

Newspaws

For, of and by Q.NPWS staff

December 1984

Part of a report by the National Parks Minister, Peter McKechnie, on his visit to national parks in the United States earlier this year.

U.S. parks have their problems

A growing concern with Queensland's national parks system is the cost of providing and maintaining visitor facilities in money and staffing terms.

I paid particular attention to national parks in the United States which have a mix of visitor facilities including:

- Accommodation, camping grounds and other facilities owned and operated within parks by the National Parks Service;
- Hotels, lodges, camping grounds, food outlets, transport services and so on operated by private enterprise within parks on a concession basis; and
- Hotels, camping grounds and other facilities operated by private enterprise at the entrance to or adjacent to national parks.

I had discussions in Washington with the International Director of the U.S. National Parks Service, Mr Robert Milne, the Director of Concession Services and Mr David Gackenbach, the superintendents and staffs of the Shandoah, Yosemite, Muir Woods and Williamsburg parks.

Unlike Australia, the U.S. Parks Service is the main parks agency and, surprisingly, that Service has little interaction or exchange with the extensive parks systems run by the various American states or municipalities.

The main problem besetting the American parks network is population pressure to the point where some parks are catering for 3 000 000 visitors a year as in the case of Yosemite and Yellowstone.

A consistent point made to us by the American park authorities was the need for an overall plan pinpointing and reserving likely future park needs particularly near developing areas.

They also highlighted the need to have buffer zones around parks near built-up areas.

An example was Shandoah, a park very similar to the Bunya Mountains National Park, purchased by the State of Virginia and handed over to the United States National Parks Service in 1933. The park is some 80 miles west of the Washington-Baltimore-Richmond area with a population of over 4 million.

Previously, rural areas around the park have been developed for farms and subdivisions which now reach right to its boundaries. Animals

which once could freely roam in and out of the park have become a nuisance, particularly bears.

The Parks Service is now considering fencing the entire park — a staggering proposal for a park 92 miles long, 18 miles wide with 350 miles of boundary.

Similar problems are already evident in Queensland, particularly on the Gold Coast, around Brisbane, the Bunya Mountains and along the coastal strip north to Cairns.

The Shandoah National Park has an annual budget of \$4.5 million a year and collects entrance fees of about \$1 million a year from an estimated 1.2 million visitors.

It has a full time ranger staff of 90 plus 70 seasonal workers and some 300 employed by concessionaires.

The bulk of accommodation, camping and food facilities are provided by a principal concessionaire, Automatic Retailers Association (A.R.A.) which began as a vending machine company.

A.R.A. operates three lodges sleeping 900 people, cabins, five restaurants, gift shops, riding stables, three gas stations, camp stores and camping grounds.

All concessions in U.S. parks are handled by the concessions division in Washington, with a concessions manager stationed in each park.

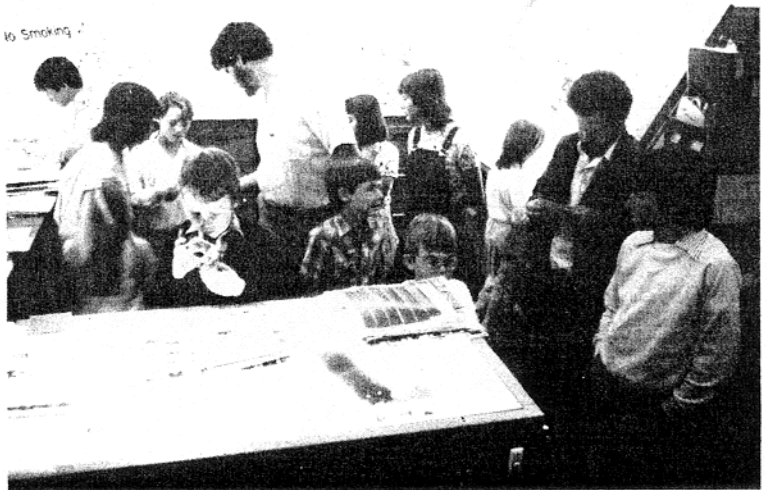
The Shandoah contract originally was worth \$3.5 million, but is currently due for renegotiation. The Parks Service is stipulating that the new contract must include an additional \$5 million worth of facilities, plus an increased percentage of gross takings.

Under U.S. law, concessionaires have an automatic right of renewal, subject to satisfactory performance and financial arrangements.

The Service is not happy about this, because it is a powerful weapon for the concessionaire in renewal negotiations.

To be continued

So this is work



Year of the Family had extra significance during the September school holidays when State employees were invited to bring their children to work for a morning. Tim Vanderkop and Dave Ritchie took charge of one group for a tour of the photographic display area at Head Office.

Life — never easy

The Service will be 10 years old in June.

We have come a long way. The road has not been easy, the work hard and constant. There is still much to be done.

I am proud to have played a central role in the Service's development. Without the support of the staff my task would have been impossible. I am indebted to you for your efforts.

With our 10th birthday coming it is inappropriate to consider ourselves a young organization finding its feet.

Recent changes and consolidation represent development maturity we must continue to reflect.

Life in the Service will never be easy. I have been constantly aware of your enthusiasm and sense of mission towards our work.

Maintain that dedication.

We have made some noticeable achievements during the past year. New parks have been gazetted. Unemployment funds have injected new life into our works programs.

Thank you and may the Spirit of Christmas and the New Year enrich your lives.

G. W. Saunders
Director.



Image of none other than our Sue Osborne as she appeared in the pages of leading Japanese newspaper Yomiuri Shimbun recently.

Their correspondent in Sydney, Mr N. Kotani, wrote of Sue during a series on the Great Barrier Reef.

His translation of the cutting has Sue at work at 8a.m. counting birds and finishing the day at 10p.m. by going jogging!

Col Limpus also got a mention but not a picture.

New faces

New manager, research and planning branch Dick Grimes is no stranger to many Service staff. His B.Sc. (Forestry) at University of Queensland was followed by 24 years in the Forestry Department, most recently as district forester, Yarraman. He's had a wide range of positions and contact with national park operations. In the near future, he hopes to be one-third out of the office, and two-thirds in with some leisure time for squash and sailing.

New manager, management services Lester Harth brings 19 years experience of public administration to the Service.

His BA. (U. of Q.) and management certificate helped in the Queensland Housing Commission and in the last 10 years as a Public Service Board management consultant.

Now a new family home is finished, Lester will be back to the gym and boating and fishing.



Psssst . . .

Head Office staff have succumbed to the less active ways of modern life.

The stairwell over three floors is no longer the busy passage of staff coming and going between desks.

Security and someone has determined we shall bear the daggers of other building users as we must travel but one floor by automatic lift.

Paul Grimshaw on the two-way at the Moggill open night had some very enquiring children.

Forestry's Mike Devery came back to tell Paul he would forward some suitable publications to answer the tricky questions on the life cycle of trees.

Marine Parks have hit the crisis button.

Terry Walker is sporting the latest in stress management — a neat frontal lobotomy scar.

Terry's story has something to do with a fall at sea but those in the know are nodding wisely.

We know the Service has an identity problem in some sections of the community but a recent wrong number on Trevor Vollbon's phone takes the prize.

An elderly woman caller was seeking the Queensland Council on the Ageing. Trevor was last seen reaching for the hair dye.



Grahame Walsh, always on the job for the Service, found this new prohibitive sign during a trip to Western Australia recently.

And trust Grahame to suffer the effects of a rare tick picked off and brought back for identification from Lawn Hill recently.

Stop! Spare that old sign. Technical Services Branch is in the market for all old signs, tree labels, brochures, posters, hat bands, badges and similar memorabilia.

The branch is seeking to establish a Service museum to preserve the early history of the national parks section of Forestry and the fauna conservation branch of DPI.

The early hand carved signs' tree tags now 10m above the ground and cloth fauna protection signs are sought.

Head office conference room might be a suitable repository during our 10th anniversary year next year.

It's history now but the odds must have been mighty long for Neil Krause to draw the same horse, Rose and Thistle, twice in separate Head Office Melbourne Cup sweeps. It's still coming of course.

Syd Curtis and Don Marshall were the lucky winners.

Another name change to upset the system. Sue Dawson married Peter Green on 24 November. She now looks to getting the phone calls for Ken Green instead of those for Noel Dawson!

Earl Saxon is on the staff in the Far Northern Region officially after getting a foretaste of the Service

earlier in the year when fire swept part of Barron Gorge National Park near Cairns.

A surgeon almost achieved the impossible — shutting up media unit officer Damian McGreevy — in Brisbane in October.

For three days, Damian barely uttered a word after an operation to remove a skin cancer from his bottom lip.

The effect was highlighted by a very neat line of black stitches. 'Scoops' is now back to his vocal best but warns all Service officers who spend the greater part of their day in the sun to take warnings seriously.

He says there is no fun in seeing a lump of your bottom lip in a kidney dish or for that matter a slice off your forehead as he has also suffered.

Five A4 and five A3 reports for John Winter 'The Specific Habitats of Selected Northeastern Australian Rainforest Mammals' have been mislaid between the Government Printing Office and Townsville.

The reports have a bright lime green cover. If you know where they are, ring John Winter in Townsville (077) 74 1411.

Is wildlife-RNC manager Peter Johnston jinxed? Mackay office averages one live animal to handle in two weeks.

In a matter of hours during Peter's recent visit, an abandoned possum, an echidna and a koala turned up.

Peter was able to release the koala in a favourable area along the Dawson River.

Rose Webster was reunited with her sugar glider Glenys after a long shot.

Glenys, raised after being grabbed from the jaws of a hungry cat as a baby, went for a glide and landed on the face of an ABC editor who called Brisbane Forest Park.

A few days later, Rose and BFPs Lin Martin happened to meet in a que where Rose's loss and BFPs find were matched.

Watch out Jenny Schultz (production unit). Her husband won the rolling pin award during a fun weekend at Binna Burra.

Talk about dedication. While many staff at Moggill stayed on for the open night voluntarily, Fred Prant went one better.

The night coincided with his wedding anniversary but Fred was there to the end.

Much of the night's success was due to Fred and his team of Joe Adair and Duncan Johnston.

Fred also fancies himself as an expert on wombats.

He was seen being mobbed as he cradled Channel 7s Winnie, a none too easy task since Winnie has grown more than some since her arrival in Brisbane.

He had one family convinced that the sleeping Winnie was in fact stuffed and her flickering eyelids were magic on his part.

Have you heard Gerri Kluver tell the story of the large German Shepherd left tied to the office-barracks verandah at Dundubara, Fraser Island?

A note left with the dog stated: 'We have gone for a drive through park. Decided to leave Sheba here for a couple of hours. Hope that is OK with you. Have signed permit to traverse. She may growl but she won't bite (sic)!

Views on a loo



Earth is flat

In conjunction with the 1983-84 annual report, the service has produced a 1:4 000 000 state map showing the service estate in relation to the recently adopted region and district boundaries.

These are superimposed over the network of biogeographic regions. Also shown are the various sections of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

Every Annual Report contains a cope of the map folded into a pocket inside the back cover. However further flat copies of the map have been produced and these will be made available upon request to the Technical Services Branch clerk.

Because of the necessary small scale of this map it was not considered practical to show the management areas.

It is hoped to be able to eventually show these on a 1:2 000 000 State map similar to the one presently produced by Forestry showing State Forests, Timber Reserves and National Parks.

Interleaves

Interleaves is a new column to feature snippets of information and views on interpretation.

Interpretation is the art of stimulating public awareness and appreciation of cultural and natural heritage and communicating nature conservation ideals and practices. When we interpret our parks and wildlife, we try to help people understand and enjoy them.

Interpretation is more than environmental education, information and public relations but includes elements of all these.

The six secret ingredients of interpretation are interest, influence, imagination, intrigue, innovation and involvement. Whenever you do any interpretation, you should try to use most of these ingredients.

What's new? The good news is that the Interpretation Manual has been printed. The bad news is that you've only got a couple of weeks to get a copy, read it and put it into practice for Christmas.

The Manual provides guidelines and helpful hints on face-to-face interpretation (guided walks, talks, spotlighting, slide shows etc).

A Junior Ranger Manual will soon be available for park staff and volunteers who run Junior Ranger programs. Frances Hrdina hopes to get the Manual into the parks by Christmas.

More than 80 field staff from every region except Northern have attended all or part of workshops on service productions and written communication. The products of these workshops are trickling into the system and some of these staff will soon be able to show their good work.

Several visitor information sheets have been produced in recent months. These include Blue Lake, Cape Palmerston, Lakefield, Glass House Mountains and Eurimbula.

The new species list paper has proven popular and many parks and districts have produced lists of birds, mammals and reptiles.

Signs are an increasingly popular interpretive technique. Two signed self-guiding walks are being produced — Kinaba and Eungella National Park.

Display planning in production was a major topic at a recent workshop for service interpretive staff held at Bardon Professional Development Centre. Three information centre displays are being renewed this year — Carnarvon, Kinaba and Girraween. Three new information centres are planned — Cardwell, Heron Island and Burleigh Head.

Technical Services Branch co-ordinates Service interpretation. Staff are located at Head Office, Townsville (Marc Hockings, Fiona Davie and Paul Minton), Moggill (Gil Field and Elizabeth Naumann) and Toowoomba (Gordon Stone).



Mission Beach senior overseer Ted Long with his wife and friends at his retirement on 5 November. He is believed to be the Service's longest serving employee. Over 33 years, he worked at Palmerston, Chillagoe, Davies Creek and Mission Beach. Ted's bush skills are renowned and many rainforest walking tracks are his work. In retirement, Ted will have more time for his hobby of wood working on his son's property near Charters Towers.