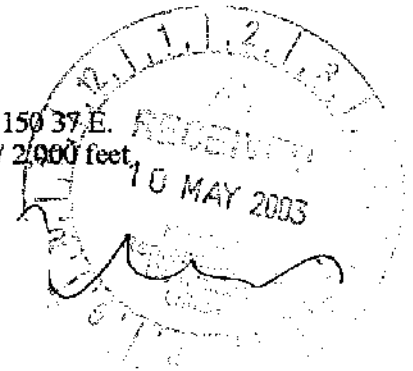


Long Acre

Lat. 33 31 S. Long. 150 37 E.
Altitude: 600 metres/ 2000 feet.



Submission No.181

2003, May 6

The President
House of Representatives Select Committee INQUIRY INTO THE RECENT BUSHFIRES
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear President

The NSW Ski Association has advised member-lodges that you are calling for Submissions to your Inquiry. Hence, I should like to submit the following:

While similar action would be totally unthinkable to the NSW Environment Protection Authority, the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, and members of the Green Political Party, your Inquiry may be interested to learn how the British managed their forests in Assam in North-East India, more than half a century ago. The following excerpt is taken from the self-published booklet, *Tales From My Assam Days, 1922-1944*, by Harold Cocksedge, who was a PWD Civil Engineer with responsibilities in that Indian State. As a footnote on page 51, Mr Cocksedge states:

"These Fire Lines are broad belts of cleared forest intended to check the spread of a forest fire and confine it to the block in which it originated. Fortunately, fire was never a serious problem in these evergreen forests. The heavy tropical rainfall and lush evergreen undergrowth generally prevented any fire from developing and spreading to any considerable extent. But the practice of establishing and maintaining such Fire Lines proved very useful. They divided the forests up into blocks which were very convenient, and in fact essential, for the purposes of efficient administration and control."

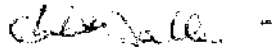
Of equal anathema to the NSW EPA, NSW NPWS, and the Greenies, is the "Mosaic Burning", carried out to this day by the Aborigines of Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory. For centuries these people have burned different areas for food, and to ensure that at all times - even under conditions of ferocious drought - a lightning-strike bushfire will not greatly spread. Their future wildlife food chain will thus, be greatly protected. The term, mosaic burning, comes from the fact that the resultant differing time of burning each area and its subsequent re-growth, is clearly visible on high ground or from the air.

It is greatly to be regretted that the above-mentioned bodies are incapable of realising that, generally speaking - except for small areas that would never be hazard-reduced in wintertime backburning such as the *Wollemia nobilis* of the NSW Wollemi National Park - all NSW National Parks are only as "pristine" as from the time of their last lightning-strike burnout or by Aborigines seeking food.

Although not a Federal issue, the frightening, ever-burgeoning bureaucracy of the NSW EPA and NSW NPWS is of great concern. The latest edict from the Park to Perisher Valley Ski Club Lodges is that we must report twice-yearly on the amount of washing-up detergent, paint etc. that we use. Would this effort not be better-spent on fire hazard-reduction to protect the sad wildlife inmates of the Park who, until there is a change to a much-more-practical Park management, will continue to lose their lives with each succeeding bushfire.

I wish your Inquiry every success.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Herbert Bolles".

Herbert Bolles