



Echo from the Mountains

Vol 1 – No 1 – 2003 Victorian High Country Huts Association Inc - A0043804Y

Welcome - Echo from the Mountains, a newsletter designed to keep you informed of what's happening with the Victorian High Country Huts Assoc. Inc.

Following the blazes that began on the 8th January 2003, and have swept through the entire High Country region, a conversation between two authors, Dianne Carroll and Fiona Magnussen was the beginning of this association.

The path of the massive fire has destroyed livestock, property, fences, wildlife and our beautiful country, also numerous historical huts.

For many, these huts hold some unique treasured memories that will never be forgotten. Some of these huts are very popular, whilst others are hidden and known to just a few.

The loss of Horse Hair Hut has been a huge lost our heritage. Being the oldest hut in the Alpine region, and being registered with the National Trust, it held so many historical aspects to our huts. Its construction highlighted the unique pioneering skills of our fore fathers, the style was a masterpiece of yesteryears living, the interior held the mementos of the thousands that stayed in her over 130 years and the chimney of corrugate warmed the hearts of all that boiled the billy during their stay.

We can not change what has happened, but we can join together and unite as one to ensure the safe havens that are scattered throughout the region are retained, repaired, protected, preserved and where necessary, rebuild for the many generations to follow. Ensure that they enjoy the remaining evidence of our heritage as we and the generations before us have enjoyed it.

Whilst each hut has its own story, served its own purpose, and constructed to the times of its birth, all of them join as one in a network of safe havens for those in need, the loss of just one, breaks that network and could in years to come result in the difference between life and death.

We set out the feelers to see if there was enough interest to form the Victorian High Country Huts Association. The response has been beyond belief. People from all walks of lives and a variety of interests have made contact, from individuals to LARGE organisations.

We have to ensure the procedures and avenues are explored. We have made initial contact with Parks and DSE, who have welcomed our endeavours, and we are confident that we can work with them to ensure the future and heritage of the High County

Currently we are making every effort to have a full assessment of each hut, but this will be a slower than wanted process.

The founding of this Association is as important to the High Country as the Huts themselves.

The latest update of the losses known and confirmed in Victoria as follows, but this list is not complete as we have many to assess yet.

1. Battys Hut
2. Bogong Creek Hut (2)
3. Bon Accord Hut
4. Boyles Hut
5. Briggs Logging Camp
6. Buckwong
7. Burnside Hut
8. Charlie Creek Hut
9. Damm Hut
10. Dr Searles
11. Dunstans Logging Camp (5)
12. Euco Stephenson's Hut
13. Federation Hut
14. Horsehair Hut (3)
15. Huggins Hut (Honeymoon)
16. Long Plain
17. McNamaras Hut, Buckety Plain
18. Michell Hut
19. MacFarlanes Flat
20. Mt Leinster Hut
21. O'Rourke's Hut
22. Quintet Mine Hut (2)
23. Roney's Hut
24. Red Hut
25. Red Robin Mine Hut
26. Rocky Plain
27. Ropers Hut, Duanes Spur
28. Spring Saddle
29. Worcester's Mine Hut

Losses over the Border

In Kosciuszko, 19 Huts are now confirmed destroyed including Brooks, Delaneys, Bolton's Hill, Pretty Plain, Patons, Orange/Diane, Old Geehi/YHA, Geehi, Happy Jacks, Kidmans, Dr Forbes, Boobee, Pugilistic, O'Keefes, Verandah Camp, Olsens LO Shelter, Opera House, Stockwhip, and Grey Hill Cafe.

SAFETY WARNING

Parks Vic are doing everything possible to reopen tracks, but at present there are logs across tracks, as well as hanging branches that could pose safety hazards to walkers.

If anyone is intending to visit the area, we emphasise that all care and safety precautions are to be taken. Ensure you notify someone of your destination and approximate time of return.

There is also concern the burnt hut sites may contain hazardous materials such as asbestos, burnt plastics giving off chemical fumes and burnt CCA treated timber giving off chemical fumes etc.

Fires are not yet out in all areas, so you need to check with local authorities as to whether it is safe in the region you intend to visit.

Our Website and Newsgroup

We have a website which has updates as they come to hand. <http://www.vhcha.org.au/> When you visit the site join our online newsgroup. Here you will be kept up-to-date with all the happenings of the VHCHA.

We going to insert a link on each hut will have a visitors book for people to record their memories of each hut.

Office Bearers

Until the AGM, which will be in Dinner Plain on May 10th, the following people will fill the following positions in the interim to get the Association up and running

Interim President - Fiona Magnussen

Interim Secretary - David Oldfield

Interim Treasurer - Eric Godward

Interim Membership Sec - Robert France

Interim Publicity Officer - Dianne Carroll

Web Mistress - Dianne Carroll

Yahoo Group Moderator - Darren Mc Rae

Email Newsletter Editor - Steve Rowlandson

Hut Research Officers - Robin Rishworth - Yvette Yeates.

Bush fire recovery submission

The Government has called for Bushfire Recovery submissions, which are to be in by the 14th of March. On such short notice I have prepared a submission on behalf of the association (which is being run by the other interim officials for their comments, additions, omissions etc..) so we will have it in by the deadline.

AGM Set – 10th May 2003

Our first AGM is to be held at Crystal Creek Lodge, Dinner Plain on the 10th of May, at 2 pm which time the official committee elected, will begin their term in office and work to ensure we can most of the huts lost are rebuilt.

We are a non-political group whose mission is to care for high country huts that still exist and any future huts that may be rebuilt.

Once we have determined hut repair / rebuild needs and obtain the appropriate authority, set about getting our hands dirty, canvassing for donations of materials and labour from other stakeholders eg 4wd, bushwalking & ski clubs and applying for grants.

The Media

The Media have been wonderful in putting the word out about the VHCHA, and there is more to come. The Weekly Times is doing a feature for us in Country Living, which they tell me will be in the mid March issue- so ensure you get a copy.

I have to commend the ABC for the interviews. I am not the best public speaker, but looks like the message got across, going by the many phone call, emails and letters – Thank you all for your support!

Our Huts Database

We are currently compiling a comprehensive report on each hut, which will include photographs, location, GPS readings, history etc

If anyone has information or photographs of any of the huts (even old ones that are long gone), and would like to contribute any, please send to Dianne Carroll, P.O. Box 87 Yarragon 3823. All copies will be returned.

Those who do decide to donate copies, can you please enclose a letter authorising use of the photos. Any contributions will be fully acknowledged.



**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP
OF
The Victorian High Country Huts Association**

I,(name),
of.....Postcode.....(address)
desire to become a member of The Victorian High Country Huts Association.

I wish to receive notices, communications etc by post/facsimile/email (delete as appropriate)

Phone (home) Fax

Email

Please find enclosed the sum of \$_____ for membership / donation

In the event of my admission as a member, I agree to be bound by the rules of the Association for the time being in force.

..... Signature of Applicant

..... Date

Membership is \$25 per annum; corporate membership will be \$40 per annum payable to Victorian High Country Huts Association. A receipt will be issued for memberships and donations.

Please post the completed form and your cheque / money order to;

Mr E Godward
43 High St
Yackandandah, Vic, 3749

Registration of Interest and Skills

I / We _____ Individual / Group
Can offer:

- General Support
- Skills (Type)_____
- Supply of Materials (Type)_____
- 4 Wheel Transport
- Other_____
- If a group – how many people_____

Please tick and advise of skills/support offered and a contact phone no.

Contact No _____