

AUSTRALIAN
Forest History
SOCIETY Inc.

*'... to advance historical understanding of human interactions with
Australian forest and woodland environments.'*

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Borradaile Plain Hut

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Borradaile Plain Hut

Forestry Tasmania has commissioned a conservation management plan for the Borradaile Plain Hut in the upper Mersey River in Northern Tasmania. The study was completed by Peter Brown and Simon Cubit.

While the main thrust of the report was to assess the significance and condition of the hut many interesting themes of land use emerged.

The hut is a small wooden building that was extended with the addition of a skin shed, porch and garage. It is a composite structure incorporating fabric from earlier huts dating back to 1907. The surviving hut was built to replace one built in 1898 and burnt down in the late 1940's.

The Borradaile plain is a natural plain with a forested environment in the high country (c.700m asl). Aboriginal people used it for over 30,000 years. These plain /forest ecotones were favorite places for Aboriginal people as they had resources available from several different environments.

Brown and Cubit outline the European history of the plain, which was eagerly exploited both as an easy travel route and for cattle grazing. This plain and similar ones in the high country became used for summer grazing. Later history includes the construction of forestry roads leading to improved access. During this time the Plain continued to be leased for cattle grazing, an ar-

range that continues to this day.

As a model for managing structures associated with historical settlement this document is recommended. It comprehensively considers the hut in its setting, identifies the significant features, assesses the condition and makes sensible recommendations for its conservation.

The partnership between the leaseholders and Forestry Tasmania as the responsible land managers is highlighted.

Copies of the report can be obtained from Mersey District, Forestry Tasmania.

Denise Gaughwin
Forest Practices Board, Tasmania

Call for Information - Occupied Trees

Recently I have come across a number of mature trees in Tasmania that have been occupied.

The inhabitants have modified trees with large hollows at ground level. In several instances platforms have been built at the base to create a level floor. Other features include shelves and nails for hanging goods. Timbers and nails at the entrance, presumably for holding up Hessian or skins. 'Doors' are also common. I have assumed that these trees were occupied c.1930 by trappers and hunters as many are at high altitude. However a recent find does appear to be more correlated to a dwelling for a timber worker(s?).

I would be interested in hearing from Members in other States whether these occupied trees are known and what attributes they exhibit.

Thanks

Denise Gaughwin
Forest Practices Board, Tasmania.





H-NET BOOK REVIEW

Published by H-Environment@h-net.msu.edu (July, 2004)

Nancy Langston. "Where Land and Water Meet: A Western Landscape Transformed". Foreword by William Cronon. Weyerhaeuser Environmental Books Series. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003. xiv + 230pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$26.95 (cloth), ISBN 0-295-98307-8.

Reviewed for H-Environment by Ryan J. Carey, Department of History, University of Texas at Austin.

The Poetics of Conflict

In a field full of cautionary tales about humanity's uncanny ability to bring about totally unintentional environmental circumstances, Nancy Langston's scholarship is unique. In her first book, "Forest Dreams, Forest Nightmares" (1996), a sympathetic yet critical examination of forest management in Oregon's Blue Mountain National Forest, Langston moved beyond the tragic stock-narrative of environmental history by sketching a program of practical management solutions to the often disastrous interactions between humans and the non-human world. Work to account for complexity, Langston urged her readers. Her latest book, "Where Land and Water Meet: A Western Landscape Transformed", is in many ways the second chapter in a larger project. Langston, an environmental historian, professor of forest ecology, and management at the University of Wisconsin has produced a careful cultural, social, and natural history of human management of wetlands in eastern Oregon, specifically the riparian areas of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. The book is also a lesson in what Langston calls "pragmatic adaptive management." To the theme of complexity, Langston adds conflict as a necessary component of sustainable natural resource management.

Birders and sportsmen familiar with great basin wildlife know Malheur's marshes quite well; egrets, ducks, Canadian geese, herons, and trout, are but a few of the animals that depend on the refuge's riparian marshlands during the year. Langston traces the history of this landscape from the arrival of the first white settlers near the end of the nineteenth century to the present day, identifying two overlapping eras of land management: cattle ranching and federal wildlife management. In both eras, Malheur residents tried to engineer the wetlands to produce different empires. Ranchers shaped the land to create imperial cattle concerns. Henry Miller, of Miller and Lux, set up an operation in the basin, while Peter French and Hugh Glenn used the marshes and surrounding area for their P Ranch. These ranchers turned their visions of cattle empires into reality by manipulating the wetlands and the flow of water across them to create more and more property for cattle grazing.

Ironically, the story of federal refuge management is not terribly different. Refuge officials, like ranchers, were equally single-minded in their manipulation of the environment. Once the federal government wrested control of Malheur Lake and the Donner and Blitzen River from rancher control, creating the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, managers tried to create an "empire of ducks," a vision based on their romantic notions of the cattle empires of the "old West." Refuge managers used complex science to engineer the wetlands into "better" marshes capable of "producing" more of what the marshes were famous for, ducks and trout. The result, no surprise to environmental historians, was a weird hybrid landscape, part human, part natural. Beavers were trapped out, their dams replaced with concrete. Riverbank willows were eradicated, planted, and eradicated again. Predators were systematically eliminated and then reintroduced. Throughout the story, Langston provides a nuanced account of the cultural context in which the people of Malheur operated, drawing a direct line between their perceptions of the land and their actions.

At the heart of this story are the power relations between competing social groups looking to control the wetlands and dictate land-use policy. In the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth, ranchers had the upper hand, controlling the vast majority of property in the basin. By the 1930s, after an intense struggle between cattle barons and refuge managers, the balance of power shifted, and the federal government was increasingly able to shape land-use at Malheur. Both groups tried to eliminate each other's influence in the basin, yet at no point was the power held by either ranchers or refuge managers very secure. Throughout Malheur's history, ranchers and managers had to gain popular support for their policies. Small farmers in the basin, urban bird-watchers in Portland, and sportsman throughout the mountain West felt as if they had a stake in Malheur as well. Both ranchers and wildlife managers tailored their message to these groups, seeking to build coalitions that might tip the balance of power one way or the other.

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H-NET BOOK REVIEW cont....

This power struggle provides the story with dramatic tension, but it also provides Langston's argument with necessary analytical tension. "Where Land and Water Meet" shows how sustainable management was only possible when no one single social group monopolized the landscape and its use. "For generations," writes Langston, "first ranchers and then refuge managers were able to gather enough power so that they did not need to acknowledge viewpoints other than their own" (p. 9). The solution to such narrow-minded management practices and their resultant disastrous landscapes, Langston maintains, is conflict. The story of Malheur teaches us that "both environmental lawsuits and environmental change forced open a door through which new stories, new perspectives, and new assumptions could enter" (p. 9). Conflict is the key to successful management policies. "For many people conflict is a dirty word," Langston writes, "yet conflicts among different users of Malheur Lake Basin eventually improved refuge management [and] disrupted the hold of narrow orthodoxies on resource management" (p. 9). Only by allowing for conflict, for the messy social reality of multiple users, perspectives, and voices, can we hope to manage the equally messy world of multiple biological, climatic, and geological forces.

Similar to "Forest Dreams, Forest Nightmares", "Where Land and Water Meet" ends with a fascinating historical essay and management methodology statement on how restoration ecologists, wildlife managers, ranchers, sportsman, local residents, and recreational tourists might try to work together to manage and account for the complexity of riparian areas or any other landscape. The last chapter, "Pragmatic Adaptive Management," is not so much a conclusion, but a complex suggestion on how management should incorporate conflict and complexity. Langston draws on the philosophical foundations of American pragmatism to argue for a "democratic process that creates a structure for useful conflict" (p. 161). In short, Langston makes conflict and multiple perspectives necessary for good management. Only by putting locals, such as ranchers and small farmers, and non-locals, such as government scientists and environmental activists, on an equal footing can management succeed.

As a teaching tool for both undergraduate and graduate students, this book reads wonderfully. Similarly, "Where Land and Water Meet", will also be easily digestible for those outside of the academy. It is full of enlightening stories as well as careful and accessible analysis. "Where Land and Water Meet" is elegantly concise at 169 pages, and its six chapters are divided into discussions of discrete historical episodes or thematic discussions which run from about two to fifteen pages apiece.

For all the book's strengths, its coverage could have been broader. Ranchers and federal managers dominate Langston's history of Malheur because they were the ones that actually determined land-use policies. Homesteaders, small farmers, and sportsman, for instance, play a much more marginal role in her analysis because they never secured control over that process. Yet the reader is left wondering if these more marginal groups were more than just a constituency to be won over. Langston argues that ranchers and refuge managers tailored their rhetoric to appeal to these groups but took little of it from them. In this story, those in power held the power of cultural production. The narrative could have withstood further discussion of the role played by other users. It would not have altered Langston's larger argument, but it would have provided a more nuanced telling of how different Oregonians contributed to the creation of the rhetoric of nature so crucial to the fights over Malheur.

"Where Land and Water Meet" is a sophisticated yet accessible analysis of the intersection of nature and culture. More importantly, however, it moves beyond simple criticisms of the problems inherent in wildlife and natural resource management and advances a nuanced program for those invested in land management, outdoor recreation, farming, ranching, and the environment.

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Call for papers: European Forests in Ethical Discourse

The University of Joensuu, Faculty of Forestry, Finland and the University of Freiburg, Faculty of Forest and Environmental Sciences, Germany are arranging in collaboration with the Finnish Institute in Germany, the SILVA Network and the European Forest Institute, a research symposium on: **European Forests in Ethical Discourse Berlin, Germany 18-19 January 2005.**

The symposium includes four sessions:

1. Ethics and forestry: sustainability, values in conflict (1st day)
2. Forests, culture and religions (1st day)
3. Codes of professional ethics (2nd day)
4. Forest sector: corporate responsibility, fair globalisation (2nd day)

One of the keynote addresses is "Sustainable Forests, Global Responsibility and the Earth Charter" by Prof. Robin Attfield, University of Cardiff.

Those interested in participating and/or giving a voluntary presentation, are asked to submit a letter of interest, indicating a tentative title of the proposed paper and preferred sessions. The letter of interest should be sent as soon as possible preferably by email to Dr. Antti Erkkilä at the University of Joensuu, Finland (antti.erkkila@joensuu.fi, Fax +358 13 251 3590, Tel. +358 13 251 3628).

The website of the event is under preparation. When the website is available the link may be found through <http://gis.joensuu.fi/silva/> or http://www.efi.fi/events/2005/event_calendar/

Call for papers: European Society for Environmental History

Third International Conference "History and sustainability" February 16-19, 2005, Florence, Italy.

The European Society for Environmental History and the University of Florence, Faculty of Agriculture / Dipartimento di Scienze e Tecnologie Ambientali Forestali, are pleased to invite proposals for panels, papers and posters for the Third International ESEH Conference.

The theme of the conference is "History and Sustainability". The Conference Committee especially encourages proposals related to the theme of the conference, but contributions that examine any aspect of human - environment - interaction over time are welcome. Scholars from all fields and disciplines are invited. We encourage contributions by graduate students and independent scholars.

Submitting a proposal In order to make ESEH 2005 conference planning easier, please, submit your proposal preferably via the website form at: www.eseh2005.unifi.it. In due course, the site will also provide additional information about the conference. E-mail: info.eseh2005@unifi.it.

Panels A panel consists of three papers of 20 Minutes each, with 30 minutes of discussion time (90 minutes). Panel submitters can, but do not need to propose a chairperson. There are no commentators, discussion is with the audience.

Papers Individual paper submissions will be considered by the committee, but presenters should be aware that the committee cannot guarantee thematically consistent panels for such papers.

Posters We especially encourage the submission of posters, which will be introduced by authors in a 3 minute statement in the poster plenary session.

Scholars are invited to submit proposals of no more than 300 words in any of the above categories in English by 21 May, 2004. If you cannot access the web-form on the conference site, send an e-mail to the ESEH secretariat (e-mail: Oosthoek@ontel.com).

Alternatively you can post your paper through the ESEH website at www.eseh.org. Click on the link "Paper submission 2005" in the Important bar on the front page.



BOOK REVIEW - *Significant Trees of South Gippsland.*

Mary Ellis 2002.

Significant Trees of South Gippsland.
South Gippsland Conservation Society
and South Gippsland Shire Council, 69
pp., ISBN 0-9592959-X RRP \$20.

One of the publications listed in an earlier *Newsletter*, this slim volume documents trees considered to have heritage value in a largely deforested part of Victoria, the Shire of South Gippsland which, according to the author, contains less than fifteen percent of its original forest cover.

Helped by a National Estate Grant from the Australian Heritage Commission, the National Trust established a Register of Significant Trees in Victoria in 1981, and many councils prepared tree registers to identify and protect trees with heritage significance. One was the Woorayl Shire, whose significant trees were documented with the help of the South Gippsland Conservation Society. In 1999, after the Woorayl Shire had become part of the South Gippsland Shire, its Council commissioned the South Gippsland Conservation Society to develop a local register of significant trees, stands of trees and sites in the South Gippsland Shire. Botanist and writer, Dr Mary Ellis, has recorded and photographed these trees, which include Australian and exotic species. Their significance may be their age, size, rarity or aesthetic value, or their peculiar or outstanding growth form. Commemorative plantings and forest remnants and stands considered to have landscape value are also included. No trees considered to have cultural value were nominated, so there are no trees associated with Aboriginal activities.

Information about local trees on the Register of Significant Trees is tabulated. Fifty-seven of seventy-two nominations of trees on public land in the Shire of South Gippsland were deemed to be significant. A table shows their locations and common and botanical names – from Algerian Oak, *Quercus canariensis*, via Mountain Ash, *Eucalyptus regnans*, to Western Red Cedar, *Thuja plicata*. Another table lists the fourteen successful nominations of stands of Australian and exotic trees in the Shire. A third table lists twenty-four public sites with significant trees, including Avenues of Honour and various parks and reserves.



But the book contains much more. Dr Ellis provides a short chapter on the horticultural history of some species, and line-illustrations (leaf, flower and fruit or cone) and diagnostic details to allow the reader to identify the species listed. And in case you wish to observe other examples of these species, the locations of accessible examples are listed for conifers (Australian and exotic), deciduous and evergreen exotic trees, and Australian trees. Lo-

cally indigenous species are indicated. Sycamores and other trees which have become weeds within the Shire are not included. There is an alphabetical listing of towns with their significant trees and sites and some historical details and references. The Mountain Ash in the Gunyah State Forest, whose huge barked butt graces the front cover has lost its top, but has managed to survive timber-getting and forest-clearing across the decades. It may be much older than the huge, 60m, three-century old Mountain Grey Gum, *Eucalyptus cypellocarpa*, known as 'The Big Tree', opposite Darlimurla Railway Station, and perhaps centuries older than the oldest exotic trees in the Shire.

There are maps of the Shire of South Gippsland, a glossary of botanical terms, bibliography and an index of place- and tree-names. Even if you don't visit South Gippsland, you might like to purchase a copy of *Significant Trees of South Gippsland* (from the Shire of South Gippsland, Private Bag 4, Leongatha, VIC 3953) to admire the sixty-four colour portraits of exotic and indigenous trees in the region. I hope it will help heritage-conscious people learn about trees.

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Cultural Heritage Conference

I went to the IUFRO "Woodlands - Cultural Heritage" Conference in Vienna and a subsequent post-conference tour to Styria, which is not a Shakesperian imagining, but a region of beautiful, forested mountains. Although cultural heritage has been assessed in Australian forests since 1990, it only gained international recognition as a part of the goal of sustainable forest management in 2003 (Fourth Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe), hence the conference.

Of the varied topics covered, two touched on my paper on the 'Layered cultures of forestry'. Eirini Saratsi showed how the culture of modern state forestry fails to recognise how traditional land uses in NW Greece preserve the patches of forest in agricultural lands there. Drawing on Spanish

research Juan and Jesús Latorre attributed the widespread view that the dry Mediterranean regions were badly degraded, to the cultural pre-conceptions of nineteenth century travellers from a green northern Europe. Enamoured of ruined monuments, the travellers projected views of indolence on the population and soil degradation on the landscape. In fact, the region was arid, the people were consequently poor and northern forestry misconceived.

The Austrians wanted to know how an understanding of their 'forest culture' might serve communities in the forest regions now. With agriculture declining, the forests were gradually encroaching on the fields, but forest production on their very steep slopes was barely economic. Tourism in such attractive sur-

roundings was a possibility if it could be boosted harmoniously. We visited a number of small museums, some locally flavoured and sponsored, others professionally designed and provided by wealthy estates. The forest culture they depicted focussed on hunting and on the ingenious water-based technology of flumes and weirs used until the mid-twentieth to transport wood. It was very male view of the world and the only female image we encountered was of an old woman carrying a bundle of sticks on her back. It left me wondering about who this culture would appeal to today? And then reflect that it would be just as good a question to ask of displays in local museums in Australia.

John Dargavel

Archives, embroideries and web sites

I spent a few days in Dublin researching material in the National Library archives and the National Gallery about the early lives of Charles Lane Poole, who became the Commonwealth's first forester and head of the Australian Forestry School (transferred to ANU Forestry in 1966), and his wife Ruth Pollexfen. Ruth was part of the Yeats fam-

ily and was trained as an artist and embroiderer; I was able to see examples of her work. She became an interior designer and designed the furniture for the Lodge and the Governor-General's residence in Canberra, the wood being selected by Charles.

Our National Archives has chosen the Lane Pooles to be included in the

web site that they are developing on *Uncommon Lives*. I have been commissioned to prepare the content and identify the salient records in the archives. These will be digitised and available on-line to aid other researchers and to demonstrate how our national collection can be used.

John Dargavel

Membership of the Australian Forest History Society (AFHS) Inc is \$25 a year, or \$15 a year for students. For overseas addressees, it is \$30 (in Australian currency please).

These prices do not include GST as the AFHS is not registered for paying or claiming GST. Membership expires on 30th June each year.

Payment can be made by cheque or money order, or through Electronic Funds Transfer.

Cheques or Money Orders should be made payable to the AFHS and sent to:

Australian Forest History Society Inc.
PO Box 5128
Kingston ACT 2604

Electronic Funds Transfer can be paid into:
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During World War II the Queensland Forest Service kept its fleet of vehicles running by using coke, coal or wood to power its vehicles with producer gas as shown in this picture. A Forestry Branch was established in the Department of Public Lands in 1900. This grew to become a Forestry Department from which parts were joined with the Department of Primary Industries in 1989.

Bunya Freebies for AFHS Members !

On the Bunya Trail (2003) describes itself as 'a rich multimedia experience exploring the many stories about Queensland's bunya pine.' It is an interdisciplinary CD-Rom, co-coordinated by Anna Haebich, Director of the Queensland Studies Centre at the University of Queensland. You can also see it online at <http://www.bunya.gal.org.au/default.asp>

Members of the AFHS who attended the *Perfumed Pineries* conference in 2000 (or read its proceedings, published 2001) will know the value of an intensive study of one genus (in that case *Callitris*). The bunya pine (*Araucaria bidwillii*) provides an even closer study of just a single species. But it is a very significant

one especially to Indigenous peoples and increasingly to non-Indigenous Queenslanders as well. Haebich describes it as both a 'natural and cultural heritage icon of Queensland'.

The project began in 2001 as a joint project of Global Arts Link (Ipswich) and the Queensland Studies Centre. Its aim was to 'make the bunya pine visible in our cultural landscape, thereby to encourage a sense of connection with landscape and environment and with people, places and stories of the region.' Haebich's association with the bunya pine is personal – she grew up on a farming property at the base of the Bunya Mountains.

Some of the material on the CD has

appeared in a special edition of the *Queensland Review* in 2002, and this might be a way for people without CD-Rom facilities to access the project. John Huth, a member of AFHS is one of the contributors to this volume.

If you have a computer that reads a CD-Rom and you would like a copy of the CD, e-mail your postal address to Anna Haebich - a.haebich@griffith.edu.au She has 10 free copies of the CD which she will arrange to send out on a first-come, first-served basis to members of AFHS.

Libby Robin