

Friends of Black Mountain Oral History Project 2021-23

Interviewee: Ian Fraser

Timed summary: Ian Fraser interviewed by Mary Hutchison

Date: 15/6/2022

Session #1: 1:21:12

Time	Subjects	Key subject words including names of people and organisations
00:00:00	Introduction [after false start]. Family background. Father's war experience and work at Roseworthy Agricultural College. Maternal grandfather's wartime role in Perth. Mother's family in Perth. Early memories of outdoor childhood in rented farmhouse north of Adelaide.	Second World War, Bomber Command, CSIRO, Shingleback lizard
00:04:29	Move to Adelaide for schooling. Impact of moving to city. Allergy test. Interest in working with animals. University study in zoology and genetics. Enjoyment of ecology. Increased teaching of Australian zoology.	Hampstead Primary School, Gilles Plains High School, South Australian Housing Trust, asthma, animal phyla
00:08:09	Political milieu during and after university. Active in protests against Vietnam War and conscription. Environment and conservation movement. Early work at South Australian Museum and on Australian Bird Atlas. Finding career direction through employment at South Australian Conservation Centre.	'Inspect' schools conservation project, James Tedder, Judith West (Jim and Judy)
00:12:34	Potential study in new Masters Degree in Environmental Studies in Perth. Influence of parents on main career interests: birds and words.	
00:13:57	Coming to Canberra 1980 for job at the ACT Environment Centre. First impressions of Canberra. Location of Environment Centre with other new organisations. Travel in Europe 1982-84. 1984 appointed as first Director of newly formed Conservation Council of South East Region and Canberra 1984. Previous planning for this. Difference between ACT and South Australian models.	Mark Diesendorf, Aquarius Festival, Food Co-op, PhotoAccess, Childers Street theatre, Barry Drive
00:17:55	1985 fire on Black Mountain. Becomes more involved in fire ecology. Living at foot of Black Mountain from 1984.	Experimental burns, 'orchiholic', cable car, National Capital

	Everyday connection with Mountain and particular interest in orchids. Black Mountain conservation issues. Telecom (later Telstra, originally PMG) Tower politics. Overturn of Supreme Court decision that tower was illegal by Federal Executive Council.	Development Commission, Post Master General, Governor General
00:21:04	1980 initiates Environment Centre 'walkathon' based on SA Conservation Council educational approach to campaign against nuclear energy. Production of book about places on the walking route. 1981 same model on smaller scale for <i>Black Mountain: A Walker's Guide</i> . Tracks and trails at the time. Road issues from 1980s. Ecological impact of increasing isolation of Black Mountain.	<i>Canberra's Environment: A Walker's Guide</i> , Caswell Drive, Ian Warden, Belconnen Way
00:26:30	Appointment as Director of Conservation Council of South East Region and Canberra 1984. Mentors. Started an educational Environment Tour of Canberra to show people examples of Conservation Council work. Popularity leads Ian and partner to develop further as an independent program, Environment Tours, lasting many years and expanding across Australia. Decision to focus career on work with natural things.	National Capital Development Commission, John Rowland, Jim Tedder, <i>Penguin Book of Australian Poetry</i> , Margaret McJannett, self-employment
00:30:17	1984 appointed as Conservation Council representative on Namadgi National Park Management Committee which developed a wider ACT role as an environmental advisory committee with various name changes over time. Served on this committee, including as Chair, for 30 years. Satisfaction of long-term work with skilled committee and public servants. Career role as 'old-fashioned naturalist' with wide range of knowledge of natural environment and wildlife.	Frank Muller, Tom Uren, self-government, Black Mountain, Canberra Nature Park Management Plan, orchid tours.
00:34:11	Role of formal education in career. Conservation underlies approach to work. Understanding of job as naturalist-educator. Focus of Environment Tours. 'Showing the country to people'. Locations. Learning from being there	Accessibility, Ormiston Gorge and Pound Walk, stories, Tjoritja, Brindabella wildflowers, adult education classes
00:39:40	Consultancy work often with botanist Geoff Butler. Main advisory role on ACT Parks and Conservation Consultative	Self-employment, subdivision, Threatened Species Act, Gungahlin

	Committee. Work as 'voice of natural history' on local ABC Radio. Productions include a series of CDs.	Juvenile Detention Centre, Elaine Harris, Andy Henley, <i>Around the Bush Capital</i>
00:43:56	Talks and publications. Natural history walks and guides, Co-curation of Canberra Museum and Gallery Exhibition, <i>Bush Capital</i> , with Rowan Henderson.	Land Care, community education, public naturalist, Namadgi, Canberra Nature Park, high country, wildflowers, Jeannie Gray, <i>Australian Bird Names: Origins and Meanings</i> (2019), Peter Marsack, <i>A Bush Capital Year</i> (2011), Whitley Award, <i>Birds and their Habitats</i> (2018), John Gould, Ferdinand Bauer
00:48:10	Importance of relationship between professionals and private individuals and organisations in future of Australian conservation. Conservation on individual properties. Deterioration of New South Wales environmental protection legislation and ranger resources in the ACT. Role of community groups. Citizen scientists as collectors of data. Underfunding of institutions who analyse data. Black Mountain as example of relationship between professionals and community members. Community attachment to local reserves.	Citizen Science, Bush Heritage, Birdlife Australia, weed control, Canberra nature Map, Bush Blitz, CSIRO, entomological taxonomists, Friends of Black Mountain
00:54:13	Gungahlin Drive Extension (GDE) issues and key players in difficult negotiations on route. Position in this as Chair of Environmental Advisory Committee. Loss of Black Mountain environmental values including orchid habitats. Implications of GDE route decision as precedent for the future.	Natural Resource Management Advisory Committee, Bill Wood MLA, John Stanhope MLA, Australian Institute of Sport, Rosemary Purdie, Geoff Butler
57:50	Experience of working on book, <i>Black Mountain: A Natural History of a Canberra Icon</i> . Approach to writing natural history. Role as communicator, reaching wider audience with current natural history blog.	Rosemary Purdie, Friends of Black Mountain, co-authorship, Jeannie Gray, <i>Birds and their Habitats</i> , literature, 'Talking Naturally', the Riot Act
01:03:10	Writing intentions and skills, advocacy and community education as focus of work. Environmental tours to South America.	Journalese, George Orwell, Gondwanaland, communication
01:06:22	Black Mountain's role in Canberra. Its cultural and natural heritage values in the context of other local nature reserves.	Telstra Tower, Griffin axis, Parliamentary Triangle, Park

	Relationship between biodiversity and people investigating it. Importance of sandstone for flowers. Ant and orchid species. Local reserves and their communities. Own approach to getting to know a place.	Care groups, attachment to place
01:12:43	Future issues for Black Mountain and other urban reserves. Issues of fire management. Natural conservation and human safety. Compromise and more than one solution.	Conservation, climate change
01:16:31	Reflections on career. Value of Environmental Advisory Committee. Love of exploring places. Importance of getting out in the bush. Impact of Covid19 on travel.	Self-employment, South America, Africa, Gondwana
01:21:12	End of session	

Date: 17/08/22

Session #2: 00:21:05

Time	Subjects	Key subject words including names of people and organisations
00:00:00	Introduction. Namadgi National Park Management Plan before self-government provided model for Canberra Nature Park Management Plan under ACT Government. Role in developing Namadgi Plan based on community consultation as member of National Park Consultative Committee. Committee evolves into broader environmental advisory committee after self-government. Departmental planners and park rangers	Black Mountain, Tom Uren, Conservation Council of South East Region and Canberra, Department of Territories, National Capital Development Commission, Paul Davies, Mark Butz, John Turner, ACT Parks and Wildlife Service.
00:00:19	Genesis of Canberra Nature Park as concept for managing Canberra nature reserves within Department of Territories. First reserves. Their growth in number and type to present. Community participation in development of Canberra Nature Park Management Plan	Tom Uren, Black Mountain, Mt Ainslie, Mt Majura, National Parks Association, Field Naturalists Society, Bush Walking Club, Society for Growing Australian Plants, activism
00:08:46	Namadgi and Canberra Nature Park Management Plans prioritise natural values ahead of heritage and recreation. European heritage and recreations issues about Namadgi. Continuing issues in urban environment re recreation. Update of plans.	Biological conservation, Orroral Valley, grazing, skiing, Corin Road, dogs, mountain bikes, resourcing
00:14:22	Positive experience of developing the management plans and serving on ACT environmental advisory committee for 30	ACT self-government, community consultation, democracy

	years. Community involvement in management plans as model for other jurisdictions.	
00:17:56	Decline in government resources for Park services. Importance of continuing community dedication to maintenance work. Development of Park Care groups (from 1994) formalises community care for ACT reserves. Future of biodiversity and conservation depends on community and private activity and initiatives.	Friends groups, non-government reserves
00:21:05	End of session	