



Canberra Bushwalking Club
GPO Box 160
CANBERRA ACT 2601

The Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Planning and Environment
ACT Legislative Assembly
GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Ms Derrigo

I am responding to your call for submissions to the Inquiry into the Namadgi National Park Draft Plan of Management advertised recently in the *Canberra Times*.

I understand from my phone conversation with you that the focus of the present inquiry is on the first of the terms of reference, the effectiveness of the plan's consultation mechanisms and arrangements surrounding the operation of the Interim Namadgi Advisory Board.

The consultation with the wider community in relation to the previous inquiry into the plan seems to us to have been adequate, as briefing sessions were available and we were able to make a submission (attached) to the inquiry in 2005. However, we have heard nothing since then and so do not know what was the outcome of the points we made.

We are very interested in the Park and its management given the number of walks we run there but, as we do not have a copy of the current draft plan, it is difficult for us to make a substantive submission in relation to the matters it raises. However, we would make the general point that Namadgi has a very high value as a bio-diversity conservation area and this would need to be central in any planning in relation to the management of the park or its future.

If you need further information, please contact me on (h) 6254 9568 or (w) 6274 7350.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stan Marks'.

Stan Marks
President

26 March 2008

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Dear Sir/Madam

Namadgi National Park Draft Management Plan – September 2005

On behalf of the Canberra Bushwalking club I wish to congratulate Environment ACT on the preparation of this draft plan of management and I wish to thank you for giving us the opportunity to provide comment of the draft prior to its finalization.

Since formation 44 years ago in 1961 our club has had a long and very close association with the area which as you can see precedes its declaration as a National Park. We value and respect its importance for its recreational, environmental and heritage values and in particular, for its significance to the Aboriginal community.

In 2004 we provided comments to the New South Wales Government on the Kosciuszko National Park Draft Plan of Management and in that submission we said that:-

“We believe that every effort should be made to strive ultimately for World Heritage Listing of the park as part of the Australian Alps including areas of importance both in Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory. Further we strongly agree with continuing programs designed to generate close association with governments, officers and park staff and the need to foster close and strong supportive arrangements in the co-operative management of this unique and valuable asset”.

We consider that more prominence needs to be given to the objective of achieving World Heritage Listing for Namadgi as a part of the Australian Alps.

Our club has had a long and close association with the Management of Namadgi National Park through specific conservation projects such as the removal of the invasive Broom species from the Upper Cotter area. This year is the 13th consecutive year that we have been involved in this project and we plan to continue for as long as it takes to eliminate this plant from the area. In March 2004 we also conducted a comprehensive inspection of the whole ACT section of the Australian Alps Walking

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Track and provided a full report to park managers on its condition with a focus on safety following the devastating bushfires.

In recognition of its long and close association with the park we wish to propose that our club and similar organizations be given some recognition (or preferred status), in relation to use and access of the park. We adhere to and advocate a Minimal Impact Bushwalking Code of Practice with strict limits on numbers especially in sensitive alpine areas, encourage and provide both navigation and first aid training to members and generally operate with a view to the safety of members. In recognition of this we would propose that some exemptions be provided to us from the requirement to obtain current or proposed future permits together the payment of any booking fees should they be imposed. If this is not acceptable then perhaps some other recognition could be considered through negotiation.

Our specific comments in relation to the draft plan are attached.

Yours sincerely

Signed by Irene Davies

Irene Davies
President
23 November 2005

Comments Relating to the Draft Plan of Management

Chapter 5 – Nature, Landscapes and Biodiversity Protection

Page 61

5.7 Objective 13 – Pest plant objectives and strategies

We strongly support the objectives but specific mention needs to be given to provision of adequate financial resources to enable Parks and Conservation to undertake control measures as identified. Funding for eradication programs should be clearly identified in annual budgets so that it can be monitored by the community.

Page 62

Objective 13 - Pest animal management

The same comment as above about provision and clear identification of adequate financial resources applies to pest animal management and in particular to control of wild pigs and dogs. As regular users of remote areas of the park we are concerned at the increased evidence we have seen of pig activity, (disturbed areas), and sightings of feral dogs.

Page 64

Objective 14 – Pest animal objectives and strategies

14.2 We support the formation of a pest animal working group on the understanding that it reports to the ACT Legislative Assembly annually and that the report on its activities is publicly available.

Page 67 ACT Legislative provisions for wilderness

We strongly support the current statutory provisions for wilderness areas relating to no new tracks and no motor vehicle access except on defined roads. The same limitations should also apply to bicycles.

Chapter 6 – Protecting and managing our Cultural Heritage

Page 74 – Issues and opportunities

Dot point 9 - We recommend stronger emphasis be placed here on community involvement by inserting a new sentence at the end of the paragraph, “*Community involvement of this nature should be actively encouraged*”, as this would complement objective 21.

Page 79 Acknowledgement of community attachment

21.6 Add an additional sentence stating that construction of memorials of any kind not be permitted in wilderness areas.

Chapter 7 Fire Management

7.4 Objectives and Strategies

Objective 29

Page 92

Access infrastructure is provided to support fire management activities. No mention is made of adaptation of infrastructure following research findings or development of new and emerging equipment, eg. Lighter, faster earthmoving equipment may not need the large floats currently needed to transport a D8 dozer. If this is the case then the roads may not need to be as wide as proposed.

Appendix 7 and Map 5

We definitely do not support the construction of a new fire trail connecting Corin Dam Road with Stockyard Spur. We believe that the environmental damage and the disturbance needed to construct a trail in this extremely steep country is not warranted.

We have concerns about the construction of any new trails and reinforce the need to undertake comprehensive environmental impact statements before any work is allowed to take place.

Chapter 8 -- A Place for Community Wellbeing

Objective 36

Page 102

We have no fundamental objections to what is proposed but do not support a comprehensive licensing system. We propose certain exemptions for recognized organizations who adhere to strict rules covering Minimal Impact Bushwalking as covered in our introductory letter. In addition, from considerable experience within our club, group sizes are best limited to vehicle capacity so we would recommend limits based on 4 occupants per vehicle so rather than a limit of 10 persons we would propose 12 = to 3 cars x 4 people plus weekend packs. If this was considered to be too many then reduce to 2 cars X 4 = 8 persons.

Objective 37

Page 103

Paragraph 37.4 – In addition to proposed methods of warning as listed we suggest the use of a prominent website such as <http://www.environment.act.gov.au> to inform users. Most walkers refer to the Bureau of Meteorology website for weather conditions and for state or territory web sites for such things as park closures or fire warnings.

Objective 38

Page 105

Establishment of accommodation is supported but “off park”, not within the park as per the Tasmanian Government approval of establishment of quality visitor facilities adjacent to but not within Freycinet National Park. An exception should be given to Gudgenby Homestead because it is already established and for its European heritage values. Some strictly controlled improvements to the complex should be allowed in order to enhance its usability and to ensure its preservation.

Page 106

Paragraph 38.16

Use of campfires is a contentious matter and somewhat divisive issue however our club is of the view that some limited use of fires be permitted such as in colder weather when temperatures often fall significantly. We strongly support limitations during times of high temperatures and when fire restrictions are in place and also support restrictions in vulnerable areas.

Page 107 Picnicking and Sightseeing

We recommend some more “view stops” be established such as the one on the Boboyan Road overlooking Yankee Hat. Such stops can enhance visitor experience in a safe manner.

Page 117

Paragraph 38.87

Limits on tour operators should be strictly enforced as we believe that these rules are subject to broad interpretation. Our club members have seen first hand, large numbers of organized “wilderness experience” groups with key to access closed fire trails transporting considerable numbers of participants by vehicle to overnight camping destinations. It was clear from the evidence that approval was given for a vehicle to transport food and associated camping materials and not to transport all participants to the destination involving numerous repeat trips.

We do not believe that large numbers should ever be allowed to have access to the park.

Paragraph 38.90

Our comment relating to page 102 also applies here namely limits should be either 8 or 12 people (4 persons per car rule), not 10 as suggested.

Chapter 10 -- Community, Neighbours and Volunteers

Page 135 - change last dot point to “Canberra Bushwalking Club”.

Chapter 11

Page 149 –

Objective 55

Canberra Bushwalking Club

Recognize contribution of volunteers and organizations with a long and close association with the park through some exemptions from fees. Our introductory letter already covers this matter.



Standing Committee on Planning and Environment

Mick Gentleman MLA (chair), Mary Porter AM MLA (Deputy Chair),
Vicki Dunne MLA

CT
15/3/08

Inquiry into the Namadgi National Park Draft Plan of Management

INVITATION FOR PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS

The Standing Committee on Planning and Environment is inquiring into the Namadgi National Park Draft Plan of Management.

The Committee is particularly interested in receiving submissions from interested organisations and individuals on the following issues:

- the effectiveness of the management plan's consultative mechanisms and cooperative management arrangements, including the role, management and operation of the Interim Namadgi Advisory Board;
- Namadgi National Park's value as a biodiversity conservation area and as part of a greater regional conservation corridor, including catchment protection and fire management issues;
- any other relevant matters.

Submissions should be lodged no later than 11 April 2008 with the Committee Secretary, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, Legislative Assembly for the ACT, GPO Box 1020, CANBERRA ACT 2601; e-mail: committees@parliament.act.gov.au. The committee will be holding public hearings in due course.

For further information please contact the Committee Secretary Ms Nicola Derigo on (02) 6205 0435.

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www.parliament.act.gov.au