

## APPENDIX C

Extracts from Annual Reports of the Soil Conservation Board / Authority concerning its oversight of grazing on the Bogong High Plains, 1945 - 1988

1945

*Following a request by the State Electricity Commission for the co-operation and assistance of the Board regarding the utilization of the Kiewa River Catchment so that stream flow may be maintained for hydro-electric development, a sub-committee of the Board consisting of Messrs. G.T. Thompson (Deputy Chairman), E.J. Pemberton, and A.O. Lawrence, inspected the catchment in March, 1943. A report which was adopted by the Board, in which the following recommendations were made, was submitted to the State Electricity Commission:*

*" In view of the apparent deterioration of the grazing value which has taken place on the High Plains, it would appear that steps should be taken to introduce some measure of control of the usage of these areas by limiting the number of stock that are allowed access to, and the times at which they shall enter the runs. The controlling authority would then fix the date each year when the cattle may be taken up on to the Plains. There are four alternatives that may be adopted in utilizing the High Plains country:*

- (1) to leave the licence areas and control as they are at present;*
- (2) a licensing system with revision of boundaries to conform more to the configuration of the country;*
- (3) an agistment system;*
- (4) complete elimination of grazing.*

*It is our considered opinion that, provided all relevant considerations are maintained in balance all the natural and potential resources of this catchment of which grazing on the High Plains is one, should be fully exploited. Elimination of grazing is, therefore, not a practical consideration while any reasonable alternative to improve the existing situation can be explored. It is our view, therefore, that the lines of investigation and future development which would be most satisfactory are offered by Alternatives 2 and 3 above."*

*In January last, a Conference arranged by the Soil Conservation Board and attended by representatives of the Board, the Forests Commission, the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, the Department of Lands and Survey, the State Electricity Commission and the Department of Agriculture met and considered the Sub-committee's recommendation. The following resolution was carried:*

*"That this Conference generally approves of the recommendations of the Sub-Committee of the Soil Conservation Board regarding the utilization of the Catchment of the Kiewa River, with a preference for paragraphs 2 and 3 of the recommendations, and recommends that the Department of Lands and Survey and the Forests Commission confer about the best methods for the control of grazing within the principles of paragraphs 2 and 3, and, after consultation with the cattlemen who utilize the grass on the High Plains, submit a plan for the control of grazing on the Kiewa catchment area for future consideration by the Conference."*

*The Board believes that the experience of controlled grazing on the Kiewa Catchment can be used as a guide for the control of all the highland grazing country of the north-east.<sup>1</sup>*

1946

*Following an official inspection by the Soil Conservation Board in February, 1946, of the catchment area of the Kiewa Hydro Electric Scheme on the Bogong High Plains, during which the Board held a field day and conferred with cattle-men depasturing stock on the plains, an Advisory Committee, and a Cattlemen's Committee were appointed for the control of grazing on the Bogong High Plains in an endeavour to prevent erosion and to ensure continuous stream flow for hydroelectric development on the Kiewa River. The Advisory Committee, comprising representatives of the Board and the following Departments: Lands and Survey, State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, Forests Commission, Agriculture, State Electricity Commission, and cattlemen from the Omeo, Bright and Tawonga Districts, determines the number of cattle which shall be taken on to the Bogong High Plains each season and also the period within which the cattle may be depastured there. The Cattlemen's Committee, the chairman of which is Board Member Mr E.J. Pemberton of the Lands Department, and on which the Bright, Tawonga, and Omeo cattlemen are represented, allocates the number of cattle which licensees holders shall be allowed to take on to their respective runs during the season and furnishes its report to the Board, which notifies the Departments concerned of the committee's recommendations in order that these Departments may endorse on their licence the number of cattle each licensee may take to the licensed area for the season and the date such cattle shall be removed. The Board places on record its appreciation of the co-operation which has been received from the cattlemen and from the various Departments represented on these committees.*

*Experiments in pasture regeneration and re-establishment of natural vegetation in the Kiewa and Hume catchment areas are proceeding. A botanical survey of the Board's experimental area on the Bogong High Plains is being carried out by the Botany School of the Melbourne University, which will assist the Board in determining the best means of maintaining the vegetative cover on the High Plains.<sup>2</sup>*

1947

*The Advisory and Cattlemen's Committees, controlling grazing on the Bogong High Plains as a measure for the protection of the catchment feeding the Kiewa hydro-electric project, were again appointed. Local elections for licence holders' nominees to these committees were held in February. The Advisory Committee, which comprises representatives of the Board and other Government authorities and cattlemen representing the Omeo, Bright, and Tawonga districts, decides the number of cattle which may be taken on to the Plains each season. The Cattlemen's Committee, comprising cattlemen from the three districts, with a Board member as Chairman, allocates the number of cattle each licence holder is allowed to run on the Plains each season. The Advisory Committee inspected the Bogong High Plains in March, and a meeting of that committee was subsequently held at Bogong. The committee's resolutions will considerably facilitate control over grazing on the area. The Cattlemen's Committee met in*

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<sup>1</sup> VPPs No. 7.-[9d.]-9682/45. 1945. VICTORIA. SOIL CONSERVATION AUTHORITY, FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30<sup>TH</sup> JUNE

<sup>2</sup> VPPs No. 25.-[9D.]-10950/1946, p.4. VICTORIA. SOIL CONSERVATION BOARD. SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE, 1946

*June, and allocated the numbers of cattle to licence holders within the 9,000-head limit agreed to by the Advisory Committee for the 1948 season. Allocations will be adjusted annually and endorsed on the licences. The Board approved the recommendations of these committees. Regeneration of the vegetative cover has been assisted by this control of grazing on the Bogong High Plains.*

*Research students of the Botany School of the University of Melbourne, under the direction of Professor J. S. Turner, again spent some weeks on the Bogong High Plains carrying out additional investigations and experiments designed to increase vegetative cover on this area. The Bogong High Plains Advisory Committee has recorded its appreciation of the valuable work done by Professor Turner's party. So that this investigation may be extended, the Board requested the State Electricity Commission to fence additional small plots for experimental purposes. The Board's research officer has continued her investigations in connexion with the ecological survey of the Hume Catchment Area.<sup>3</sup>*

1948

*The Board's Advisory Committee inspected the Kiewa Catchment, and recommended that 9,000 cattle be allowed on to the Bogong High Plains next season, and the Cattlemen's Committee, comprising cattlemen from the Omeo, Bright, and Tawonga districts with Board Member Pemberton as Chairman, allocated the number of cattle each licence holder will be allowed to take on to the Plains next season. It is satisfactory to report that the vegetative cover on the Bogong High Plains is improving as a result of these measures.<sup>4</sup>*

1949

*The Board continued giving attention to protecting the catchments of the Kiewa, Goulburn, and Murray Rivers. In February, 1946, the Board held a Field Day on the Bogong High Plains, the catchment of the Kiewa Hydro-Electric Scheme. The Cattlemen who depasture cattle every summer on the high plains attended that Field Day and conferred with the Board re protecting the catchment. The conference agreed to appoint an Advisory Committee to decide how many cattle shall be taken on to the plains each season. and also the period within which the cattle may be depastured there. The conference also agreed to appoint a Cattlemen's Committee to allocate the number of cattle each cattleman shall be allowed to take on to the plains each season. Those two Committees were appointed by the Soil Conservation Board early in 1946 and were functioning prior to the appointment of the Royal Commission to inquire into Forest Grazing, but no reference to the controlled grazing which those Committees initiated was made in the Report of that Commission. Last February the Board held another Field Day on its enclosed area at Rocky Valley on the Bogong High Plains. The Board's Advisory Committee, Cattlemen's Committee, and cattlemen from Omeo, Bright, and Tawonga, and a party from the Botany School of the Melbourne University attended the Field Day. The controlled grazing which the Soil Conservation Board initiated in 1946 has improved the vegetative cover on the area and protected the Kiewa Catchment.<sup>5</sup>*

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<sup>3</sup> VPPs No. 2.-{/s.}-8977/1947. VICTORIA. SOIL CONSERVATION BOARD. SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE, 1947

<sup>4</sup> VPPs No. 26.-{9D}-9744/1948, P6. VICTORIA. SOIL CONSERVATION BOARD. SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE, 1948

<sup>5</sup> VPPs No. 15-[9D.]-8908/1949, P7. VICTORIA. SOIL CONSERVATION BOARD. SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE, 1949

1958

#### PROTECTION OF RIVER MURRAY CATCHMENT.

The Honourable the Premier in an instruction to all Departments stated that the Authority shall be solely responsible for decisions in respect of the use of all land above 4,500 feet elevation in this catchment and in contiguous areas. Some years ago the Upper Murray Catchment was proclaimed under the Soil Conservation and Land Utilization Acts. The Authority after consultation with the Land Utilization Advisory Council its authorized to determine the most suitable use in the public interest of all land in proclaimed catchments. The instruction referred to above requires that particular consideration be given to the use of the snow country in the River Murray Catchment. The Authority has been careful not to vary any existing form of land use in the catchment until it can be shown that the change is desirable and justified for the preservation of the catchment. In order to obtain the necessary basic information upon which to base determinations, a Soil and Land Use Survey is scheduled to commence shortly. A set of conditions has been adopted and is used in considering all applications for the alienation of Crown Land in the area which are referred to the Authority by the Department of Crown Lands and Survey.

A provision designed to prevent erosion and to ensure safe land use has been laid down and is included in all new leaseholds.

#### Bogong High Plains District Advisory Committee

The territory with which this Committee is concerned was extended to include several runs surrounding the Mt. Hotham area, and these additional areas will now be subject to the same control of grazing as applies over the balance of the Bogong High Plains. The part of Mt. Bogong which contributes run-off to the Kiewa works, has now been completely closed to grazing by fencing. A substantial improvement in the amount of vegetative cover was apparent at the end of the first season after fencing. Although a total of 8000 cattle was permitted on the Bogong High Plains for the season 1957-58, the actual number grazed was 6310.

Measuring weirs have been constructed by the State Electricity Commission to measure the run-off from an enclosed area in the Rocky Valley and from an adjoining area of a similar nature which is still open to grazing. The Advisory Committee has been appointed for a further term of three years, there being one change amongst the cattlemen's representatives.<sup>6</sup>

1959

In the catchments to the Upper Murray the Authority has had the advice not only of the Land Utilization Advisory Council. but also the Bogong High Plains Soil Conservation District Advisory Committee. During the year this Committee recommended drastic reduction of stocking on those parts of the High Plains around Mounts Hotham, Loch and St. Bernard. The number of cattle in these areas has been reduced by half and for the whole of the High Plains the permissible numbers for the coming season total 6,730. At the request of the Committee the Authority will provide more supervision of cattle numbers and grazing locations throughout the season. In March 1958, the Government decided that the use of any lands in Victoria above 4,500 ft. elevation in the Upper Murray Catchment and contiguous areas, excluding timber stands of commercial lumber, shall be a matter solely for decision by the Soil Conservation Authority of this State". The Upper Murray Catchment has been interpreted to mean the area draining to the Murray River above Yarrawonga and " contiguous " areas to include adjoining high land catchments to southern flowing streams.

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<sup>6</sup> VPPs No.18,-[2s. 9d.]-9319/58.

Because of this directive and the advice of the Bogong High Plains Committee the Authority is now exercising even stricter control over grazing and other forms of land-use on the high elevation land. Grazing is to cease in the Mt. Hotham area as from the season 1961-62. Development for skiing and other tourist uses is to be under strict control.<sup>7</sup>

Bogong High Plains District Advisory Committee -The committee decided that owing to the hazardous condition of the Mount Hotham area, total numbers of cattle permitted to be grazed on the whole area under the control of the Committee would be reduced by 800 head to 6,730 during the next season.<sup>8</sup>

1960

#### HIGH MOUNTAIN CATCHMENTS.

A special committee of the Graziers' Association, members of the Authority, and cattlemen inspected areas of snow country. Bogong High Plains. At the request of the Bogong High Plains Soil Conservation District Advisory Committee, the Authority has intensified its control and supervision of cattle grazing in the snow country which forms part of the catchments to the Upper Murray River. Drastic reduction of stocking in the Mt. Hotham area was recommended in last year's report, and numbers were reduced by 50 per cent. As from the 1960-61 season, no grazing will be permitted in the general area of Mounts Hotham, Lock, St. Bernard, and the southern portion of the Razorback. Specific boundaries of the excluded area will be defined. The permissible number of cattle allowed to graze on the Bogong High Plains in the coming season is 6,890.<sup>9</sup>

1961

Species trends and Erosion Control in Alpine areas.

#### (a) Ecological Investigations.

The ecological investigations into the effect on the vegetation of the exclusion of cattle from the Mt. Hotham area, begun in 1960, were continued in 1961. The second recording of the fixed transect lines and fixed quadrats was made in March 1961. The result showed little change in the percentage composition of the vegetative cover, or the proportion of bare space to vegetative cover. This was expected after such a short period. Although the differences between the results were not statistically significant, they did indicate a trend towards increased ground cover. The species responsible for the increased cover was Snowgrass, *Poa australis*. Owing to the slow growth of vegetation in alpine areas the next set of observations will be made early in 1963.<sup>10</sup>

1963

Ecological Investigations - Mt. Hotham. The investigations into the effect on the vegetation of the exclusion of cattle from the Mt. Hotham area, commenced in March, 1960, were continued in 1963. The third reading of fixed line transects and fixed quadrats was made in March, 1963. The results show that there has been an increase in the ground cover by vegetation on all transects on the summit of Mt. Hotham. This increase has been due mainly to the greater area now occupied by snow grass (*Poa australis*) and yellow Kunzea (*Kunzea muellerii*).

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<sup>7</sup> VPPs No. 14.-[2s. 9d.]-9932/59.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> VPPs No. 30 --[2s. 9d.]-9497/60.

<sup>10</sup> VPPs No.23.-[3a.]-9234/61.

Reclamation Investigations - Mt. Hotham. Studies to determine the most suitable species, fertilizers and mechanical treatments for use in reclaiming sheet eroded alpine land were continued. Snow daisy (*Celmisia longifolia*) planted as culms in autumn, 1960, continued to grow very well, and most plants flowered last summer. Tubed stock of *Pinus montana* var. *mungo*, *Pinus sylvestris*, *Pinus contorta*, a hybrid larch (*Larix eurolepis*) and Japanese larch (*Larix leptolepis*) planted just below the tree line in autumn, 1962, survived, but growth has been slow. The trials were extended in autumn 1963. Tubed stock of a number of introduced alpine trees including Mt. Wellington peppermint (*Eucalyptus coccifera*) were planted in trial sites above and below the tree-line. Seeds of five species and varieties of grasses of the genus *Agrostis*, and plants of a cold resistant South African perennial clover (*Trifolium burchellianum*) were set out in test rows on severely eroded land to test their potential. Three types of jute mesh were used in a trial designed to test their ability to protect establishing seedlings of Highland bent grass (*Agrostis tenuis*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*), and snow grass (*Poa australis*).<sup>11</sup>

1965

Alpine Areas - On sheet eroded areas at Mount Hotham, the possibility of seeding and establishment of strains of phalaris and ryegrass is being examined. This work is being done in co-operation with the Agriculture School, Melbourne University, and the Pasture Research Section of the Department of Agriculture.<sup>12</sup>

1967

Bogong High Plains Regional Advisory Committee

A. Mitchell, Soil Conservation Authority, 378 Cotham Road, Kew (Chairman).

D. K. Richardson, Cobungra Station, Omeo.

J. F. Roper, "Mount Yorke," Tawonga.

R. F. Briggs, Toorak-road, Bright.

J. A. Davis, General Superintendent, Kiewa, S.E.C., Mount Beauty (Retired).

R. K. White, General Superintendent, Kiewa, S.E.C., Mount Beauty.

J. L. Mitchell, Lands Department, Melbourne (Secretary).<sup>13</sup>

1968

Alpine areas.

A comparison of ground cover on plots at Mount Hotham in 1960 with that in 1968 was made along fixed transect lines and on fixed quadrats. An analysis of the vegetative cover along the transect line showed that bare ground decreased 7.87 per cent. This improvement in ground cover indicates that the prevention of grazing on these areas, which are highly vulnerable, has arrested further erosion while existing erosion is being slowly healed.<sup>14</sup>

1972

Alpine Areas.

Three strains of *Trifolium ambiguum* (kura or pellett clover), likely to be more persistent at higher altitude levels above the tree line than any type of white clover, were obtained from C.S.I.R.O. for

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<sup>11</sup> VPPs No. 11.-[4s. 6n.]-8270/63.

<sup>12</sup> VPPs No. 12.-9705/66.

<sup>13</sup> Parliamentary paper (Victoria. Parliament) ; 1967-68, no. 17, p.54

<sup>14</sup> VPPs No. 14.-8389/68.

preliminary trials. The tubed stock of clovers was planted on the slopes and on the High Plains at Mt. Bogong and Mt. Hotham.<sup>15</sup>

1974

*A Government directive, first issued by the Premier in 1957, and still operative, established the view that the sustained yield, in perpetuity, of maximum quantities of high-quality water is the prime function of the State's alpine areas. To implement this directive, the Soil Conservation Authority has been charged with supervisory responsibility over all activities which may cause disturbance of the soil surface at elevations in excess of 1220 metres. The major snow sport resorts of Mount Buller, Falls Creek, Mount Baw Baw and Mount Hotham all lie within this alpine area, as do Mount Buffalo, Mount Wills and Lake Mountain. The whole area is also being subjected to the increasing pressures of requirement for summer recreation and tourism. The high plains are summer grazing areas of considerable importance to the local cattle industry. The delicate environment of this alpine land requires constant surveillance, and Authority staff to supervise the area has been reinforced, although not to the degree considered desirable. During the year, the Mount Bogong summit area was withdrawn from cattle grazing and grazing control measures were extended to an alpine area in Gippsland.<sup>16</sup>*

1975

#### Alpine Areas

A full time alpine conservation officer and assistant are now undertaking alpine soil conservation activities. Ski slope development has continued at the major resorts and new techniques in slope grooming methods are proving successful. Cattle grazing and mining operations continue to pose problems, largely due to the current depressed economic situation in the former case.

Environmental interest in the alpine area continues to involve numerous organizations and groups, and officers are frequently involved in inspections. The most important visit during the year was made to the grazing areas by the members of the Parliamentary Meat Industry Inquiry.<sup>17</sup>

1978

#### Protection of Victorian Alps

As a result of unrestricted grazing and wildfire, alpine vegetation and soils on the high summits of the Victorian Alps had been severely damaged by 1950. The picture above, taken in 1954 on Mt. Loch, shows the vegetation largely destroyed and most of the topsoil eroded away. By 1977, after 17 years' protection from grazing, below, shrubs are actively colonising the erosion pavement and grasses and herbs are growing in the shelter of the shrubs. Protection will be needed for many more years to achieve an effective level of plant cover.

These two pictures show a moss-bed on the slopes of Mt. Loch, looking towards Mt. Hotham, as seen in 1954, above, and later in 1977 below. Exclusion of cattle for 17 years has been accompanied by substantial revegetation; there is also some regeneration of the Sphagnum moss but redevelopment of the peat will take several hundred years. Moss-beds are important in high mountain catchments in Victoria and need to be conserved.

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<sup>15</sup> VPPs No. 21.-8193 /72.

<sup>16</sup> VPPs No. 26.-9273/1974. SOIL CONSERVATION AUTHORITY TWENTY -FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT FINANCIAL YEAR 1973-74

<sup>17</sup> VPPs No.76 -9583/75.

### High Plains Study:

Assistance was given to a re-evaluation of grazing-exclusion plots on the High Plains by Mrs. S. G. M. Carr (the former Miss Maisie Fawcett), who has been involved with the research since its inception in the 1940s. Dr. A. B. Costin, a former Principal Research Officer of the Authority, was invited to revisit the area to assess changes in soil and vegetation conditions over the past twenty years. Some of the areas inspected by Dr. Costin in 1955 and subsequently described in *High Mountain Catchments in Victoria in Relation to Land Use* published in 1957, were revisited, described and photographed. A report has been presented to the Authority.<sup>18</sup>

1979

### Alpine Activities

The alpine area is Victoria's prime source of water supply, producing 25% of the State's water. The alpine area is also very sensitive to damage and most difficult to reclaim. Yet it is the scene of an escalating demand for its use for both winter sports and summer recreation, as well as the more traditional pursuits of forestry and cattle grazing. During the year, Authority staff continued their responsibility for the supervision of grazing and earthworks above 1220 metres altitude. These earthworks included not only new roads, but also the development of recreational facilities costing over \$5 million. Other matters of significance were the provision of information to the Land Conservation Council on the Alpine Study Area and the continuation of ecological investigations on the High Plains. These are detailed below:

**Bogong High Plain • Experimental Plots:** In the 1940s, plots in a range of vegetation associations were established by Mrs S. G. M. Carr (then Research Officer for the Soil Conservation Board), to determine the vegetational changes which might occur under grazed and ungrazed conditions. The vegetation on the plots was remeasured during January 1979, by staff and students from Melbourne University Botany School, under Mrs Carr's direction and with financial support from the Botany School, State Electricity Commission and the Soil Conservation Authority. A report presenting detailed results of this research is in preparation.

**Additional Ecological Research on the Bogong High Plains:** A series of permanent transects was established to monitor changes in vegetative cover and composition in grassland-herbfield ranging from those dominated by *Poa* (snowgrass) near Mt. Jim and Mt. Fainter, to those rich in *Celmisia asteliifolia* (snow daisy) on Mt. Nelse and Mt. Bogong. Most of the sites are grazed during the summer but the grazing intensity at each site is unknown and is likely to vary greatly between sites. Experimental plots were also established to assess vegetation trends on Mt. Bogong on land recently withdrawn from grazing and on an adjacent area currently grazed. It will take up to five and possibly ten years before vegetation trends become apparent at the various sites and worthwhile results can be produced.

**Study of Vegetation Changes After Fire on the Bogong High Plains:** In December 1977 a small burnt and unburnt area was fenced near Mt. Jim, to assess the relative recovery in a grazed and ungrazed situation. Permanent transects were measured at that time and again in January 1979. These measurements indicated that the herb population recovered better in the fenced area than it did in the unfenced grazed area.

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<sup>18</sup> VPPs No-29. 12150 / 77

Ecological Investigation in the Mt. Hotham Area: Cattle grazing ceased on Mt. Hotham in 1960 because of severe erosion there. At the time ecological investigations were established on Mt. Hotham and Mt. Loch to document such recovery as might occur on the badly damaged alpine vegetation. Measurements have been taken regularly since 1960, the most recent in March 1979. These indicate a reduction in bare ground from 47.88% in 1960 to 19.27% in 1979.<sup>19</sup>

1980

#### ALPINE ECOLOGY RESEARCH

Colour Aerial Photography for Vegetation Mapping During the summer of 1980, colour aerial photographs were taken of most of the State's alpine and "open" sub-alpine country, at an approximate scale of 1:15 000. This will provide the basis for a series of vegetation maps of the snow country, and provide a bench-mark against which future trends in vegetation, such as invasion of grassland by shrubs and vice-versa, can be measured. The photography was arranged by the Department of Crown Lands and Survey through its official contractors, and funds were provided by the Environmental Studies Division of the Ministry for Conservation, the State Electricity Commission and Tallangatta High School. The maps are now being prepared, using the aerial photographs and data gathered during field work from about 300 sample quadrats. The data on species recorded in these field samples will be analysed by computer to produce "associations" which will then be used in the mapping.

#### Vegetation Monitoring, Bogong High Plains

During the summer of 1980, the composition and condition of the vegetation at Bogong High Plains were recorded for three sets of conditions:

- grassland-herbfield sites previously recorded in 1979;
- a series of moss beds and snow patch sites;
- ski runs at Falls Creek village.

This work aims at establishing vegetation trends under differing conditions of management, and producing guidelines for the management of the vegetation. It will be five to ten years before vegetation trends become apparent. Large-scale colour aerial photography will be used to supplement data gathered in the field.

#### Regional Advisory Committees

Each of the 23 Soil Conservation Districts has an Advisory Committee appointed under the terms of the Soil Conservation and Land Utilization Act. A majority of the representatives on these seven-member committees are elected by landholders. In carrying out their planned programs of inspections and advice to the Authority, the Committees had a very full year. Attention was given to such items as:

- the establishment and extension of Group Conservation Areas and Projects;
- Authority activity in Proclaimed Water Supply Catchments;
- the provision of the Authority's service to landholders for soil conservation and farm water supplies.

Some specific items dealt with were:

- requesting reassessment of Bogong High Plains cattle runs so that consideration may be given to accommodating licensees likely to be displaced as a result of the Land Conservation Council Alpine Area recommendations;

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<sup>19</sup> VPPs 1979

- appointment of a local committee of landholders to assist in assessing the annual requirements for cattle grazing on licensed runs in East Gippsland Alpine Areas;<sup>20</sup>

1982

#### BOGONG HIGH PLAINS VEGETATION MAP AND SURVEY

A report entitled "Alpine Vegetation of the Bogong High Plains" was completed by K McDougall. This describes and analyses the composition and condition of alpine plant communities on the Bogong High Plains and adjacent Mounts Bogong, Feathertop and Hotham. The report will be published by the Ministry for Conservation in 1983.

A series of five vegetation maps at a scale of 1:15,000 was produced in conjunction with the report. One of these maps will be published in colour by the Victoria Conservation Trust in December 1982.

#### MONITORING OF VEGETATION, BOGONG HIGH PLAINS

In 1979, a project was commenced to monitor trends in grassland at a series of typical sites on the High Plains and adjacent Mt. Bogong. Most of the sites are grazed by cattle. The data supplement that collected from the grazed and ungrazed plots established in the 1940s at Rocky Valley and Pretty Valley. Over the past three years there has been little change in the species composition and condition of the grassland at the selected sites, which is predictable as natural changes in alpine vegetation occur slowly. The data provide a good base from which to measure future changes. Snow patch and bog vegetation is being monitored also at a number of sites, some of which have been fenced to exclude cattle. These vegetation types are particularly susceptible to damage by trampling. The results from this type of monitoring assist in formulating guidelines for conserving the vegetation and soils, a principal aim of soil conservation in alpine areas.<sup>21</sup>

1983

#### ALPINE LAND

Alpine and subalpine areas have a severe climate. This makes it extremely difficult to revegetate eroded land. It is important to control erosion there because of the high capability of those areas for water supply and their high value for recreation. The problems are the bare, steep surfaces created by building, roading and ski developments, the long-term interference with the water regime because of logging alpine ash, and the still-not-ideal vegetative cover in some rangeland. Authority activity in this area cost approximately \$159,000 or 2 per cent of the Authority's total budget and involved 350 inspections or 3 per cent of all inspections carried out during the year. During the year, the Authority continued to work towards acceptable management solutions by providing advice to resort managers through five Committees of Management, to the Forests Commission and to the National Parks Service.

The Authority, in association with the Victoria Conservation Trust and the Ministry for Conservation, published a Vegetation map for the Rocky Valley sheet of the Bogong High Plains at a scale of 1:15,000. It also advised on the number of cattle for each run, monitored alpine plant communities and continued trials to select native species suitable for revegetation of disturbed sites.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Parliamentary paper (Victoria. Parliament), 1980-81, no. 65

<sup>21</sup> Parliamentary paper (Victoria. Parliament) ; 1982-85, no. 51

<sup>22</sup> Parliamentary paper (Victoria. Parliament) ; 1982-85, no. 108

1985 (absorption of SCA into Dept Conservation, Forests & Lands)

Alpine: Successful vegetation management in the alpine region is the key to environmental stability. Cattle grazing continues in the alpine region. A number of fixed sites are regularly monitored to detect any change in vegetation composition and cover. No long term changes in vegetative cover in grazed areas have occurred at any of the 10 established sites. This indicates a state of equilibrium between vegetative cover and grazing pressure at those sites. Other projects which continued during the year included a moss bed and snow patch grazing monitoring program, commenced in 1982. It is too early yet to determine any changes in these communities. Revegetation trials have been carried out on ski slopes at Mt Hotham, Falls Creek and Mt Buller. The trials have concentrated on the use of different fertiliser levels to obtain rapid revegetation and on a replanting program using native species.<sup>23</sup>

1986

Alpine

Successful vegetation management in the alpine region is the key to environmental stability. Cattle grazing continues in the alpine region. Several fixed grassland sites are regularly monitored to detect any change in vegetation composition and cover. No long term changes in vegetative cover in grazed areas have occurred over the period, indicating a state of equilibrium between vegetative cover and grazing pressure at those sites.

Monitoring of moss beds and snow patch vegetation was among projects that continued. It is too early yet to determine any changes in these communities. Revegetation trials using native species have been carried out on ski slopes, at Falls Creek and Mt Buller.<sup>24</sup>

1988

Purchase of 450 ha at Wonnangatta Station

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<sup>23</sup> Parliamentary paper (Victoria. Parliament) ; 1985-87, no. 68

<sup>24</sup> Parliamentary paper (Victoria. Parliament) ; 1985-87, no. 133