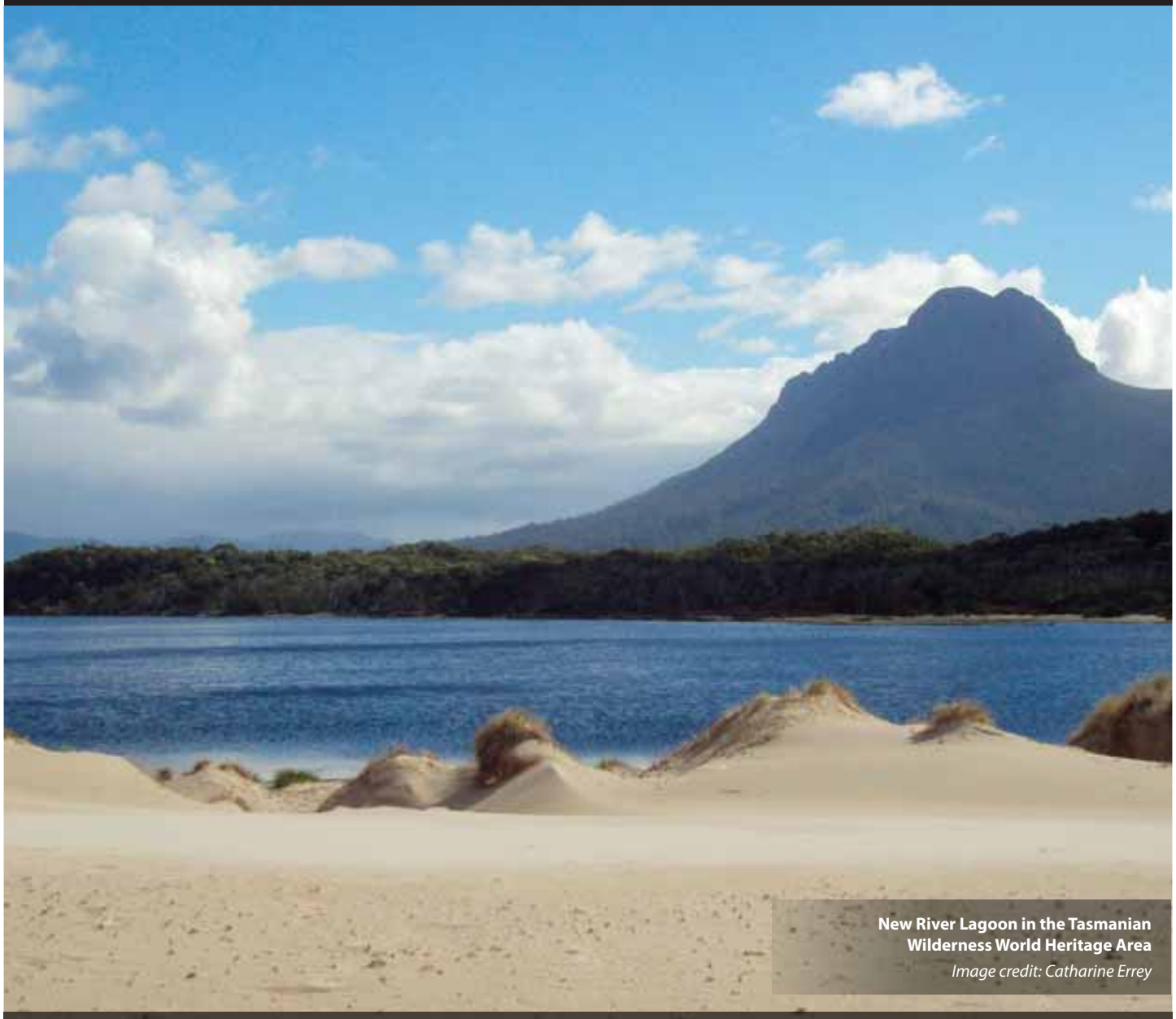
TNPA NEWS

TASMANIAN NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION INC

Newsletter No 20 Summer 2015



New River Lagoon in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area
Image credit: Catharine Errey

THANK YOU

The TNPA Committee would like to thank the following people and organisations who over the last 6 months have volunteered their time to assist the TNPA, or have helped us in other ways.

Buttongrass Ball: Folk Federation of Tasmania, Dave Wanless, The VerandahCoots, The Devils Own, Plants of Tasmania Nursery

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To identify, protect, conserve, present, and where appropriate, rehabilitate the area and to transmit that heritage to future generations in as good or better condition than at present.

Overall objectives of the World Heritage Area Management Plan 1999

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN:

Since the last issue of TNPA News, alarm bells have been ringing even more loudly for Tasmania's reserved lands and, in particular, for its Wilderness World Heritage Area.

The TNPA, along with other conservation bodies, has been well aware of the changes being planned that will impact on our parks, specifically the impending release of the draft revised TWWHA Management Plan, and the State government's call for expressions of interest for tourism ventures in the Wilderness World Heritage Area.

The 1999 TWWHA Management Plan was finalised after an extensive process which gave the public ample opportunity for input and comment and which eventually produced a document which the majority of Tasmanians were happy with – and which has been working reasonably well for the last 15 years. It was a document of such high quality that it won a number of awards.

The 2014 – 2015 Draft Management Plan, by contrast, is a hastily-thrown-together document that comes out of a political agenda and was heavily influenced by the high end of the tourism industry. It ignores the fact that our TWWHA and all our reserved areas are publicly owned assets – and that these areas were reserved and gazetted only through the foresight, passion, struggle, tireless lobbying, and sacrifice of many many people, going right back to photographer Beattie in the nineteenth century, Weindorfer in the early twentieth century, and countless campaigners of more recent times.

In anticipation of the release of the State government's 'Parks 21' plan for tourism ventures in the TWWHA and of the draft revised TWWHA Management Plan, representatives from Tasmania's major environmental non-government organisations (ENGOs), including Robert Campbell from the TNPA, began meeting together in late 2014 to work out a combined response to the impending announcements from the State Government and to formulate an alternative vision for tourism in Tasmania's National Parks and reserved areas.

The Environment Non-Government Organisation's alternative vision is based on the following principles:

1. We have a responsibility to pass on to future generations Tasmania's exceptional natural and cultural heritage in no poorer condition than we experience it.
2. We must acknowledge that wilderness is a diminishing global asset which needs to be protected, not compromised.
3. Tourism (and recreational) ventures must be compatible with statutory management plans (and not require *ad hoc* changes); and will be established and managed in an ecologically sustainable manner.
4. Where facilities can be developed outside the TWWHA and national parks, such facilities and services will not be provided as concessions within the TWWHA or national parks.
5. New tourism (and recreational) initiatives will support and commercially contribute to communities living in juxtaposition with National Parks and other protected areas, so that benefits flow to these communities.
6. Tourism (and recreational) initiatives should encourage a mutually beneficial relationship between tourism operators, rather than a competitive one.
7. Assessment of tourism initiatives will be undertaken in a publicly transparent and accountable manner.

Now that 'we know the worst' the ENGOs are working together to inform the public about these threats to our TWWHA (which, after all, is a publicly owned and publicly funded asset) and to assist people to speak up in defence of the TWWHA.

The community has until 22 March to comment on the draft TWWHA Management Plan and the TNPA encourages all its members to make a submission. This issue of TNPA News includes advice on making a submission.

Catharine Errey (President, TNPA)

New management plan for Tasmanian wilderness

Comment sought by 22 March

History

15 March 2014 Tasmanian Election – Liberals defeat minority Labor government. Elected on a policy to create new tourism jobs by "unlocking our parks and World Heritage areas".

June 2014: Release of *Reimagining the Visitor Experience of Tasmania's Wilderness World Heritage Area* (Ecotourism Investment Profile) by Tourism and PWS. It identifies opportunities for a range of mostly commercial tourism activities with an emphasis on air access.

June 2014: Call for expressions of interest in proposed developments in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA) and other national parks and reserves. This process has now (February 2015) closed and the announcement of the proposals selected to proceed to the second stage of assessment has started.

Nov 2014: The Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania (TICT) calls for "wilderness" to be dropped from the name of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

Dec 2014: The Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania and the Parks and Wildlife Service release *Parks 21*, a Memorandum of Understanding between the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service and the Tasmanian Tourism Industry, identifying priorities and actions to develop ecotourism opportunities.

Jan 2015: Release of the 2014 draft TWWHAMP for public comment (this is the correct title, despite the release date being early in 2015). This does not authorise any individual development but its prescriptions and assessment processes set the rules by which all development proposals will be assessed. It has obviously been drafted so that many of the proposals identified in *Reimagining* … can be approved.

The process from now:

Public comment on the 2014 draft TWWHAMP closes 22 March 2015. Following the close of public comment the PWS is required to review the submissions and prepare a report for the Tasmanian Planning Commission, which is likely to hold public hearings. i.e. finalisation of the plan is unlikely until much later in 2015. However, final approval is entirely at the discretion of the Minister. He is required to seek advice, including that of the Planning Commission, but not necessarily to act on it, and it does not require approval by State Parliament (with the exception of the "statutory powers" section, and this may change if proposed amendments to the *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002* are enacted). The 1999 plan remains in place until its replacement is finalised.

The new plan is a statutory management plan under Tasmanian legislation but World Heritage is a Commonwealth responsibility so it will require some form of approval from the Commonwealth but it is unclear exactly what form this will take (clarification has been sought from Minister Hunt). Regardless of the detail, it is unlikely that the Commonwealth will thwart policy implementation by a Liberal State government.

The State government will be keen to see the new plan take effect because many of the proposals identified in *Reimagining* … cannot be permitted under the current (1999) plan, which provides far stronger protection for wilderness values.

The 2014 draft plan - key points:

By comparison with the [current] 1999 plan:

1. **Values of TWWHA**

   The 1999 plan includes a clear statement of the values of the TWWHA and many specific prescriptions for their protection. Little of this remains in the 2014 draft.

2. **Zoning**

   Zoning is the main tool used in a management plan to maintain the values of the area while presenting it to visitors. It does this by defining what activities can be undertaken where. The 1999 plan clearly distinguished the activities permissible in the various zones in order to maintain the values of each zone. The zoning in the 2014 draft provides less protection of values and contains so many discretionary uses that it is almost meaningless.

3. **Process for assessment of development proposals**

   The 1999 plan contained a clearly-defined process for the assessment of major proposals. The PWS would provide the developer with guidelines for an environmental impact statement. This would be assessed by the PWS and the assessment included mandatory public comment.

   In the 2014 plan this has been replaced with a reference to the PWS Reserve Activity Assessment (RAA) process. This is a less robust process and is non-statutory. i.e. it can be changed relatively easily. Of greater concern is the process for the assessment of proposals submitted under the Expressions of Interest (EoI) process. This appears to bypass the

RAA and involves no opportunity for public comment unless the proposal requires planning approval from local government (e.g. it includes built structures).

The State government assures us that only sensible and appropriate development proposals will gain approval but this appears to depend largely on the opinion of the Minister – neither the 2014 draft plan nor the EoI process includes clear criteria or guarantees public scrutiny – they provide no confidence that this will be the outcome.

4. **The 2014 plan also potentially permits special species logging and mineral exploration and mining in parts of the TWWHA.** The 1999 plan does not permit logging and restricts mining to the Adamsfield Conservation Area, where it ceased several years ago. The future of the areas identified in the 2014 plan as *Permanent Timber Production* and *Future Potential Production Forest* is unresolved.

Consensus or conflict?

In the past the emphasis in National Park planning has been on consultation and consensus. The current approach ignores both in its haste to implement the new plan.

The development of the 1999 TWWHAMP involved two stages of meaningful public consultation prior to the mandatory public comment period on the draft plan. This consultation may not have resulted in total agreement of all stakeholders with the prescriptions in the final plan but they did appreciate why particular compromises had been made, resulting in broad acceptance of the final plan. In contrast, the only public consultation prior to publication of the 2014 draft was a series of token public meetings around the state late in 2013. Direct consultation has occurred with some stakeholders but the main influence appears to have been elements within the TICT.

The government has also turned the process back to front – we should start with planning - which takes into account the full range of issues involved in the management of one of the world's great natural areas. Only then should proposals for specific activities and developments be considered.

Other things you should know:

Much of the public debate has focussed on the renaming of the "wilderness" zone to "remote recreation" which has been portrayed as "deleting wilderness from the plan". The name change is mainly symbolic. The real concern is what is permitted within the remote parts of the TWWHA.

Some mention of wilderness does remain within the 2014 draft plan but it contains no management actions whatsoever. In contrast the 1999 TWWHAMP contained management prescriptions specifically relating to the maintenance of wilderness quality and the wilderness recreational experience, and the zoning provided considerable protection for the wilderness zone.

The zone named "wilderness" in the 1999 TWWHAMP is the area that remained after the more intensively used areas had been zoned. Confusingly, it bears no direct relationship to areas of high wilderness quality (or wilderness areas) defined elsewhere in the 1999 plan.

Wilderness is NOT an "outstanding universal value" under the World Heritage Convention. Hence statements about maintaining World Heritage values do not necessarily include any protection of wild character.

To download a copy of the plan and for instructions on how to make a submission:

http://dpipwe.tas.gov.au/conservation/tasmanian-wilderness-world-heritage-area/new-tasmanian-wilderness-world-heritage-area-management-plan

For further information and suggestions on what to include in your submission:

Tasmanian National Parks Association:

http://www.tnpa.asn.au

by Anne McConnell

The Rustic - A Review of the Design Evolution of Parks and Reserves Infrastructure

In places such as the United States of America (USA), Canada, New Zealand, and Australia, and even in Tasmania, which have comparatively large, primarily natural areas of national parks and other reserves, national park and reserve infrastructure design has not been *ad hoc*, nor has it been a matter of the individual tastes of managers or of commissioned architects (although it might be argued that this is becoming the case today).

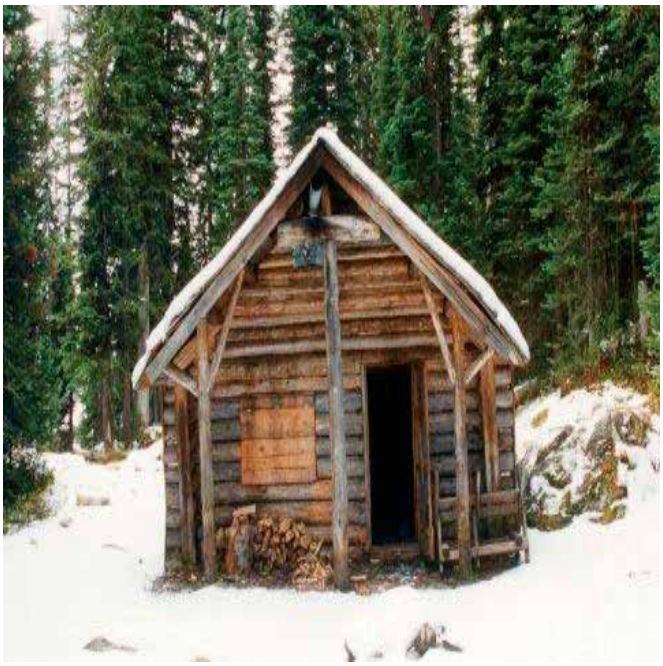
Rather, it was based on the fundamental principle that built infrastructure should reflect the natural environment in which it was located through both the designs and materials used, with a preference for using local material where possible. This approach was built strongly on late 19th century – early 20th century landscape and design philosophies from Europe and Great Britain. Particularly important were the landscape philosophy of the Romantic Movement and the design philosophy of the Arts and Crafts Tradition with its interest in natural scenic beauty and rustic design.

The following is a brief overview of the history of design of infrastructure in national parks and reserves, with an emphasis on Tasmania, and a focus on buildings. Track construction was also similarly influenced by the same design considerations, but to a lesser extent, as the local terrain and available materials also had a strong influence.

From the early days of the United States National Parks Service (created in 1916) infrastructure was built to specified standard designs. These designs, for a range of infrastructure including buildings of various types, bridges and tracks, were created by architects, landscape architects, and engineers employed by the US Parks Service, and were aimed at "subordinating all built features to the natural, and often cultural, influences of the environment in which they were placed".[1] The designs were made widely available through the dissemination of 'pattern books' containing detailed designs, and were used throughout the United States.

The basic philosophy was for the infrastructure to fit into its natural context by being built of natural materials (primarily stone and timber), and, while there were large buildings constructed, in general the buildings, particularly huts, were designed to be small and visually unobtrusive. The design aesthetic was primarily that of the Arts and Craft Tradition. With its emphasis on the use of natural materials in proper scale, on hand construction, and on avoidance of severely straight lines, its resultant quintessentially 'rustic' design was extremely sympathetic to producing infrastructure that could fit into a natural environment and which was pleasing to the eye.

By 1900 the Arts & Crafts tradition in the United States had evolved into a distinctive American style, fusing the European Arts and Crafts style with local regional and indigenous styles, and also incorporating Japanese influences. Traditional building styles from the forested and alpine environments of Europe also influenced the designs, a function of the fact that a number of the early US architects and landscape architects who influenced the parks designs were of European origin.



Glacier Circle Alpine Hut (1922), Glacier National Park, BC, Canada
[Source – Canadian Register of Historic Places]

Abbot Pass Refuge Cabin (1922), Banff National Park, BC, Canada.
[Source – Canadian Register of Historic Places]

1 *Flint McClelland, 1998, p1.*

Pyramid Lake Island Picnic Shelter (1933), Jasper National Park, BC, Canada (built by Depression employment relief labour)
[Source – Canadian Register of Historic Places]

One of a number of graceful stone bridges in Alum Rock County Park, California, USA, built by Depression employment relief labour.
[Source – G. Brechin, 'Forgotten Foundation' in Bay Nature, 2008]

The result in the parks was a set of building designs featuring primarily steep gable-roofed log cabins or stone alpine-style chalets with wide eaves, which were plain or had timber or stone decorative elements (e.g. porches, doors, trimmings), and sometimes shingle roofs. The design for tracks echoed that for buildings, with wide, well built tracks for heavily used routes, moderate grades with built up sections with drystone retaining walls, and timber bridging. In park entrance areas tracks might be stone edged, and bridges had sturdy timber handrailing. Signs were generally in timber. The timber elements were generally painted in brown or oiled for weather protection.

This approach created a distinctive 'national parks' style – simple, practical structures in natural materials and/or tones, but with a strong aesthetic quality, which fitted well into the natural environments they were designed for.

This strongly rooted Arts and Crafts Tradition style carried on into the 1930s when extensive works in national parks and state parks were carried out under the various employment programs that comprised the New Deal, Franklin D. Roosevelt's visionary initiative for combating the Great Depression of the late 1920s/early 1930s in the USA.

This USA national parks rustic infrastructure style continued at least to the late 1900s, with only minor design changes being made to accommodate changes in technology and available materials that were seen as beneficial.

The history of infrastructure design in Canada is similar to that of the USA, although its roots are slightly different. Although there was not a design style and pattern books from the formation of Parks Canada, the alpine environment, conifer forests, and strongly European heritage also promoted a parks style that was essentially similar to the USA – log cabins in the forests and stone alpine chalets in the mountains, and also in the major centres at railheads and at key railway stops (e.g. Banff).

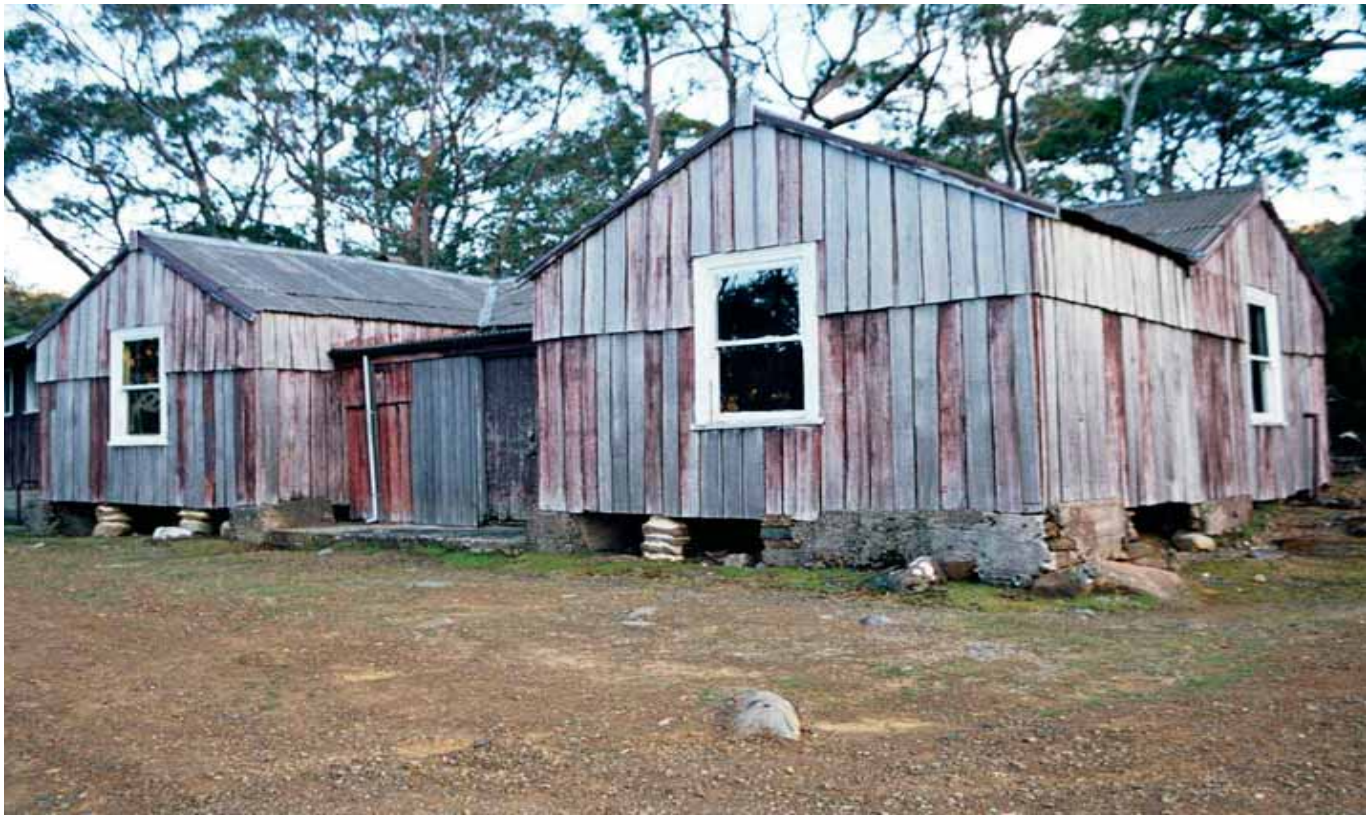
In Canada much of the early parks development was at the behest of the Canadian Pacific Railroad Company, which not only established access to the early parks in the Canadian Rocky Mountains, but which also was responsible for developing much of the infrastructure, both at railheads and centres around railway stops, as well as some of the early tracks and huts, to provide visitors with scenic alpine experiences. The background, practical knowledge and skills of the early Swiss guides employed by the railway also influenced the style of buildings, resulting in a number of alpine-style stone chalets in this area. The predominantly log cabin construction that was used was derived however from the earlier backcountry log cabin style huts used by trappers, miners and railway workers.

From these origins a distinctive 'Canadian rustic style' is recognised in parks infrastructure design, which persisted at least up until the 1960s. Key characteristics of the style are vernacular log structures with shingles, prominent stonework, deep eaves, rough board siding and verandahs, prominent rectilinear or diagonal bracing, and a deliberate Swiss quality. The popularity of the style is considered to be due to its 'apparent informality'.

This Canadian style is clearly also strongly influenced by the Arts and Crafts Tradition. As in the USA, the Arts and Crafts Tradition appears to have been the main design aesthetic for Canadian national parks infrastructure. This was not used only in the national parks, but also appears to have been extensively used in other reserves, including urban and peri-urban parks. This appears to be particularly the case in the c.1930s, when a large amount of parks infrastructure construction was also undertaken as Depression unemployment relief work in Canada.

National parks infrastructure design evolution in Australia and New Zealand appears to have been quite different to that in the USA and Canada. A key difference is that there was no national standard design, nor do there appear to have been standard designs in the various states, at least not over significant periods. As a result there appears to have been more variation, with the infrastructure styles used in parks and reserves in Australia and New Zealand drawing on European and English styles of rustic and alpine buildings, drawing deliberately in some cases on the USA and Canadian parks uses and styles (e.g., the standard parks sign style of brown timber signboards with routered script) and, in relation to buildings, from the rural vernacular building styles.

The rural vernacular influence saw a predominant use of weatherboard, vertical board (or planking), and corrugated iron for building cladding. This led to a distinctive Australian and New Zealand



Telopea – one of the 1940 Mt Field 'government huts' *[Source - Terry 2003].*

use of corrugated iron and vertical board for walking, skiing, and climbing huts in the national parks, in contrast to the North American log cabin and stone chalet styles of construction.

There were however also some important similarities. Key among these was the strong influence of the Arts and Craft tradition in building design, particularly in the early peri-urban parks (e.g. Royal National Park south of Sydney, Belair National Park near Adelaide, and in Mountain Park on kunanyi / Mount Wellington (now part of Wellington Park). Another key similarity was the extensive hut and track construction undertaken in a number of popular parks and reserves in the Depression for unemployment relief. In Tasmania for example, several timber and stone huts and over 30 km of walking track were constructed on kunanyi Mount Wellington as Depression employment schemes (before the Pinnacle Road was built) using a combination of Hobart City Council, State government and Federal government funding and also public donations.[1] As with the USA and Canada, the style of the Australian Depression period buildings strongly reflected an Arts and Craft aesthetic.

Australia also did some experimenting with concrete construction during the Depression, with notable examples being a number of day-use shelters in the Blue Mountains out of Sydney, and the rustic picnic shelters in Cataract Gorge with the concrete formed to look like timber, and replicating the earlier Arts and Crafts Tradition inspired timber picnic shelters, although not with the same result.

The history of hut and other accommodation building in Tasmania provides a good example of the broader history of built infrastructure design in Australia, although there was little use of corrugated iron in Tasmania.

The initial phase of management agency built park tourist infrastructure was essentially from the c.1890s to the 1910s. As well as a number of walking tracks being constructed on kunanyi Mt Wellington at this time, rustic picnic shelters were built in urban-edge parks such as Mountain Park on kunanyi / Mt Wellington and Cataract Gorge in Launceston, and the government-built tourist accommodation at Lake St Clair, Great Lake, Lake Leake, Miena, Interlaken, and the Hartz Mountains. There was also a small amount of privately established visitor accommodation at places such as Collinsvale, next to Mt Field National Park, and at Chudleigh. In the more remote areas of the Central Plateau/Central Highlands at this time, tents or pre-existing miners, trappers/snarers and timber getters huts were used, with the only purpose-built tourist hut being Du Cane Hut (1910). These huts were small, basic timber huts with gabled roofs. Most were of split timber palings, but a small number were of log cabin construction (e.g. the Lea River hut and Dixons Kingdom Hut).

Amongst the earliest purpose-built buildings in parks and reserves in Tasmania were the government huts at Lake St Clair (c.1890) and at Lake Fenton in Mount Field National Park (1911-1929). These government huts were of plain construction and of sawn timber. Those at Lake St Clair were large, but the six huts at Lake Fenton were small, vertically planked huts with corrugated iron roofs. Waldheim Chalet, the privately built home and tourist accommodation at Cradle Valley which was also built at this time (1912), however, was relatively ornate, the overall style, includ-

1 *It is interesting to note that all of this work was completed a year before the similar New Deal Depression relief works started in the USA.*

ing the timber shingle cladding, reflecting Gustav Weindorfer's European origins, and the ornamentation using timber elements strongly reflecting an Arts and Crafts influence.

The 1940s-60s saw new government infrastructure development at a number of key park road-heads under the auspices of the Scenery Preservation Board, the then management body for Tasmania's parks and reserves. In 1940 a set of huts was built at Lake Dobson to replace the Lake Fenton huts; from 1956 to 1968 a set of huts was built at Cynthia Bay, Lake St Clair; and in the 1960s a set of nine huts was built in Cradle Valley. A key consideration in the design of these structures was that they would be sympathetic to their natural and scenic locations. The resulting style were simple, gable roofed, vertical board designs with an oiled or brown painted finish, and in some cases local stone foundations. This general style strongly echoed the earlier Arts and Crafts style. The use of vertical board, which is a particularly Tasmanian feature, reflected both a common local vernacular bush style popular from the 1930s, and a Tasmanian evolution of the Arts and Crafts Tradition (as seen in architect designed vertical board clad bush retreats).

With a small number of exceptions, the predominant use of timber and stone, of brown tones for timber, and of simple unobtrusive design, persisted in infrastructure design in Tasmania until the late 1900s. For example, mid-late 1900 park ranger accommodation was generally a standard small-medium home design, and was simple, weatherboard clad, and painted brown, generally with corrugated iron roofs.

Tasmanian track construction has also kept to the use of local natural materials and avoided major scale construction to maintain the sense of being in an essentially natural environment. After a brief phase of pine duck boarding, a new design ethic for tracks emerged in the late 1900s which used local timbers, often cut lengthwise and laid with bends to create more natural curving paths, or which used local stone laid so as to give a natural feel while providing a hardened track. In some high altitude areas where timber has to be imported, planks have been laid longitudinally and surfaced with tar to reduce the visual impact and area of impact.

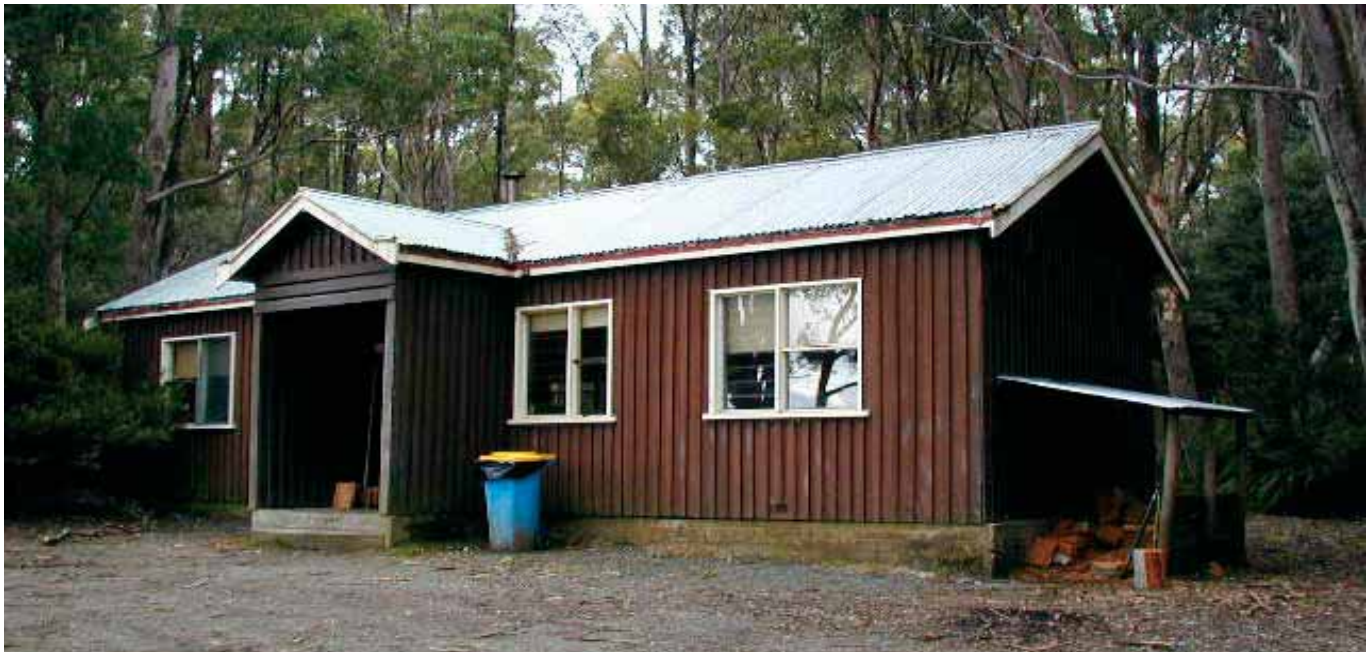
The routered brown timber sign, echoing a global national parks design style, was also an instantly recognisable symbol in national parks and reserves throughout Tasmania during the 1900s.

But in Tasmania, and elsewhere in Australia, in the late 1900s-early 2000s, this recognisable sympathetic and aesthetic approach to infrastructure design in parks and reserves has begun to change.

It would seem that today, at least in Tasmania and some other parts of Australia, these considerations no longer apply and more emphasis is being placed on building infrastructure that is recognisably modern, of state of the art technology, and using state of the art materials, which although durable and cheap are not natural. This new infrastructure appears to be designed to stand out, advertise its modernity, and in some cases its architect, or to otherwise impress.

Lake Fenton Hut (1911), Mt Field National Park, Tas. *[Source – Terry 2003b, p21]*

Waldheim Chalet (1912), Cradle Mountain. *[Source - http://cradlemountain.net/2010/11/waldheim-chalets-cradle-mountain-national-park/waldheim]*



Top: Mimosa Cabin (1968), the only surviving hut from the 1956-1968 government huts at Lake St Clair *[Source– A. McConnell, 2004].*

One of the earlier 1960s Waldheim huts, Cradle Mountain.
[Source - www.sheffieldcradleinfo.com.au/accom_result1/waldheim-cabins-cradle-mountain]

One of the Waldheim huts, Cradle Mountain *[Source – PWS, 2004]*

Some Tasmanian examples are the now ubiquitous bright blue parks signs, the over constructed stonework on the steeper section of the Cape Hauy Track, the overly large and not particularly comfortable Pelion and Windy Ridge walkers huts which show little sensitivity to their local setting, and the unsympathetic and impractical designs proposed for the Three Capes Walk huts (initially including proposing the use of bright exterior colours!), and the Mount Field National Park Visitors Centre, which arguably has no particular reference to a natural setting, and could be built anywhere.

This new approach is in stark contrast to the widely accepted and appreciated philosophy of the last century, that park infrastructure should not overwhelm the natural values, should be unobtrusive, and should be sympathetic to the local setting in its design, material, and finish.

Perhaps it is time to review where we are going in designing infrastructure for our national parks and reserves. The lesson of the last 100 years is that it is not appropriate to build just anything in our parks and reserves, and it is not modern designs, but rustic designs using predominantly natural materials, that will provide the most appropriate aesthetic outcomes, and prove most attractive to park and reserve visitors.

Key Sources & Further Reading

Brechin, G. 2008 "Forgotten Foundation", *Bay Nature*, California, USA – sourced from baynature.org/articles/jan-mar-2008/forgotten-foundation.

Flint McClelland, L. 1998 *Building the National Parks – Historic Landscape, Design and Construction*. The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore & London.

McConnell, A. 2012 *The Historic Track & Hut Network of the Hobart Face of Mount Wellington: Interim Report – Comparative Analysis and Significance Assessment*. Report for the Wellington Park Management Trust, Hobart, Tasmania.

By Paul Smith, with assistance from Catharine Errey, Nick Sawyer and Chris Bell

Do we understand wilderness well enough to explain it effectively to others?

The draft revision of the 1999 Management Plan for the TWWHA that the State government released for public comment on the 16th January reveals a lack of understanding of what wilderness is and of its value. Although the science of wilderness has something to say about these things, after half a century of only spasmodic development it is still in a formative stage. No doubt this has facilitated the abandonment of wilderness by some environmentalists in recent times, as noted by Don Knowler in "Don't raise the wilderness white flag" on pages 32 and 33 of *The Mercury*, 31st January 2015. We tackle this issue here by outlining a few important aspects of the science, beginning with an explanation of what conservationists who specialize in wilderness protection mean by 'wilderness'.

At the outset it should be pointed out that the definition of "a wilderness area" given by the 1999 Management Plan (MP) for the TWWHA (pp91, 92) confuses this by including not only necessary and sufficient characteristics (which are, as we shall see, naturalness and remoteness) but also something that is unnecessary - "sufficient size" (p91). Although size is very important, not only for protecting wilderness areas into the future, but also for the strength of their wild character, it is (as may be seen below) irrelevant to their definition. Another complication is that some wilderness definitions require 'a wilderness area' to be an area that is protected by law, as in the US Wilderness Act of 1964. This is not done here as our purpose is simply to define and evaluate the type of territory that can be labeled 'wilderness' and thereby facilitate public debate on whether such areas should be given legal protection.

In conformity with research such as Kirkpatrick and Haney (1980), Hawes and Heatley (1985), the Australian National Wilderness Inventory (NWI) and recent papers in the USA, wilderness is defined here as territory that is both *very* natural and *very* remote. Just *how* natural and remote will be discussed later. The combination of naturalness with remoteness is here termed 'wild character', rather than 'wilderness character' (as done in recent US research) and 'wilderness quality' (as done in the NWI). 'Wild character' is preferable because it makes sense across the entire continuum of strengths, from zero wild character (no naturalness, or no remoteness, or none of both, such as in cities, towns and many rural areas) to extreme wild character (extremely natural and extremely remote, such as most of Antarctica). In contrast to 'wild character', 'wilderness quality' and 'wilderness character' only make sense for the wilder part of the natural/ remote continuum that actually qualifies as wilderness. Obviously, 'wildness' could be used instead of 'wild character', but it runs some risk of being read, or heard, as 'wilderness'.

By the naturalness/remoteness definition of wilderness, the widespread assumption that all of 'a wilderness area' is 'wilderness' is mistaken. This is because only the core of a wilderness area is *very* remote and thus wild enough to be considered 'wilderness'. The 1999 TWWHA MP implies this where its definition of "a wilderness area" states that it must be "remote at its core" (p92). The non-core part of a wilderness area is a peripheral zone bounded externally by "points of mechanized access" (p92) such as roads, airstrips and navigable waterways, and/or artifacts "of colonial and modern technological society" (p92) such as houses, huts, dams, farms, plantations and communication towers. Note that by these specifications, Aboriginal influences and artifacts would not impair remoteness, nor naturalness. So each 'wilderness area' comprises a peripheral zone that is basically natural and a core that is also natural, but very remote as well and therefore 'wilderness'. The peripheral zone has been dubbed a "remoting zone" (Hawes and Heatley 1985) to distinguish it from the 'wilderness' at the core and also to indicate its crucial function of providing sufficient remoteness for that core to be wilderness.

This outer-inner structure of wilderness areas may seem an unnecessary complication to those with no experience of multi-day, self-reliant journeys into wild country, but it is inherent in the definition given here. And that definition is considered essential by many who have had such experience, in order to explain to others what is needed to produce the experience. Those requirements are to spend time in a place that is both very natural and very remote. To do this, visitors must get to that place with a minimum of artifacts: especially no mechanized vehicles, nor buildings, as the presence of such facilities eliminates both naturalness and remoteness. The more remote the visitor is, the wilder his or her experience and therefore the more accurately it can be described as a wilderness experience.

What does this meaning of 'wilderness' imply for terms such as 'wilderness lodge', 'wilderness railway', 'wilderness cruise', wilderness flight', 'wilderness highway', and commercial 'wilderness journeys' (such as those employing professional guides, or vehicles, or boats, or standing camps, or huts)? As all of these 'wilderness'

Image by Catharine Errey

things have artifacts of "modern technological society" (which include commercial activities), the word 'wilderness' is contradictory in each case. These terms are therefore oxymorons. This would not be the case, if they meant 'on the edge of a wilderness area', but they strongly imply that the things they refer to are in the 'wilderness' that can only be found at the core of 'a wilderness area'. And how far is that core from the remoting zone's outer edge, which these things (lodges, railways and so on) produce, by their presence? The usual convention (e.g. Hawes and Heatley 1985) is that the outer edge of the core is at least half-a-day's backpacking (say eight kilometres across terrain that is fairly easy for a fit and capable person) from the outer edge of the 'wilderness area' (which is the outer edge of its remoting zone). This convention recognizes the significant heightening of the feeling of being in a wild place that arises beyond half-a-day's backpacking into a wild area because the visitor is then no longer on a relatively casual day-trip, but has to camp overnight before he or she can return to the conveniences of civilization. To better understand this convention, one might ask: "Am I in wilderness if I walk 100 metres into thick bush, off a 'wild' section of the Lyell Highway?" Although one's immediate surrounds would then be totally natural, with no view of a road or any other modern or colonial artifact, one has only to walk for a few minutes to be back at one's car and therefore, in essence, to be back in civilization. Thus, totally natural country within easy reach of a road (or any other transport facility) cannot produce a real wilderness experience and should therefore not be called 'wilderness'.

Although oxymoronic, terms such as wilderness lodge and wilderness railway will no doubt persist and continue to confuse the popular idea of wilderness as entrepreneurs strive to profit from its allure and mystique. But the Management Plan (MP) of the TWWHA must resist this. It must be clear about what wilderness is and thereby allow us to see what wilderness reserves aim to protect and enhance. But just why the MP *should* do these things might be better understood from two arguments; one from moral philosophy and the other from human psychology.

The moral philosophy argument is a response to the common accusation that wilderness advocates are 'elitist, selfish people who want to lock away vast areas for the exclusive use of the few who are young, fit and strong enough to backpack into them'. As many of these advocates are not young and strong, they at least, are hardly selfish. But the crucial response is: "Yes, we are elitist, and very deliberately so. We are elitist in that we are trying to cre-

ate a future environment for humanity that is of high quality - an 'elite' environment if you will, and certainly not a mediocre one". Wilderness advocates can then go on to explain that an environment that is of high quality for people is one that caters to the fact that people vary in their physical and mental capabilities. In any community there is a range of types, from people of limited capabilities to more capable ones, all the way to those who need the sort of physical and mental challenges undertaken by explorers like Dr. Livingston of Africa, or Scott, Amundsen, Shackleton and Mawson of Antarctica. Therefore, to be of high quality for humanity (or for any human community), the environment must present challenges that cater to the whole range of human capabilities. For the most physically and mentally capable people, wilderness can provide real challenges. A world with large wilderness areas therefore provides the *freedom* for humanity to exercise and test the full range of its capabilities. It also offers freedom in romantic satisfaction for those who don't want (or aren't physically capable of) a real wilderness experience, but who enjoy knowing that really wild country is out there somewhere. The freedoms provided by wilderness should appeal to political conservatives in particular, as many of them are very keen on liberty. Freedom is essentially why 'frontier societies' are so attractive - they still have some country that is more or less natural and remote. As Tim Flannery (writing in O'Connor 1998, pp8-10) has pointed out, in 1775 Adam Smith (the founder of economics) wrote that human happiness, peace and prosperity are greatest in societies that are in the frontier stage of development. The challenge before us now is to retain as much of this stage as we can by protecting our remaining wilderness - and even restoring some of it, where possible.

To understand why the challenges posed by wilderness excite us - and also why wilderness evokes perceptions such as beauty, mystery and awe - we must turn to evolutionary psychology. This indicates that as humanity evolved for many hundreds of millions of years in wilderness (from pre-cellular organisms, all the way to *Homo sapiens*), we should instinctively feel at home in it in some ways - and have strong emotional reactions to it. By using evolutionary psychology to design an empirical enquiry into such reactions, Professor Emeritus of psychology at The Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Shalom Schwartz (1992, 2007, 2012), has shown that across the world everyone needs "stimulation" (which he defined as "excitement, novelty and challenge in life") irrespective of their ethnicity, nationality, gender or any other differences. However, the amount of stimulation that each individual needs varies from one to another. If it is too great for a particular personality it may seem chaotic, unmanageable and frightening. This rather obvious finding (long expressed by the aphorism 'variety is the spice of life') indicates that part of the human need for wilderness arises from the novelty it creates by making a dramatic contrast with the developed parts of our planet. We find this stimulating to our imagination and also, when we visit wilderness, stimulating in physical as well as mental ways. The wilder the wilderness, the more contrast it makes with developed regions and therefore the more it

Image by Catharine Errey

can impress and engage us. The wilder it is, the more challenge it presents to self-reliant visitors such as backpackers, kayakers and rafters. The greater these contrasts and challenges, the more powerful and memorable the wilderness experience. From empirical psychology then, we can argue that *contrast* and *challenge* are key objectives in protecting wilderness, or more broadly, in protecting any piece of territory with some wild character. Where wild character is insufficient to produce wilderness, it may still provide a contrast with the developed world that justifies its protection. And where wild character is strong enough to produce wilderness, the stronger it is (or can be made) the better, as that produces more awesome and inspiring contrasts with the developed world.

These arguments in moral philosophy and psychology indicate that wilderness and even non-wilderness areas with some wild character have instrumental value that may warrant their protection. But this is only part of the argument for protecting wild character. Another part is that the economic rationale for *not* protecting wild character is false, at least in relatively developed countries. This rationale is that economic development is good because it helps to satisfy wants for more income and employment. But, as explained in the previous edition of this newsletter (Winter 2014 "How the false promise of economic growth destroys our environment"), such development exacerbates those wants. It does this by initially satisfying some of them, which then evokes responses that raise them to higher levels than before.

It appears from these arguments that wilderness advocates have crucial understandings of human needs and economic behaviour, though perhaps at more intuitive than explicitly analytical levels. Rather than being *greedy*, wilderness advocates who ask for very large areas to be protected - and even enlarged with 'rewilding' measures - are being *realistic* in trying to provide for human needs into the future.

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Douglas Apsley National Park, image by Richard Dakin

Know Your National Parks:

Douglas Apsley National Park

Many Tasmanians, including regular bushwalkers, have never visited Douglas Apsley National Park and some have the mistaken idea that being in the east of Tasmania and not on the coast it would have drab vegetation and no interesting scenic features. It also suffers from being a modest near neighbour to the long-established, very scenic, and highly promoted Freycinet National Park.

However it has a number of unique features and attractions which should put it high on the list for those who like to visit Tasmania's National Parks.

Douglas Apsley is a relatively recent addition to Tasmania's National Parks. It is significant for including the largest intact area of dry sclerophyll forest on the East Coast of Tasmania, with plant species that occur, or survive, only within the Park. It is also notable for having within its boundaries almost a whole river catchment, that of the Douglas, of which only the last few kilometres are outside the Park. The Douglas is a typical east coast river, catering for large short term rainfall events during east coast low pressure systems. The river falls around 500m as it descends through the national park.

The park includes pockets of rainforest, river gorges, waterfalls and rock pools – and dramatic dolerite crags.

History

Not much is known of the Aboriginal presence in the area in earlier times. According to the journals of George Augustus Robinson, two bands of the Oyster Bay tribe occupied the area. To date there is little evidence of the area having been intensely used by Aboriginal people.

European Activity in the Area

Coal A large part of what is now Douglas Apsley National Park is underlaid with coal and there were a number of mine workings and exploration drillings from as early as 1843 till as recently as the late 1970's (this last was a joint venture between the Shell Company of Australia and Industrial Mining and Investigations P/L). The coal in the area is reported as being unsuitable for coking and uncompetitive for exporting as steaming coal.

Grazing Grazing of cattle occurred over many years in Thompsons and some of the smaller marshes in the north of the area. The marshes were regularly burned to provide feed for stock.

Trapping Professional trapping of native animals (kangaroo, wallaby and both varieties of possums) occurred from about 1921 until the end of World War 2, by which time demand for skins had dropped. Patch burning was practised by snarers, to encourage feed for the animals they hoped to trap in the next season.

Logging Minor logging occurred during the coal mining period early in the twentieth century and there were some sawlog operations after World War 2. More extensive harvesting operations for sawlog and pulpwood commenced to the north of the current Park in 1980 with approximately 250 hectares being logged in the north-western corner of what became Douglas Apsley National Park.

The Establishment of the National Park

In 1977, a university study (Russell et al, 1979) identified the Douglas Apsley region as a wilderness area. Vegetation studies showed the rich diversity of plant communities that it contained. In 1981, in part due to the extensive logging that had been taking place on Tasmania's East Coast and the fact that this Douglas Apsley region had a large area of untouched dry sclerophyll forest, The Tasmanian Wilderness Society proposed the establishment of a National Park in the area. A group of conservation organisations subsequently prepared a more detailed proposal and Park supporters constructed tracks to the main scenic drawcards, followed by an overland track through the length of the proposed Park. However it took a number of years of campaigning before the area was finally declared a National Park, on 27 Dec 1989. A block of privately owned land, adjacent to the Apsley River swimming hole, was given to The Wilderness Society and is leased by the Parks and Wildlife Service to permit access into the National Park.

Special Features of Douglas Apsley

The Park contains a substantially unaltered landscape in a region of Tasmania that has seen many changes since colonisation. It includes a significant area of intact and diverse dry sclerophyll forest, rainforest, river gorges, heathland, swamps and the impressive Jurassic dolerite crags of Nichols Needle and Nichols Cap. Douglas Apsley is botanically rich and is a refuge for a number of threatened plant species. The Douglas River may be the last stronghold in Tasmania of the Australian or southern grayling.

Douglas Apsley National Park, image by Catharine Errey

Management Issues

There have been no broad scale fires in the Park for nearly fifty years and the Parks and Wildlife Service has a programme of prescribed ecological burning to aid recruitment of threatened plant species in the area. The risk of wildfire caused by Park users or lightning strikes is a constant threat during the summer months. No campfires are permitted between October and April inclusive to help manage this risk.

Phytophthora cinnamomi has been recorded and is clearly evident in the south of the Park and for this reason the Leeaberra Track, which winds it way for 28km from Thompsons Marshes in the north through to Apsley Waterhole in the south, is walked in the north-south direction only.

The through-walk, on the Leeaberra Track, usually takes three days. Apart from the risk of bushfires during summer there are also occasional flash floods on both the Douglas and Apsley Rivers, potentially leaving walkers stranded. Visitors planning to walk the Leeaberra track are advised to do so after carefully checking weather forecasts.

There is a five kilometre walk including two creek crossings to access Thompsons Marshes (the Leeaberra trail head). This is along the E road, which was constructed for forestry purposes in years gone by.

Douglas Apsley National Park, top image by Catharine Errey, bottom image by Richard Dakin

Douglas Apsley National Park, top image by Richard Dakin, bottom image by Catharine Errey

Conclusion

Douglas Apsley National Park is a significant component of Tasmania's suite of National Parks and reserves. We need to be thankful to those people who recognised its importance and had the foresight to work and lobby for its establishment. The Douglas Apsley National Park is interesting, stunningly beautiful and well worth visiting.

Thank you to Richard Dakin, Ranger in Charge, Freycinet National Park, for information and assistance in preparing this article.

TNPA REPORT *by Nick Sawyer*

PADDDing – the World Parks Congress Sydney – November 2014

The World Parks Congress is organised once every decade by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). It is the world's foremost conference on everything to do with protected areas. In November 2014 it was held in Sydney, attended by over 5000 delegates from around the world. Nick Sawyer could not resist the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to attend. These are his very brief personal impressions of the highlights(?) of the congress.

Several heads of state and two Australian Federal ministers (The Hon. Greg Hunt and The Hon. Julie Bishop) attended. Our Prime Minister was notable by his absence. Minister Hunt extolled his government's purported environmental achievements.

The world's conservation bureaucracy was on full display, each organisation keen to emphasise its own importance and achievements. Some seemed so focussed on their own long-term agendas that they appeared out of touch with reality and government agencies were obviously unable to officially criticise political constraints on their activities. Despite the overarching attempts to talk up the successes, the bad news stories outnumbered the good.

My greatest insight from the conference was the appreciation that the assault on reserves that we are currently experiencing in Australia is not confined to this country, rather it is a world-wide phenomenon. Perhaps the difference is that here it has been a sudden onslaught; in the rest of the world it has been occurring for longer, more gradually.

This is captured by the acronym PADDD (**P**rotected **A**rea **D**owngrading, **D**ownsizing and **D**egazettement), coined in a paper in *Nature,* "The Performance and Potential of Protected Areas", which documents the worldwide decline in government support for protected areas in the last decade. The article also focusses attention on the need for quality not quantity of protected areas. Legal protection of an area does not accomplish anything if there are no resources for enforcement or management.

The good news? Things could be worse. After all, the new management plan for the TWWHA is only opening the door to tourism developments and logging, it is not proposing to excise 20% of the TWWHA for a uranium mine in exchange for funding for wildlife conservation, as is the case for one African WHA.

image by Catharine Errey

TNPA REPORT

Buttongrass Ball Report

In response to the Federal Government's intention of devolving Commonwealth environmental powers under the EPBC Act to the States and Territories, the 2014 Buttongrass Ball had a 'greentape' theme, the hall decorated with green streamers and some of the dancers having responded to the invitation to dress in green.

Music was provided by the VerandahCoots and The Devils Own and in his inimitable way Dave Wanless called the dances. The Buttongrass Ball is always a very enjoyable event with everyone made to feel welcome - young and old, single and 'paired', nimble and 'two left-footed', and the full range of dance experience, including none at all.

The TNPA wishes to thank the Folk Federation of Tasmania and Dave Wanless, the musicians and the many volunteers, for once again putting on this event and for generously donating the proceeds to support the work of the TNPA.

Thanks also to Plants of Tasmania Nursery for the loan of the buttongrass plants.

All images by Anne McConnell

Midden, Tarkine coast, image by Anne McConnell

TNPA UPDATE

The Tarkine

There has been a temporary reprieve for Tasmania's Tarkine. A Federal Court judge has ruled that controversial 4WD tracks should remain closed to recreational vehicles to protect Indigenous heritage.

The Liberals while in opposition had vowed to overturn the Labor Government's ban on 4WD vehicles south of Sandy Cape (plus several other tracks). As soon as it took office, the Liberal Government overturned the ban.

In December 2014, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre took legal action and successfully obtained an interim injunction which ordered the Parks and Wildlife Service not to issue any permits till the full hearing of the Federal Court. The Arthur Pieman Conservation Area is rich in Aboriginal history, including middens, rock engravings and rare hut depressions. It remains to be seen if Parks and Wildlife can prevent the on-going, illegal activities that have been so destructive. This Federal Court injunction represents a first step to forever remove this activity that is irrevocably destroying parts of this wondrous coast.

Recently, a small delegation to the Environment Minister, Mr Groom, suggested he visit the area with TNPA members to inspect the colossal damage first hand, but he has given no indication that he would do so.

Postscript

On 11/2/2014 the ABC News reported that a number of 4WD vehicles, with covered numberplates, had been filmed driving on tracks south of the Interview River – a blatant contravention of a law which has been in place for 30 years (this flouting of the law has been reported by walkers for many years but this time was the first that vehicles were seen with taped-over numberplates). Having had further cutbacks to staff numbers, the Parks and Wildlife Service is now in no position to monitor compliance.

Opinion Piece

by Nick Sawyer

The Times They Have A-Changed
(apologies to Bob Dylan)
and why we must avoid value judgements

My first active involvement in wilderness conservation issues was in the mid-1980s when a major concern of conservationists was that the Tasmanian wilderness was being "loved to death". The fear was that an ever-increasing number of bushwalkers would result in many of the poorly defined bushwalking routes in the TWWHA developing into tracks, which would develop erosion problems, which would require substantial construction work to repair, which would lead to a loss of wilderness quality. In the early 1990s this concern led to the PWS Track Management Strategy with its controversial proposal for a WHA-wide walker permit system.

By and large, this increased use of remote areas has not eventuated. Reliable data are not available but use of most remote bushwalking routes appears to have stagnated or declined, not increased. Use of relatively easy, highly publicised walks like the Overland Track has skyrocketed. Much of this increased use has come from overseas backpackers rather than "traditional" Australian bushwalkers.

Several other significant changes are apparent since widespread concern for the environment started to emerge in the 1960s.

- The proportion of Tasmania that is national park or other reserve category has increased dramatically.

  CONSEQUENCE: many recreational activities (e.g. dog walking, campfires, use of off-road vehicles) are now restricted in places where they were previously permitted. There is now a perception (exploited by the mainstream political parties) that there are too many national parks and they are places where ordinary people are not allowed to have fun (locked out).

- Up to the 1980s the vast majority of wilderness users were independent bushwalkers. This is no longer the case (again, reliable data are not available):
  - An increasing proportion of users are on commercial trips. In the 1980s commercial tourist operations accounted for only a tiny proportion of walkers and provided only basic guiding services in a few areas. Now a wide range of commercial trips are available; they are heavily promoted and most emphasise an easy "luxury" experience.

PWS sign, Skullbone Plains

- An increasing proportion of users are undertaking competitive events such as mountain biking, rogaining and multi-sport endurance events. These are organised events where emphasis is less on appreciating nature, more on excitement – nature as a naturally occurring obstacle course.

CONSEQUENCE: a strong conservation ethic emerged from those early independent bushwalkers. Clients on commercial trips are unlikely to have the same degree of motivation, and those whose main priority is the conquest of nature will probably have even less.

- Ownership of 4WD vehicles has increased. In the 1960s Land Rovers were quite rare and most were purchased for a specific purpose – only rarely were they a recreational toy. Now 4WDs are widespread, as are a whole range of other off-road vehicles (trail bikes, quad bikes etc) that did not exist in the 1960s. Most recreational off-road drivers appear to be motivated by "nature as a naturally occurring obstacle course" rather than by any real appreciation of nature. NB – I refer to the Tasmanian context where 4WDs are largely unnecessary to access natural areas and their impacts on wet, fragile soils are considerable. The situation is very different in, for example, the deserts of central Australia where 4WDs leave little or no lasting evidence of their passage and are usually the only feasible means of travel.

  CONSEQUENCE: there are more off-road vehicles than ever before and fewer places where they can legitimately be used. Some owners are very frustrated and see national parks as the problem.

- In the 1960s nobody questioned that the emerging concern for the environment was a state responsibility (including all aspects of national park management) and that free access to public land (e.g. national parks) was a basic right. More recently the user pays principle has become widely accepted, as has the practice of outsourcing.

  CONSEQUENCE: In 2015 services within parks are increasingly provided by contractors or commercial operators, rather than by PWS staff, and the user pays principle has largely triumphed. Entry fees for national parks were controversial when introduced in the 1990s but are rarely questioned now. However, the government's application of "user pays" is selective; it does not always extend to making private tourist operators pay the full cost of infrastructure within parks (e.g. jetties, tracks etc) that is primarily for their benefit.

What has this got to do with avoiding value judgments?

Prior to the 1990s a purist approach to activities within national parks was justifiable and probably supported by a majority of wilderness users – national parks were mostly remote areas for bushwalkers and even they needed to be restricted if their numbers were causing problems.

As described above, times have changed. **The greatest threat to wilderness is no longer loving it to death, it is that not enough people love it at all** – loosening restrictions on activities in national parks is now seen by mainstream politicians as a vote winner – the tourism industry is lobbying for the removal of "green tape" which restricts tourism developments in national parks. Even the concept of wilderness, which underpinned the conservation campaigns of the 1970s and 1980s, is under attack. We have to get more public support for national parks and wilderness and we don't do this by unnecessarily excluding people or wasting our time on arguing against concepts (e.g. the principle of commercial operations on public land) that now have broad acceptance in Australian society. The purist approach is doomed to failure even if we personally feel that easy, luxurious commercial bushwalks in national parks (for example) are inappropriate and unnecessary. If justified, we should argue against them on the grounds of impacts on the natural or social environment, not the principle of commercial activity.

I doubt if most visitors on commercial trips or competitive events appreciate wilderness as much as independent bushwalkers do, but they appreciate it far more than those who do not visit it at all. In the 1980s I advocated banning both commercial trips and competitive events, now I accept (albeit reluctantly) that they have their place in attracting more people into wild areas so long as they are subject to appropriate constraints. We need to maintain opposition to activities and facilities which impact on national park values but opposition must be justified by potential impacts on the natural or social environment, not by value judgements about commercialisation or the motivations of the participants. In general, this will mean keeping major developments (particularly overnight accommodation) outside reserves while providing facilities for the majority of visitors in front country areas, thereby preserving the wilderness quality of more remote areas. This is essentially the policy that PWS successfully advocated in the 1990s (e.g. 1999 TWWHAMP) before its professional advice was silenced by the tourist industry lobby. One of the biggest problems with such an approach is that it is not simplistic – it is a complex compromise that is not simple to explain and does not lend itself to 20 second media sound-bites.

And I haven't even mentioned the elephant that has entered the room – global warming. This will cause pressure for remote area fire management on a massive scale.

TNPA REPORT *By Nick Sawyer*

Walking Track Deconstruction

The photograph shows the stumps that once supported boardwalk across an area of wet buttongrass on the track into Lake Judd in the Southwest National Park in the TWWHA.

Minister Groom has confirmed in correspondence to TNPA that the boardwalk was removed because it had deteriorated to the point where it was a safety hazard, and that it will not be replaced. He pointed out that much of the remote area track infrastructure was constructed with Federal funding in the early 1990s and confirmed that the Parks and Wildlife Service does not have the resources to maintain every piece of infrastructure that has previously been installed.

In recent years public liability has become a major concern for all land managers, not just the PWS, so we can look forward to much more removal, without replacement, of ageing track infrastructure in the future.

This does not bode well for many of Tasmania's more remote walking tracks where infrastructure was installed primarily to protect the environment, in contrast to "tourist tracks" where the trackwork is primarily for the comfort of the walkers.

The boardwalk pictured is not in a particularly sensitive area. Its removal will make walking less pleasant but the resulting impacts are not a major environmental concern (buttongrass is very common and will eventually recover if walker impacts are removed). ***The real concern is the likelihood of future removal without replacement of ageing track infrastructure in extremely sensitive alpine areas.***

The Parks and Wildlife Service's priorities have shifted to provision of tourist infrastructure – the Service may need to be reminded that it still has a responsibility to protect some of Tasmania's most special and sensitive areas through maintenance of existing environmental protection measures.

Remains of boardwalk. *Image by Nick Sawyer*

Explanation: public liability. If a walker injures himself/herself in a fall on an unconstructed section of track, it is unlikely that he/she could sue the PWS for damages. If a walker injures himself/herself as a result of failure of PWS infrastructure, for example an old section of boardwalk collapses under his/her feet, it is very likely that he/she could mount a successful damages claim against the PWS. Hence PWS has a strong incentive to remove ageing track infrastructure before it becomes a safety hazard.

Mt Field National Park. *Image by Catharine Errey*

TNPA News

TNPA News is published twice a year. It aims to provide informative articles on issues related to national parks and other reserves, as well as updates on TNPA activities and campaigns. The views expressed in TNPA News are not necessarily those of the TNPA Inc. For this issue many thanks to: Anne McConnell, Nick Sawyer, Chris Bell and Paul Smith. Original articles in TNPA News may be reproduced, but please acknowledge the author and the source. Contributions for TNPA News No.21 are welcomed (deadline mid June 2015). Please send contributions to admin@tnpa.asn.au (attention: TNPA News editor).

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Meetings
Management Committee meetings are usually held one Monday each month at 6:00pm. Members and supporters are welcome. Meeting dates and venue will be advertised in each TNPA Communique or please check with the Secretariat.

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