

**WARBY RANGE
PROTECTION SOCIETY
1978**

Warby group seeks more members

An all out drive for members is to be conducted by the Warby Protection Society.

The Society has sent circulars to all community organisations in Wangaratta and neighboring areas asking for their support and donations in their fight to preserve the Warbys.

Treasurer, Mrs T. Kentmann, said that the response so far was encouraging, although not "overwhelming".

She thought that many organisations would not have had time to put the society's proposals before members.

In their circular the society said it had been active in opposing a lease application by ICI and generally in attempting to "conserve this oasis of nature from the depredation of subdividers".

Last September, following a seminar on the Warbys, various planning authorities were urged to protect the ranges in the interests of the people.

"It is important to maintain this interest and concern in the land use of the Warby Range, and to this end the WPS invites you to

become a member", the circular said.

Although most of the Warbys falls within the Shire of Benalla, any mining activity is likely to be on the face of the ranges which can be seen by Wangaratta and district people, who, the society feels, have the greatest interest in the area.

A recent amendment to an Interim Development Order by Wangaratta Shire to incorporate escarpments and conservation zones in the Warbys to restrict development in the interests of conservation, has been published in the Government Gazette.

Imperial Chemical Industries has taken out a lease application and is prospecting for minerals for metals additives.

If anyone is interested in joining the society, they should send donations — \$2 for individuals, \$3 for families, and \$15 for life membership — to Mrs T. Kentmann, treasurer, 10 Dixon St., Wangaratta.

Chronicle 25/1/78

WARBY MINING NOT ECONOMIC SAYS ICI

BY
KEN
DYASON

The mining company ICI (Australia) Ltd. will not mine for minerals in the Warby Ranges.

A company spokesman revealed this morning that ICI has relinquished its exploration licences in the ranges.

The company says that test drilling in the ranges has shown that mining for minerals would not be an economic proposition.

The ICI spokesman said this morning that assay results of samples from the 14 percussion drill holes put down towards the end of last year had been obtained.

These had shown mining would not be an economic proposition.

"The assay showed a low fluoride level, and X-ray scans showed other elements under economical levels.

The company had therefore written to the Minerals and Energy Department indicating it wished to immediately relinquish its exploration licence over the area.

A copy of the assay reports would be forwarded to the department.

The spokesman said ICI had primarily been interested in mining for fluoride.

Minerals

However, even if fluoride levels had been low, and some other minerals had been available, possibly gold,

mining could have been feasible.

But the assays had shown the levels of all minerals were below that required for mining to be able to proceed.

"The assay will probably be of benefit to those in the area who are opposed to mining", the spokesman said.

"It will probably mean no other organisation will bother to explore for minerals because of the poor results obtained by our work", he said.

The spokesman said ICI now had no further interest in the Warby Range area.

"There will definitely be no drilling or mining", he commented.

Objected

The news has been welcomed by organisations who are opposed to any exploration of the Warby Ranges.

President of the Warby Range Protection Society, Mr Bill Emslie, said his organisation had received a

letter from ICI advising of the decision.

Similar letters had been sent to all those organisations and individuals who objected to ICI's activities in the area.

"It is a load off our minds", Mr Emslie commented.

Mr Emslie said the society was opposed to any sort of activity that could harm the environment of the range.

"Mining would have been a most serious development", he commented.

"The decision by ICI has confirmed what many of us have always believed—that there is not enough minerals in the ranges to warrant mining.

"And now the decision has been announced we are very pleased".

Mr Emslie said the society would continue its fight to preserve the range.

"We are still opposed to housing development in the area, and see the amendment no. 8 to the Wangaratta Shire's planning scheme as being a most important step.

"This amendment prohibited development along the escarpment zone, and limited development in other areas to subdivisions of not less than 50ha.

"We are now hopeful that Benalla Shire will introduce similar restrictions", he commented.

The mayor of Wangaratta, Cr. Kevin Howard, said he was delighted with the ICI announcement.

"Right from the start the city opposed the granting of an exploration licence to ICI.

"This was a unanimous decision of the council, and I am sure it is the view of the council today that the latest news is very welcome", he commented.

Cr. Howard said the results of testing undertaken by ICI could well have "answered forever" the question of whether there was the possibility of mining in the ranges.

He was hopeful the results would prove mining was not possible in the range, and that other companies would be discouraged from attempting to carry out exploration in the area.

revised
6/3/1978

SHIRE STRIKES 'HAPPY MEDIUM' ON SUBDIVISION

An increase in minimum subdivision size in the Warby Ranges has been announced under Benalla Shire Council's new town plan.

The increase from 16 ha to 40 ha subdivisions has been designed to stop uncontrolled development of the ranges.

The subdivision amendment brings Benalla Shire in line with Wangaratta Shire Council's regulations on land development in the Warbys.

Wangaratta Shire Engineer, Mr. Frank Smith, said that his shire also had a minimum 50 ha subdivision in the conservation zone of the ranges.

"This is on a flat area of the ranges.

"And no subdivision is permitted whatsoever on the escarpment of the ranges", he said.

Happy medium

Benalla Shire believes they have struck a "happy medium" with subdivision regulations on the Warby Ranges.

Under the previous 16 ha ruling, a number of developmental problems could have arisen, shire engineer, Mr. Don White, said.

He said the council was concerned that small size lots would have made it

difficult to provide adequate roads and fire fighting facilities.

Mr. White said the subdivisional amendment would stop any haphazard development of the area.

"The amendment was made to preserve the area but at the same time allow controlled development.

"Py doing this we have



FRANK SMITH

tried to strike a happy medium for open subdivision within the Warby Ranges".

He said the new ruling would also "reduce any future large population density.

President agrees

President of the Glenrowan and East Warby Action Committee, Mr. Bob Tivendale, said he agreed overall with the Benalla subdivision amendment.

"The idea is obviously to stop natural bushland being destroyed.

"But we are not that one-eyed where we built in

the ranges on small lots and we are not concerned about other people wanting to do the same thing", he added.

The Benalla Town Plan was now on public display at the Benalla Shire Offices until April 11.

Any objections to the plan had to be lodged by that date.

15/12/1975

An easy day in the hills

BUSHWALKING

by SANDRA BARDWELL

THE 12-KILOMETRE walk described this week is within the Warby State Forest and could occupy an easy day or a more energetic half-day.

It takes in a good representative sample of the best features of the Warby Range: undulating forested plateau dotted with granite boulders, extensive views and examples of unusual plant species.

To reach the starting point, on a tributary of Chinaman Creek, follow the Yarrowonga road from Wangaratta for nearly three kilometres to a Y junction by the golf course. Take the left fork in the direction of signposts to Wangandary and Ryans Lookout and follow a straight, mostly unsurfaced road westwards for nearly seven kilometres. Turn right at a T junction then left 1.4 kilometres further on, following the Thoona road as it climbs steeply onto the plateau.

Two kilometres past the turnoff to Ryans Lookout turn right along Adams Road for just over two kilometres to a T junction. From here follow the signpost to the fire tower and some 250 metres further on veer right at a Y junction. Almost immediately, travelling in a north-easterly direction,

continue for 1.1 kilometres to yet another Y junction and swing left along Cox's Road (the road to the right leads to the fire tower). Follow Cox's Road north-west for about 800 metres and park in an open area on the left just after a creek crossing.

There are a number of informal camp sites or picnic areas in this pleasant, lightly-timbered valley on the upper reaches of Chinaman Creek. Map and compass work is called for on this walk. Alternatively, it would be possible — but less enjoyable — to walk along roads for a large part of the journey.

Set out in a south-westerly direction (from GR 281860 — see map note below) along a low, fairly open spur, gaining height gradually. After 1.5 kilometres cross an unsurfaced forest road (GR 271859) and continue in the same direction over a low hillock for another 700 metres, then swing gradually west and north-west. One kilometre further on, through grassy open forest, you will reach another forest road (GR 259833). Cross the road and turn northwards along a fairly well-defined ridge.

Walk parallel to the road for just over one kilometre and then continue generally northwards, losing height in open country. By now the pinnacle of Mt. Killawarra should be visible ahead and slightly east

of north. From the rocky summit the highlight of the very pleasant view is the beautifully-folded Baranduda Range near Beechworth, to the north-east.

To vary the return journey, set a compass course for the fire tower, clearly visible to the south-east. Although the tower naturally disappears from sight sometimes on this cross-country route, you can check your direction from the top of each ridge along the way. The course takes you across four valleys, all but the last steep-sided, and separated by spurs of varying widths. If you are exactly on course, the last creek-cum-valley is crossed very close to the starting point of the walk. Neither scrub nor boulders presents a major hazard.

The outlook from the fire tower is well worth the extra distance, and includes the Buffalo Range and Mt. Cobbler to the east and south-east respectively. Return to the start of the walk either along the road (see map) or across country.

MAP: The Wangaratta 1:100,000 sheet (Division of National Mapping) covers the area and is just adequate for reliable navigation.

The Warby Range Protection Society is working to protect the range from harmful development and to preserve its natural values. The Secretary may be contacted at PO Box 226, Wangaratta, 3677.



Age

Wonderful Warbies

EXTENDING northwards from Glenrowan in an almost straight line for about 25 km and overlooking Wangaratta on the way the Warby Range is highly prized by many people

Bushwalkers, orienteers, horse riders, picnickers, bike riders, shooters, orchardists, trail bike riders and resident landowners all find the range particularly attractive.

Inevitably the aims and action of developers and preservers of the status quo conflict. An acceptable solution to the problem is very difficult to find when popular interest in both outdoor recreation and hobby farming is growing. The dilemma is aggravated by the fragile ecology of the Warby Range, which cannot absorb the impact of heavy, ill-considered human activity.

Yet, this rather pessimistic introduction should not obscure the fact that the Warby Range is a fascinating place, and for bushwalkers interested in fairly short walks, well worth a visit.

A substantial part of the northern section of the range is Crown land reserved as the Killawarra and Warby

State Forests, while to the south the several, separate blocks of the Warby Range State Park are surrounded by privately held allotments, many freehold and uncleared.

A complex geological history has produced an undulating plateau amid flat or gently rolling farming country. Waterfalls spill over the steep eastern escarpment and canyons indent its rocky face while the western slopes are more gently graded. The larger part of the range is composed of granite; sedimentary rocks occur in the Killawarra State Forest at the far northern end. The range generally rises from north to south, culminating in the highest peak, Mt. Glenrowan (514 metres), guarding the town of the same name.

This structure is fundamental to the attractiveness of the Warby landscape: steep-sided, lightly timbered valleys, scattered tors and large boulders on the main ridges and spurs, rocky peaks and small, cascading streams. From a distance, the scattered clearings for farms, holiday homes and orchards add

large bushy plant with curved and spurred leaves; it blooms brilliantly and profusely in late spring.

Other wildflowers to be seen include dense mint bush and fringe myrtle, as well as 30 different types of orchid. More than 140 species of birds have been observed there and amongst the native fauna likely to be seen are the grey kangaroo, black wallaby, echidna, brush-tailed and glider possums.

Unsurfaced roads, most in good condition, criss-cross the range, offering a choice of approaches from the east (Wangaratta) or west (Glenrowan).

Spring and early summer are the best times for a visit. Many of the creeks would almost certainly be dry by late December. Camping is permissible in the State Forest. Alternatively, Glenrowan or Wangaratta could be used as a base to explore the range. As an unfinished jigsaw, the State Park is suitable only for very short strolls. Ryans Lookout and picnic area on the Wangandary to Thoona road is worth a stop for the views east and south-eastwards towards the Baranduda and Buffalo ranges.

a certain rural charm to the scenery, although on closer inspection the aspect is sometimes marred by the slow-healing scars of bush clearing.

There are a number of good lookouts on the range affording panoramic views of the plains and low hills to the west and the long, spectacular chain of mountains across the eastern skyline.

The open forest of the granitic section of the Warby Range is an association of at least five types of box, red stringybark, blakeleys gum, and occasional small stands of red ironbark. Copses of white cypress (or native) pine are not difficult to find, but the main botanical interest derives from several species of smaller plants.

Many of the plentiful giant grass-trees are truly magnificent, growing in small groves and looking not unlike a group of wise old men deep in discussion. With a maximum height of 4.5 metres, the fronds of many specimens fall to the ground hiding the rough black trunk.

A type of sandalwood and two acacias are found only on the Warby Range. Of the latter, spur-wing wattle is a rather

At her request the W.R.P.S. provided Sandra Bardwell with information re the Warbys which, she told us was of use to her when writing this article.

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