment ACT to expand these activities, a program has been developed that will provide young Aboriginal people with cultural interpretation training to allow them to be employed on a seasonal basis to assist with ranger guided activities. The program will commence in early 2003.

Environment ACT has also set up a volunteer program that will allow young Aboriginal people to gain work experience through participation in park care activities. The program’s first project is the upgrade of a walking track to an Aboriginal rock shelter in Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve with similar projects to follow in Namadgi National Park. The projects are being funded through an ACT Government Community Development Program.

Aboriginal board members are also keen to assist the local Aboriginal community to gain economic benefit in ways other than through permanent or contract employment within Environment ACT.

Companies bidding for contract work in Namadgi National Park are now required to include with their tenders details of the extent to which they employ Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal consultancy firms with the necessary skills are invited to submit proposals for available consultancy work. Ngangaana Wiradjuri has successfully bid for work under these arrangements and Environment ACT is currently finalising the appointment of an Aboriginal facilitator to conduct public workshops on recreation, pest plants and animals and fire management as part of the development of the new Namadgi draft Plan of Management.

Aboriginal board members and Environment ACT are currently looking at the merits of providing assistance to the Ngunnawal community to set up a small business that could tender for some of the contract work in Namadgi that is available on an annual basis, such as weed and feral animal control.

Tentative steps have been taken to determine whether or not there might be financially viable opportunities for the community to become more actively involved in Aboriginal cultural tourism, nature based tourism and food tourism.

Implementation of joint management arrangements

Joint management is working for Namadgi National Park and some significant achievements have been made during the eighteen months since the Agreement was signed. It will, however, take a number of years for joint management to be fully effective.

Namadgi differs from many other jointly managed national parks in that the association of the Aboriginal community with the area that is now the park has been so constrained since colonisation that much of the community’s traditional knowledge of this area has been fragmented. As a result, there is much to be done to restore ‘connection to country’ and to transfer to the community information held by Environment ACT about the community’s sites and places.

There are still tensions between the preoccupation of non-Aboriginal land managers with decision making, project schedules and output reporting and the desire of the Aboriginal board members to take the time needed to consult with their community so that decisions made are properly informed. At times, the Ngunnawal community rightly complains about feeling excluded because of the use by non-Aboriginal people of technical language, jargon and acronyms.

The inability to progress negotiations on the permanent joint management arrangements because of the unresolved native title claim over Namadgi is of concern to the Ngunnawal community as is the lack of a statutory basis for these arrangements.

At a philosophical level, cultural differences can give rise to conflicting viewpoints that are not always easy to reconcile. For example, the Board is currently debating options for either removing or redefining the term ‘wilderness’ in the new Namadgi draft plan of management. Many local Aboriginal people take offence at the use of a term that makes invisible the occupation and settlement of Namadgi by their ancestors. The difficulty for the Board is how best to address this issue whilst giving proper recognition to the energy invested by conservation groups in lobbying for declaration of wilderness areas over a long period of time.
The understandable focus of the Aboriginal board members on improving social and economic outcomes for their community means that they are not always able to devote as much attention to cultural aspects of joint management as they would like. Their available energies are, at times, diverted to addressing Aboriginal disadvantage in the fields of health, housing, education and justice. As leaders of their community, they are in great demand for service on other ACT Government representative bodies.

The success of joint management to date is founded on the high level of trust and goodwill that has been built up between the parties to the Agreement. With a number of key projects completed or underway, the Aboriginal board members have begun to take a more strategic view of what they would like to achieve from joint management in the longer term.

Their goal remains to use joint management as a mechanism for improving social and economic outcomes for their community in a way that does not conflict with the values for which Namadgi National Park is treasured. They believe that economic security is critical to the future of their community and that, without this, the community will be less inclined to engage fully with Environment ACT on the joint management of Namadgi National Park.

The first steps taken in support of this goal have been modest but significant. The view of the Aboriginal board members is that joint management can be a strong unifying force for their community. They believe that it is now appropriate for joint management to be put in place in throughout all of the Australian Alps National Parks.

For Environment ACT, joint management has forced its land managers to rethink the way in which they do business but has resulted in a richer understanding of Namadgi National Park for them at both a professional and personal level. The reaction to joint management by visitors to the park and the broader Canberra community has been overwhelmingly supportive. This positive experience suggests that it might now be timely for other jurisdictions to consider the implementation of joint management arrangements for their alpine national parks.
Abstract

Mountain peaks throughout the world are charged with special significance. In Australia this is evidenced in two national parks that are in the process of being transferred to Local Aboriginal Land Councils and then leased back to the NSW Minister for the Environment. The initial step in the process leading to the return of Biamanga National Park, marked by the summit of Mumbulla Mountain, and Gulaga National Park, dominated by Gulaga Mountain, has established a particularly positive precedence. Recognising that these parks have a special significance for members of the south coast Aboriginal community, a detailed and inclusive process was set in train to define the parameters of Aboriginal ownership as is required under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 (NSW). The notion of Aboriginal ownership is meant to be inclusive and contribute to community building as well as reinforce an individual’s sense of belonging to the greater south coast Aboriginal community. Both mountains are the focus of the identity of local Aboriginal communities, or 'sense of place,' and have in the ethnographic past been the loci of ceremonial activity that continues in to the present.

There is potential for Aboriginal ownership and joint management of the Australian Alpine region under the same process that is being undertaken for Biamanga National Park and Gulaga National Park. NSW legislation provides for Aboriginal ownership of lands that are of cultural significance to Aboriginal people throughout the State.

In this paper the structure of this legislative scheme is reviewed and the capacity of the legislation to provide a foundation for meaningful Aboriginal involvement in the management of lands of cultural significance to Aboriginal people and of high conservation value is discussed. The positive experience of the process being undertaken on the south coast of NSW is reviewed and the potential for the Australian Alps to be brought within the legislative scheme is considered.

In this year of the mountains, where to now in Australia for the sharing of the High Country, the Australian Alps with the Aboriginal peoples? What are the possibilities, the pitfalls and the lessons to be learnt from the experience of joint management of other mountain regions in Australia?
Biamanga National Park and Gulaga National Park

Mountain peaks throughout the world are charged with special significance. This is evidenced in many places in Australia, particularly for indigenous people who have known this continental landscape for more than 50,000 years with their intimate association continuing into the present. For south-eastern Australia, a region where the life-ways of Aboriginal people have been disrupted by over two hundred years of British colonial suppression, the association with sacred mountains is remarkably intact. Mountains feature prominently in the stories of indigenous gods and deities that reside in the sky. At Coolangatta Mountain, south of Sydney, R. H. Mathews wrote in 1898:

It is believed that it was to this mountain that the dead went after burial in midden sands. The spirits of the recently buried had to ascend from a rock on the mountain’s eastern side, to a world of the spirits.

Baiame is one of the god-like figures of southeastern Australia said to reside in the sky. Tom Knight (2001), considers in detail the Aboriginal spiritual nature of mountain peaks and their association with the god-like figure of Baiame (see also Howitt 1904: 501-503) and has aptly titled his thesis Stepping Stones to the Sky. He asserts that Aboriginal clever men and spiritual leaders sought out peaks to be near to, and to thus facilitate communication with Baiame.

In 1995, Isabel McBryde brought forward a thoughtful (prescient) article “Dream the Impossible Dream? Shared heritage, shared values, or shared understanding of disparate values?” Isabel, from her intimate perspective of the sharing through joint management of that powerful Australian icon of Uluru, explores the values that are so much a part of Aboriginal society and deeply rooted in the Australian landscape, and considers how they could be shared and ‘sustained or accommodated in management’. Ten years later the dream is becoming a reality in New South Wales.

The National Parks and Wildlife (Aboriginal Ownership) Act 1996 (NSW) amended the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 (NSW) (‘the ALR Act’) and the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 (NSW) (‘the NPW Act’) to enable lands of cultural significance to Aboriginal people to become Aboriginal owned and jointly managed by Aboriginal owners and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. This process commenced with the joint management of the highly significant rock engraved national park of Mutawintji, 130 km north east of Broken Hill, and now other lands in New South Wales, including the landscapes of the sacred mountains of Gulaga and Mumbulla, are moving towards agreements where local Aboriginal people will be a majority on boards of management established for these areas of land under the joint management scheme.

Gulaga was the first place in Australia to be named by British explorers when Captain Cook called it Dromedary Mountain. Gulaga has received considerable attention in the early anthropological writing of the region as a sacred place. Howitt (1904: 494-95) recorded the Yuin creation myth:

Long ago Daramulan lived on the earth with his mother Ngalalbal. Originally the earth was bare and like the sky, as hard as a stone, and the land extended far out to where the sea is now. There were no men or women, but only animals, birds and reptiles. He placed trees on the earth. After Kaboka, the thrush, had caused a great flood on the earth, which covered all of the east coast country, there were no people left, except for some who crawled out of the water on to Mount Dromedary. Then Daramulan went up to the sky, where he lived and watched the actions of men. It was he who first made the Kuringal and the bull-roarer, the sound of which represents his voice. He told the Yuin what to do, and he gave them the laws which the old people have handed down from father to son to this time. He gives the Gommeras their power to use the Jolas, and other magic. When a man dies and his

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7 With respect to the Yuin of the south coast of New South Wales, Howitt (1904:518) states that ‘Biamban is the name for the “great master’, whose true but secret name of Daramulan it is not lawful to utter’.
It was not until 1976 when Mumbulla Mountain was under threat from logging that the Aboriginal significance of the place was in part revealed to Europeans. The assertion by the Aboriginal Elder Ted Thomas that Mumbulla Mountain was highly significant to the Yuin people of the south coast was found to be supported by historical documentation (Egloff 1979). That study has been summarised a decade later by John Mulvaney in *Encounters in Place: Outsiders and Aboriginal Australians 1606 - 1985*. Considerably earlier, Mulvaney (1970) had written a well researched article on the role that A.W. Howitt played in the initiation ceremony of 1883 that took place in part on Mumbulla Mountain. Eileen Morgan (1994), the sister of Ted Thomas, eloquently expressed the spirituality of the mountains in her *The Calling of the Spirits*. Sue Feary, Sue and Gregg Borschmann (1999) in an article titled ‘The first foresters’ in *The People’s Forest: A living history of the Australian Bush* have placed the Mumbulla Mountain controversy within a broader context.

Throughout the 1980s there was a renewal of spirituality on both Mumbulla and Gulaga, with the activity being more public on the latter. Although known to have featured in the initiation of young males, it was not until relatively recently that the importance of the place to Aboriginal women was asserted (Australian Heritage Commission 1988). Deborah Bird Rose (1990) elaborated upon the overpowering significance of Gulaga stating that:

> the significance of the mountain can be analysed along several dimensions. These include the significance: as the place of origin for local Aboriginal people, as a living presence which is reciprocally related to the Yuin people; as the abode of local ancestors; as teaching site for women, as a repository of women’s secret information and other matters; as a teaching site for men; as the home of a variety of living beings . . .

As one can imagine, the conservation and management of living sacred places of cultural significance has an added dimension requiring considerable sensitivity to the requirements of the people for whom the place is culturally significant. The need to be particularly sensitive has been discussed in various publications and placed within the context of the ‘visitor experience’ by Myra Shackley in *Managing Sacred Sites*. From an European-centric position, Shackley assumes that the sacredness of the place will be revealed to the visitor and that this in turn will lead to a spiritual experience. In Australia, sacred is often prefixed by ‘secret’ indicating that the sacredness will have to be taken as given by the visitor and most certainly will not be revealed. This hurdle has been overcome, with many visitors to secret-sacred places accepting that a special behaviour is required. This is evidenced by the willingness of visitors to Uluru to forgo the much heralded climb to the top.

**The Register of Aboriginal Owners**

Returning, managing and sharing lands of high cultural significance and conservation value requires not only sensitivity but also a considerable amount of information. Both Mumbulla-Biamanga and Gulaga had been the focus of many years of research, but that information had to be refocussed to meet with the requirements of the Registrar of the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* (NSW). Under the ALR Act the Registrar is required to establish and maintain a Register of Aboriginal Owners of land in NSW. It is a role that was provided to the Register due to the political impartiality of the position and Office towards the management of the lands.9 Once lands of cultural significance to Aboriginal people have been listed on Schedule 14 to the NPW Act and transferred to Aboriginal ownership and leased back to the National Parks and Wildlife Service pursuant to Part 4A of the NPW Act, boards of management for the lands are

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8 NSW, Legislative Assembly, 20 November 1996, Second Reading Speech, Hansard p. 6275 ‘The register will be administered by the Register of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act, and therefore will be separate from any political or other party having a direct interest in the management of the lands.’

9 There are currently 7 areas of land listed on Schedule 14: Jervis Bay National Park, Mungo National Park, Mootwingee National Park, Mount Grenfell Historic Site, Mount Yarrowyck Nature Reserve, Biamanga National Park and Gulaga National Park.
established. The primary purpose of the Register is to provide a group of Aboriginal owners who are appointed by the Minister for the Environment to sit as a majority on those boards.\textsuperscript{10}

Under the Act entry on the Register of Aboriginal Owners requires that an individual:

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{is} directly descended from the original Aboriginal inhabitants of the cultural area in which the land is situated,
\item \textit{has} a cultural association with the land that derives from the traditions, observances, customs, beliefs or history of the original Aboriginal inhabitants of the land, and
\item \textit{has} consented to the entry of the Aboriginal persons name in the Register.
\end{enumerate}

With respect to the joint management process for Gulaga and Biamanga National Parks, it was decided that the best way to obtain the information required to support requests for entry in the Register was to commission extensive research. Entering the names of Aboriginal people in the Register of Aboriginal Owners was a process that was undertaken by the Office of the Registrar with much caution. The Office was aware of the social and political history of the far south coast and of the custodianship towards these mountains held by the south coast Aboriginal community.

The legislative requirement of the Registrar to use his best endeavours to enter in the Register the name of every Aboriginal person with a cultural association with land in NSW was interpreted by the Registrar in a liberal manner. The Registrar placed emphasis on the Office assisting Aboriginal people to register through supporting research, rather than requiring individuals to provide extensive information to support their request to enter the Register. This approach resulted in thorough and considered research by the team with equal weighting given to consultation about the registration process as to the research itself.

The Office of the Registrar put together a team that had experience with the sacred mountains (Brian Egloff), had knowledge of the local geography and Aboriginal families (Sue Wesson) and had experience with various land rights process (Nicolas Peterson). Certainly the research leading up to the ongoing registration of the Aboriginal owners of Gulaga and Biamanga National Parks would not have had the authority that it has if it were not for the willingness of Aboriginal family members to share their associations with the cultural area and the sacred places.\textsuperscript{11}

The research and consultation occurred over a 12 month period. A final report was provided to the Registrar in December 2001 and the entry of names in the Register of Aboriginal Owners for Biamanga and Gulaga National Parks commenced in March 2002. Based on the work conducted during this time requests to enter the Register continue to be received and determined by the Registrar.

The research conducted for the purposes of entering the names of Aboriginal people on the Register has had numerous results. The report itself has consolidated, albeit, for the purpose of the Register of Aboriginal Owners, the vast amount of research that has been conducted on the Aboriginal cultural significance and association with the far south coast of NSW. Apart from the report providing detailed information as to the history and cultural association of Aboriginal people with the country, 25 ancestors were identified, based on oral, historical and ethnographical records, who are considered to be descendants of the original Aboriginal inhabitants of the cultural area in which Biamanga-Mumbulla and Gulaga mountains are situated. Although not considered to be a complete nor comprehensive list of the only families descended from the original Aboriginal inhabitants of the region, it has provided a foundation from which individuals are able to assert their involvement in the management of the lands. Furthermore, the research has provided a level of confidence for individuals involved in the process. Their assertions to be involved in the management of lands are now supported by factual information and are free from political pressures exerted by dominant factions in the community that may otherwise impede their involvement.

The report has been used as a reference tool by the Registrar to assist him in entering the names of Aboriginal people in the Register for Biamanga and Gulaga National Parks. A process that has contributed to moving the joint management of the lands closer to actuality, with the Aboriginal

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{10} Boards of management under the legislation are to consist of 11 but not more than 13 members.
\item \textsuperscript{11} Provision was made for the retention by Aboriginal people of any intellectual property rights created in family genealogy, history and statements of cultural association during the research process.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
navigating panel for these lands appointed within 5 months of Aboriginal owners being entered in the Register.

The approach of consultation and research to support people in seeking entry in the Register has resulted in the emergence of a group of people who have expressed interest in being involved in the management of the mountains and the surrounding country of the national park. This has provided a foundation for Aboriginal involvement in the future management of these lands. The people listed in the Register are male and female, young, middle aged and elders, some are known for political activism and strident contributions at meetings, while others are not the faces generally seen, or the voices heard at meetings. It has laid the foundation for equitable involvement amongst Aboriginal people in the management of the land and has assisted in endeavours to avoid the domination of the processes by minority interests.

Sharing the Mountains

The process being followed to provide for joint management of the sacred landscapes of Biamanga and Gulaga under Part 4A of the NPW Act is a process that may be followed in the alpine regions of NSW. As the management of the Australian Alps enters a period in which increased Aboriginal involvement in management is a possibility, consideration must be given to the nature and extent of that involvement and the foundations upon which it may rest: ethical, moral and legal. The experience gained at Mutawintji National Park, Biamanga National Park and Gulaga National Park suggest that there are two major challenges that must be faced when establishing a framework for the inclusion of Aboriginal people in the management of lands of cultural significance to them.

The first is establishing the rightful people who belong to country and may speak for it. Experience to date suggests this requires gathering information by extensive, inclusive and accurate research. The second challenge is to broaden Aboriginal involvement beyond the scope of consultation and cultural heritage to all areas of management of the land. While at the same time ensuring that management of the land remains joint management and does not come to be sole management and ownership by Aboriginal people. If this were to occur it would not accord with the underlying rationale of joint management nor with the legislative intent of establishing partnerships in the management of lands of cultural and conservation value.

Meeting the first challenge in sharing the mountains is made greater in the Australian Alps by the minimal amount of information currently available about Aboriginal cultural association and values, as well as of the people, of this country. This paucity of information will hopefully be addressed by the Kosciuszko National Park Aboriginal Heritage Survey currently being undertaken by the NPWS. This is the first time an extensive survey and assessment of the Aboriginal history and heritage within Kosciuszko National Park has been done.

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12 Power identifies one of the main hurdles to increasing Aboriginal involvement in Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park is lack of training and skills available to Ngurrata to allow them to effectively participate in the Park and the related issue of individuals from outside the region, but who may live on Park in the Mutitjulu community exerting undue influence over the community and Park issues. T. Power, 'Joint Management at Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park', in (2002) 19 EPLJ 284.

13 The joint management process undertaken at Mutawintji National Park initially resulted in a prominent member of Paakantji people, Badger Bates, being excluded from the Register of Aboriginal Owners and the board of management for the Park. This was the result of a consensus amongst a group of Wiimpatji (Paakantji for Aboriginal person) as to whom the original Aboriginal inhabitants of the cultural area in which the Park existed were. Badger Bates did not trace his descendancy back to these families. Recent information from the current Aboriginal owners registered suggests that a further Aboriginal ancestor has been identified that may enable Badger to be registered if he wished. Detailed and inclusive research is currently being undertaken by the Office of the Registrar to assist in identifying individuals who may wish to request entry in the Register. Some confusion exists in the literature as to the extent and nature of the research undertaken at the time the Park was transferred. See S. Feary, 'Moving towards joint management in New South Wales: a Jervis Bay Case Study', in 'Working on Country, Contemporary Indigenous Management of Australia’s Lands and Coastal Regions’, eds R. Baker, J. Davies, and E. Young, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2001, pp. 276 to 293.

14 The tendency to move in the direction of sole management and control may be seen in statements in the Booderee National Park Management Plan. In the Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community Council Vision Statement its goals include ‘sole ownership of all lands and waters within the Jervis Bay Territory, (and) sole management of its freehold land and waters, allowing for Community responsibility, empowerment and self determination.’ Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community Council hold legal title to the land within Booderee National Park and have leased the land back to the Director of National Parks and Wildlife (Cth) as a national park and botanic gardens. A board of management comprising a majority of Aboriginal traditional owners manages the park. Booderee National Park Board of Management and Director of National Parks, Booderee National Park Management Plan, Commonwealth of Australia, March 2002.

The experience to date with establishing and maintaining the Register of Aboriginal Owners suggest that a process that allows people who might not otherwise speak up about their association with country to do so is essential. Widespread consultation, established and respectful relationships between the Aboriginal communities and researchers and an awareness on the part of the commissioning agency and the researchers of the political and social reality of Aboriginal communities on the south coast were central in obtaining the results at Biamanga National Park and Gulaga National Park. A significant number of Aboriginal people across a broad section of the Aboriginal community and representing numerous family groups and factions contributed to the research.

The approach to the research and consultation has been critical to the integrity of the report and its validity. The outcome has been an acceptance of the process and of the Register.

The understanding of the cultural significance of land and waters within Kosciuszko National Park to Aboriginal people may offer the opportunity for some or all of the land within the Park to be brought within the statutory joint management scheme set up under Part 4A of the NPW Act. This is one way to meaningful involvement by Aboriginal people in the management and protection of land with which Aboriginal owners and custodians have an inseparable cultural link. This has the potential to meet the second challenge, that of broadening Aboriginal involvement beyond the scope of consultation and cultural heritage to all areas of management of the land.

The Schedule 14 path to joint management requires that an Act of Parliament be passed that lists land found to be culturally significant to Aboriginal people on the Schedule. It also requires the registration of Aboriginal people who meet the statutory requirements on the Register of Aboriginal Owners so that a board of management may be constituted. It is a process that has its philosophical and moral bases in the recognition of prior ownership of lands by Aboriginal people and the centrality of land in Aboriginal culture.

The joint management scheme under Part 4A of the NPW Act has many characteristics that are generic to other statutory joint management schemes across Australia. It is not possible in a paper of this length to review in detail the characteristics of all such schemes in operation in Australia. However a number of key elements may be discerned either in the establishing legislation and the compulsory requirements for the terms of the lease agreement or in the leases as negotiated. These elements have been provided in endeavours to ensure meaningful, equitable and empowering involvement by Aboriginal people beyond consultation and purely cultural heritage matters. While the various schemes have attracted criticism in their implementation these elements form a useful list of matters to be dealt with when considering joint management arrangements for the alpine region. They include:

- transfer of legal title to Aboriginal people and a compulsory lease back,
- payment of rent in return for the lease,
- Aboriginal training and employment,
- majority Aboriginal representation on the board of management,
- cultural awareness training,
- Aboriginal designated positions,
- reservation of certain rights to use and occupy to particular Aboriginal groups, including hunting, fishing, and gathering rights in accordance with tradition and culture.

In considering each of these elements the long-term aims of joint management must be kept in mind. Is it to be a medium term structural change leading to eventual sole ownership and sole management of lands by Aboriginal people or a continued partnership in the management of lands for the whole Australian community? If there is to be an equitable balance of ownership and control between different groups each of whom values the land for different yet connected reasons then the structure that is set in place at the

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16 Statutory joint management arrangements exist for Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, Kakadu National Park, and Booderre National Park under Commonwealth legislation. In the Northern Territory joint management of national parks on Aboriginal land occurs at Nitmiluk (Katherine Gorge) and Gurig National Park. In NSW Mutawintji National Park is the only National Park currently under statutory joint management. For an outline of the various joint management models in Australia see http://www.nsm.uq.edu.au/iucn/pages/chap15/ch15fm.htm at Weblink 15.6.

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Aboriginal people may be involved in the management of mountain landscapes through arrangements other than those under Part 4A of the NPW Act. Such arrangements include memorandums of understanding (i.e. Mungo National Park) and Indigenous Land Use Agreements arising out of native title claims (i.e. the Arakawal ILUA). Memorandums of understanding drawn up between government agencies and Aboriginal groups provide some benefits yet they may rely upon assertions of rights allegedly in accordance with Aboriginal tradition which may not be substantiated by research. Further they are often entered into as a trade off where rights are being claimed under other land rights legislation or where common law native title rights and interests are being asserted. Each of the different approaches makes use of and is founded upon different legal regimes and the assertions of different rights. These in turn have different underlying philosophical and moral bases. In each case it is the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal rights in and claims to country that is being worked out. In every instance both the basis upon which claims for joint management in certain lands rests and the long-term aims of joint management in those lands must remain clearly in mind.

It is an area in which great sensitivity is required. It involves non-Aboriginal concerns regarding ‘doing the right thing’ by the Aboriginal spokespersons and concerns regarding the authenticity of claims of rights to speak for country and of traditional ownership. It also involves Aboriginal peoples concerns about being asked to prove what they already know: who belongs to the land and who has rights in country, for the sole purpose of complying, once again, with an imposed legal process. Yet the benefits are many.

**Conclusion**

Within NSW, the processes involved in land claims and with obtaining common law recognition of native title rights and interests have involved much division, fracturing, and creation of conflict within Aboriginal communities. Moves toward joint management need to work away from increasing this division and conflict toward rebuilding relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and country, including the mountains that are so special and valuable to so many.

Meaningful involvement of Aboriginal people in the management and protection of lands of cultural significance to them is central to any involvement of Aboriginal people in land from which they have been dispossessed. The impossible dream of Isabel McBryde of a sharing of values and a sustaining and accommodating of them in management is a distinct possibility for the mountain regions of the Australian Alps. The special place that the Australian Alps occupy for so many Australians and visitors, the highest country in this vast, dry, ancient continent offers the perfect opportunity for management that promotes shared understanding, respect for and participation in protecting the disparate values held by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in country.

**References**

Australian Heritage Commission. 1988. Sites We Want to Keep, video production.


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17 For comment on the workings of joint management at Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park see Power, pp. 284-301.


Abstract

Trail maintenance requires work in remote areas, typically with simple tools and extensive hand labor. Understanding how trails have evolved and their historic, natural, and cultural context are critical to guide maintenance and management decisions. Using the methodology of a “Cultural Landscape Report,” a forthcoming publication, “Landscape Line: Historic Trails” will describe an approach to historical research, existing conditions documentation, analysis of significance, evaluation of historic features, and treatment of historic trails. Recent work at Acadia National Park has culminated in a thirteen million-dollar endowment for rehabilitation of the hiking trail system. A publication in draft, “Treatment and Maintenance Guidelines” provides specifications for constructed features in Acadia’s alpine environments, sign standards, and cost-effective methods for rehabilitating historic stone and wood steps and bridges. Similarly, trail preservation projects underway in other National Parks recognize the importance of historic features and construction techniques, as well as the challenges faced by increased use and natural resource protection. Research and planning builds a constituency, justifies the physical work needed, provides guidance to seasonal trail crews, and helps preserve the historical character of trails.

Identification and preservation of cultural landscapes is increasingly recognized as an integral component of the management and maintenance of National Parks in the United States. Broadly defined, a cultural landscape is a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domesticated animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person, or that exhibits other cultural or aesthetic values. A “Cultural Landscape Inventory” is underway to document all significant cultural landscapes within National Park Service-owned properties, with the information compiled into a database. The National Park Service recognizes four general types of cultural landscapes, not mutually exclusive: historic sites, historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes, and ethnographic landscapes. In this respect, the traditional use of an area, the delineation of boundaries, or designation of a natural for protection, can all be viewed as cultural phenomena that influence the landscape. This paper will describe a methodology for the documentation and treatment of historic trails, a case study of historic trail preservation efforts at Acadia National Park in Maine, and examples of historic trail work across the United States. The paper emphasizes working cooperatively with communities and field staff, and the importance of preserving the design, intent, workmanship, and materials of historic trails.

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1 The Cultural Landscape Inventory is a baseline survey and database that identifies and evaluates the location, historical development, existing conditions and management of cultural landscapes in the National Park System. It can also be used to determine National Register eligibility for previously undocumented cultural landscapes.
The projects relate to my work at the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation. Established in 1992, the Olmsted Center strengthens the capacity of parks to manage cultural landscapes as part of our national heritage. Serving as a center for cultural landscape preservation, training, and technology development; the Olmsted Center works in partnership with national parks, universities, government agencies, and private non-profit organizations. The Olmsted Center offers expertise in horticulture, landscape architecture, and history. Based at the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, the Olmsted Center perpetuates the traditions of the Olmsted offices and Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.’s lifelong commitment to people, parks, and public spaces.

**Methodology: Cultural Landscape Report and Treatment Guidelines**

When the United States National Park Service was established in 1916, the emphasis was clearly on the protection of natural and scenic values. More recently, a broadened perspective that incorporates cultural landscape values requires a multi-faceted approach. To ensure that efforts are constructive, the National Park Service has developed a methodology, which is described in “A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques.” Published with the guide are a series of technical references, collectively known as “Landscape Lines,” on specific types of landscape features and characteristics. This paper focuses on a “Landscape Line” in progress on the treatment of historic trails. Understanding the methodology for a cultural landscape report lays the groundwork for the second and third portions of the paper.

Historic trails are those that were built or in use during a significant event or historic period; associated with heritage themes, such as those associated with indigenous uses, commerce, communications, community planning and development, conservation, recreation, landscape architecture, military, religion, or transportation. Historic trails may be eligible or already listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Some of the issues facing historic trails include:

- need for recognition and documentation
- potential for loss due to neglect, heavy use, or misguided improvements
- demand for new types of uses
- limited management and maintenance staff
- limited funds and potential cost savings by using new techniques and materials

With an awareness of issues such as these, the Cultural Landscape Report methodology includes four major components: research, existing conditions documentation, analysis, and treatment.

**Research**

Historical research of a trail provides an understanding of the resource and lays the foundation for subsequent analysis and treatment. Research should begin by placing the development of the trail within the broader trends and events in regional history. The political, social, economic, and environmental context, can offer insights into the purpose of the historic alignment or method of construction. Trail-specific research should then clarify the intent with respect to the origin, destination, and other trail or landscape. For trails that are highly crafted, understanding features such as drainage systems and intended trail grade is useful. Tracing the changes in appearance of trail characteristics through successive historic periods may reveal a correlation to the number and type of users, impacts associated with insufficient maintenance, a change in the trail’s starting point and destination, or alterations caused by automobile circulation systems.

Sources for historical information on trails include old maps, trail guides, hiking club annual reports, travel logs, diaries, journals, maintenance logs, paintings, sketches, photographs, aerial photographs,

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2 www.nps.gov/frla/oclp.htm
postcards, newspaper articles, and oral histories. In some cases, trail archeology may be appropriate to either understand how the trail was built or determine if the trail is associated with a historic or prehistoric use. Topics to address are summarized below:

**Themes or associated events that influenced trail development or use**

- Designers and builders of the trail, design intent, width, grade, origin, route or alignment, destination, views, natural features, cultural sites
- Adherence to local, regional, or national design standards
- Materials used and sources, local or imported
- Tools and equipment used for construction and maintenance, crew size and professional skills of builders
- Types and extent of built features such as drainage systems, steps, retaining walls, railings, tread preparation, and bridges
- Location and frequency of repairs for trail sections
- Rationale for trail closures and reroutes
- Successes and failures of maintenance solutions, particularly in high use areas
- Changes in origin, destination, tread materials, width, or use
- Documentation on the location of features that may be difficult to find in the field, such as closed trails, drainage systems above the trail, closed culverts, iron work, or retaining walls that may be obscured or in poor condition

**Existing Conditions**

Documentation of a trail system requires a geographical survey and field verification to locate and assess the current condition of extant landscape characteristics and features associated with each trail. Ideally, Geographical Information and Global Positioning Systems (GIS and GPS) computer technology can be used to develop an electronic map with links to a GIS database. This information can then be manipulated to produce plans that illustrate past periods of development, existing conditions, as well as proposed future management actions.

Contemporary photographs are useful for documenting the current condition of trail features, particularly when paired with historic photographs taken from the same vantage-point. A video of a trail is also useful for remote sections that are difficult to visit. With all visual documentation it is important to maintain a concise record of the trail name, number, and location within the trail. For highly crafted trail features, sketches, measured sections, and plans are useful for subsequent phases of analysis and treatment. Types of features are listed below:

- Crossings: bridges, causeways, stepping stones, bogwalks
- Drainage: culverts, side drains, water bars, water dips
- Guidance: fences, safety rails, signs, blazing, cairns, scree, plaques
- Retaining Structures: coping stones, walls, checks, iron pins
- Steps, Rungs, and Ladders: set-behind, slab-laid, cribbing, foot and hand rungs, ladders
- Tread: gravel, soil, ledge, stone pavement, concrete, bituminous, turnpike
- Associated Structures: benches, shelters, towers, restrooms, parking lots, assembly areas
- Associated Cultural Features: archeological sites, historic sites
- Associated Natural Features: water features, views, notable vegetation, wildlife populations, geological formations

**Analysis**
Many trails are historically significant and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. As defined by the National Register, seven aspects of integrity can be used to evaluate the degree to which the trail retains its historical appearance (see table). A trail may be closed or no longer maintained, yet still retain its historic integrity. However, if the origin, destination, or trail corridor have been substantially altered, integrity may be lost. Only a portion of a trail may be significant. In other cases, an individual trail may not be noteworthy, but a network of trails may be significant as part of a larger circulation system. Studying the resource holistically is recommended, such as an integrated circulation system of roads, bridle paths, trails, and associated developed areas within a protected area.

Analysis and evaluation is necessary to identify the physical characteristics and features that contribute or do not contribute to the historic character of the trail. Landscape characteristics, including processes and physical forms, are the tangible evidence of the activities of people who shaped the landscape, or trail. The evaluation includes a brief description of the historic and existing condition, as well as a determination of whether a particular characteristic or feature of the trail contributes to its significance as a whole. Characteristics or features defined as “contributing” are those that were present on the historic trail that survive or are replacements in-kind of historic features. The analysis and evaluation section identifies features that should be preserved and those that should be removed or mitigated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect of Integrity</th>
<th>Retains Integrity</th>
<th>Does Not Retain Integrity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Continued use of the historic route or the presence of the historic route that is abandoned but not obliterated</td>
<td>Substantial reroutes and obliteration of the historic route</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Evidence of the design style or design standards from the period of significance</td>
<td>Redesign, realignment, or obliteration of design from the period of significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>The presence of the setting or views from the period of significance</td>
<td>Loss of the trail corridor setting, important sites, destinations and views due to subsequent development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>The repair of tread, crossings, and drainage features in the same style as the period of significance</td>
<td>Loss or replacement of materials from the period of significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workmanship</td>
<td>The presence of trail features, such as walls and steps, that date to the period of significance</td>
<td>Loss of workmanship from the period of significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling</td>
<td>The presence of a trail corridor or setting, views, and materials from the period of significance</td>
<td>Dramatic change in use, setting, views, or destinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association</td>
<td>Physical evidence of associated sites, uses or cultural traditions</td>
<td>Loss of associated sites, uses, or cultural traditions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Treatment**

After documenting the trail’s historical development, determining its significance, and evaluating its integrity, a treatment approach should be chosen for long-term management and maintenance. The development of a treatment plan is a collaborative process, involving managers, field staff, multidisciplinary expertise, and associated communities and organizations. Goals for treatment are defined and a range of alternatives may be developed. In the United States, the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Resources provide a framework for how the treatment of trails should be approached.

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6 Landscape characteristics defined in *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Technique* include: natural systems and features, spatial organization, land use, cultural traditions, cluster arrangement, circulation, topography, vegetation, buildings and structures, views and vistas, constructed water features, small-scale features, and archeological sites.
Landscapes identifies four types of treatment: preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction. 7

When selecting a treatment alternative, issues to consider for trails include: safety and accessibility; topography; signs; natural features and systems; natural resource management; trail corridor protection; multiple users; traditional use patterns and archeological resources; associated buildings, structures and monuments; interface with other circulation systems, reroutes, and parallel routes; vandalism; opening abandoned trails; vegetation and viewshed management; drainage and water features; small scale features, walls and steps; surface materials and resource extraction.

The format of a treatment plan should convey three levels of information: the overall treatment philosophy and principles, guidelines for types of features common to many trails or trail segments, and specific guidelines for individual trails or trail segments. For common features and individual trails, a brief recap of related history, historical characteristics, and pertinent issues provides the necessary foundation for treatment specifications and recommendations for routine maintenance. These treatment specifications should be as concise and graphically oriented as possible. Since many trail features are rustic and assembled with local wood and stone, specifications can be phrased as parameters, e.g., bridge railings consist of logs between 4 and 6 inches in diameter or stone steps are between 16 and 24 inches wide. Historic and contemporary photographs, diagrams, and text should convey the guidelines or parameters for trail work. A historic photograph may be paired with a contemporary photograph to illustrate compatible yet distinguishable differences in construction style. New details can show concealed features that aid in preserving historic character by improving durability, such as perforated pipe or checks.

Preserving a historic trail requires careful planning. This planning requires a substantial amount of time and the involvement of a multidisciplinary team, including affiliated groups and specialists. The project team should strive to develop clear goals and guiding principles that are based on a thorough understanding and analysis of the physical history and existing conditions of the trail. Many aspects of trail documentation and treatment are labor intensive, underscoring the need to build a project team. The next section describes successful implementation of this team approach.

Case Study: Acadia National Park

Acadia National Park is located along the coast of Maine on Mount Desert Island. The park covers 47,000 acres and contains just over 100 miles (160 km) of marked, maintained trails. 8 Until recently the park had limited cultural resource management staff and relied on outside assistance, such as the services provided by the Olmsted Center. The park knew that the trail system was old and special, but its history had only been partially documented by a local citizen. With the assistance of this individual, the Olmsted Center staff conducted exhaustive primary research, including correspondence, maps, annual reports, photographs, newspaper articles, archeological reports, and interviews.

Trail System History

Research revealed that there were four historic trail systems overlaid on the island that preceeded the National Park. 9 The first network, which predates the early 1600s, was associated with Native American carry paths. Generally, these were straight paths between lakes and streams, which allowed Native Americans to portage their canoes across the island or inland to hunting and fishing areas. Typically, these routes were narrow and unmarked to discourage use by others. Since the trails were neither constructed nor maintained, they either disappeared without use or were subsequently widened during later periods. European settlers developed the second trail system when they cut cart paths and logging

8 www.nps.gov/acad/
trails across the island. Most of these routes are now roads. The third trail system was built during the late 1800s and early 1900s by island tourists who came to the island for the summer, often staying in large hotels in four of the communities on the island. With a month or two of leisure time, the summer visitors formed “Village Improvement Societies” to enhance the livability and aesthetic qualities of the island. The societies included path committees who were responsible for mapping, marking and maintaining the island’s walking paths. They loved to build paths and constructed over 250 miles (400 km) of trails, including commemorative trails in memory of family members, which were endowed in the 1910s and 1920s with construction and maintenance funds ranging from 500 to 1,000 dollars (US). Several of the trails began in the community centers and led to the mountainous interior of the island. The trails themselves were often winding in character and leading through interesting rock formations, as they were in no hurry to reach the summit. The Village Improvement Society path committee members were also active in promoting the idea of a National Park to protect the island’s scenic areas from private development. Ironically, community involvement in path marking and maintenance diminished with the arrival of the federal government when the park was established in 1916.

The fourth trail system evolved during the Great Depression of the 1930s, prior to World War II. Hundreds of young men, employed through the Civilian Conservation Corps, built roads, parking lots, picnic areas, camping areas, and trail heads with in the federally designated park area. The park did not maintain many preexisting trails, including those that led outside of the park onto non-federal land, resulting in the abandonment of over one hundred miles of trails on the island.

Community Involvement

Most of the abandoned trails are still evident and used by local residents. Many of the three million visitors that come to the park each year use the marked trails with park boundaries. In the mid-1990s, the park’s non-profit support group, Friends of Acadia, initiated a fundraising campaign for the trail system entitled, “Acadia Trails Forever.” A first and symbolic initiative was to work with locals to reopen the community connectors, the paths that led from the villages into the mountains. This was successfully carried out in Bar Harbor, the island’s largest community, and a free propane-powered public bus can also bring walkers back to town.

The largest initiative was to establish an endowment, or trust fund, for the rehabilitation of the island's trails system. Although the fundraising campaign initially focussed on the reopening of abandoned trails, concerns about the poor condition of the existing trails, caused a shift in emphasis to the complete rehabilitation of the island's most popular trails. What is amazing is the amount of funds raised. A thirteen million dollar endowment (about 23 million Australian dollars) makes the Acadia Trail system the first endowed trail system in the National Park Service. A lead gift of five million dollars was matched with many smaller donations from ten dollars on up. The federal government was also able to contribute funds through its Fee Demonstration Program, where park admission fees are spent on park improvements rather than placed in a central fund. Additional contributions were received to rehabilitate trails to meet accessibility codes. In short, people that live around the park and visit the park love the trail system. They were eager to contribute to its long-term care. Their appreciation of the system was strengthened with an appreciation of the long history of trail use, the tradition of philanthropy, and an understanding of the physical resources that require a high level of care.

Treatment and Maintenance Guidelines

In addition to a site history for the trail system, we developed treatment and maintenance guidelines. As described in the previous section of this paper, the format of these treatment guidelines included a description of the most significant historical attributes for the trails and recommendations for construction methods and materials to be used. While the topics addressed are similar to those in generic trail maintenance manuals, the techniques are specific to the park's historic trail system, including bridge styles, stone and step construction methods, ironwork, and signs.

Most of the specifications were prepared by the park’s trails crew, as were the diagrams. The role of the Olmsted Center was to define the format of the guidelines, and edit and compile the text, diagrams and photographs. The trails crew completed the diagrams in the “off-season,” the winter months when the mountains are inaccessible due to snow and ice. This collaborative approach has produced excellent and practical guidelines, as well as improved the ability of the trail crew leaders to supervise and train seasonal workers and volunteers.

**Historic Trail Work Across The Country**

To ensure that we were doing the right thing at Acadia National Park and gain some professional advice, we organized a conference on preserving historic trails and invited trails professionals from across the country, as well as local community members and Native American councils in Maine. Proceedings from the conference highlight the Acadia project as well as trail preservation projects across the country. For example, at Rainier National Park in Washington State, the trails foreman has also developed a site-specific trail maintenance guide. This ensures that the rustic style of construction is preserved, particularly the many rustic bridges found on the Wonderland Trail. At Yosemite National Park in California, the trail crew uses native stone and gravel to harden paths through alpine meadow areas, rather than introducing cut planks, recycled plastic, or other non-native materials. Materials are brought to the work site by mules or helicopters. The resulting well-built trail encourages hikers to stay on the path rather than trample the alpine meadow.

At Big Bend National Park in Texas, a group led by the Dry Stone Conservancy rebuilt long sections of a dry laid stone wall that had been built by the CCC in the 1930s and subsequently collapsed. The exterior face of the rough, rustic wall was rebuilt, however the interior backfill was tightly laid to improve the structural strength of the wall. At Chiricahua National Monument in Arizona, existing stone work done by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s has been carefully documented in order to develop specifications for rebuilding damaged sections of trail.

Along the Appalachian Trail that runs from Georgia to Maine, historic fabric remains from the Appalachian residents that were displaced when the land was taken by eminent domain for the creation of the national park. Efforts are now underway to protect rather than obliterate the remaining associated cultural sites and document, through oral histories, the lifestyle of these mountain people. The Appalachian Trail itself is now also being recognized as a significant early example of regional planning. At Tsankawi, a unit of Bandelier National Monument, the park worked with the affiliated Native American tribe, the Pueblos, to identify sacred sites within a highly visited area. The existing system of poorly defined paths allowed visitors to roam all over the sacred sites. A clearly defined system of hardened paths, educational wayside signs, and vegetation barriers were installed. Eroded paths were improved by adding steps cut from a similar stone that was brought from another location.

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14 Ibid.
Figure 1: Stone steps on the Emery Path, an endowed memorial path in Acadia National Park, Maine, circa 1922. Courtesy of Acadia National Park archives.

Figure 2: Log steps on the abandoned South Bubble Path in Acadia National Park, 1930s. Courtesy of the Bar Harbor Historical Society, Maine.
Conclusion

In conclusion there is much work to be done to preserve historic trails and associated sites. Using a well-defined methodology, such as a Cultural Landscape Report, can streamline this work. Documenting the history of the trail system is an important first step to garnering community and financial support. Raising enough funds to establish an endowment for trail maintenance ensures long-term viability. Involvement of communities, displaced traditional landowners, trail users, and trail maintenance crews is essential. The development of treatment and maintenance guidelines requires a team approach and ensures that the character, workmanship, and materials for trail construction are preserved.
Abstract

Land managers wishing to protect ‘wild’ or endangered places face a particular cultural problem: the widespread belief that restriction on access is an affront to traditional rights. We examine the idea of right of access, and draw attention to another idea present in our culture: that some places are best experienced if we refrain from visiting them. We relate the idea of access to that of dominance, and show that this can obscure our vision of nature, and make it harder to appreciate important features of the natural world, like biodiversity. We consider an important influence, The Man from Snowy River: can such stories be developed to support an attitude to nature characterised more by restraint than conquest? We suggest ways educators and park managers could support a process of cultural change to highlight the work of scientists and others as role models for a different approach to wilderness.

The Problem

This paper aims to reflect on the problem of imposing restrictions on access to ‘wild’ or environmentally fragile places. To put it crudely, it is now widely acknowledged that the demand for a ‘wilderness experience’ can overwhelm places where that experience might be had. Consequently, land managers have to limit access to these places, and in doing so, they have to confront an important difficulty: the fact that in our culture it is commonly held that as long as you are careful (and no one admits to not being careful) you have a right to go just about anywhere on public land which has not been designated for a particular use. Attempts to zone areas as ‘wilderness’ and to limit vehicle access, for example, are fraught with potential controversy. The recent debate over whether sections of Victoria’s Box-Ironbark country should be declared National Park aroused again the question whether any restriction is an affront to our democratic and traditional rights, and National Party candidates in that region are currently campaigning on this very issue (Castlemaine Mail 2002).

Bernbaum’s response to the problem of overcrowding is to propose the idea of sacredness. He cites the Chinese Mount T’ai Shan, whose slopes are covered with inscriptions, temples and tea stalls, and which, he maintains, still evokes for the Chinese as powerful a sense of awe as any wild peak might for a westerner (Bernbaum 1996). This idea deserves respect. What we would like to explore, however, is those strands in our own and other cultures which propose as positive, desirable and most fulfilling that we withdraw from wild places, and experience them best from a distance. We would like to see if there is a practical overlap between the protective, essentially science based ideas of zoning practised by park managements, and the ideas of respect and awe in the face of nature expressed by some artists and thinkers over the centuries. If there is, then it might be possible to work towards a situation where culture and tradition are allies in the preservation of wild areas, not impediments to be overcome.
Dominance And Restraint

We’ll begin by looking at the history of the idea of ‘right of access,’ and considering two attitudes to this as expressed in one way in our culture.

The first idea is that of dominance.

In The Bureaucrat’s Domain Ray Wright discusses the question of access to land as it affected early administrators’ attempts to control the exploitation of Victoria’s public lands by applying zoning principles. ‘Viewed through European eyes the land truly was “blank space”…Yet, even as they looked at bush and mountain and endless vistas, immigrant settlers mentally ordered and partitioned the landscape’ for their own private exploitation (Wright 1989 4). Discussing the efforts of Crown Commissioners to control relentless illegal felling of trees and protect access to water he notes the difficulty faced by the commissioners in dealing with the public’s belief that:

'It was not the place of the government to interfere with the individual’s right to gather the 'produce of the land', be it the collection of firewood or the removal of stone from unoccupied, unused and therefore by definition ‘waste’ Crown land. Any restriction in that regard was an infringement of individual rights, of the ancient right to “basic needs”.' (Wright 1989 48)

The feeling for the ‘ancient right to basic needs’ is still a major player in debates about land management, although the meaning of ‘basic needs’ has changed in the last 150 years. It now encompasses recreation: the right to collect wood, or graze cattle, has been joined by the right to build resorts, and to walk, ski and mountain bike freely over the mountains.

The right to ‘basic needs’ is of course a right to exploit. Even expressed most moderately in the ‘wise use’ vision of nineteenth century planners, it can merge very easily into the idea of dominance. A spectacular example of this idea is the Snowy Mountains scheme, built on the premise that nature was there for us to bend to our will, and for our needs.

Other apparently more reasonable positions also have a lot in common with the dominance position. Take the harmless practice of peak bagging: at its extreme it becomes the notion that any millionaire can buy access to the peak of Mount Everest. What this comes down to is the same set of assumptions and logical slips: we want to, we need to, we have a right to: to climb the mountain, carve it up, punch a hole in it. The idea has adherents in most activities: for example, bushwalkers often resent attempts to limit their right to go anywhere their feet can take them.

Restraint

The second idea is in some respects the opposite of the first. It’s restraint.

In her poem Before Kosciusko (1946) the Jindyworobak writer Minnie Agnes Filson (‘Rickety Kate’) argues that the best way to experience the splendour of the mountain is to resist the urge to conquer it. After evoking the approach to the ‘dazzling slopes’ of the ‘immaculate mountain’ she tries to impress the reader with what should be the deepest response to it:

I would have then turned back,
   Remembering the dark
   In the secret chasms of the mind,
   And I would not have defiled
   That high white country
   With the sign of my ascending.
   I would have been content
   That my eyes had seen it.
Filson’s view is not new in the culture of white Australia: certain nineteenth century writers wanting to emphasise the mystical power of great mountains suggested that to want to scale them was vulgar and insensitive. Here’s James Cuthbertson in the 1890s, evoking a European alpine scene and proclaiming

\begin{quote}
And holy reverence their passage bars
To meamer souls who seek to enter there.
(Cuthbertson in Hansen/McLachlan 1924)
\end{quote}

This view and variations on it have a long pedigree as well, though not principally in the Western tradition.

Simon Schama refers to the Taoist tradition in China as being ‘hostile to the idea of mountains as a site of human triumph and possession,’” and notes that it was held that only the ‘true adepts of Tao, solitary shamans, could climb or descend the peaks, and then only in the mystical trance that came from exercises of ascetic self abnegation.’ Schama suggests on the whole a difference between eastern and western traditions here, though even in the Christian tradition there are examples of reverence for mountains as sites of spiritual, not physical attainment (Schama 1995:407ff). Passing over the many complexities of this history, what is striking about it is the many variations on the theme of restraint which characterise it.

Schama, for example, refers to ‘respectful annihilation of the human self’ which was the Lakota Sioux Indian shaman’s precondition for experiencing the true spirit of Mount Rushmore (Schama 1995:399). At its most modest this is an ethic of ‘self restraint’, a phrase with which John Haines tried to sum up the entire environmental ethic (Haines 1996:224). Its intention is not to deprive the practitioner of an experience, but to enrich that experience. Barry Lopez suggests that to get a true appreciation of a place, you should ‘look away from what you want to scrutinize in order to get a sense of its scale and proportion.’ (Hay 2002:154).

A well known example of what we are talking about is the request by the Anangu people for visitors to respect Uluru by not climbing it. This is not a restriction: it’s left to the visitor to decide what to do, and some visitors to Uluru disregard the request. They feel that without the ascent they will not have had the full experience of the monolith.

When the Anangu did close the Rock last year for eleven days as a mark of respect for a member of the community who had died, the furore was extraordinary, and shows how the ‘right of access’ idea in some respects seems to transcend even respect for the dead. We could argue negatively here as follows: the idea that abstention from the ascent is the deepest form of appreciation of the Rock (or any other mountain) is up for consideration; it is abundantly clear, however, that those who clamoured against the restriction in this case showed no interest in the Rock: it existed for them only as a source of tourism dollars.

The Anangu vision is not, of course, the same as the idea practised world wide in National Parks of reference areas and exclusion zones. Nevertheless, there are overlaps in the two positions.

Williams (2002) has drawn attention to the way that ‘cultural expectations of beauty’ can affect our very ability to see, and has produced research to show how we can seriously undervalue certain valuable landscapes—like grasslands, or casuarina woodlands—because they don’t seem beautiful. These findings confirm and extend the intuitions of common sense, that we may miss things if we approach them too fixated on one dimension of what they might offer. Our argument is that this is what may have happened with our obsession with wanting to go everywhere: and that by endowing certain chosen landscapes with the mystique of inaccessibility we might even enhance our appreciation of them.

The Man From Snowy River

We’d like now to focus on a particular example of a major cultural influence on Australians’ attitudes to mountains, and to nature generally: The Man From Snowy River.

In the Bulletin debate of the 1890s Henry Lawson criticised Banjo Paterson for his romantic portrayal of bush life, arguing that he was ‘blinded to the Real’. Lawson won this argument, and lost the audience. A
weakness of Lawson’s attitude lay in his failure to recognise, or at least to admit, that literary nationalism, with its idealisation of the outback life…had made a significant contribution to the development of a national pride, a fact made evident by the staggering sales of Paterson’s The Man from Snowy River and Other Verses.’ (Wilde et al 1985:124) This volume sold out in two weeks. It sold 100,000 copies and has continued to outsell any other Australian poetry since: the vision presented by Paterson is arguably still expressive of the way we want to see ourselves in relation to nature

What is that vision?

The story of the riders ‘who could go wherever horse and man could go’ can still raise the hairs on the back of the neck in its evocation of the Man, who conquered not only the mob, but the mountain too: and his ride has been used as a stirring battle cry for some of the mountain cattlemen struggling to maintain their grazing rights in the Victorian Alps. So Lazy Harry, a Wangaratta singer, in support of the mountain cattlemen’s ‘right’ to graze cattle in the Alpine National Park is able to sing

...the legend of the Man from Snowy River
Is riding close beside us as we fight
(Lazy Harry 1989)

Lazy Harry is right to see Paterson’s vision as consistent with that of the cattlemen. The Man could also be used to support any use of the mountains which involved action and romance: anything which involved seeing the land as a backdrop, a context within which human affairs could unfold, without too much attention to fine details. If Australian literature in the nineteenth century revealed a struggle in writers ‘between perception and memory, between what the poets saw and what they thought they saw, or wanted to see’ (Elliot and Mitchell 1970), Paterson’s work, for all its brilliance, falls into the wishful thinking side of the conflict.

Paterson’s bush is an ‘idealised land that never was…He did not, in effect, write about the Australian bush; he re-created Arcadia “down under”…eternally and usefully available as the dreamland of the Australian fancy… a land where all that is potentially disturbing is tamed by the settled air of Arcadian inconsequentiality.’ (Heseltine 1962) In other words, Paterson replaced the fake Europe which earlier writers and artists had tried to see in Australia, and created instead a sort of fake Australia, a land which, though tough, was to the measure of the heroic, resourceful people who came to colonise it, and was ready for their sheep and cattle.

As such, it encourages its readers to misread the land it is set in. This was understandable in the nineteenth century, even in the era of Lawson’s brutal realism: it is one we should be more wary of now. One hundred and ten years later Judith Wright, Les Murray and numerous others have produced work closely attentive to the landscape and what it means, yet the views expressed in Paterson still hold popular sway. The Man needs, not an antidote, but perhaps an update, and maybe it has one.

In 1996 Mark O’Connor published Tilting at Snowgums, a book of poetry on a variety of themes about the Australian Alps. The collection concluded with a longish poem entitled A New Ballad of the Man from Snowy River.

This offers an intriguing reading of the poem and the tradition of which it is a part. Although it ends after the colt returns voluntarily to the Man because he’s sick of the hard life in the mountains, and yearns for the mollycoddled life of the thoroughbred racehorse, O’Connor’s version is not a parody of Paterson. He claims rather to be mixing a tart 1990’s realism into the romance of the old ballad. (O’Connor 1995:76). His version seeks to complete Paterson’s by inserting material which our different understanding of nature has made more important, and which has made us want to see the Alps as more than just a backdrop to an action story. Here’s an example:
In the supply of detail and the sardonic humour of the last line O’Connor is trying to make us look beyond the adventure: he emphasises the idea that the country suffers when the horses thunder through—not something considered by Paterson, who lacks ‘the modern environmentalist’s eye for the small species and the subtle interaction.’ O’Connor ‘hoped to offer not so much an opposing vision as a more complete one, however less memorably expressed … to show not just the flying hooves of the gallant horsemen but some of the delicate species underneath.’ (p 76) The book aims to make a new statement about the nature of our relationship with the high country, a statement which will celebrate the culture implied in The Man from Snowy River, but make us look again at it, perhaps a little uneasily. In thus celebrating the human traditions of the mountains and yet laying a heavy emphasis on the non human reality of the environment, O’Connor undertakes an unusual task: to situate cultural history constructively in an appreciation of the natural environment without fudging the issue of conflict between the two. Without rejecting the heroes of the past, he wants us to see them with a critical sympathy, softened with a slightly ironic humour.

The rest of O’Connor’s collection extends the ambition of his task by offering us a range of heroes, from plants to volunteers of the KHA. This offers another intriguing lead in the matter of redefining our approach to the mountains.

On the matter of cultural heritage Griffiths and Robin have lamented the fact that the work of scientists in the High Country have not entered the imagination as those of the cattlemen have, (Griffiths and Robin 1994) and it does seem strange that the adventures of the forester Baldur Byles, who in the thirties spent months in the Alps on a lone mission clambering in and out of deep gorges to investigate the state of mountain catchments are not part of the legends of the mountains. Similarly, Maisie Fawcett/Carr, dubbed by the cattlemen of the Bogong High Plains ‘the washaway woman’, laid the basis for our understanding of the effects of grazing with her exclusion plots. Both these people are virtually legends to those interested in the ecology of the Alps, but are distant from the imagination of the general public. ‘The scientists won the conservation battle, but lost the cultural debate’ (Griffiths and Robin 1994:7). Maybe it’s much easier for a rampaging horseman to capture the public imagination than it is for a scientist struggling with transects while being bitten by millions of flies, but this is mainly a challenge of presentation: or, as Williams puts it in a different context: it ‘provides opportunity for new approaches to extension.’ (2002:2-3). Educators and managers have to put up the models they think should be admired and support them.

**Conclusion**

The task is to promote new heroes without disparaging the old ones, and to be prepared to look at different and at first sight paradoxical ideas, like the idea of withdrawal from selected areas. If the idea is not offered to the public more positively than has been possible in the past, exclusion zones will continue to be dogged by controversy and administrative problems.

In 1994 Alec Costin suggested a “‘reserve within a reserve” around Mount Twynam, a place of science only, protecting the vulnerable loose rocks and maintaining more natural ecosystems for future study.’ The idea is to create some ‘scientific reference areas protected altogether from tourist traffic,’ so as to avoid the eventuality that ‘the huge increase in tourist traffic [would] make it impossible to undertake scientific research in normally functioning eco systems (Griffiths and Robin 1994:22).’ Commenting on
this idea in their report Science in High Places Griffiths and Robin observe, ‘One day, humans may have to follow the sheep and cattle off parts of the mountains, victims of their own exclosures.’ (22)

The word ‘victim’ is an unfortunate one, derived from the perception—accurate at this time—that refraining from going somewhere is necessarily a deprivation. As we have argued, that depends on how you look at things. Costin’s idea is based around the strategy of drawing visitors away from the mountain, via the use of strategically placed viewing platforms and tracks, as much as it is about ‘exclusion’, a process which is in any case as much a matter of persuasion and education as compulsion. In any case, when the volume of crowds begins to destroy even to them the whole point of the excursion, such that it is no longer possible to see and feel what you came for, then withdrawal becomes a much easier matter to contemplate. Think of the road to the Kosciuszko summit. When park authorities proposed its removal, it was believed that ‘the public would not wear’ removal of an access right which had been there for sixty years. In fact the closure went ahead with little opposition. Surveys revealed that few claimed the right to scale Kosciuszko in a bus. (Costin 2002)

Time can be on the managers’ side. Research by Slattery on Wilson’s Promontory National Park shows that a park established for a hundred years fosters a pattern of traditions in the public mind which make it resistant to unscrupulous manipulation (Slattery 2002). A heavy weight rests on park administrations in the fostering of healthy traditions. These are not the result of sudden dramatic acts, but of years of decisions about tracks, consultation, interpretive material and the presentation of heroes and perspectives: of cultural realities which need to be nurtured too by teachers and scientists.

The idea of voluntary withdrawal has to be brought into the mainstream of our culture: not as a restriction but as an opportunity for increased understanding, better appreciation, for a clearer view of where we are.

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*Castlemaine Mail* November 15 2002.


The Inspirational Value of Mountain Landscapes

Chris Johnston and Juliet Ramsay

Appreciating Australian landscapes

The appreciation of the beauty and drama of Australian landscapes by European explorers and settlers, is evident in the art and writings that in the early 19th century, captured the sublime landscapes of Sydney Harbour, the forests, waterfalls, fern gullies, plants and mountains which were used to inspire other settlers to the colonies. These early responses to the landscape were predominantly purely aesthetic, the artists had not had their lives moulded by this land, and unlike Aboriginal people, had not acquired centuries of narrative, myth, meaning and environmental understanding. The inspirational response to our landscapes has been further enriched as non-Indigenous Australians have learned to appreciate the depth and breadth of Australian Aboriginal attachment to land as being integral to their lives, religion, health and tradition and, have in turn, layered the landscape with their own narratives, myths and meanings, along with their increasing environmental understanding. For most, Australian landscapes are part of being Australian, their colours, shapes evocations and meanings are prolifically embedded in the cultural life of this country. Mountain landscapes in particular, inspire art, as paintings, poetry, literature, music. Thought, feelings, and spiritual beliefs.

However, although the evocations of the landscapes, including mountains, are realised and generally highly appreciated, those particular values have not been well represented in the majority of the mountain landscape listings in the Commonwealth Government's, national heritage register, the Register of the National Estate (RNE). This gap in heritage listings, has perhaps been exacerbated by the two strands of heritage discipline, cultural and natural, having different organisational support. Natural conservation groups reflect the interests of scientists, while cultural groups, such as historic societies and national trusts, predominantly reflect history and historic fabric. Universities separate the disciplines of science and, humanities and the arts while a number of State and Territory environmental and heritage agencies have separate natural conservation and cultural heritage legislation. Nonetheless, the protection of landscapes at the international level - the World Heritage Convention (1972) and at the national level – the Australian Heritage Commission Act (1975) established protection of both the cultural and natural values of places together in their respective legal documents. We can therefore respect the vision of the initiators of heritage legislation - that cultural and natural values are inextricably linked.

Approximately 544 mountains and ranges records are in the Register of the National Estate and of these 221 have included Aboriginal values, 80 of the records are for historic places (mostly mining sites and huts) while the aesthetic value of the places, when mentioned has, until recent years, been at best, only briefly noted as the place having 'scenic quality'.

1 UNESCO (1972) Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.
Previous approaches to landscape assessment

The gap in the heritage records of aesthetic values of natural landscapes is not due to lack of effort from the Australian Heritage Commission (AHC). The Commission undertook a its first methodology study for aesthetic landscape values in 1979 (Fabos and McGregor). It is rather, that the assessment of aesthetic or inspirational values of landscapes has proved to be an elusive task, fraught with issues of subjective interpretations that have not been comparable to the confident and quantitative scientific assessments for natural values. The wider community has generally not nominated natural mountain areas for their aesthetic, inspirational and social values. Also, natural heritage scientists who nominate mountain landscapes are generally not comfortable with the descriptive language used to describe aesthetic inspirational landscape values. It is far easier to have a place registered for its biodiversity value than for its inspirational values. This focus on scientific values of natural landscapes has meant many heritage landscape records lack depth.

It was the regional forest assessment studies commencing in 1993 that provided impetus for further effort into methodology research and its application. A peer review workshop with a range of aesthetic experts from diverse backgrounds, reviewed methods, defined a suitable definition for aesthetic value that could be applied to landscapes, and approved a multifaceted approach that included documenting the experience of community members, cultural groups, and forest experts through workshops. It added to that information, the places that had inspired notable art, poetry or literature by publicly recognized artists and writers and evidence of aesthetic landscapes in tourism brochures, guidebooks, posters and periodicals. This resultant multi-faceted experiential approach was applied to most of the aesthetic value assessments for Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) - Comprehensive Regional Assessment (CRA) studies that were conducted from 1993 - 1999. A suite of landscapes for each RFA region was identified as having significant aesthetic values and nominated for entry in the RNE. For those that have now been finalised such as for the East Gippsland RFA, aesthetic values have been included with the numerous large tracts of natural landscapes many of which are mountain ranges, slopes and mountaintops. Several mountaintops were identified for their ability to provide a significant aesthetic experience, and others as a vista feature, as well as numerous landscape features such as waterfalls, caves, gorges and ‘old growth’ or what is understood as ‘old growth’ forests. Of the 97 natural value place records for the Australian Alps many now have aesthetic values included in their record, thanks to the RFA research.

In the RFA research, it proved difficult to create a listing for a place based on a work of art. Association with works of art was generally used as support for the value. Research by (Lennon and Townley 1998) proved that poetry was a dominant media in describing landscape. A major component of the identification of values came from people attending the community and the forest expert workshops. They easily captured the particular meanings that could not have been identified in any expert assessment. They could also map areas and particular viewpoints and as well, they could describe the values, at times with great skill.

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4 Refer to the National Estate Reports prepared for each RFA at: //www.rfa.gov.au

This assessment approach needed to provide data that was substantiated and could meet the set thresholds for significance. Qualitative information (from people) established the heritage value and quantitative measures (from art, literature, tourism etc) helped to determine if places met the threshold.

The Australian Heritage Commission has explored other ways of recognising the aesthetic and social meaning of natural places. It has run the Indigenous Art Award, the Art of Place and the school program Places of the Heart. This has greatly increased awareness and strengthened social and inspirational appreciation of places. A challenge for the future to ensure that cultural and natural values of landscapes at the macro and micro scale, with their many linked intangible qualities are described as one place.

An opportunity for considering the national heritage importance of inspirational landscapes has recently arisen with the proposal for new national heritage legislation. New Commonwealth heritage legislation, expected to be in place early next year, proposes a National Heritage List that retains natural and cultural values as integrated heritage, where relevant.

Australia’s inspirational landscapes were considered a suitable theme to pursue for national heritage identification. Although there exists the possibility of building on the aesthetic landscapes methodology undertaken for the RFAs, there will be a need to establish a national level of significance (a higher level than for the RNE) and to clearly document the values of the landscape that inspire people. In addition, the appreciation of intangible values has become increasingly important in World Heritage identification. There is great scope for this proposed new national heritage regime to promote and develop the inspirational landscapes concept.

In this new area of heritage listing, perhaps a substantial creative work inspired by a place could be the reason for listing? New heritage assessments could be a stimulating celebration of a heritage landscapes and in return be inspirational to others. On the one hand, a new approach such as this provides an exciting direction for heritage assessments. On the other hand, listing is a legal process that demands a clear and repeatable process. Values need to be measured. They need to meet clear thresholds and be defensible in a court of law and these requirements do not sit comfortably with subjective, artistic expressions.

In seeking to address the task of a defensible method for the inspirational values of landscapes, early this year, the Australian Heritage Commission funded a study to explore the concept of inspirational landscapes and to outline a methodology for their assessment as heritage places. The consultant, Context's, innovative response to the brief was accepted and an outline of the results of their research to date follows.

**The Inspirational Landscapes Project**

The Inspirational Landscapes project is designed to better understand what makes a landscape 'inspirational', how these qualities can be understood, analysed and documented to enable important inspirational landscapes to be recognised and protected as heritage places at the national level.

...K. Sacherin, describing the inspirational aesthetic values of Dawson Range, Victoria (1993)
The project has three main stages. The first stage focuses on the concept of inspirational landscapes, seeking to explore different views and perspectives. The second stage will focus on development of an assessment methodology, considering current methods, significance indicators and thresholds. Stage 3 will involve testing the assessment method on some selected landscapes, clarifying and refining the approach and ironing out any bugs. The final stage is to prepare the project report incorporating the final methodology.

In Stage 1, ten perspectives essays have been commissioned from eleven Australian artists, writers, poets, activists, and heritage professionals (http://heritageforum.truenorth.net.au). The on-line conference was structured around four themes, plus a plenary session. 309 people registered for the conference, with 234 posts made over the two days of the conference. A conference report is to be posted on the web site (http://heritageforum.truenorth.net.au). Some of the ideas arising at the on-line conference are discussed in this paper.

Seeking the essence

'Inspirational landscapes' is a simple, but powerful concept. It combines two words that both encompass a set of diverse meanings. As a starting point, the project brief defines inspirational landscapes as:

- essentially those places associated with positive and inspiring aesthetic or cultural perceptions of a place and experiences derived from a place. They may be discrete sections of the environment or vast expanses of landscape … Significant stories associated with this theme may include:
- perceiving and celebrating landscapes in art, literature, film, song, photography and other media
- conserving and fighting for the protection of landscapes
- inspiring scientific ideas and understandings
- inspiring bushwalking and recreation and other stories.

This definition raises interesting questions for consideration:

Can we identify the qualities inherent in a landscape that 'inspire'? What are the characteristics or deficiencies in those landscapes that don't or can't inspire?

Are there degrees of 'inspirational'? For example, is there a difference between places we enjoy, versus those that are inspirational? Are they part of the same continuum?

Are there different qualities that inspire different forms of response; for example, what inspires contemplation versus arousing excitement? Is it a difference in the landscape or the viewer?

Inspiration and place

Fundamentally, 'inspiration' means the drawing in of breath - in this context, a response to a place. The sharp intake of breath, the 'wow' factor, the contemplative response - all of these 'take your breath away' responses are both personal and cultural. Stephen Martin's essay asks 'what is it that makes us stop and take a breath at a particular place or landscape? Is there something recognisable in the lie of the land or in the way we see it?'

Joy McCann suggested that inspirational landscapes reach far beyond the aesthetic response, quoting an Oxford Dictionary definition: 'inspire' means to 'fill with the urge or ability to do or feel something'.

Is there a distinction between emotional response and 'inspiration'. At the conference, a strong view emerged that it was necessary to consider as 'inspirational' places that evoked negative emotions as well as the positive. Many examples were proposed including places of horror that may inspire people to act to prevent a repeat in the future (e.g. Nazi concentration camps, killing field of Cambodia, refugee camps).

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6 Stephen Martin: Our Landscapes. Essay prepared for the project
7 Joy McCann; lhayes: Forum 1 - To be inspired?; Juliet Ramsay: Forum 1 - Are modified landscapes inspirational?
Haydn Washington, in response, proposed that we separate out the anger and hurt that we feel at devastated landscapes (while recognising that these painful place may inspire an artists, writers and activists) from the potential transcendent moments that may be inspired by natural landscapes.\(^8\)

The term ‘evocative’ was also proposed as a way around this problem: an evocative landscape is one that evokes an emotional response, whereas an ‘inspirational landscape’ is one that uplifts, refreshes etc?

Even the boundary between negative and positive was recognised as blurry.

> Beauty and fear often go hand in hand. The one attracts us while the other pushes us away. This creates a ‘frisson’ which many of us find exciting. The so-called ‘sublime’ landscape often seem to come into this category.\(^9\)

Are inspirational landscapes primarily natural places or can ‘modified’ landscapes also be inspirational? It was agreed that many cultural landscapes and cultural features have the potential to be powerful and inspirational. Examples included the industrial Newcastle waterfront with its blast furnaces, steel mills and colliers.

Another emerging theme was the importance of the nature of the relationship between a person (or group of people) and a landscape, raising many questions about the knowing and experiencing of places, the power of the familiar place and the newly discovered place, and the many different ways of seeing and knowing that we each bring to our relationship with landscape. And do we need to see and experience a landscape to respond to it, or can we be inspired by places that we have only ‘seen’ through images created by others (through paintings or photographs for example) or even places that we have ‘seen’ only through powerfully-told stories?

The essays by Sally Morgan, Robyne Bancroft and Deborah Bird Rose highlighted Indigenous perspectives on the relationship with place, and how these may come to be shared by non-indigenous Australians.

Don Thomson wrote of another group within the community - farmers. His work demonstrates that farmers see landscape as a medium through which notions of ‘good farming are continually redefined: that is, they are focused on the relationship and interactions between themselves and the landscape and vica versa.\(^10\)

Jeff Malpas proposes that landscape is something that we experience, that we are active within and that is therefore ‘inspirational’ in every aspect of our lives. ‘As landscapes are inspirational - as they flow into our lives - so the encounter with landscape is an encounter with that which makes us what we are’.\(^11\)

For other conference contributors too, the split between people and the environment is a false duality, and is not helpful in understanding ‘inspirational landscapes’:

> There is really no landscape that humans have not altered ... there are no humans that landscapes have not altered.\(^12\)

Our responses to and relationships with place and landscape embodies all of our senses, our intellect, our knowledge and our culture and our experience. Like the attachments to place assessed as ‘social value’ which draw much of their power from the experience of place, inspirational landscapes appear likely to share this characteristic - that of being experienced not just ‘seen’.

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\(^8\) Haydyn Washington: Forum 1 - Are modified landscapes inspirational?
\(^9\) Christain Clare Robertson: My Inspirational Landscape - Scary Places
\(^10\) Dr Don Thomson, Forum 1
\(^11\) Jeff Malpas - as quoted in Forum 1
\(^12\) Haydyn Washington: Forum 1 - Are modified landscapes inspirational?
Defining the indefinable and the rarely spoken of is part of the challenge in the concept of 'inspirational landscapes'. Haydyn Washington wrote of the 'sense of wonder' as something that peaks in a 'transcendent moment' and asks what it is about certain landscapes that lead to such moments. He suggests that part of the answer may be in the beauty of the place, the sheer joy of artistic line and form, the sense of wilderness (or freedom from human constraints and boundaries) and perhaps more.13

And then there is the landscape itself. The term landscape is used in many different ways, and yet remains hard to define. At its least, landscape is still scenery; at its greatest, landscape embodies the idea of environment and the interaction between people and their environment, referring to both the spatial and temporal arrangement of things as well as to the layers of meaning and interpretation which we 'read' in the landscape.

Culture and place

Bronwyn Hanna highlighted that 'human experiences of place are inevitably mediated by social factors: gender, ethnicity, class, sexuality, ability, age and familiarity for example'. She asks:

> Does every landscape appreciation have to get bogged down in a mass of competing interpretations, and if so, how many should be sought and included? Does this question need to be addressed before the attributes of landscape can be codified (since each interpretation included will involve the recognition of different attributes found in the landscape)?14

So how deep are the differences, and how much might be universal or at least widely shared? Katherine Gorge for example:

> recently I had the opportunity to paddle a canoe up Katherine Gorge in the Northern Territory, and I met an enormous number of people from all around the world. Some had picked up a little bit of information about the place before going, others had no idea what to expect before they got there, but all of the people that I spoke to, even briefly, expressed how awe inspiring they felt the Gorge is. This was the first time that most people had been there, yet it inspired such strong, and similar, emotions and thoughts in all of them, regardless of their cultural and personal backgrounds ...So, is it possible for a landscape to be intrinsically inspirational?15

Within cultures and regions, it seems likely that there will be a shared sense of which landscapes 'inspire':

> some people within a culture will share a 'common' perception of landscape - common values are, after all, what holds cultures together - at some level. There are likely to be some landscapes that do, therefore, inspire us more or less universally because of a shared cultural experience ... At the end of the day, it only really matters that people have different perceptions of and values towards landscape when landscapes become contested.16

An important message is that defining inspirational landscapes requires an answer to the question: 'for whom?'

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13 Haydyn Washington: Forum 1 - To be inspired?
14 Bronwyn Hanna: Forum 1 - To be inspired?
15 Niccole: Forum 1 - To be inspired?
16 Don Thomson: Forum 1 - To be inspired?
And those inspirational landscapes?

From the on-line conference many places and themes emerged. Mountains topped the list of inspirational landscapes: Mt Warning, Mt Buffalo, Garriwerd (Grampians), Mt Speculation, the Brindabellas, and even Mt Ararat - Noah's mountain. Mountains take a strong hold on many people's hearts. Some mountains were named for their beauty; some for their intimacy and yet vastness; some for what we know and understand about them; some for their atmosphere, energy, danger and power (a sublime beauty).

Some directions

The aim of the on-line conference was to explore many of the challenging questions about how can the concept of 'inspirational landscapes' be used to identify and assess inspirational landscapes. It demonstrated the complexity of the questions, adding more ideas and further questions. Some key points:

- Does the concept of 'inspirational landscapes' capture the essence of a quality that we can assess as a heritage place?
- Is our aim to identify landscapes to which we deeply respond - whether it is a response to the power of a place, to its beauty, its tragedy, its horror or meaning? If our scope is this broad, the methodology will need to cross 'criteria boundaries' and cover aesthetic, spiritual and social values.
- A useful concept - and one worth exploring further - is that of connectedness: I keep coming back to the 'inspiring' being reflected in moments of connectedness or realisation.17 The expression of connection between people and a landscape may be found in many existing forms (art, song, story, action, visiting etc), and creative ways of drawing out unarticulated connections will be needed.
- Should we look for universal values or focus on difference and diversity, asking 'which landscapes and for whom'?

Stephen Martin can have the last word:

Our response to a landscape - the catch and its aftermath - have in common shared symbols and descriptions and stories. Landscapes and the shared and respected perceptions they evoke form a conspiration of understanding. And that's worth keeping.18

Bibliography


UNESCO (1972) Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.


\[17\] Nicholas Hall: My inspirational Landscape - Scary Places

\[18\] Stephen Martin: Our Landscapes
Why Wait For A Rolls Royce When A Bicycle Will Do: A Practical Model For Prioritising Management Of Cultural Heritage In The Australian Alps

Jennifer Storer
Lanyon Historic Precinct, ACT

Abstract

Management of cultural heritage in the Australian Alps is largely the task of Parks Victoria, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and ACT Parks and Conservation. Given severely limited resources these agencies are looking at ways to quantify and prioritise the management of 1000s or more cultural heritage sites spread across a multitude of parks and regions. This paper briefly examines the history of strategic planning of cultural heritage management in this area and how management strategies are evolving to deal with the inherent challenges of burdensome planning and the limitations of using traditional valuation criteria. It then suggests an experimental model for inventory documentation and systematic prioritisation based on risk, stakeholder interest, rarity and physical integrity. Once prioritisation is done then those elements that come to the fore can be examined for their cultural values and then treated accordingly.

NB While the model could be applied to all cultural heritage it focuses on non-indigenous cultural heritage (hereafter called cultural heritage) because that is where most of the author’s experience lies. Also, the author would like to apologise for oversimplification of the issues owing to the desire to raise some macro concerns within obligatory word limits.

Introduction

National Park agencies manage most cultural heritage in the Australia Alps. The significance of their cultural heritage is acknowledged in most park management plans and their care is usually a legislated requirement. However their existence within areas protected primarily for their natural values means they are inevitably going to come second in the allocation of precious management resources.

While there will always be the battle to obtain better resourcing the fundamental challenge is to quantify and prioritise resources for 1000s of cultural heritage sites spread across a multitude of parks and regions. While this paper does not have the quintessential answer it offers a markedly different model to that presently utilised by park agencies that manage the alpine areas. To provide context for the model it is necessary to briefly examine the history of strategic planning for cultural heritage management in this area and how management strategies are evolving to deal with the inherent challenges. The proposed model is then offered as a way of determining which cultural heritage elements demand attention first by utilising a simplified inventory system with a strict ranking process.
1. History of Strategic Planning for Cultural Heritage Management

Prioritising management of cultural heritage in the Alps is almost entirely dependent on their respective national park management agencies, ie Parks Victoria (VIC), NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NSW) and ACT Parks and Conservation Service (ACT). In the recent past the management of cultural heritage relied almost solely on Burra Charter\textsuperscript{19} styled Conservation Management Plans (CMPs) with their essential cultural significance assessments for identified sites. While over time this proved problematic it also left unfortunate legacies which, to a degree, still rest in the management psyche.

The original Burra Charter and resulting CMP template was most readily utilised for built heritage. While the profession has moved on to a broader understanding of what constitutes cultural heritage, “place means site, area, land, landscape, building or other work, group of buildings or other works, and may include components, contents, spaces and views”\textsuperscript{20}, many current CMPs or their namesakes are still focused on built fabric. This does not adequately address the breadth of cultural heritage within the parks.

The broadening of the concept of cultural heritage only appeared to confirm that to be fair to all heritage you needed to produce a CMP for every element. This meant spending more on doing CMPs and significantly inturn spending more on employing consultants, who had the necessary skills, to do them. This has proved too expensive and time consuming to do.

The ‘Significance Assessment’, advocated in the Burra Charter, as the key determinant for the conservation of a particular place invaded thinking to the point that attempts were made to utilise it for prioritising management of cultural heritage in general. However the criteria used in the Burra Charter for significance assessment, ‘aesthetic, historic, scientific, or social value for past, present or future generations’\textsuperscript{21}, made it impossible to satisfactorily determine if the place with high aesthetic value was more important than the place with high scientific value.

Utilisation of what has been termed “relative significance”, assigning national, state or local significance was/is more useful but inherits similar problems associated with criteria that assess cultural value. It is wide open to abuse through the biases of the individual applying them. It is difficult to define what it is that demonstrates the value (look at the publications on applying the Burra Charter criteria). Ultimately it is all too easy to assign a high degree of cultural value to anything if you want to and the propensity for this renders many a significance statement so subjective as to be useless for prioritisation.

2. Evolving Cultural Heritage Management

The state agencies looking after alpine cultural heritage have just begun to address these problems. While I want to examine these processes critically I don’t want to detract from the amount of work and successes achieved by the cultural heritage professionals in their management. It is nothing short of amazing considering their limited resources and they are all in the early, as I said evolving, stages of forming prioritisation processes.

2.1 ACT

The ACT has no overarching strategy for the management of cultural heritage in Namadgi National Park (although it is intended to include one within the new park plan) and no dedicated heritage works funding. It is largely reliant on field officers to identify works that normally need to be championed by a community group to obtain external funding, such as heritage grants, from another area of ACT government. However unlike NSW and VIC it deals with effectively a single municipal region.

\textsuperscript{20} ibid
2.2 NSW

NSW have a substantial planning hierarchy with the most significant change towards a prioritisation process being the development of Cultural Heritage Management Strategies for individual regions\(^{22}\). The draft for the Snowy Mountains Region\(^{23}\) suggests the following process:

Every element goes through a traditional significance assessment and is then subject to other “considerations”\(^{24}\) which are used to decide whether it will be conserved or not and how. The significance assessments, based on Burra Charter values, still dictate a large workload and the “considerations” have not been developed as yet into a real structure or hierarchy. The themes as utilised in the table for “places and landscapes to be actively managed” are perhaps too complicated to be effective in prioritising groups. There is also a superimposed complicated hierarchy of relative significance (National, Regional, Local value) in the table but its definition and its parameters for use in the prioritisation process are unclear.

Challenges in prioritisation have also been recognised at the point of funding allocation and NSW are currently drafting a set of weighted criteria. Regardless of its practicality I would argue that it occurs far too late in the planning process to be of great value.

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22 Note it covers both indigenous and non-indigenous cultural heritage.
24 Ibid p11
Parks Victoria also has a substantial planning hierarchy with the most significant change towards a prioritisation process being the development of one statewide Heritage Management Strategy\textsuperscript{25} for non-indigenous cultural heritage. The draft strategy suggests the following process:

Prioritisation for “allocating resources for managing historic places and objects (is) based on significance and historic themes”.\textsuperscript{26} By the term “significance” in this instance they mean a valuing set of criteria and a list of other management considerations, ie “relative significance (and) risk to heritage value; levels of visitor service and public use demand; compatible management of indigenous, natural and heritage values; and contribution to the social and economic well being of all Victorians”\textsuperscript{27}. While Heritage Actions Statements are not written for all inventory elements it is unclear how those who receive the first level of detailed planning are decided.

While the use of “relative significance”, a cultural value assessment, in the prioritisation criteria forms a part of the considerations it is not the chief ranking process. However overall the prioritisation criteria still do not have a hierarchy and this renders them less useful than they could be. The themes are well utilised to formulate “strategic research projects”\textsuperscript{28} but they provide different groups rather than palpable priorities.

### 2.4 Summary

In general most management agencies suffer because of the substantial planning processes that need to occur before prioritisation can begin. The given considerations for prioritisation criteria suggest a sound beginning. However, the lack of any defined hierarchy means that firstly the process is open to accusations of hidden agenda setting and secondly the criteria fall short of their potential. Again, these are early stages of evolving prioritisation processes.

\textsuperscript{25} Parks Victoria, Cultural Heritage Division, Parks Victoria Heritage Management Strategy, Draft, Vic, 2002.

\textsuperscript{26} ibid p5.

\textsuperscript{27} ibid p19

\textsuperscript{28} ibid
3. Proposed Experimental Model

The aim of the model is to identify broad resource and planning requirements at the inventory compilation stage, prior to major planning exercises.

The objectives of the model are:
- to utilise a simplified inventory system – that demands less professional input and overall resources
- to defer the assessment of cultural values for each heritage element to a later stage.
- to provide a system that is flexible enough to be used for statewide, regional or thematic approaches

It is essential to note that while the system makes judgements it steers away from referring to this as “significance assessment” because the model does not assign cultural significance values to the element. That is, the model uses comparatively objective contributory management factors to determine which elements receive attention first but it does not imply that those elements are the ones that have to be conserved or indeed how to do it. It simply lists the elements that need a significance assessment, assessment of cultural values, first.

There are two key parts to the model, documentation and ranking. While none of the ideas are new it is the way that it operates which is so ostensibly different. The model should not be seen as prescriptive but just one that introduces another possibility to be explored. It would ideally be explained in a statewide overarching strategy for cultural heritage that also included an interpretation plan.

3.1 Description Dataset

It is impossible to get away from the need for an inventory of cultural heritage elements across the state and the best way to manage one is on a computer database. For the inventory it is undesirable to use anything more than the standard database available across an agency, which will typically be Microsoft Access. Also using a simple, self-explanatory form for inputting information will make it user friendly to a broad range of staff.

Outlined below is a suggested dataset that could be tailored to suit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Named Element</th>
<th>Element Type</th>
<th>Related to?</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Position Co-ordinates</th>
<th>Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

3.1.1 Named Elements

Parks Victoria give the definition of non-indigenous cultural heritage as

..built structures and their surrounds; gardens; trees; cultural landscapes;
shipwrecks; sites of important events; commemoration sites; contents of buildings;
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Less tangible elements like knowledge, stories and traditions can be accommodated but the more clearly defined they are the better the system will work. In terms of what can be listed you would need to determine some rules or risk recording say this year’s rubbish or every single 1930 beer bottle. eg list no objects that postdate the creation of the national park.

3.1.2 Element Type

Beside the name of the element a category gives useful information. I suggest:
- Landscape eg garden, tree, cultural landscape, view
- Built Structure (noting whether it is extant or ruin) eg building, headstone
- Maritime Archaeological Deposit eg shipwreck

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29 ibid p32
- **Objects** (noting whether it is a collection or individual) eg collections of domestic items belonging to a hut or single pieces of mining equipment.
- **Archaeological Deposit**
- **Cultural Route** eg old bridle track, Kosciuszko summit road walk.
- **Intangible Element** eg stories, traditions, spiritual connections.

### 3.1.3 Related to?
This is the field which helps link related elements to one site. eg The Grey Mare 1890s hut, Grey Mare 1949 hut, the safe, alluvial workings, open cut workings, adit workings, 18km race, stamper batteries and much more. Using this field will help build site relationships, showing the complexity of some sites whilst allowing recognition of the individual value of certain elements.

### 3.1.4 Themes
Deciding on themes is difficult. I have worked on nomenclature for several databases and they can be the death of one. They need to be broad enough to group sites but narrow enough to be of use. The six areas listed by Parks Victoria are possibly too broad and the National, State and Local themes of NSW too complex. Given the diversity of the cultural heritage themes need to allow for a regional focus. Thus for the Alps they might be:
- Pastoral/agricultural
- Mining
- Forestry
- Survey/civil engineering
- Scientific Research
- Recreational
- Communications
- Monuments/memorials

### 3.1.5 Position co-ordinates
A recording of map, or better still, GPS checked northings and eastings.

### 3.1.6 Region
The administrative region/district in which the element is located.

### 3.1.7 Summary
All this base information can be manipulated any number of ways. You can tally the number of objects or extant buildings, elements in a particular region, reveal the richness of a particular site by its related elements, you could use themes to assist with interpretation planning etc.

### 3.2 Prioritisation Dataset
This is more complex as it involves some judgement and where some basic training and/or internal/external professional support would greatly enhance the outcome.

Outlined below is a suggested dataset that could be tailored to suit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Factor</th>
<th>Stakeholder interest</th>
<th>Rarity</th>
<th>Physical Integrity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

An acknowledged limitation of the prioritisation fields chosen for the experimental model is its awkward, although not impossible, applicability to the more intangible elements of cultural heritage like views or traditions. (Given the nature of these elements it becomes all the more important that an interpretation plan is an integral part of the suite of management documents).
3.2.1 Risk factor
A useful definition of risk comes from the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service,

> Risk is the exposure to the possibility of such things as economic or financial loss or gain, physical damage, injury or delay, as a consequence of pursuing or not pursuing a particular course of action.\footnote{ NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Risk Management Strategic Plan, 2nd ed, NSW, 2002. p6}

This category is not there to acknowledge the general risk to all items, such as to deterioration due to being out in the elements, but note particular concerns. eg major visitor infrastructure being built close by, pest infestation, internal or external fire risk, increased vandalism in the area. Acknowledging a possible risk to people (staff and public) takes extraordinary factors into consideration. eg built structure about to collapse, old agricultural chemicals still in rusting tins, exposed mine shafts. For intangible elements the evaluation of risk has to be taken a little laterally. You would be deciding if the loss of the element was a strong possibility or not.

This is where a possible basic checklist could be utilised to calculate the following:
1. High Risk
2. Medium Risk
3. Low Risk

3.2.2 Stakeholder interest
Whether we like it or not the degree of stakeholder interest usually determines what receives attention.
- Hot topic
- Fair degree of current user interest
- Ambivalent to discontinued user interest

This takes stakeholders from state politicians to local action groups into consideration. While the former is unlikely to be ignored it does value help avoid ignoring an element that is only cherished by a group of local residents.

3.2.3 Rarity
This is probably the hardest for a person to decide and perhaps the most open to mistake. At the very least it would require input from a person who possessed knowledge of what heritage elements exist across a single park or region. A thousand examples of beer bottles might be reason enough to believe they were common elements. Only a few examples might lead you to believe they were rare or should at least signal to others that it was worth further investigation.
1. Rare
2. Not rare but not common
3. Common

Still it should be seen as just a very basic assessment of the element’s rarity on the basis that a rare element should demand attention over a common one because you might not be able to afford to lose a one off. Most intangible elements would fit into the first category.

3.2.4 Physical integrity
This gives a basic assessment of the element’s completeness with the necessary assumption that a ‘whole’ or near ‘whole’ element is usually better than bits of one.
1. Complete
2. Incomplete
3. Remnant

Although I write complete it could be defined by a rough percentage. Some definition with examples would help an individual understand that they are not assessing the physical condition/frailty of the whole or part but how much of it exists. In other words, how intact is an element in terms of fulfilling its intended function? Again, one has to interpret this category laterally for intangible elements. eg Is the view ‘complete’ or are their elements which disturb or obstruct it?
3.3 Interpreting the data

Once all the data has been filled in it is simply a matter of noting the hierarchy of the four categories in the Prioritisation Dataset to do the final ranking. Out of a duty of care all the elements noted as “High Risk” in the “Risk” category must be examined first. This is followed by those “Hot Topics” in the “Stakeholder Interest” category, as this is likely to dictate matters whether we like it or not. The last two are simpler in that something rare, “Rarity”, should receive attention first regardless of how much is left, “Physical Integrity”.

This means that high-risk elements, with a high degree of stakeholder interest, that are rare and complete are given attention first. Then all high-risk elements with a high degree of stakeholder interest that are rare and incomplete are given attention second. And so on…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Stakeholder Interest</th>
<th>Rarity</th>
<th>Physical Integrity</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Second Priority

<table>
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<th>Risk</th>
<th>Stakeholder Interest</th>
<th>Rarity</th>
<th>Physical Integrity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
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Third Priority

<table>
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<th>Stakeholder Interest</th>
<th>Rarity</th>
<th>Physical Integrity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Fourth Priority

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Stakeholder Interest</th>
<th>Rarity</th>
<th>Physical Integrity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

etc

This process is unlikely to pull out 1-3 greatest priority elements, rather batches of elements. In doing so it may create opportunities to consider integrated or parallel planning/treatment of elements facing similar issues. If there are too many elements that fall into the category of highest priority you could break it down further by using areas in the Description Dataset. eg by theme. Even if there is an even spread you may wish to allocate money to regions and allot their priorities to them. There are many ways to approach the prioritised groups.

Conclusion

This paper has briefly explored the history of strategic planning for cultural heritage management with its legacy of planning burdens and limitations of applying traditional significance assessments to a large body of cultural heritage. It has shown how state agencies that manage cultural heritage in the Australian Alps are exploring new ways to deal with this problem and limited resources by attempting to formulate prioritisation processes. These agencies have generally acknowledged that there are many criteria to be considered in the process but have so far not found a straightforward way to use them. The model presented is not a cut and dried solution but an opportunity for further discussion and possible adaptation. It utilises the essential cultural heritage inventory for simplified documentation and then applies systematic prioritisation based on risk, stakeholder interest, rarity and physical integrity. The ultimate aim being to simplify the process of where to begin with planning and resource allocation.
Select Bibliography/Resources


The author would like to thank those who manage cultural heritage in the Australian Alps and elsewhere for sharing their valuable time, information, wisdom and views.
Listening to the Voices of the Cultural Landscape

Eva Logan

Abstract

This paper explores the issue of local involvement in cultural landscape management, comparing the relationships of rural communities the mountain regions of mid-Wales and the Cooma-Monaro and Snowy Shires with their landscapes. The people are a vital part of these landscapes, cultural landscapes that are a palimpsest of the past and our canvas for tomorrow. There is need to listen more closely to what the people of these communities have to teach including their knowledge of the landscape, related experiences, values and beliefs, as well as the effectiveness of past management approaches. The active commitment of the local level and its diverse communities to regional and national strategies, and vice versa, are vital to successful sustainable outcomes for the landscape.

The landscape of the Cambrian Mountains of rural Wales is one of lush green rolling fields, high hedgerows and grazing sheep, whilst the landscape of the Snowy Mountains region of New South Wales, east of the Kosciuszko National Park, plays golden green in the sunlight with fields of burnished gold and hardy sheep and cattle. These are rural localities with monuments and sites of national and regional significance and importance, yet they are places that arguably follow the global pattern of regional decline. This paper arises out of discussions with community members in these regions in 1999 and 2000. External pressures and internal changes are altering the nature of these communities and their culture. In considering future development strategies for regional areas, an appreciation of the diversity inherent in these regions and an in-built flexibility is required.

There is value in drawing parallels between Wales and Australia and exploring their comparative tensions even though there are some differences between them. These regions are rural sub-coastal, isolated by relief and proximity to major centres. As the Snowy and Cooma-Monaro Shire field area is secondary to Cooma, the Welsh region is secondary to Aberystwyth. These places have both been historically imposed upon by outside forces, they are both rural and in part due to traditional reliance on the now declining pastoral industries are looking to other sources of income. These diversified sources include cultural tourism ventures and alternate crops or grazing animals to enable them to stay on their land. The diversification approach and use is one that Australian community members were more familiar with, whereas the focus of the Welsh region is still largely on the single industry economy.

There is an increasing appreciation of the resources in the cultural landscapes of regional areas, of the need for local communities to value and protect what they see as significant, and seek to influence regional and national organisations to do more of the same. There is also the need for urban decision-makers to listen to the regional voices, so that vernacular landscapes, their heritage resources, people and the multi-faceted composition of perceptions of place are protected. The challenge for decision-makers is to incorporate these aspects into the processes of policy and project development, recognising that the translation of intentions into real outcomes is more difficult and unlikely to run smoothly and according to plan (Davis, et al, 1993:182). Whilst we appreciate and seek to protect and manage the current incarnation of the cultural landscape, the landscape cannot be understood without its prehistoric and historic context.

These areas were once regions of national and local significance. The Welsh region contains evidence of Iron Age occupation, a medieval Cistercian Abbey, Strata Florida (Ystrad Fflur) and was on an important
route for drovers and travelers between villages and also between Sister Abbeys. Even up until the 1970s and 1980s a nearby village, Tregaron was the pony-trekking capital of Europe. The New South Wales region is also one with evidence of national significance, most notably the Snowy Scheme, recently listed on the Register of the National Estate. The most notable difference between the two regions is the length of the recorded history, a much more detailed story is evident through physical and written records in Wales.

The local Welsh landscape holds remnants of Iron Age hill forts, quarries, and the wetland of Cors Caron (Tregaron Bog) that teems with flora and fauna and other evidence of prehistoric and historic significance. To help give a picture of the landscape before the medieval period, it is interesting to note that the Cistercians, who settled the area in the late 12th century, tended to settle in areas that were sparsely populated. As information regarding the pre-Cistercian landscape in the region is minimal and written by these new settlers, it is unclear how much impact the Cistercians had on the movement and settlement patterns of people in the landscape. An increased focus on sheep grazing seems to have been one of the major changes wrought by the Cistercians in the 12th century (Davies, 1994:130). Local features such as hill forts do indicate that this area already contained important settlement that maintained trade and travel routes. Such travel routes may have then been harnessed in the medieval period as paths between the Sister Abbeys of the Cistercians, markets and villages or by drovers. The abbey of Ystrad Fflur is arguably the most significant resource in the Welsh region under consideration and one with distinguished historical associations to the Welsh Princes, Owain Glyn Dŵr and Welsh poets.

The region then continued to pursue an agrarian economy, impacted more recently upon by the Industrial Revolution and the Great Depression (Davies, 1994:224; Hall, 1980:87). Of late, pressures on traditional industries have increased in part due to decreased protectionism and commodity prices, animal disease and competition from other producers and obsolescence.

The Welsh villages today can be either intimate environments or exclusive through language and cultural barriers. Strong local familial and historical bonds interplay with incomers escaping from the cities of England seeking the quality of life associated with a rural idyll. Tourists drift in and out intermittently, disappearing into the woods for a ramble, or perambulating the grounds of the ruins of Ystrad Fflur until the winds pick up and they dash back into the warmth of their cars and mini buses.

This New South Wales region supported the Aboriginal language groups of the Ngarigo (or Ngarego), and the Walgalu (also Wolgal or Walgal) and Ngunawal to the north (Tindale (1974), Howitt (1904), Wesson and Matthews (2000) in Young, 2000:22, 24-5), but the population was severely impacted upon by violence, forced removal to reserves and disease soon after Europeans took over the land. It is now well known that descendents of the original inhabitants who left the region or were removed from their ancestral lands to Reserves have maintained their association with the area (Young, 2000:3). Local people believe that the early settlers derived place names from the local Aboriginal languages.

Migration is a common thread to the Australian region’s European history of settlement. By the 1830s Old Adaminaby was an important cattle station and became a stopover point for the region in the gold rush of the 1860s focusing many thousands of people on Kiandra and its gold. Near the site of Old Adaminaby, there was a copper mine, which encouraged skilled workers and their families into the region.

People from a variety of backgrounds inundated the region in the mid 20th century when a large skilled workforce was needed to help create the Snowy Mountains Scheme. The Scheme remains an achievement of national significance for its construction works that provides electricity to the southeastern Australian grid and some water security to Australia’s arid inland. This large influx of people necessitated the establishment of a number of temporary townships, the remains of which are now only partly visible in the landscape, such as the remains of the former township of Adaminaby, a town moved to make way for the rising waters of the Snowy Scheme, now submerged beneath Lake Eucumbene.

On the heels of the Snowy Scheme were the development of Kosciuszko National Park and the tourism and skiing industries associated with Jindabyne, Thredbo in the 1950s and 60s. The pastoral industry is not the centre of the region’s economy as it once was and there are many examples of diversification on landholdings, especially related to tourism ventures which have enabled individuals to maintain their viability and their properties. Positive visions for the future are hindered by a lack of access to...
information and some fear of a loss of control over their livelihoods to external organisations. This is in contrast to the Welsh region where locally focused agencies act as a bridge between the government and funding bodies, and the community.

The local community identifies with towns and events outside their immediate area, but there remains a deep commitment to the local community and its future. The communities tend to welcome travelers in the Snowy region, although they are sometimes a little disparaging of the visitors’ ignorance of their town’s history. This attitude is in stark contrast to some of the Welsh region. There have been few projects or issues uniting the Snowy region community; even the Snowy Scheme was not a unifying force, suggesting one reason behind its seeming disjointed cohesion. The fragmented sense of local here is bound up with their relationship with other towns, such as Cooma, Tumut or Jindabyne.

Even though these regions were once important grazing and droving areas, they are now secondary to other villages and towns with memories and scattered remnants remaining of their past in the landscape.

As small scale industries and ventures keep the locals in work, results of the changes in agricultural practices, declining returns on produce and subsequent lessening options for employment include youth movement out of the region and impacts on local services. Young people are leaving these rural communities for opportunities in urban regions. As larger regional centres, such as Cooma and Aberystwyth tend to be the focus of employment, shopping and services, the decreased reliance on local services is problematic for the maintenance of local shops, evident in both Berridale and Pontrhydfendigaid.

Another significant change is an influx of retirees and second homebuyers as long-term residents sell up and move. These new homeowners, also known as rural retreaters, are often absentee landowners and contribute to cultural change through their lack of engagement with the local community. They are criticised for not contributing to the local economy as they shop, socialise and work in other regional areas. Through a lack of experience such rural retreaters may also have little awareness of land management issues and inadvertently contribute to the spread of unchecked weeds, or pursue practices not suited to the local environment.

In Wales, English incomers can cause an additional tension through the challenge of maintaining the Welsh language in the community. In Pontrhydfendigaid, regular Welsh language courses were run up until a few years ago then cancelled due to a decreased interest. Even with an increasing number of English incomers, some of whom now manage local businesses, the Community Council is still conducted in the medium of Welsh; a source of deep pride for the Welsh, frustration for some English.

There is also a difference in the approach of the English and Welsh in Wales, with the English being generally more keen for development to improve the area, whilst the Welsh are generally more protective of their cultural integrity. This sometime clash of priorities between the long-term locals and the newcomers from other areas, some of whom are absentee landowners, is not a new scenario and occurs in both regions. Current populations do not want to lose their sense of locality and identity so bound up in place.

When we talk of ‘community consultation’, the concept of community is not a homogenous entity, nor is consultation an inclusive process. Diversity and difference are the defining features of local communities. Managing this in a practical sense is far more difficult than well meaning theories or by simply changing the name of the concept to participation or engagement. There is no simple answer to the challenge of involving communities and giving them a sense of ownership over local projects, which in turn contributes to the project’s success.

Local people and locally organised groups need to be involved in meaningful landscape management that considers local resources and the range of issues specific to the place, facilitated through local leadership, accessible local level agencies and informal community networks. To impose a static project framework over diverse communities without their active involvement from the feasibility stage and to then expect motivated and committed support is to risk failure. Obtaining and maintaining such a commitment within an externally imposed framework is challenging, especially in the short-term environment of project development and funding cycles but also as communities employ formal mandates in an unforced, ad hoc
and diverse manner. Building the vital relationships and working within informal community networks is not a process that fits easily into a fixed, short-term approach.

There are significant social, economic and environmental challenges facing regional communities, but they are not passive observers. Some communities are working to shape their own futures using both formal and informal mechanisms. One Welsh farmer sees the challenge for farming communities in shifting their focus to the long term and addressing issues of community apathy, motivation and cohesiveness.

People are generally aware of the problems locally and regionally yet getting people actively involved requires the dissemination of information and opportunities to access new skills and resources to manage activities. Examples with organisations such as Greening Australia include field days with practical demonstrations and participation, or undertaking projects in prominent locations. It is seen as vital however not to push rural community members as they, like their urban counterparts, have lives and livelihoods to maintain and will adopt practices and get involved at their own pace.

If it is assumed that volunteers will contribute to the management of the landscape, it is important to understand why people would want to be involved. Volunteerism and involvement by the local community occurs on both an informal and more formalised basis. The push towards accredited training for voluntary groups moves the sector away from notions of community work, which is concerned with helping out on an informal basis. There must be a sense of ownership where people have a say in the goals and activities of the group, and consideration should be afforded the enjoyment factor, as a team spirit is necessary among volunteers. Alternately if they see it as a commitment and not a choice, this leads to guilt, and they either leave or feel obliged to stay. There is no exit policy within an informal network as it is more of an emotional or personal link and this can sour the experience. There needs to be two-way communication within the group.

The Welsh language is an important consideration for volunteering in Wales, especially in the distinction between formal and informal networks. Incomers into areas may have been previously in voluntary groups, but strong, informal networks can be difficult to tap into. This raises the possibility of introducing or encouraging externally focussed outreach workers.

In accessing assistance individuals, local businesses and community groups are sometimes hesitant to involve government and agencies for funding out of a fear of a loss of control over their local resources and future direction of the project. This was especially marked in the Snowy region, as opposed to the Welsh area where agencies with devolved responsibilities are more the norm. A manager of a regional voluntary organisation in Wales did however note that the community is wary of overly ambitious projects seeking to answer all challenges, and are themselves keen to see that such projects seek a consensus view as far as practicable, rather than just a vocal minority. In the context of tourism and heritage projects the pace and type of development are also important considerations together with local cultural concerns.

Antur Teifi, an agency in Wales that focuses on local economic and rural development and also manages funding applications to the Welsh European Funding Office for the Leader II Program, assisted in the organisation of the increasing number of Farmers Markets across County Ceredigion, a community led initiative. Communities and organisations either make inquiries of Antur Teifi for assistance, or Antur Teifi approaches communities for assistance in developing a project on a particular theme, such as the Printer’s Festival in 2000, which highlighted the resources available in the region. This agency acts as a mediator of sorts between government and communities, but such devolution can only be effective when there is adequate provision of resources and transfer of skills to fulfill responsibilities.

Rural areas that are off the beaten track for tourism can benefit from promoting a local resource or project that is unique in the region, such as a recent blues festival in Berridale. This can however be a tenuous solution as the village up the road seeks to emulate this success with a similar development. Even with sites of importance such as Ystrad Fflur or the shores of Old Adaminaby, these are places that tourists will drive to, take a photograph, jump back in the car and leave without stopping in the village as there is little to hold them there. Tourism ventures and heritage site developments are not answers in themselves to community employment or economic challenges.
Local knowledge and an understanding of the past and the people are key to successful environmental, economic and cultural landscape management as it is local communities that know about the success or otherwise of past land management practices or businesses. Local communities can act as stewards for the landscape and are aware of what is of value in the region, or can be provided with the skills to do so. If such stewards are forced away from their land due to economic, social or environmental pressures the connections with the land and its significance, as well as the way of life and landscape that encourages an increasing number of urban dwellers into rural areas will be lost. What there is to sustain in the landscape will lose its human link.

Effective landscape management that focuses on improving the local economy, environment and quality of life requires locally supported projects and sensitive developments, together with capacity building and a partnership approach of participants. It adds complexity that rural challenges of a long-term nature should be managed within short-term environments, reliant on funding and the support of urban decision-makers and the urban majority. Awareness and involvement in community networks, both formal and informal allow for a deeper understanding of the avenues of communication that will assist in the harnessing and encouragement of support and action for cultural landscape management. This support is related to goals such as successful heritage site development, environmental management and more sustainable practices, projects and businesses.

Bibliography


