

Newspaws

For, of and by Q.NPWS staff

March 1985



Our model ranger

Centre-piece displays of the Carnarvon interpretive centre are being built at the Queensland Agricultural College, Lawes.

That's our Felicity Prociw at left in K. Condon's QAC Photos picture working on the first model, a scale model of the gorge showing the major features of all areas used by the public.

The identified uses of the model are predominantly interpretive. It shows landforms, vegetation distribution and the relationship between major interpretive features. The model may be used with the brochure

Exploring Carnarvon Gorge for visitor centre-based interpretive activities.

Additional benefits have become apparent in discussions with management staff. Its accurate three dimensional representation can be used to explain planning concepts with groups unfamiliar with conventional maps. Of course, it will be a briefing aid for emergency and fire suppression activities too.

The process of model manufacture has been documented carefully and will be the subject of a detailed report in conjunction with Q.A.C.

Concluding a report by the National Parks Minister, Peter McKechnie, on his visit to United States national parks last year.

No obligations in U.S. contract

The Yosemite Park and Camp Curry Trading Company has a monopoly on all facilities in Yosemite National Park.

The Parks Service contends that because that monopoly cannot be broken, even when the contract comes up for renewal in 1992, the concessionaire is under no obligation to provide the improved or additional facilities the Service considers necessary.

For example, the main hotel in Yosemite was built of wood in 1927 and, apart from being booked out 12 months of the year, constitutes a major fire risk.

The concessionaire has refused the Service's request that the hotel be rebuilt in fireproof materials or that a second hotel be constructed.

The U.S. Parks Service's advice was that no concessionaire or lessee be given a complete monopoly or exclusive clause after a defined 'pioneering' period to recoup the initial investment. The U.S. Government enacted a Concessions Policy act for National Parks in 1965.

The U.S. Parks Service carries out a marketing and feasibility study in each park and draws up an overall development plan. Tenders are then called for the whole or part of the various facilities, to a design and overall cost determined by the Service.

Leases range from 5 to 30 years, based on the capital investment considered necessary, with a rental review each 5 years.

Facilities are inspected annually and if found unsatisfactory, are inspected at lease quarterly the following year.

If there is no improvement, the lease can be cancelled.

At the first renewal of the lease, the Parks Service lists all improvements to be made by the lessee.

Overall, the U.S. Parks Service, given the chance to start afresh, would have preferred:

- A buffer zone around all parks to avoid conflicts between conservation and development needs;

- All major accommodation, camping, transport and other facilities to be located outside park entrances to avoid congestion and environmental damage; or alternatively to be widely dispersed throughout the park rather than concentrated in pick locations.

- Other than foot traffic, transport within parks to be confined to bus tours with private vehicles prohibited;

- No permanent monopolies of facilities within parks by any one concessionaire;

- No automatic right of renewal or possessory interest by concessionaires;

- Concessionaires be required to provide unprofitable services offset against profitable facilities;

- A percentage of entrance fees to be retained in each park for specific improvements to public facilities;

- Park services such as water supplies, sewerage, garbage disposal, accommodation for concessionaire's employees and supervision be a planning priority in parks.

Yosemite also highlighted two other parks problems that Queensland will face increasingly — crime and rescue services.

This park has its own enforcement service of specially trained rangers, a horse patrol and its own fire and rescue service. Park facilities include its own court with a resident U.S. magistrate, a jail and hospital.

With a transient population of 3 000 000 a year, Yosemite is prey to all the problems of crime including theft, drugs, rape and murder.

At least 50 people a year die in hiking and climbing accidents. While I was there, one climber died and another was injured in a fall.

The park has its own fire patrol and rescue helicopter and can call on the nearby U.S. Navy base for assistance, as happened in this case.

Yosemite has a horse patrol of a dozen rangers and 30 horses and pack mules.

The Park Superintendent made the point that the horses were more in keeping with the Park, could reach most points faster than a vehicle and patrols could stay out for up to a fortnight at a time.

He also made a point that should be considered by the Queensland Government — that all park rangers, in common with other similar officers in the United States — are put through an introductory course in law enforcement, self defence, search and rescue work and public relations at the F.B.I. Academy in Washington.

I would recommend that Queensland officers in similar situations such as park rangers, Boating Patrol officers and so on be given a similar introductory course of about a month to six weeks at the Police Academy in Brisbane. I plan to encourage private enterprise to assist in the provision of visitor facilities in some of our national parks in Queensland. At a later date I plan to put a submission to Cabinet on future parks policy in Queensland including the question of admission charges and the training of parks staff.

The saga of Charlie McCoffus

A field overseer named Charlie McCoffus. Worked all day in the field and all night in the office. Checking contracts and vouchers and estimates too. To be picked all to bits by the Brisbane crew. For the boys in Brisbane in the double-lensed specs. Their sallow complexions and white collar necks. Care not for the time or the money they waste. If a carbon is missing, a comma misplaced. They bounce back the papers with ill conceived jeers To harass the hard working field overseers. To get back to Charlie, he struggled along Till an ache in his head told him something was wrong. He went to a doctor and 'Doctor', said he, 'There's a buzz in my brain — what's the matter with me?' The Doctor said, 'Gad, what a narrow escape. But a quick operation will put you in shape. Your brain's overworked like a motor run down. And you're flirting with death each time you turn round. I must take out your brain for a complete overhauling. In the interim you take a rest from your calling.' So Charlie McCoffus went under the knife. He struggled home brainless and kissed his own wife. While the good old physician and two other men Were putting his brain back in order again. Well the weeks rolled along and Charlie McCoffus. Never called for his brain at the medico's office. The doctor got worried, gave Charlie a ring. Said, 'You'd better come over and get the damned thing.' 'Thanks, Doc, I don't need it,' said Charlie McCoffus, 'I'm being transferred to the Brisbane office.'

(With acknowledgements to Public Administrator Review).

Lakefield plan

Park staff of Lakefield National Park will soon have a management plan for their 537 000 hectares of rivers, flood plains, and forests.

They have returned home from a management planning workshop at Cairns in which they were able to give their views on how Lakefield should be managed.

The workshop, organised by regional officers, was also attended by officers from Lake Eacham and Brisbane.

After three days, Ron Teece, Richard Carrigan and Ron Stannard were glad to return to the vast landscape and serenity of Landscape.

Thanks again to Jon Walsh and his long-suffering wife for their hospitality Cairns style.

Next issue

Your next Newspaws could be doubled in size. Your informative, humorous and in-house material is required.

Deadline for text and black and white pictures is 15 May at Head Office. Do it now!

Would you buy a car from these men?



Thank goodness!! For they know nothing about cars, we think. Recognise Service officers (and lecturer Bob Beeton at right) photographed during a break when they attended a project planning short course at Queensland Agricultural College, Lawes.

Psssst . . .

Media always has a way with words. How about 'state-of-the-art relief facilities' reported recently.

That turns out to mean a new pit toilet!

We all know that Moggill is in an expansion phase but Tricia Gilmour has taken things literally.

Don't be surprised to see her blossoming forth over the next few months before the pitter patter of little feet about August.

Chris Murphy's inter-office memo to Don Marshall somehow ended in the post at Toowoomba.

Never mind. Australia Post delivered the envelope to Don's former employer at Bowen Hills from where it was re-directed.

No permits to move required for

the battle of the dragons over two certain lizards on Head Office 6th floor.

Peter Johnson's pictures are a feature of a new book *The World of Shooting*, about the great bird shoots of the world. Our wildlife/RNCs Peter Johnston denies all knowledge.

Many a park officer could do with some of the new soap which doubles as a mosquito repellent.

Only trouble is that in those places where it is most needed the lather never dries to leave the invisible non-sticky film which is supposed to work for 10 hours.

Lauren Beth Oxnam, born 9 January without giving parents Suzanne and Warren very much notice.

Management officer Warren, working on a new generation of management plans, has started one of his own it seems.

Service staff have only until 31 March to enter the Wilderness Photographer of the Year award. Three categories — Man in the Wilderness, the Wild Environment, and Wildlife. Buy *Action Outdoors* magazine or write PO Box 200, Chelsea, 3196.

Even if you don't watch TV, make sure your kids keep an eye on upcoming Wombat programs.

That's the message from Marine Parks' Len Zell and Geoff Mercer who feature with Queensland Museum staff in segments taped on and around Lady Elliot Island recently.

Videotape of a recent co-production on dugong is available for viewing by interested staff. Contact Len Zell to arrange a show, say one lunchhour.

Set for take-off

Q.NPWS was chosen to be a pilot department to implement the Government Accounting Package.

This basically is an accounting system that maintains records of commitments (orders placed), expenditure (invoices processed) and account code information.

Such a budgetary control system allows each district manager to receive feedback of available funds.

While the Service will start processing expenditure on this Package by mid-March, full recording of orders placed will start in early July.

Orders remaining unpaid at 1 July will be 'loaded' onto the Package and a carryover

figure ascertained.

From this date, the Service will be the only government department in the world operating on commitment accounting using the Government Accounting Package.

This has been at a time when the Service has also provided a Queensland public service first by operating program budgeting.

It is hoped that the trials and tribulations we have all gone through in this interim year of conversion will pay off in 1985/86.

Thank you for your patience in the accounting area.

John Halliday.

Logs handled with ease

Staff at Eungella National Park, west of Mackay, have solved the problem of manoeuvring heavy logs used for parking area barriers.

The front mounted winch on the



Service vehicle now allows the collecting and positioning of one-half tonne logs by just one person (see picture).

A tow ball mounted on the bulbar beneath the winch allows the positioning of the trailer in front of the vehicle where the winch pulls the logs up a heavy steel gauge slide onto the trailer.

To transport the logs to the parking area, the loaded trailer is coupled to the rear of the vehicle in the conventional manner.

The next stage of the operation is to raise the log off the ground and place it onto short gouged log footings.

A special pyramid designed and constructed by Mike Provic and Craig Norman (pictured), incorporates a swivel pulley wheel that accommodates the winch rope, thus enabling a vertical lift.

The short gouged footings are placed into position and the log lowered.

This time saving device, requiring little physical exertion and lessening the risk of personal injury, has proved invaluable in redevelopment work at Eungella.

Peter Chapman (Burleigh Head) has converted an old council shelter shed adjoining the park to a Service information shelter 'shop front' after negotiations with the supportive Gold Coast City Council.

Darryl Jeffress (Moggill) has designed demountable outdoor noticeboards for the Burleigh shelter and now has refined the design for testing in the field at various parks. You'll see them soon

at Moreton Island, Maijala National Park and Cooloola National Park (Kinaba).

Neil Hansell (Lamington) has constructed an information shelter at Green Mountains with bush pole uprights and recycled moss and lichen encrusted tiling. Neil's previous outdoor theatre screen design is now the basis for a screen to be erected at Moreton Island.

Conversion of a Service shelter shed at Green Mountains to accommodate a 'recycled' open fire canopy has made it an ideal venue for holiday interpretive activities during the frequent rains.

Peter Hazelgrove (Sundown) has constructed a 'donkey' hot water service for campers from a horizontally mounted 200 litre drum with bucket filled water inlet funnel and simultaneous hot water outlet once the whole contraption has been wood fired for an hour. Further details contact Peter.

Neil Hansell (Lamington National Park) has produced an hexagonal wood frame and car tyre inset 'mould' for open fire place construction for campers.

John Hughes (Lamington National Park) welded together five spaced star pickets with two picket off-cut horizontals that were then placed within a cemented pathway to the ranger station as a boot scrap. Ingenious recycling!

Mike Hall and staff (Springbrook) are converting an old schoolhouse on national park into an office and visitor centre. Built in 1915 the Springbrook school was found to have cedar and silkyoak window frames once paint was removed.

Legally alerted

Marine park rangers and other field officers are overcoming the barriers in providing a comprehensive program of protection for our famous reef.

The first investigation course for inspectors appointed under the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act was held in Rockhampton.

The week-long course of lectures, practical sessions and a visit to the Rockhampton Courthouse was presented by Sen. Constable Doug Smith of Queensland Police legal and training section.

Other local representatives included officers from Rockhampton Police and Harbours and Marine Department.

Mr Simon Woodley of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority attended as well as Mr Ian Bates of the Commonwealth Department of Public Prosecutions who lectured on Commonwealth law particularly as it applies to the marine environment.

Co-ordinated by Wendy Dent of Q.NPWS Management Services Section, the course proved to be one of the most effective and popular of its kind.

Certainly the presentation and style of Constable Smith played no small part in its success.

Q.NPWS officers in attendance included Peter Shanahan, Mike Osmond, Zena Dinesen, Mick Simmons, Gordon La Praik, Rob Hughes, Dennis Devine and Dean Lee.

A second course, for those who missed out is scheduled for late April in Cairns.

Chuck Wilder.
CMO Maritime.