

# LCC Mallee Study Area – 1976 comment on proposed recommendations

## HAMILTON FIELD NATURALIST'S CLUB

### NOTES AND COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION'S FOR THE MALLEE STUDY AREA

#### A. PARKS

The recommendation that the National Parks Service be the sole management authority for the two national parks, the state park and the regional park within the study area is strongly endorsed and highly commended. The Council's general recommendation that there is an urgent need to make additional field staff and finance available is critical to the successful implementation of the recommendations.

It must be stressed that the National Parks Service is the only appropriate, objective and competent authority capable of managing the regional park at Lake Albacutya (recommendation A4). The present state of mismanagement of this area can be regarded as indicative of the role that local vested interests (strongly influenced by narrow parochial demands) have played in the abuse of the area. It must be emphasized that determinations of the Council are for all Victorians irrespective of their historical alliances. The foreshore area around parts of Lake Albacutya managed by the Lake Albacutya Committee of Management has no doubt given the Council's field staff a graphic illustration of the problems that poor management can initiate. Lack of attention to litter, off-road recreation vehicles, uncontrolled grazing, illegal cropping and illegal shooting of protected fauna have brought about a progressive deterioration in the area. It is quite essential that professional management through the National Parks Service is introduced so that the ineffective committee of management system is not perpetuated or replaced by some other management body without the advantage of professional expertise.

Transfer of control for vermin and noxious weed eradication programmes to the National Parks Service (provided that the necessary support in the form of finance is available) should result in an improvement in these problems, particularly at Pine Plains, Lake Albacutya and in the Kulkyn Forest. The present system of responsibility for these problems leaves much to be desired and cannot be regarded as being as thorough as the ~~consequent measures~~ which would be available to the National Parks Service through their cooperative agreement with the Vermin and Noxious Weeds Board.

Specific criticisms and proposed modifications of the recommendations are as follows :

#### National Parks

##### A1. Wyperfeld

(c) that Pine Plains be gradually resumed (as provided for under the Land Act Section 125 (j) ) and that the remainder of the lease pass to the management of the National Parks Service at the next expiry of the last 21 year lease period to be granted. In the interim proposed stocking rates are to be controlled by negotiation between the lessee, the National Parks Service and the Soil Conservation Authority.

A2. Hattah-Kulkyne

(c) grazing of domestic stock be phased out within five years and in the interim stocking rates be controlled by liason between the Forests Commission and the National Parks Service.

(d) . . . . . (to follow existing statement) and special emphasis be placed on cleaning up the large accumulation of litter deposited on the frontage and special funds be provided for this purpose. In future camping areas are to be restricted in number and properly controlled and managed.

(i) special emphasis be placed on the problem of noxious weeds particularly the eradication of Datura sp.

Regional Park #4 Lake Albacutya

(e) grazing on the dry bed of the lake be permitted at the discretion of the managing authority provided that vegetation on lakeside frontages is protected by adequate means e.g. electric fencing.

State Park A3 Pink Lakes

Park

The recommendations are inadequate in the provision of adequate/areas. In particular setting aside of sufficient representative areas of the Raak Land System in particular has been seriously neglected. Specht, Roe and Boughton (Conservation of Major Plant Communities in Australia and Papua New Guinea, 1974, pp. 500, 501) list two low shrubland and open shrubland alliances found in the Raak system whose conservation is only poorly catered for. (Atriplex vesicaria - Kochia pyramidata)alliance and Arthrocnemum spp alliance).

The proposed Pink Lakes State Park only goes a very small part of the way in reserving such areas and does not include such features as the gypsum deposits characteristic of the Raak plain west of Hattah. The solution to this inadequacy is to expand the proposed State Park to incorporate all the uncommitted crown land to the north and north-east of its present boundaries. Gypsum extraction should be excluded from at least two of the larger N2 areas so that representative areas of the vegetation and gypsum deposits are preserved intact on these gypsum-rich sites.

C. REFERENCE AREAS

C6 Wymlet Reference Area is surrou

This is surrounded on three sides by crown land recommended for alienation

F1. This is directly inconsistent with the Council's intention that the Reference Areas should be surrounded by a buffer zone. Recommendation F1 should be changed to R1 Uncommitted Crown Land and be withheld from alienation irrespective of its present tenure.

#### O. WATER SUPPLY AND DRAINAGE

There is a great deal of evidence that in the past low-lying areas have been drained by drainage trusts and local government bodies under the auspices of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. These activities have often conflicted with the value of these areas for nature conservation particularly in providing habitat for wading and other water-birds. To ensure that this does not occur in future all recommendations (not just O21-22) should read :

"...and that they be reserved under section 14 of the Land Act 1958 and managed by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission in consultation with the Fisheries and Wildlife Division".

#### R. MILITARY TRAINING

Present arrangements are ad hoc with ineffective monitoring procedures.

The army should be required to make available its own monitoring resources-e.g. aerial photography remote sensing techniques-to monitor the effects of its operations. It is only by such means that the long term/short term effects of such manoeuvres can be adequately assessed.

Hamilton Field Naturalists Club Submission  
on Proposed Recommendations for Mallee Study  
Area.

20 June 1976