

Friends of Black Mountain Oral History Project 2021-23



Interviewee: David Shorthouse

Timed summary: David Shorthouse interviewed by Mary Hutchison

Date: 3/8/2022

Session #1: 1:01 02

Time	Subjects	Key subject words including names of people and organisations
00:00:00	Introduction. Family background. School experience. Father's work as a Congregational Minister involves frequent moves.	Chippenham, Wiltshire, Bath, Penge (SE London), Redhill, Surrey, gender
00:03:59	Studies agricultural zoology (entomology and parasitology) at University of Newcastle. Realises potential capacity for academic work and starts living independently. Reasons for choosing agriculture. Masters in Conservation followed by PhD in Australia.	Biology, career path, Agricultural Zoology, University College London
00:08:00	Importance of studying conservation in the late 1960s. Potential for agriculture and conservation. Successful application for PhD study at Australian National University. Study of semi-arid scorpion. Interest in connecting with new environments. Later experience of Australia becoming 'home'. Experience of university life at ANU.	Land clearing, <i>Silent Spring</i> , Rachel Carson, Australian immigration program, Broken Hill, ecological science, energy flow, University House, Burgmann College
00:13:04	Coincidence of fellow student at Newcastle University moving to Canberra. First impression of Canberra as a city planned around open space through NCDC publication in University College London Library. Strong connection with growing understanding of environment, ecology and conservation. Impression confirmed on arriving in Canberra. First connection with Black Mountain through local scorpion study.	Richard Milner, CSIRO, National Capital Development Commission, <i>Tomorrow's Canberra</i> , Walter Burley Griffin, <i>Living with Nature</i> , Graham Smith
00:17:54	Black Mountain Tower controversy highlights growing political interest in conservation. Later Gondola proposal. Recruited to teach ecology at new Canberra College of Advanced Education 1972 (later University of Canberra). First time animal and plant ecology taught in	Gough Whitlam, Biology, Peter Rudden, John Harris, David Williams, Vietnam War, conscription, Brendan Mackie, teaching, Land Management and Conservation

	one course. CCAE focus on teaching for application by future rangers and managers. Student demand for such courses and mood for change. Calibre of students.	
00:22:59	Added focus on consulting and research in CCAE teaching leads to major change in career. Important role of local field trips in teaching. Connection between Gossan Hill and Black Mountain. Role in adjusting Caswell Drive west of Black Mountain. (See session 2 00:18:57 Gungahlin Drive Extension)	National Capital Development Commission, ACT Parks and Conservation Service, Ecological Resources Report, Caswell Drive Upgrade
00:27:31	Work for NCDC during sabbatical late 1970s initiated by one of students in Land Management and Conservation course. Ecological Resources of the ACT report for Environmental Group in NCDC Landscape Section. Wife, Lainie's contribution to report map. Canberra professional and academic networks.	David Hogg, John Gray, Phillip Kendall
00:31:46	Marriage in 1974. First house. Meeting Lainie. Lainie's work for CCAE Design Unit.	Dianella Street, Quaker Meeting, Canberra social life, Derek Wrigley, Arthur Robinson, Margaret Robinson, Fred Ward
00:35:15	Change in career through move from CCAE to ACT Parks Service in Commonwealth Department of Capital Territory 1980. In position as Reserves Biologist was responsible for parks and increasingly involved in developing the National Capital Open Space System. With Neil Taylor developed a Touch and See Trail on Black Mountain for the Year of the Disabled (report written).	Ecology, Jervis Bay, Tidbinbilla, Canberra Nature Park, public relations, nature interpretation
00:38:25	Accessibility of Government in 1970s and '80s. Position of Reserves Biologist includes responsibility for development of Namadgi National Park (declared 1984) and other local nature reserves. Issues in managing natural resources. Organisational structure of ACT Parks and Conservation. Canberra Nature Park as Capital Territory concept. In lead up to ACT self- government (1989) rivalry between Canberra Nature Park and NCDC Urban Open Space System. Status of Cotter Catchment (water supply) separate from Gudgenby nature reserve,	Moss Cass (Minister for Environment and Conservation 1972-5), Tom Uren (Minister for Territories 1983 -84), Tidbinbilla, Gudgenby Nature Reserve, Park Managers, Park Rangers, Gordon Scholes (Minister for Territories 1984- 87), Cotter Reserve, Bryan Pratt, Derek Ovington

	resolved with integration as Namadgi National Park.	
00:44:24	Move to NCDC Environment Group (1986) to develop experience in planning. Subsequent move to National Capital Planning Authority (NCPA) after abolition of NCDC at the time of self-government. Continuation of work on National Capital Urban Open Space system at National Capital Authority. Later move to World Heritage Unit (1990). At NCPA expanded the boundaries of Urban Open Space to Barton Highway to include Lyneham Ridge and Kaleen Horse Paddocks.	ACT Parks Service, David Hogg, Gary Scott, John Gray, Keith Storey, Landscape Section, World Heritage Unit, Commonwealth Department of Environment, Sport and Territories, Ecological and physical connectivity.
00:47:57	Issues at World Heritage with tension between State and Commonwealth responsibilities for lands. Own responsibility for a variety of places. Impact of Hawke-Keating rivalry on Kakadu Stage 2. Move back to ACT in management position 1994. Responsible for wildlife research and ecologically-based open space planning and management [details session 2]. Value of technical and academic expertise in government management.	Tasmanian Wilderness, Benders Quarry, Mt Etna Caves, Macquarie Island, Shark Bay, Kakadu
00:53:29	Black Mountain emblematic of meanings and issues involved in managing conservation reserves in their wider context. Its position as a core part of the Burley Griffin vision for Canberra. Also integral to ACT open space system and Canberra Nature Park and in this and anchor point in David's work. Black Mountain conservation issues and achievements.	Walter Burley Griffin vision, Black Mountain Tower, gondola, road systems
00:56:08	Role of community environment interests and key groups in work discussed.	Conservation Council, Nicola Davies, Environment Centre, Black Mountain Tower
01:01:02	End of session	

Date: 10/8/22

Session #2:

Time	Subjects	Key subject words including names of people and organisations
00:00:00	Move to ACT Government to manage Wildlife Research Unit in Lands Division, later Environment ACT. Mixture of policy and practical work continues previous Parks Service land management practice.	O'Connor Depot, Black Mountain, Barry Drive, Dryandra Street, Threatened species

00:03:33	Work of Wildlife Unit. Staff members. Greater awareness of threatened species. Long term work to integrate wildlife research with Parks Management Policy. Impact of Margaret Kitchen's fire ecology research on policy. Impact of Unit's work on woodland and grassland species on town planning and creation of reserves.	Wildlife Research and Monitoring Unit, Frank Ingwerson, Mark Lintermans, CSIRO Gungahlin, species inventories, ACT nature reserve system
00:07:28	Example of ACT Executive Director who saw no place for research in government and wanted to shut Unit down. Impact of legislation concerning threatened species. Creation of ACT Flora and Fauna Committee and role as Secretary supports implementation of conservation plans by Parks management.	Robyn Read, grasslands, legless lizard, Gungahlin, bureaucratic management
00:10:56	Conservation Council activism emphasises threatened grassland species in the 1990s and coincides with development of Gungahlin. Work of Wildlife Research Unit provides ecological information that leads to change in location of town centre and creation of new grassland nature reserves.	Legless lizard, natural temperate grassland, yellow box-red gum grassy woodland, urban planning, Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Mulanggari, Crace, Gungaderra, conservation politics
00:15:17	In 2000s, development of threatened species action plans for Gungahlin development on basis of scientific research and surveys of woodlands, grasslands and aquatic environments. Black Mountain's position as a reserve in the city based on its value as a landscape; Gungahlin reserves based on recognition of lowland ecology. Only small area of Black Mountain lowland woodland conserved.	Urban planning, ecology, vegetation communities, yellow box-red gum woodland, Lady Denman Drive, Tuggeranong Parkway, connectivity, Gungahlin Drive Extension.
00:18: 57	Adjustment of Caswell Road Upgrade at time of Gungahlin Drive Extension 2003 (see session 1, 00:23:00). Influencing planning rather than managing what's left over. Protection of Aranda Snow Gums growing on leased land on the fringe of Black Mountain. Conservation of the edges. Compatible uses may maintain ecological values.	Tony Gill, Transport and Roads, revegetation, Friends of Aranda Bushland, grassland research, Sarah Sharpe, Glenloch Interchange, snow gum ecology, Molonglo development, Conservator's Directions.
00:24:03	The growing issue of connectivity in conservation. Wildlife Unit work using models of wildlife movement was able to indicate where connectivity required. Black Mountain's connections with wider ACT Parks system and natural features. Not just a reserve on its own. Conserving	Roadkills, compatible land uses, Molonglo River, Lake Burley Griffin, Mt Painter, Cork Oaks, Arboretum, Yellow Box Woodland, Mulligans Flat.

	connectivity as basis for more sustainable city.	
00:27:16	Development responses to connectivity. Example of edge definition at Ginninderry in contrast to Molonglo development. Role in decision making about boundary of Ginninderry's Murrumbidgee corridor conservation area results in ecology and fire zone based boundary. Black Mountain highlights change of thinking from reserve as an island to ecological connectivity	David Maxwell, Tony Adams, Ginninderry, connectivity
00:32:06	Interaction with community groups as Public Servant. Combination of staff training and community conservation concerns. Relationship with Conservation Council.	Nicola Davies, Ian Fraser, Larry O'Loughlin, John Hibberd, Helen Oakey, Friends of Aranda Bushland, Friends of Grasslands, Southern Tablelands Ecosystem Park (STEP)
00:36:41	Origin of ACT Park Care groups and their role.	Land Care, Coast Care, Prime Minister Bob Hawke
00:38:16	Three-year budget of \$1.6m for Woodlands and Grasslands research and management 2004. First budget line for research includes preparation for reintroduction of locally extinct species and predator proof fences at Mulligans Flat and work on grasslands ecology.	Chief Minister John Stanhope, David Lindenmeyer, Adrian Manning, University of Canberra
00:43:43	Post retirement involvement in creation of Southern Tablelands Ecosystem Park (STEP) as regional botanic garden in Arboretum Forest 20. Process of establishing appropriate tree species and understorey and presenting them in their landscape context with reference to Black Mountain and Aranda Snow Gums. Tree sequence reflected the natural sequence on Black Mountain.	Friends of Grasslands, Australian native Plants Society, Canberra Arboretum, John Stanhope
00:46:31	[interruption]	
00:47:02	Development of cross border planning framework for threatened species with New South Wales Parks Queanbeyan Office. Developer concerns about planning overlaps. Outcomes include a report, facilitation of cross border exchange of knowledge and mapping and modelling of cross border connectivity.	Michael Saxon, The Alps Agreement, Tony Carey, Rainer Rehwinkel, Sarah Sharpe, Grasslands, Michael Mulvaney
00:51:38	Retirement activities include paper on history of Black Mountain management for Friends of Black Mountain Symposium 2018. Research for the paper highlights shrinking boundaries of reserve, staffing	Black Mountain Reserve 50 th anniversary, ecology, planning, National Parks Association

	issues as Canberra Nature Park expands, and bureaucratic processes over time. Value of looking further at the human culture of environment management.	
00: 56:11	Experience of doing research for symposium. Value of further analysis of material about Black Mountain management over time. Most of archived material focuses on the reserve itself rather than its context. Political rather than scientific management of the Tower issue. Birth and development of ecological approach to reserve management over own career.	
01:01:13	Future scope for managing Black Mountain in its ecological context. Roads and fire. Issue of fire heightened by climate change. Interface of reserves and suburbs. Housing vulnerability.	Regrowth, understorey, fuel load, controlled burns, Rosemary Purdie, <i>Daviesia</i> , building standards
01:04: 09	Reflection in interview process. Growing awareness of Indigenous peoples' knowledge of environment and fire. Its importance and value of connecting it with science.	Ngunnawal, Ngambri, Cultural meaning, ecological thinking, Wally Bell, Mark Butz, Margaret Kitchen
	End of session	01:08:16