

As taxpayers we have a right to ask for a copy of a financial audit detailing how much of our tax dollars support recreational/wilderness areas, what our dollars are spent on and who donates towards what programs the NPWS develops. AFA would like to be able to advise their members where these figures can be found. If anyone out there knows how they can be accessed please let us know. On a lighter note the Colong Foundation is also proposing a "Discovery Ranger" program where the scouting movement, bushwalking and environment groups are asked to assist.....maybe AFA members will be able to become "rangers" and assist them with their discoveries!

A REMINDER THAT:

- MEMBERSHIPS FOR 2010-2011 ARE NOW DUE..... Membership fees: Family \$20.00, Single \$10, Pensioner \$5 and Corporations \$100. Thank you for renewing your membership.
- "The Deua River Track" - There is only a limited number available. This publication will not be reprinted. Many outlets will not be able to be restocked. If you have been unable to purchase this outstanding book a committee person will forward you a copy on receipt of payment (\$22.00 plus \$1.30 postage).

Future dates for AFA meetings:

31st October 2010 - Xmas meeting Venue: In Bendethera, near the horse yards. Look for AFA banner. Time: 10.00 am meeting. Lunch: Sausage sizzle, BYO drinks. RSVP: Week before for catering purposes.....it is a long way to go & miss out on lunch!

30th January 2011 - Venue & time to be confirmed

29th May 2011 - Venue & time to be confirmed

31st July 2011 - AGM Venue & time to be confirmed..... somewhere warm!



Gary Gowen and Terry Hart on the way to NPWS 'Bendethera Day' 23rd August 2008. We are expecting better weather for our next meeting at Bendethera on 30th November.



Last meeting held at Moruya Bowling Club was well attended. A few of the attendees are pictured, Jenette Hindmarsh, Reg Webb, Gary Gowen, Joan Webb, Terry Hart standing.



AFA had a productive meeting with NPWS at Braidwood Services Club on 7th September 2010. Seated: Gary Gowen (AFA), Reg Webb (AFA), Peter Smith (AFA). Standing: Josh Madden (NPWS), Chris Haywood (NPWS), Tim Shepherd (NPWS), Terry Hart (AFA), Tony Baxter (NPWS).



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AFA 2010 – 2011 COMMITTEE

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Publicity Officer: Peter Smith
Website Officer: Peter Kneen

FROM THE COMMITTEE

**HOW EXCITING IS THIS? ACCESS FOR ALL HAS
A COLOURED NEWSLETTER WHICH INCLUDES
COLOURED PHOTOS!!!!**

WELCOME TO OUR FIRST "PROFESSIONAL" EDITION. Neil & Margot Waddell (original founders of AFA) would be proud! No doubt this will be a collector's item one day, along with our

previous black & white newsletters! AFA archives are growing and the committee still has not found a permanent home for them.

On 31st July 2010 AFA held its ordinary meeting at the Moruya Bowling Club. It was heartening to see new faces, especially a representative of a bush walking club. At the end of the day it is important for all non-government groups to cooperate so we can be useful to each other to achieve a reasonable outcome, which is to keep our heritage & environment ecologically sustainable & make our bush lands accessible for all who would like to visit them.

Co-ordinators for the AFA calendar have been found. Thank you to Jenette Hindmarsh, Helen Waddell & Terry Hart for offering to prepare & liaise with printers & distribution outlets. Sponsorship has also been successful and photos have been provided by many members, thank you to those who have yet again supported AFA. The calendar is a reliable fundraiser and the committee is looking forward to our 2011 calendar as they are great Christmas stocking filler! Calendars will be available late November if all goes to plan. Outlets for the calendars will be published in our Summer Newsletter Edition as well as being able to be purchased from committee members.

HERITAGE GRANT AWARDED FOR CORN TRAIL & SHOEBRIDGE TRACK – The value of AFA's work has been recognized by the Heritage Council with a grant to assist with the publication of our next book on the Corn Trail & Shoebridge Track. Thank you to Peter Smith for contributing so much of his time toward this project. Peter is in the process of researching these tracks & is finding it challenging to access historical data. Peter is requesting members (or friends/contacts of members) to contact a committee member if they have or know of someone who maybe able to provide information about the Corn Trail & Shoebridge Track.

What Else should you Know?

At the July AFA meeting it was brought to the committee's attention that some AFA members are of the opinion that the AFA committee is a "clicky" group. Reality is that, like so many organizations, there are the few individuals that will always put in the time required to maintain the organization. Any of AFA 500plus members is welcome to become a committee member or come to AFA meetings. Meetings are held in different areas so members can participate, so to those feeling left out, come to our meetings and participate, we look forward to seeing you at our next meeting in Bendethera.

AFA does not organize horse riding or 4WD group outings. Individual members arrange their own outings which are not under the auspice of AFA.

AFA volunteers – To assist with track maintenance the NPWS demands certain criteria to be met by those assisting them e.g. chainsaw license and restricted number of volunteers on each outing. Thank you to those who have placed their names on our volunteers list to assist with track maintenance. AFA will endeavor to give you as much notice as possible however because the work is done with the NPWS rangers this is not always the case. Like all government departments things do not always happen as they should.

Browsing through the Dept of Environment, Conservation & Climate Change website it is alarming to note the rapid increase in New Reserves, National Parks and State Conservation areas that have been gazetted since our last newsletter in May 2010. In May there were 6, in July there were 19 and in August there are 20 already up to August 13th! Making the total number of hectares approx. 199,425.02! No doubt the green movement were concerned that there could be a change in both State & Federal leadership so

someone was making the most of our present state & federal governments. Regardless of government, the same question still presents itself, how are all these hectares being managed? When it comes time to maintain bushwalking tracks so bushwalkers are kept on a pathway so they do not disturb the flora & fauna and assists some of them from getting lost, AFA does not have any names on their volunteer list from any 'green' movements such as the Colong Foundation or The Wilderness Society.

Conservation & ecological sustainability of our bushland is a good thing, however what is concerning is the transparency of how our tax dollars are spent on managing conservation. Browsing through the Colong Foundation website alarm bells continue to ring true. Part of their program proposal is that:

- "About 2,000,000 hectares of private wilderness is yet to be purchased" and the declaration of Deua Valley and Pilliga wilderness are their first priority. The site states it would like to re-establish the Dunphy Wilderness Fund so an allocation of \$20 million, in addition, to the recurrent funding of the NPWS budget for 5 years would permit acquisition of 75,000 hectares of wilderness land at \$200 per hectare.
- They are also proposing that NPWS set up a Wilderness Unit
- Also a list of alternative routes for the Bicentennial National Trail and designation of areas for use by 4WD vehicle users and horse riders in non-sensitive Crown Lands and State Forests.