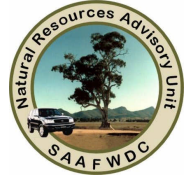




SA ASSOCIATION OF FOUR WHEEL DRIVE CLUBS Inc
NATURAL RESOURCES ADVISORY UNIT
Access Guide and Newsletter



2003

Autumn Edition

THE NRAU - WHAT IS IT? - The SAAFWDC has an internal organisation of "Units" that are charged with specific responsibilities in representing the interests, or coordinating the activities, of clubs of the Association.

One of those Units, the NRAU, sets the policy direction of the Association regarding matters pertaining to environment, and represents it on matters of access. This involves preparation of detailed written submissions to government and other interested parties in presentation of the views of the Association and its members.

- **UNIT COMPOSITION** – the NRAU has a committee, made up of members representing as many member clubs that will become involved - currently we meet monthly, on the 2nd Monday of the month – Unit expenses are basically \$400 to \$600 per year (expenses include copying, fax machine, fuel expenses for 1 member to attend Coorong Consultative Committee meetings (4 per year).
- **AIMS** - our main focus is on **ACCESS** - attempting to keep tracks open for our use – we attempt to influence the decision making process (where possible through reasonable argument and discussion) when tracks and camping areas are under threat or restriction, thus hopefully reducing the number of tracks closed as authorities regulate to overcome problems with incorrect behaviour.

HOW DO WE TRY TO ACHIEVE THIS - Approximately 70% of South Australia is the area we are most likely to want to use - these are Pastoral Leases, National Parks (NPs) and Aboriginal Lands. The ALU (Aboriginal Liaison Unit) has been left to work towards gaining improved access Aboriginal Lands.

The other two areas (Pastoral and NPs) is where the NRAU attempts to influence decisions. Over the years we have developed close contacts within relevant Government Departments which allow us to monitor any topics of interest to the Unit.

We do this by making regular calls to individuals within Government Department's, and ensuring the NRAU is on mailing lists for draft management plans and other publications, newsletters, etc. NRAU representatives are involved on various committees, and the National Association gives information from around Australia.

When items of interest come up, we analyse them and decide whether to comment or not - the unit attempts to respond in a positive manner to proposed draft management plans for NPs and other proposals, such as Ramsar (bird protection), West Coast 2000 strategy, use of pastoral lands, and the formation of PARs and access by consent. Generally, we research, and may act on any issue which could affect where and how we can drive and camp.

MEMBERS OF THE NRAU ARE INVOLVED IN – the Coorong Consultative Committee (for NPs), Innamincka and Strzelecki Parks Friends, Friends of Coorong, Friends of Simpson Desert, Coorong and Lakes Ramsar (our representative is on the Coorong Consultative Committee and in a position to influence attitudes), Coongie Lakes Ramsar, Public Access Sub Committee of Pastoral Board, National Council Access Committee, and the Wilderness Committee.

PROTECTED AREAS POLICY and PARTNERSHIP WITH PARKS – Members of the NRAU are on the RVAC (Recreational Vehicles Advisory Committee) - a mechanism for regular meetings between SAAFWDC representatives and NP senior staff and Pastoral Branch staff to discuss problems, and design ways of overcoming them.

We do not expect to alter existing access in Parks, but when plans come up for review or before draft plans are written, suggestions will be submitted for allowing tracks to remain open as long as they can be shown to be sustainable. It requires 3 members of the Association to attend 2-3 meetings a year, and preferably have knowledge of areas under discussion.

DO WE ACHIEVE ANYTHING? - we think **YES**. It is not always highly visible, but underneath the attitudes to 4WD use have changed over the years, and 4WD touring is now recognised as a legitimate form of recreation. We prefer to work with Departmental personnel rather than politicians, and try to influence decision making behind the scenes.

At the Coorong, we have managed (with the assistance of the Nissan Patrol Club involvement) to keep both the 28 and 32 mile crossings open where Management Plans recommended closing one of them down. On Committees and at seminars and forums we are able to counter negative attitudes to 4WDs and camping, and sometimes eventually win people around to our way of thinking. If there is no one there representing SAAFWDC, attitudes would remain negative along with recommendations for restrictions and closures.

THE NECESSITY FOR CLUBS TO BELONG TO THE STATE ASSOCIATION AND FEDERAL COUNCIL -

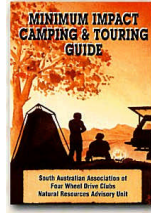
Departments and Ministers prefer (and sometimes demand) dealing with representatives of the overall movement instead of from individual clubs. This started back in 1974 when the Anne Welsh report on 4WD vehicles called for all the State to be closed to vehicles beyond properly made roads.

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Minimum Impact Camping & Touring Guide

A 16 page booklet, prepared by the Natural Resources Advisory Unit, was distributed to members in 1998. The booklet (dimensions about 15cm x 21 cm) is of a handy size to fit into a vehicle glove box.



If you do not have a copy, and would like one,

please contact your club delegate, or the Association.

The following is an extract from the introduction – “*This document contains guidelines recommended for use when camping and touring throughout South Australia. These guidelines are produced to contribute to the development of an awareness of the environment and ecology in all regions of South Australia, enhancing the enjoyment of this state for all visitors, now and in the future.*

*It is recommended that all tourers, particularly those in four wheel drives (and their trip leaders) become familiar with the guidelines set out in this document. The emphasis being on **guide**, as a degree of flexibility may be required in some camping and touring situations.*

Extra care should be observed when travelling through National and Conservation Parks, which have been set aside because they have an intrinsic environmental value worthy of preservation for future generations. Visitors have a responsibility to ensure that such assets remain intact and undamaged.

This document is designed to promote an awareness of the preservation of the environment and beauty in our Parks and Wilderness areas of South Australia for all to enjoy for generations to come.

May your touring and camping in South Australia be a pleasant and memorable experience!”

Topics covered include –

- ✓ General principles
- ✓ Care of tracks – care, choice, driving, conduct, flora & fauna, sites
- ✓ Motor vehicles
- ✓ Campsite selection - principles, location, “do nots”
- ✓ Camp washing
- ✓ Rubbish disposal
- ✓ Campfires – management, safety, alternatives
- ✓ Bush toilets – general principles, chemical toilets, latrines

Unless we all heed and practise the advice contained in the booklet to minimise our impact on the environment we all love, that environment may not be available to our children, and our own access to many areas may be restricted – **it is up to all of us to protect it**

Recreational Vehicle Handbook - another booklet being prepared by the NRAU and other entities, which should be available to all in the not too distant future.

CLOSED TRACK - apparently some doubt exists regarding closure of the Macumba Track (also known as Rocks Road), which runs NNE from Oodnadatta to near Purnie Bore via Macumba Station – that track is permanently closed to public traffic, and has been for many years.

Would your club editor like to receive this newsletter via email – if yes, please advise the NRAU Editor of an email address:

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WORKING BEES BY CLUBS – are a positive step towards continued access - adopt a track in a NP, forest, etc – organise clean up days in these areas. All great ideas, and feed back from local staff is always positive. (One problem is that frequently only local staff know and appreciate work done. Managers change and new staff have to be educated as to arrangements. The partnership agreement may help to overcome this).

WE NEED COMMITTED VOLUNTEERS ON THE NRAU - with computer skills; knowledge of the State, NPs, forests, and pastoral areas; time to attend meetings; knowledge of Government Department ideas; and possibly retired.

IN THE FUTURE YOU WILL NEVER HAVE MORE ACCESS THAN YOU HAVE NOW - more areas will be closed – the user pays principle will increase – it is already in national parks – and is coming in private and leasehold areas.

It always amazes us that people spend between \$20,000 to \$60,000 on a 4WD vehicle, perhaps another \$10,000 on a tent/camper trailer, and more \$s on associated camping equipment. They then want to go and use those assets in a remote area, but object to paying a few dollars to a central organisation that attempts to maintain open access to the areas which they enjoy.

We also continually have problems getting sufficient people to volunteer onto Committees to “fight the fight”. The average club member just seems to think that it’s not all that important and they should just be involved in having a good time. **This is very short sighted!** - ever thought as to whether your children or grand children are going to be able to have some of the experiences we have had travelling and camping in pristine remote areas.

GET MOTIVATED! GET INVOLVED! - think passionately about your chosen recreation **before its too late**, otherwise you are likely to be jammed into that crowded caravan park along with every body else. That may be slightly over the top, but really it needs thoughts like that to jolt the uninterested majority into either doing something or at least caring that somebody else is trying.

Club environmental projects

This newsletter would like to regularly feature an article about the environmental projects our affiliated Clubs are or have been involved in. If your club is involved in any of these projects, please forward details to the editor.

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