

FROM THE COMMITTEE

As many of our readers are by now aware the NSW Environment Minister Robyn Parker has released the Strategic Directions for Horse Riding in National Parks. This according to the minister is to provide “better sustainable horse riding in parks over coming years”.

These Strategic Directions are now in the consultation period and workshops with NPWS, various organisations, individuals etc. are in progress. AFA representatives will be attending another on 17th January 2013.

Pilot programs will be limited to specified locations which will be monitored by NPWS and no doubt various conservation groups. At the time this newsletter was written a number of tracks have been nominated however no specific area has been decided upon within the South East Escarpment.

Along with the plan of management for a national park, the NSW Wilderness Act is now a document that requires serious review & amendment by the NSW government. As mentioned in our previous newsletter, historic horse tracks to be trialled will still be prohibited in wilderness areas according to legislation within the Wilderness Act. “Corridors” through wilderness areas along with legislation will be required to change within the Wilderness Act to provide certainty & to protect any gains made.

The AFA committee, on behalf of all our members, would like to extend a very big thank you to Peter Smith. Representing AFA, Peter gave evidence before a NSW government Select Committee Inquiring into the Management of Public Lands in November.

The focus of the meeting was on reclaiming historic, heritage listed bridle tracks that were closed off by Wilderness Declarations and the management of National Parks

Peter felt “enthused” that his hearing was well received & commented that Parliamentary representatives treated his replies & opinions to their questions with respect. Rick Colless from the national party indicated he would like to have a look at the tracks & will contact Peter sometime in the future. The

Parliamentary Select Committee will send a transcript of Peter’s evidence which Peter will need to reply to. Peter will provide a summary to the AFA Committee.

Many organisations are involved with lobbying government to allow improved access for horse riders in our National Parks. AFA members include other user groups of our public lands.

A timely reminder for all our members to think of AFA aims & objectives:

- To promote preservation and conservation of our natural and cultural heritage in the bush
- Ensure non-discriminatory access to the bush for all who wish to use it for responsible recreation, education and enjoyment
- Ensure forested areas are responsibly managed for maximum benefit of the wider community

These objectives are achieved by wide community consultation and support, lobbying government at Local, State and Commonwealth levels, providing a forum for discussion for relevant issues, raising funds to support the achievement of our objectives.

Functions of AFA:

- AFA is dedicated to opposing further Wilderness Declarations in NSW on the grounds that doing so will deprive the people of access to and enjoyment of their natural and cultural heritage.
- AFA continues to lobby for open access to all public lands to responsible users and for education, recreational and cultural purposes
- AFA is a forum for the discussion and resolution of issues concerned with the use of and access to public land.

- AFA continues to lobby for responsible businesses that use their access to public lands to promote community support for all user groups to be able to access public land and wilderness areas not just bush walkers.
- AFA undertakes to inform the public and Government at all levels of these issues

How the AFA committee will support other organisations is decided by its members at AFA meetings. Your AFA committee, on behalf of AFA members, will continue AFA members own representations & submissions to NPWS and other government committees when the opportunities present. We are very fortunate to have a well-represented & focused committee which is not persuaded by agendas from political individuals or organisations.

MEMBERSHIPS FOR 2012-2013

ALL MEMBERSHIPS ARE NOW OVERDUE, Membership fees for 2012/2013. Family \$20.00. Pensioner \$5.00 Individual \$10.00 Corporate \$100.00 includes GST.

AFA Website & E-mail information: Reminder that our e-mail address has changed. It is now info@accessforall.asn.au.

DATES FOR AFA MEETINGS

9th February 2013 – Braidwood Service’s Club at 10am. An extra ordinary meeting to discuss outcome of NPWS working party workshop in January 2013.

30th March 2013 – Falls on Easter Saturday, members are asked to contact a committee member to find out if there will be an alternative date for this meeting.

29th June 2013 – AGM - Time & venue yet to be arranged.

31st August 2013 & 30th November 2013 – Time & venue yet to be arranged.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Apologies for those who have tried to use our website over the last month. The website had been “hacked” & “corrupted”...maybe we are upsetting someone? It is up & running again. Thank you Peter Kneen for putting in the long hours to get it sorted.

On a lighter note.....

A legend of the Deua River, Neta Davis (1906-1990), lived most of her life at Woollla, a remote property, on the Deua River, about 45 kms downstream of Bendethera. Most of her life she lived in social isolation, except for her family. At one period Neta, said she went to town, i.e. Braidwood, only once in a thirteen year period and that was to go to the dentist! This poem was written by Neta. Enjoy!

“Bendethera”

Bendethera, far away in a valley, where the cool waters flow.

Bendethera you have a charm and a loneliness all your own. Your great mountains, your murmuring waters for-ever flowing, your birds forever flying, and your wealth forever lying in soils untouched, through nature who shaped you long ago.

Bendethera you stir a fascination, mingled with loneliness, to fashion a heart of steel, or paint the courage with gold.

Bendethera far away amongst those rugged mountains, where the breezes play upon the sunbeams in the fading day, the blue wattle- the aroma everlasting.

Where tales are told true & just, from the diary long lost, of corn and pigs and of cattle that grow wild, and of horses staunch and brave, they could head the wildest steer.

Hardships and sorrows marked the lone grave. And I fancy there cometh a whisper, from a loved one in his youth long passed. The caves splendour nestled in the mountain side, their beauty little known, their secrets belonging to the earth.

Bendethera in the calm and solitude of night, where the moon sends long shafts of light, stealing down the mountain spurs, and the waters sparkle like diamonds, in a new world of peace. Other days and other deeds may fade amongst the forgotten things, Bendethera time could never take away, the memory of the folk who pioneered you, in the silence where no roads go by.

Bendethera calling you to me, plant me again with corn and trees, for new hands to tend, and hears to enjoy, of my wealth I could give to you, who can come to stay.

N.D.

AFA 2012 – 2013 COMMITTEE

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Vice Chairmen: Brian Clarke, Anthony Atkinson and Reg Webb

Publicity & Website Officers: Peter Smith & Peter Kneen

All the committee would like to wish our members many hours of enjoyment in our public lands and a healthy, prosperous 2013. We thank you all for your support.

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