

FROM THE COMMITTEE

The 'Strategic Directions for Horse Riding in National Parks' issued by NSW Environment Minister, Robyn Parker, are in the implementation stage. That is the local NPWS offices have been instructed accordingly and some progress is being made, albeit slowly. Some might say very slowly.

Access For All have recently attended two meetings with NPWS, the first at Narooma and a second at Bega. The first meeting, as per the Minister's instructions, was about re-establishing access for horses on bridle tracks, which had been closed by declared Wilderness areas. This is subject to a three year trial period. Three tracks were chosen for the trial, The Shoebridge Track, Georges Pack Track and W.D.Tarlinton Track. These three tracks after being made available to horse riders for the trial are subject to evaluation for any sort of environmental damage or general degradation. Even though we may feel confident, there should not be any problem, as these tracks were made for horses, we cannot take anything for granted as there is still a lot of politics to be played out regardless of any real damage. On the other hand, if all goes well, there will be an expansion of tracks with others available through wilderness areas. It was agreed and noted in NPWS work plan that they will, *"Explore potential access to all historic trails, pending the outcome of the wilderness pilots."*

According to the Minister's directions these tracks through wilderness were proposed to be available to riders from April 2013. The latest advice from NPWS office is that it will more likely be closer to year end. It is difficult to understand the delay, but in fairness to our local NPWS officers it seems they are under resourced and perhaps underfunded. Our Chairman, Garry Gowen has requested a meeting with the area manager to gain clarification and further information will be available for members at the next AFA meeting in June.

The Bega meeting with NPWS officers was to come up with a work plan to implement the Minister's instructions for horse riding generally in the National

Parks of the Far South Coast Region. AFA has been consistent in that we believe all the bridle tracks in National Parks should be available to responsible horse riders. To make all these tracks available NPWS need to confirm, map and document each track. In some cases it requires a change to the plan of management for a particular Park. This is particularly so in the case where a new track is being created. For example we have requested the track from Wambagugga to Snowball be recognized. This is important because as expressed in our petitions to Government it enables the access from the Clyde to Cobargo, once access is established through wilderness areas. A work Plan has been put together and this track could take three years to implement.

Naturally your Committee is concerned about the time frames involved. We have campaigned long and hard to achieve the progress so far and know it is not a time to relax. We intend to continue to be vigilant and supportive of our local NPWS officers to assist where possible, but we will not allow ourselves be brushed aside.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

The Select Committee inquiring into the Management of public land in New South Wales has released its report and recommendations to the NSW Parliament. This is the Committee before which Peter Smith on behalf of AFA gave evidence and put forward our philosophies about public access to National Parks and Wilderness with particular reference to historic bridle tracks. The Committee has made 12 recommendations. In brief they are that the NSW Government,-

1. Conduct an independent full scale assessment of management of public lands.
2. Impose a moratorium on the creation of any new national parks.
3. Develop a better process for converting land to national park.
4. Expand the thinning trials for river red gums along the southern Riverina.

5. Commission more independent research into the impact of different forestry management.
6. Comply with the same requirements for public and private land for fire management.
7. Actively support the apiary and commercial inland fishing industries.
8. Urgent action to resolve outstanding disputes between NPWS and its neighbours.
9. Investigate the Dividing Fences Act 1991. Should be amended to apply to public lands.
10. Identify appropriate areas for release of timber. Perhaps a swap with NPs and State Forests.
11. Provide further investment in promoting tourism and developing facilities in National Parks.
12. Improve engagement with Indigenous communities to explore opportunities.

The full report is available on the Committee's website www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/gpsc5

GENERAL NEWS

In March some AFA members assisted journalist, Laurelle Pacey with an article for South Coast Style magazine. The article will feature the great horse rides available on the south coast with particular reference to the historic bridle tracks and Access For All. The weekend involved rides from Woolla, up Woolla Creek and also up the Deua River so that Laurelle could take photos. The camp fire on the Saturday night helped with a few good yarns. The article will be published in the Winter Edition of the magazine out in June 2013.



Crossing the Deua, upstream from Woolla.



Terry, William and Isabella Hart on the original old Deua River bridle track, at Woolla.



Dan Hart at lunch

In May some members from AFA helped the NPWS with clearing the Shoebridge Track. Chairman, Garry, reported the track is in good condition after they removed a few big trees blocking the way. AFA have maintained a policy of working with NPWS to maintain these historic tracks through wilderness areas even though we have been unable to ride horses on them for some time. It is worth pointing out that perhaps due to our co-operation and consistent urging that the prospects are looking a lot better for the future. Thanks to the AFA members who have given their time.

THE DEUA RIVER TRACK BOOK- Now Available.

The original print run sold out some months ago, but due to high demand from those who missed out, the book has been reprinted. Copies are available at meetings or and can be ordered through a Committee member, or by post to Access For All, Locked Bag 10, PO BRAIDWOOD NSW 2622. The cost is \$22 plus \$1.40 postage.

MEMBERSHIP: Memberships For 2013-2014 are due in June. Please ensure your membership is up to date. Now that we are on the verge of gaining some "ACCESS" to public lands it is more important than ever we stay active. If we relax our efforts now we will certainly lose ground. 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:

29th June 2013- AGM- 10 a.m. Braidwood Services Club.
31st Aug & 30th Nor 2013. Time and venue to be advised.

AFA 2012 – 2013 COMMITTEE

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TO NATIONAL PARKS &
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