



## FEDERATION WALK Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2009

### Why Mt. Disappointment?

Being involved with brainstorming and planning for the events to celebrate our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, one needed to refer to our past as recorded in 'The Scroggin Eaters: A History of Bushwalking in Victoria, to 1989' by Graeme Wheeler (1989).

The first Federation walk was hosted on 6 October 1935 by MAWTC (Melbourne Amateur Walking and Touring Club). No records are available about the location or the clubs that attended other than the fact it was a success (p58). This is unfortunate as it would have been good to replicate the walk or at least walk in the same area to mark our current anniversary. It is also documented on page 53, that in 1934 (prior to the formation of The Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs) the President of the MAWTC wanted to mark the combination of Victoria's Centenary and his Club's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year with 'a combined walk to which all clubs would be invited, and which preferably would follow the route of one of the early explorers'.

In 1824, the Explorers, Hume and Hovell set out from near Sydney for Western Port, which George Bass discovered in 1798. They had an extremely challenging trip. Crossing several flooded rivers, excessive heat, maddening flies and mosquitoes, impenetrable vegetation and rugged mountain landscapes caused low morale. (Does this sound familiar?) To lift morale Hume and Hovell decided to climb this mountain in order to sight Western Port, their planned destination. After days of scrub bashing through thick lush vegetation they reached the summit with no view due to the dense forest of tall trees. Hence they aptly named this peak, Mt. Disappointment. History of this expedition can be viewed at Blair's Hut site, close to the summit.

Checking the list of previous Federation Walk locations on pages 266-268 reveals that this area has been previously chosen as a Federation Walk site in 1972 and hosted by the Walking Club of Victoria. Apart from all the history involved, this site was chosen for the 2009 Federation Day Walk event as it is a reasonably central location for access to reconnoitre for most of our clubs and their members and our newer individual members. Mt. Disappointment State Forest abuts a mud brick conference centre from which many successful bushwalking base camps have been run. It has been chosen as a perfect venue for registration, assembly and provision of afternoon tea (no alcohol allowed). Saturday night accommodation will be available on site to enable country clubs a good opportunity to attend.

This area is commonly overlooked by the bushwalking community. However, the walking potential is huge with many points of interest. This area has a long history of goldmining, logging, World War 2 internment camps and aeroplane disasters. Which means there are mines, mill sites, multiple waterfalls, plane crash sites, stands of huge Eucalyptus (possibly larger than the Ada Tree), camp sites, picnic areas, summits and reservoirs to explore in this spur and gully terrain. There is also good walking on the plateau along with kilometres of navigable creek lines. Extremes in vegetation occur due to extremes in rainfall, temperature, altitude and aspect. Vegetation changes occur from the dry ridges to the lush tree fern crowded creek beds. The other immediate visible difference is from the dry, open, sparsely wooded north aspects to the densely cool sheltered southern sides.

## **How Members Can Help**

Unlike other Federation Walk events, where one or two clubs host the entire event, the walk at the end of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary year is all about teamwork and unity. BWV asks Clubs to “host a walk” – provide the leader, deputy leader, whip, walk description, do the recce and offer it on the program for the day (clubs can band together to lead a walk). It is all there waiting for you to explore. Be innovative; only use the commercial walking books as a guide. Make up a walking route by encapsulating or joining points of interest together. There is so much satisfaction in showing and sharing your finds with your friends and other walkers. We need your club to design and refine your walk as soon as possible.

Club members can also assist by joining the Working Group or volunteering to help with a variety of things that need doing on the day.

**A word of warning** that this event will be held on the day that daylight saving ends, giving everyone an extra hour to get to the site and organized!

Stay tuned to Bushwalking News Victoria and the BWV website for more details as they become available.