

NATIONAL PARKS

- an alternate view by Mountain Cattleman,
Graeme Stoney.

National Parks are necessary and desirable in Victoria's Alpine regions.

To challenge the creation of more, appears childish, short sighted and akin to criticising apple pie or motherhood.

However, I believe that the creation of a very large National Park, or Parks in the Alps is undesirable and a move that future generations of Victorians will regret.

As these large Parks become more regimented and organised over the years people's freedom and initiative while using the Parks will be sapped and replaced by what virtually becomes bureaucratic control of their visit.

It is a nasty fact of life that regimentation and conformity to rules is necessary in day to day life in the community. The only place left where people can fall back on their own resources and judgement is Victoria's Public Land, especially the unencumbered High Country as it is at present.

My fear is that if most of the best and useful mountain country is taken for the Park, where can people go to exercise this basic freedom and initiative?

It was this spirit of adventure and initiative that built Australia in the early days and there is no doubt that people strive to recapture and relive that feeling, generations later. This also accounts for the extraordinary acceptance of films such as "The Man From Snowy River" by the Public.

It wasn't the story that did it, as much as the scenery, the concept and the Nationalism of the closing scenes.

The sad fact is that National Parks by their administrations, philosophies and regulations destroy people's independence and initiative.

The current popular slogan "Parks aren't for people" is unfortunately true.

I can readily understand why city based people quickly accept the concept of National Parks. I do not believe they understand the long term implications of transferring enormous tracts of Alpine land into the National Parks network.

It will create a monster which our children will be unable to control or alter.

The drain on the Public Purse will eventually be astronomical because of the particular costly management needed in Alpine areas including fuel reduction burning and road maintenance. This will not be offset to any extent as it is now by income from Timber and Grazing etc. so the whole Park system will be a continual drain on Public money.

Coupled with this, will be the growth of the unproductive bureaucracy to administer the area.

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SOLUTION

I believe that we should have some Alpine National Parks and that they should be special - If the whole Alpine area becomes a National Park, it ceases to be special.

I believe that Multi use buffer zones should be created around the declared National Parks to protect and enhance the Parks.

These Buffer Zones should be managed as Multiple use zones where people should have as much freedom as is possible within the confines of protecting the environment. The buffer should be used for timber, grazing and other commercial uses (under strict Government controls) for the community's good.

An example of an ideal National Park Buffer Zone is the Howqua river, Bluff and King Billy area east of Mansfield.

This spot is at present enjoyed by thousands of people "doing their own thing", as well as being a valuable timber and grazing area.

If it was utilized under a buffer zone concept instead of becoming a National Park, as foreshadowed, it would protect and enhance the adjoining Wonnangatta - Moroka National Park as it does now. This park is one of great beauty and at present is a very special place.

I agree that logging is aesthetically displeasing, but with a little thought and planning it could be done a lot better.

There is no doubt that grazing under strict controls is beneficial and does no harm to the Alpine meadows.

Commercial use of the alps is a renewable resource that should be utilised for the community's good, under strict controls.

We haven't many renewable resources in Australia and are losing some we have.

One valuable resource we may lose is people's spirit of adventure, initiative and enterprise.

We can renew that well in Victoria's High Country at present. In a few years we will not be able to do so.

Greenaway
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