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A.S.F. NEWSLETTER

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Editorial..

NO APOLOGY IS OFFERED FOR ONCE AGAIN FEATURING CONSERVATION IN THE MAIN ARTICLES OF THIS NEWSLETTER; INCREASINGLY WE NEED NOT ONLY TO PARTICIPATE IN CURRENT CONSERVATION CAMPAIGNS, BUT ALSO TO EDUCATE OURSELVES IN ALL ASPECTS OF CONSERVATION.

AT THE NATIONAL AND STATE LEVEL OUR CONCERN IS MAINLY AT PROTECTING LIMESTONE AREAS CONTAINING CAVES FROM QUARRYING INTERESTS, OR EVALUATING THE COST VERSUS BENEFIT OF CAVES BEING SUBMERGED IN WATER CONSERVATION SCHEMES. AT THIS LEVEL, WE NEED TO PRESENT A CASE SUPPORTED BY VALID REASONS FOR CONSERVATION, IF POSSIBLE SUGGESTING ALTERNATIVE ECONOMICALLY ACCEPTABLE SCHEMES. THE IMPORTANT POINT HERE IS KNOWING WHY THE CAVES, OR LIMESTONE AREA, SHOULD BE CONSERVED. NOT ONLY THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF CONSERVATION BUT DETAILS OF THE CAVES LOCAL FLORA AND FAUNA, CAVE FAUNA AND EVEN HISTORICAL DATA.

AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, WE MUST REMEMBER THE LOCAL OR CLUB SCENE. AS IS POINTED OUT IN THE REPORT FROM THE A.S.F. CONSERVATION COMMITTEE, MOST CURRENT DAMAGE TO CAVES IS DONE BY CAVERS THEMSELVES, USUALLY MORE THROUGH THOUGHTLESSNESS AND NEGLIGENCE THAN DELIBERATELY. CERTAINLY, THE STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR OF MEMBERS OF RECOGNISED CLUBS IS HIGH, BUT THE STANDARD MUST BE MAINTAINED OR IF POSSIBLE, RAISED...

NO, I AM NOT MERELY TRYING TO FILL SPACE IN A NEWSLETTER - I JUSTIFY THIS SPACE IN THAT THE MORE WE CAVERS KNOW ABOUT CONSERVATION, AND THE WIDER WE CAN SPREAD THIS KNOWLEDGE AMONG FELLOW CAVERS - THE MORE EFFECTIVE WE ARE AS A CONSERVATION BODY, AND THE MORE LIKELY TO MINIMISE DAMAGE TO THE REMAINING CAVES. IT IS STILL TOO EASY TO POINT OUT THE FEW KNOWN CONSERVATIONALISTS AMONG US..

STATEMENT OF POLICY ON EXPLOITATION OF
PARKS AND RESERVES FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES.

of

THE NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF NEW SOUTH WALES
THE NATIONAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA (NEW SOUTH WALES)
THE NATURE CONSERVATION COUNCIL OF NEW SOUTH WALES

1. Exploitation of National Parks, State Parks, Nature Reserves and Historic Sites (as defined in the National Parks and Wildlife Act) for commercial purposes - including mining, logging, farming and grazing (except where acceptable as management techniques appropriate to a particular area) is compatible with the development, use and preservation of these areas for the purposes of the Act.
2. Such exploitation is also incompatible with the purposes for which reserves have been dedicated under other legislation. (eg. public recreation and the preservation of native flora and fauna and caves.)
These should be reviewed as a matter of urgency with a view to selected areas being scheduled as State Parks and Wildlife act under new categories, such as State Geological Reserves or State Recreation Reserves.
3. The remaining Crown land within the State should be examined and, where suitable, reserved for park purposes, including areas which have been exploited for commercial purposes. Where such exploitation is currently proceeding, a Plan of Management should be determined at the time of dedication limiting the extent and duration of the activity.
4. Surface constructions and works, including air shafts and access roads associated with underground mining are incompatible with park purposes. No extension of mining beneath parks and reserves should take place unless it is established that adverse effects, such as land subsidence, change in the water table, damage to geological formations containing cave systems, the production of objectionable effluents and other wastes products will not occur. In all cases adequate guarantees should be lodged by the exploiting agency.
5. Drilling or seismic exploration for geological survey purposes in parks and reserves should only be carried out by government agencies and subject to the approval of the Director of National Parks and Wildlife generally and particularly as to sites, access and equipment and the removal of all introduced material, including bentonite, on completion of the survey.
Proposals to carry out geological investigations involving seismic exploration and/or drilling should be publicly advertised in the Government Gazette, State and local press at least two months prior to approval.

6. Fundamental to the protection of parks and reserves against exploitation for commercial purposes is the urgent need for amendment of the N.S.W. Mining Act in accordance with the policy outlined above and to provide a system whereby applications for mining leases and prospecting leases shall be made known in such a manner as to ensure that the general public, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and other interested bodies are informed of the applications..

P.H.Barnes
President National Parks Association of New South Wales

J.C.Moore
President The National Trust of Australia (New South Wales)

I.F.Wyatt
Chairman Nature Conservation Council of New South Wales

A copy of the Statement has been sent to the Premier of N.S.W. (The Hon. R.W. Askin) requesting close study by his Government. The Premier has also been asked to receive a deputation consisting of the three persons whose names appear at the end of the Statement.

Separate copies of the Statement have been sent to:

1. The Minister for Lands,
2. All members of the Lower House of Parliament,
3. All members of the Upper House of Parliament,
4. The Director of the National Parks and Wildlife Service,
5. A wide selection of City and Provincial Press.

CAVE CONSERVATION - THE BROADER VIEW.

The following article is condensed from a paper entitled 'Caves Versus Quarries' by G.R.Wallis which was presented at the 1966 A.S.F. Convention and is reproduced by kind permission of the author.

Introduction

My reason for writing this paper is that I wish to present to you some facts regarding the conservation of caves which have either been ignored (because they are not in strict accordance with narrow ideas of conservation) or because they have escaped your notice. I am attempting to place before you facts which should assist you in making a balanced judgement and, I hope, to reduce the number of usually, uniformed emotional outbursts so characteristic of many conservationists. However, to be quite clear, my feelings can be summed up by saying I am interested in preserving selected caves or cave systems; and in mining some

limestone where caves may occur, ie, a compromise solution.

Allow me to present my qualifications for writing such an argument. I am a geologist with an Engineering degree employed for the past 11 years by the Geological Survey of N.S.W., Dept. of Mines. I have therefore been intimately connected with mining and can appreciate its importance as one of the basic industries on which the Australian economy exists. In 1965 N.S.W. mineral output totalled \$267.7mill of which limestone accounted for 1.2% or \$3.25mill. I have carried out scientific research and have some small capacity for evaluating and recognising its worth. My association with speleology goes back to 1968. I therefore believe I am adequately equipped to comment on the problem before us, particularly the economic one.

A Sense of Values.

There are three basic ideas at large:

1. Don't mine limestone--we want it for caving--there might be a cave in it we have not yet discovered. A MINORITY GROUP.
2. Don't mine that particular outcrop because the caves must be preserved for:
 - a. Future generations;
 - b. Nature's wonderland;
 - c. Scientific research. A MAJORITY GROUP.
3. Since limestone is required for the development of most industries--some caves must go. A MINORITY GROUP.

There are two minority groups; the first I shan't mention, the third understand the problem, so it is to the second group I speak and believe you belong to.

In speaking of conservation I have in mind a definition which "means" conservation, and not only preservation. A universal definition includes, as Paul Sears, an American ecologist has said, "the widest use of natural resource" and also "the greatest good to the greatest number for the longest possible time." This is not a trite saying--it is a definition of what conservation must include. All natural resources must be included for a complete assessment.

However, many conservationists are one-eyed, intolerant of other approaches, sanctimonious and, I sometimes think, completely rigid. As Robert Wernick described him-- "he is generally a perfectly decent person, if emotional." I ask though what right has he to insinuate that anyone who does not share his passions is a Philistine?

I think we all are conscious of those who bombarded our

our ears with the righteousness of their cause and, let's face it, their causes usually are worthy. But why must they refuse to listen to reason (often in the form of objections) and become irrational? None the less I am not opposed to such groups completely, since they often act as a bar against the wholesale slaughter of nature. Further, I do not mean to infer that the business man or company are always correct. They too are one-sided; they have their business, their employees and their shareholders to protect, and consider that they need a particular deposit of limestone--so they argue.. But remember--to them their argument is just as valid as yours is to you. Always remember that people other than conservationists have equally strong, and equally legitimate reasons for building roads and opening quarries. Weren't such people once regarded as pioneers of this land? As I see it, the problem is simply one of conflicting drives, and the finding of a rational solution is being hampered by:

1. lack of communications;
2. lack of appreciation of both sides of the argument by the opposite side.

Specific Reasons for Conservation of Caves

We speak today of preserving caves for the generations to come. Due to economic necessities, this argument cannot be applied to all caves - to a representative number however--yes!

Whether or not to save some caves is, at best, doubtful; particularly when a minority of the population is concerned.

For example, Sydney Cove was infinitely more desirable to the emu and kangaroo before the aborigine came along, and also for the aborigine before Capt. Phillip arrived and disturbed the status quo. However, let me examine some specific reasons before us in favour of cave conservation.

1. FOR POSTERITY. The moral right cannot be argued on any quantitative basis - it exists and is valid and undeniable.
2. RECREATION and AESTHETICS. Again the same arguments cannot be quantified but are again valid and undeniable. Remember though, a minority of people only are involved.
3. SCIENCE. Here I will be offending people - I apologize to the scientist and research worker producing valuable results--but there are too many speleos carrying on pseudo-scientific work as a means of gaining access to caves, without producing any worthwhile results. To re-inforce my argument here are a few figures.

In 5 principal Australian speleological publications totaling 103 issues, 80 articles only have been published of any scientific merit (some not original work). Of these, 32 are in Helictite by a small number of professional scientists -- this leaves an abysmal 48 in 10 years. I have excluded trip reports and area reports compiled from them; also papers published

in A.J.S. and J.R.S.

What then is being done--collecting figures to no real end which, as Brian O'Brien has said--"is no more scientific than a boy's collection of train engine numbers or cigarette packets."

While the foregoing analysis is a bit harsh, it does represent a very true picture. I don't advocate the speleologist giving up scientific observation--but do it with an end in view and justify your reasons. Equally so, Don't use science as a reason for preserving all caves--it weakens your argument. Select those reasons that fit the picture, use them, and reject others.

Summary and Conclusions.

I have discussed a number of aspects of conservation which may or may not be new to you; I have little doubt you feel they are alien to you. However, if speleology is to achieve any form of conservation with respect to caves there must be a rethinking of the problem. There must be a concerted approach to the problem in a rational, informed manner. The days must be left behind when emotional, uninformed letters are sent to the Press and Government Departments, for they gain nothing but ridicule and pro-forma replies which amount to nought.

I have examined three specific reasons for conservation of caves (and there are others). I again urge those involved in scientific examination of speleological phenomena to look at their task dispassionately and ask--are they collecting data with no end in view and are they hiding behind the skirt of science if they are in it for fun?

I may have been interpreted as being anti-many things you are fighting for--I am sorry if that is the case.

My argument rests principally on the definition of conservation. That is, the widest possible use of all natural resources to the highest benefit of man. Always remember that there are many people involved and no one body, small or large, has the right to exclude others from what that body may consider is their domain. A compromise must be the solution..

The U.S.A. has recognised this fact in its recently passed Wildlife Act. Rather than shut up vast areas, (9.1 million acres) immediately the Act requires that the area shall be evaluated for its natural economic potential and, if seen fit, certain domains removed from the original proposed area, allowing them then to be developed for mining, forestry, etc. The Act accepts a multiple use idea--giving all comers the right of land useage if their claims are valid.

Speleologists cannot expect to have every piece of cave bearing limestone set aside for their exclusive use. Discussion and proper evaluating is the only answer-both sides placing forth their argument and evaluating the opposite side.

To achieve conservation, the following precepts should be followed:

1. Conserve by care and intelligent usage, as outlined by Hamilton-Smith's Conservation Committee Report of 1962.

2. Adopt a positive, unified approach, with informed data, using facts, not heresay. Educate those around you, Government Depts., and private enterprise of the worth of your argument, and Place your opposition, whilst learning his point of view. Do away with the petty politicians (speleology is plagued with them) and act as a body, not a rabble

3. And I consider most importantly, assess the situation from all views. This can be done by:

- a. Deciding unemotionally which cave should be saved and which not.
- b. Economically assess the potential of a limestone deposit. Here Government bodies associated with mining, tourism and conservation of flora and fauna should assist..

G.R.WALLIS.

AVAILABLE BACK ISSUES OF THE A.S.F. NEWSLETTER.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Edition Number</u>	<u>Quantity</u>
1958	3	10
1960	7	8
"	9	24
1960	10	1
1961	11	30
"	12	30
"	13	30
1961	14	29
1962	15	29
"	17	50
1962	18	2
1963	21	1
1963	22	1
1964	23	37
1964	26	3
1965	27	12
"	28	29
"	29	5
1965	30	14
1966	31	4
"	32	10
"	33	27
1966	34	11
1967	36	30
1967	38	1

CAVING IN AUSTRALIA.

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