

Cultural Landscapes – A concept for raising forest conscienceness

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ABSTRACT: The concept of cultural landscapes, human interaction with the environment over long periods, captures that otherwise indefinable set of properties of nearly all Australian forests: the mix of the natural – soils, climate, vegetation – and the cultural – surveying, harvesting, mining, settlement, burning – which together produce the forests we see today. Use of the term and concept is growing, partly as the result of the 1992 World Heritage definitions which provide a framework in which to assess designed, relict and continuing landscapes as well as those with associative values. As the concept includes Aboriginal influences on the forest it challenges the wilderness view of some forests as untouched landscapes.

To date managers of forested landscapes have not appreciated its usefulness as a concept which can illustrate how cultural influences have interacted with natural conditions and vice versa. It offers a means of understanding the cultural components and historical processes operating in forest ecology as well as the significance of historical relics remaining in situ and should guide management actions to conserve cultural and natural values.

In Australia the Regional Forest Assessments provided some data on potential cultural landscapes in forested areas but these were not developed into management categories. In the USA, the National Park Service has a standard methodology for cultural landscape studies applicable to forested landscapes. The European Landscape Convention has been applied to forested landscapes, including some which are World Heritage listed cultural landscapes.

If the public understands the history of Australia's forested landscapes more fully there might be an enhanced consciousness of the need to protect their cultural values and a public conscience about management privileging only the natural heritage values.

1 EVOLUTION OF THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE CONCEPT

This paper will examine the evolution of the cultural landscape concept and its application to forested landscapes with Australian case studies, showing the identification of cultural values and their subsequent management. Cultural landscape has been a fundamental concept for geographers since its first use in Germany in the 1890s when Friedrich Ratzel defined *Kulturlandschaft* as an area modified by human activity as opposed to the primeval natural landscape. Concurrently the French school of *geographie humaine* inquired into how people, environment and life style determine the face of the countryside (Aitchison 1995:266-7).

Carl Sauer, an American geographer at Berkeley, introduced the term 'cultural landscape' to the English-speaking world in 1925:

The cultural landscape is fashioned out of a natural landscape by a culture group. Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the cultural landscape is the result. Under the influence of a given culture, itself changing through time, the landscape undergoes development, passing through phases and probably reaching the end of its cycle of development. With the introduction of a different...culture, a rejuvenation of the landscape sets in, or a new landscape is superimposed on remnants of an older one (Sauer 1925:46).

Many ideas now current in landscape conservation stem from Sauer's contribution: interrelationships over time, distinguishable patterns of changing activities, layers of evidence. Richard Hartshorne's critical review of Sauer found division of the material features into separate natural and cultural landscapes illogical, since cultural elements in the landscape constitute a collection of parts of the total landscape. He suggested that 'unaltered natural landscapes and those uncontrolled by man' be called 'wild landscapes' in contrast to 'tamed' or 'cultivated' landscapes (Hartshorne 1939:348).

Nevertheless, the Berkeley school continued to be influential in examining the ecological consequences of human environmental transformation. In the 1960s geography resurrected cultural landscapes as a concept for analysing the ties between culture and the environment: in examining visual material evidence in the landscape such as house types and field patterns and in examining cultural perceptions and visual preferences. Lowenthal concentrated on landscapes of the mind, human attachments to the past given meaning in landscapes which are the repository of history and storehouses of both collective and private memories. Yet he too realised that the past was not static and changed over time and, that in trying to understand the past we re-valued it (Lowenthal 1985). Further landscape studies over the past two decades have taken many approaches: landscape as material culture; landscape as evidence for origins and diffusion; landscape as ecological artefact; urban landscapes or townscapes; art, literature and landscape meaning; landscape as visual resource; landscape as ideology; landscape's role in the production and maintenance of social categories; and landscapes as text, symbols and signs. These studies cemented cultural landscape as a fundamental concept in human geography (Jones 2003:36).

The National Park Service (NPS) has led the cultural landscape movement in the Americas. NPS recognised cultural landscapes as a specific resource type and in 1984 published *Cultural Landscapes: Rural Historic Districts in the National Parks System* which set out criteria for identifying and defining cultural landscapes. Since then the NPS has provided intellectual and practical leadership through its Register Bulletins and its own research, interpretation, treatment and management of cultural landscapes within the National Park system (Alanen and Melnick 2000:15). These include regrowth forests in the east such as those in the Appalachian South (Howell 2002), replanting in Vermont including those cutover forests described by George Perkins Marsh at Woodstock (Mitchell and Diamant 2001) and forests in the Pacific Northwest now in national parks.

The NPS defined *cultural landscape* as 'a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values.' Four types of cultural landscapes, not mutually exclusive, are also their management responsibility: historic site, historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes and ethnographic landscapes (NPS-28 1994).

2 ADOPTION OF THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPES CONCEPT IN AUSTRALIA

The diffusion of these concepts into Australian perceptions of landscapes was rather slow. Historians had come to realise that human interaction with the land was a continuing theme throughout regional Australia and seminal studies were produced at this time, including W.K. Hancock's exemplary study of the Monaro tablelands interpreting the landscape and its meanings to the people who lived there (Hancock 1972). Geographers were analysing landscape patterns (Rose 1972; Powell 1974; Williams 1974) while anthropologists (Berndt and Berndt 1965) and archaeologists

(Mulvaney and Golson 1971) were researching Aboriginal impact on the environment in Australia. J. M. Powell teased out attitudes and actions during the formative period from 1788 to 1914 when the Australian environment was ‘irrevocably altered for future generations ... and Australian attitudes towards native fauna, flora and landscapes, and to some extent the built environment became deeply entrenched’ (Powell 1976:6).

George Seddon encouraged a sense of place, an appreciation of local landscapes, in *Swan River Landscapes* (1970). He and Mari Davis edited *Man and Landscape in Australia: Towards an Ecological Vision* (1976), which, as well as providing a current view of cultural attitudes to the landscape, introduced many conservationists to the rich work of poets, painters and writers expressing distinctively Australian responses to landscapes.

During the 1980s, geographers and some historians studied the historical factors – people and processes – at work in the landscape. Geoffrey Bolton’s 1981 *Spoils and Spoilers* was regarded as the first comprehensive account of the love-hate relationship between Australians and the land they lived in, while Paul Carter in *The Road to Botany Bay: An Essay in Spatial History* (1987) reviewed the invention of Australia as a cultural place by examining the historical construction of Australian landscapes through letters home, explorers’ journals, diaries and maps. Denis Jeans and Peter Spearritt described the evolution of the cultural landscape of New South Wales as the product of a number of forces operating on it – technological advances enabling modification of the landscape, growth of economic resources creating new landscapes, interplay of social classes creating residential landscapes, and taste, an element of the aesthetic coming from a sense of beauty, fitness and tradition (Jeans and Spearritt 1980:1-3).

The Australian Heritage Commission, responsible for a national perspective on identifying natural and cultural (aesthetic, historic and Aboriginal, social and scientific) values in places became involved in assessing cultural landscapes. It registered modified landscapes such as historic precincts, townships and mining areas. However, the Commission did not use the term ‘cultural landscape’ until 1980 when the Tasman Peninsula was promoted as a cultural landscape as a means of linking all the historic convict sites and their surrounding landscapes (Lennon 2004b).

Studies of cultural landscapes increased during the 1980s. Ken Taylor examined the Lanyon-Lambrigg area south of Canberra (1989), advocating greater protection for rural landscapes (1984). Jim Russell examined attitudes to Tasmanian landscape conservation (1989), while Kevin Frawley (1987) and Terry Birtles (1982) studied the clearing of forests for agricultural settlement on the Atherton Tablelands of North Queensland.

The historical narratives concerning cultural landscape studies in geography show a merger between landscape and cultural landscape in which both are seen as expressions of complex interactions between ideas, social structures and physical features in the human environment, in which natural forces and human actions are inextricably entwined (Jones 2003:39). The concept soon became useful at an international level.

3 WORLD HERITAGE CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

Although the 1972 *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* brought natural and cultural places together under one framework, there was no mechanism for recognising sites resulting from the interplay between cultural and natural values. Cultural heritage protection was dominated by the ideas of art historians and focused on single monuments while nature protection reflected the goal of natural scientists to protect threatened species and ‘untouched’ nature (Plachter and Rossler 1995:16). The aim ‘to preserve or reconstruct single, unique objects at some clearly defined phase in their existence’ was criticized as reflecting a museum-like approach that excluded dynamic processes and context, while natural areas were similarly excluded from their surrounding context including human activities. The emphasis in nature conservation on nature reserves and species protection saw humans as ‘a nuisance’; human influence meant loss in value. ‘Nature modified by humans seemed beside the point ... had little value, and was not recognized as a genuine problem for conservation’ (Plachter and Rossler 1995:16).

However, in 1992, the cultural criteria for World Heritage listing were expanded providing for categories of designed, relict, organically evolving and associative landscapes: 'the term "cultural landscape" embraces a diversity of manifestations of the interaction between people and the natural environment' (UNESCO 1994:14). In 1993 Tongariro National Park in New Zealand, already inscribed on the World Heritage List in recognition of its natural values, was re-inscribed as a universally outstanding example of a culturally associative landscape, one where the natural feature, the extinct volcano, is associated with Maori beliefs (Titchen 1994:20-22). This listing set a precedent for recognizing cultural values in natural areas and living cultural values expressed in the landscape. In 1994, Australia's Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park became the second property listed for its cultural landscape values.

The European Landscape Convention signed in Florence in 2000 promotes integrated conservation of landscape features especially in rural areas where forests form an important backdrop. The products of current technologies – quick growing forest plantations, new crops with a variety of visual effects as well as biodiversity impacts, new materials and forms such as plastic sheeting and wind farms – may impact on cultural landscapes. What are the limits of acceptable change in such landscapes? If the material evidence of successive layers of landscape use remains intact, the degree of interference or stitching in of new uses has to be determined. Policies should protect what is significant while permitting changes which do not threaten significant elements. This may be done by supporting traditional uses and practices and by permitting new uses or practices on land which is of lesser significance, and by using siting and design guidelines to ensure that new built elements do not detract from the significant components and landscape features.

Forests play a multifunctional role in cultural landscapes: habitat protection for plants and animals, timber production, protection of watersheds and freshwater sources, recreation, and common welfare. Forests, and woodlands especially in the drier Mediterranean regions, have long supported rural industries and created distinctive cultural landscapes, building traditions, food and crafts. Agri-environment programs to sustain these activities are increasing in Europe. There are groups like TWIG (Transnational Woodland Industries Group) through which partner regions in England, Germany and Greece are demonstrating how to manage their woodlands sustainably and to add value (both cultural and economic) to woodland products (Lennon 2001:87-9).

The World Conservation Union (IUCN) is responsible for advising on natural areas and their Protected Landscapes (Category V) are natural landscapes that have been transformed by human action and where the natural setting has shaped the way that people live and their types of settlement. They are usually places of outstanding visual quality and represent a practical way of achieving conservation objectives on private working lands (IUCN 1994). The protected landscape approach has been most used in Europe but is being applied in the small island states of the Pacific and Caribbean, the mountains of the Andes, traditional coffee growing areas of Central America, the landscapes of New England and the rice terraces of the Philippines. Many of these are also World Heritage cultural landscapes (Beresford 2003).

4 WORLD HERITAGE LANDSCAPES IN AUSTRALIA

Australia joined *The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* in 1974. Today the 16 World Heritage areas in Australia are icons of popular heritage and major tourist destinations but only after bitter contests with a variety of communities and commercial interests.

World Heritage listing reinforced the view that our big landscapes had international value. In 1982 the Tasmanian Wilderness was World Heritage listed, despite complete opposition from the State government. A new Federal government had won the election on this issue of protection of wilderness using the external treaties power in the constitution and passed the *World Heritage Properties Conservation Act* in 1983, the only nation at that time to have legislation to protect World Heritage properties. World Heritage listing was used as a policy instrument to protect key Australian landscapes, especially where States had failed to use their land management powers for

this purpose. In many ways, this set the scene for some of the key elements of World Heritage management in Australia – the emphasis on universal as opposed to local values, the emphasis on the natural as opposed to European heritage values and the imposition of a centralist model of decision-making versus local involvement and consultation, a trend which is now being reversed.

The problem of having no jurisdiction except through the external treaty power to protect World Heritage places is one of the reasons for the creation of the National List of Australian heritage places. From 1 January 2004, amendments to the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC), which define environment to include Australia's natural and cultural heritage and create a new National Heritage List of natural, Indigenous and historic places with outstanding heritage value to our nation, came into effect. Under the new system, National Heritage will join the other six matters of national environmental significance already protected by the EPBC Act (Department of the Environment and Heritage 2003).

Australians have traditionally perceived 'nature' and Aboriginal culture as 'our heritage' especially in landscapes like Kakadu and Uluru. The history of the use of the World Heritage Convention to protect large expanses of the natural environment because of their pristine qualities has obscured recognition of historic cultural values. Despite extended research into the range of cultural values in some natural areas like the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, these values have not been officially recognized yet they form the basis of popular tourist itineraries (Lennon 2003). This is repeated in other World Heritage areas such as the Wet Tropics and Fraser Island, all containing cultural landscapes.

5 AUSTRALIAN FORESTS AS CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

Much of Australia may be regarded as cultural landscape because of the traditions and practices of Indigenous peoples over thousands of years (Lennon 1996:9-20). Indigenous use of fire has shaped the biota (Bowman 1998) and connected people to their landscapes (Langton 2000).

The World Heritage cultural landscape categories have played a significant role in drawing attention to cultural values in natural areas in Australia. The applicability of these categories to the Central Victorian goldfields was tested as part of the State of Environment reporting process in 1994 (Lennon 1997:14-15). Designed public gardens and arboreta were identified. Relict landscapes with water races, breached dam walls and stone footings of former machinery sites characterize abandoned diggings with coppiced regrowth box-ironbark. Continuing landscapes remain, often on a larger scale, with farming abutting public forest or interspersed with treed, unmade road reserves leading to mullock heaps in paddock corners, reminders of previous activity. Associative landscapes such as the volcanic Mounts Buninyong and Warrenheip at the approach to Ballarat and Mount Franklin near Daylesford, with its distinctive breached volcanic cone, have always been significant to Aboriginal people and even planting the latter with exotic pines decades ago has not detracted from that significance.

The expansion of Victoria's *Heritage Act 1995* allowed listing of landscapes and there is now a suite of types from public gardens to country estates, river valleys, coastline and forests (Lennon 2003a). In 2003, the Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park of 7442 hectares was listed. It had been gazetted in the 1970s as a regional park which contained historic mining relics and archaeological evidence of the original (1852) rush to the diggings. Its values were re-examined as part of the Environment Conservation Council's Box-Ironbark Forests and Woodlands Investigation. The Council recommended creating a new category of public land principally to protect and recognise outstanding cultural landscapes (ECC 2001:145-7). Government implementation of this designation is a first for Australia.

Under the 1992 National Forest Policy, the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments agreed to a process for comprehensive assessments of the economic, social, environmental and heritage values of forest regions resulting in Regional Forest Agreements (RFA) for their management. The Victorian process had the benefit of existing cultural data which covered Aboriginal and historic places, places of aesthetic and social value, and forest disturbance histories. Surveys of

old-growth forest involved the documentation and mapping of human-induced disturbances. Over 80 significant cultural places were identified in the East Gippsland forests and more than 200 in the more historically complex Central Highlands. Significant engineering works, little known types such as World War II internment camps, Depression era 'susso' camps, protest/blockade sites, Aboriginal pathways, historic tracks and cultural landscapes were evaluated (Commonwealth of Australia 1996a:22-25).

A key outcome of the regional assessment process was the realization that there is no rigid distinction between cultural or natural heritage, either from an identification or management perspective. Today's forests, even those with old-growth and wilderness values, are landscapes with evidence of Aboriginal occupation, early timber-getting, pastoral and agricultural occupation, mining and logging. Silvicultural practices have in turn shaped the distribution and density of timber species in some forests. A more holistic approach to management, which regards cultural and natural heritage as part of a single continuum, is required despite the challenges of integrating heritage values into management. Broad acre issues in natural heritage management need to recognize points or 'dots' in the landscape with special cultural significance, while its generally broader scale management has the potential to conserve the expansive cultural elements and links in cultural landscapes such as pathways and routes of movement (Lennon 1998:42).

The RFA methodology for identifying cultural heritage values has been criticized for clustering common themes at a specific site as most RFA areas contain cultural landscapes which had become 'another environmental category, rather than an alternative framing paradigm for the environment as a whole' (O'Connor 2001:444). This was based on observations that communities indicated a symbolic attachment to the forests as a whole, such as Mundaring karri forest and Dwellingup jarrah forest in south west Western Australia, rather than to individual sites. Communities held broad social values including economic values of forests – 'people conceptualised the southwest as a dynamic landscape, potentially a very different notion to a region defined in terms of its old-growth forest' (O'Connor 2001:449) – whereas the RFA used the very specific cultural heritage concept of social value.

5.1 *The Tasmanian Wilderness as cultural landscape*

The World Heritage cultural landscapes categories were applied in a study of the cultural values in the Tasmanian Wilderness (Lennon 2002). The Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA) created in 1982 covers approximately 20% of Tasmania, 1.38 million hectares in the south west of the island. During the 1989 World Heritage renomination process, only Aboriginal values previously identified were considered – three caves of Aboriginal antiquity – and ICOMOS advised that further work was required. This resulted in the greatly increased number of places with cultural values: 746 Aboriginal sites (307 new sites) and approximately 400 European historic sites. The new information allows interpretations in accordance with the World Heritage cultural landscape categories and there are sites identified which add weight to the existing values as having outstanding universal value rather than just being related to aspects of archaeological significance of 'a culture that has disappeared'.

Human occupation for 36,000 years is denied however by the naming of the place as 'wilderness.' And more particularly since rising sea levels separated Tasmania from the mainland about 12,000 years ago, Tasmanian Aboriginal culture has survived one of the longest known periods of geographic and cultural isolation affecting a society. Archaeological surveys since 1982 have revealed occupation sites along the coastlines, at the mouths of the retreating glaciers in the Central Highlands, along pathways linking plain and mountains.

The TWWHA contains cultural landscapes:

1. Aborigines consider the whole WHA as a cultural landscape. The beauty of its 'superlative natural phenomena' also contributes to this categorization. Mt Rufus, Dove Lake or Frenchmans Cap could be categorised as associative cultural landscapes. The Pleistocene caves, Holocene middens and Central Plateau occupation sites are considered by Aborigines to be associative cultural landscapes and not just archaeological sites or relict landscapes. The area is

significant for Aboriginal rockshelters recorded to the north of Cradle Mountain in myrtle forest and occupation sites linking the mountain and surrounding landscape with the sea via the Forth Valley corridor (with the 35,000 year old Parmerpar Meethaner rock shelter) (Lehman 1996: 40-1). Dove Lake and surrounding sheltered tarns are significant as dreaming sites – an interpretation of a Creation story which says that the lakes, valleys and rivers were the creation of Moinhernee, a star spirit (McConnell and Hamilton 2001:37).

Even without documenting the Aboriginal spiritual associations with the alpine and ‘wild’ country, there is abundant evidence on which to further develop the case for associative cultural landscape listing based on the inspirational nature of Tasmanian ‘wild’ landscapes. The RFA Aesthetic Values Study (Young and Lennon 1996) identified places which were the subject of artists’ work; Cradle Mountain, as well as being associated with images by internationally recognised photographer Peter Dombrovskis, has inspired a number of published poets, novelists and Peter Sculthorpe, Australia’s foremost contemporary composer. Photography during the Franklin/Gordon dams dispute created powerful images of the ‘wilderness’ and generated strong emotional attachment to such remote and unspoilt places for many Australians.

Wilderness appreciation has now become an associative cultural value for many Australians for beautiful, remote areas like TWWHA yet ironically it implies a disassociation of a minority from their cultural connection to an ancient land and a denial of other uses such as previous pinning, whaling and mining which have also left traces of physical evidence in the wilderness. Park management objectives create a wilderness by removing previous evidence and only allowing access to certain places along designated routes. But the visible signs are only one of the ways in which culture is written on the landscape. Many communities maintain their attachments to areas through photographs, story telling, festivals and visits by those who love the bush. They maintain an ‘associative cultural landscape.’

2. Areas that could be categorized as relict cultural landscapes relate especially to the uniquely Tasmanian interaction of humans with the natural resource:

i. The pinning landscapes of the Gordon-Macquarie Harbour–Raglan Range which illustrate the range of techniques used in Huon pine extraction from the convict era of the early 1800s to the 1940s.

ii. The hunting and snaring landscapes of montane grasslands on the Central Plateau, although it could be argued that they also illustrate both transference of European ecological knowledge and European adaptation to Aboriginal seasonal exploitation of native fauna through the re-introduction of traditional Aboriginal burning practices to the north western montane grasslands. Are these relict or continuing landscapes? Aborigines were removed from the area and occupation sites abandoned, pathways grew over and fire patterns changed, now evident in the succession of certain vegetation types. Does the absence of Aboriginal hunting and use and firing of the button grass plains for 150 years constitute a significant break disrupting the integrity of the relationship with nature? Or is it just a blip in the long occupation pattern? How significant has the seasonal use of fire been in creating and maintaining vegetation patterns enabling exploitation of resources over the last 4000 years?

The cessation of European uses in the area has also led to the creation of fossilised sites, the relics of prior uses like pinning or whaling. Yet the almost immediate colonial use of the high country for grazing using the same pathways or corridors onto the Central Plateau shows a cultural continuity. There is some connection with the seasonal movement in summer of Aborigines who visited there 9,000 years ago (and visited the southwest coast for at least the last 11,000 years) for their feasts and associated rituals.

The alpine pastoral and mining landscapes were part of the integration of the continent into the global economy which resulted from the European expansion of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Within the national park reserves these traditional European commercial activities are no longer permitted, but there is significant material evidence of their practice. The process of adaptive land use is continuing and currently the landscape is evolving into a ‘parkland’ for conserving biodiversity in all its manifestations. At the same time, public park management is recognising the need to integrate traditional owners of the land into land use

management decisions and the encouragement of Aboriginal cultural activities in parks and the employment of Aboriginal staff – all part of managing a continuing landscape.

3. Fire impacts on the TWWHA landscape have been noted by many of the researchers since 1989 (for a summary of areas impacted see McConnell and Hamilton 2001:36-47). Fire has been the agent maintaining a complex distribution of disclimax vegetation which can be considered as a continuing landscape category for large areas within the TWWHA, especially the button grass plains/sedgeland which comprise 53% of the vegetation (Jackson 1999:3). Fire not only produces a successional mosaic but causes extinction of communities and this level of displacement appears to demand a time span of human-induced fire sufficiently long enough to affect soil fertility. The palaeontological record in Tasmania shows a twofold increase in open vegetation relative to closed forest during the Last Glacial cycle. Eucalypt forest increased relative to rainforest, and charcoal increased relative to woody vegetation, and these changes occurred through a variety of climates (Jackson 1999:1). However, recent studies indicate that the noticeable increase in fire activity about 40,000 years ago, when there was no major climate change, is considered to most likely indicate Aboriginal burning. This accelerated existing trends rather than creating a wholesale landscape change but it is difficult to separate the effects of climate and human-induced burning subsequently until the European era (Kershaw et al. 2002:3).

There were extensive buttongrass plains throughout southwestern Tasmania when Europeans arrived. Ecologically, it is unlikely that such extensive plains would have persisted for more than about 250 to 1000 years without human-mediated fires. Aborigines were seasonally active, burning patches of land in the early 1800s and creating open country across which Europeans moved swiftly in the 1820s. However, there is considerable anecdotal evidence for major changes in the fire regime of southwestern Tasmania since the removal of the Aborigines in the 1830s resulting in major wide-ranging, landscape-scale fires in the 1890s and 1930s. Aborigines probably used low intensity fires when hunting to flush out game and create access tracks and a large number of small, recently burnt areas surrounded by thicker vegetation (Marsden-Smedley 1998:15-19).

The slow rate of vegetation change in southwest Tasmania meant that the distribution of the majority of the current vegetation and soil types (especially peat formation) shows the result of long term Aboriginal land use practices. With the reduction in fire frequency, buttongrass moorland appears to be undergoing a succession into tea tree scrub to the detriment of some fauna (Marsden-Smedley and Kirkpatrick 2000:196-7). The co-existence of extensive areas of buttongrass moorland in close proximity to highly fire-sensitive rainforest and alpine heaths also supports the proposal that the Aborigines burnt the former when the wet forest communities – especially those containing coniferous species like King Billy, Huon and pencil pines – were too wet to burn. Given the time period required for successional processes and soil formation, these communities must have co-existed for thousands of years. Therefore, the current distribution of vegetation and soils in this region should not be described as natural and a better description would be a cultural landscape (Marsden-Smedley 1998:25). Fire then is an agent in creating the landscape that should not be described as natural but rather as cultural. Pyne concurs with this view: 'Any fire practice ... is a cultural artifact. It reflects a negotiation between what a society wants and what its land will accept' (Pyne 2002:12).

Cultural values are also increasingly being interpreted to the visiting public at visitor centres, historic convict sites and former logging sites. Tourism has social value providing contemporary engagement with 'wild' landscapes. Tourist numbers rose to 500,600 in 1999. Local people, who were displaced when the timber industry ceased, now operate one of the major tourist boat services up the Franklin River – the only way access is permitted (Lennon 2003:125).

6 CONCLUSION

Our forests may be considered as cultural landscapes when we examine the suite of human-induced processes operating on them over long periods: from Aboriginal interaction over millennia to European settler activities like surveying, logging and log dumps, roading and associated quarries, silvicultural treatment, fire protection, sawmilling and associated settlements, forest grazing with associated yards and dips. Evidence of these phases of the forest's history needs assessment and management to conserve and interpret that evidence in the ever-changing forest. In the RFA studies almost 3000 cultural heritage sites were identified.

While the cultural landscape concept may not be acceptable to urban Greens, it recognizes human attachment to forest areas. This is especially the case in large areas of forest traditionally used for timber extraction and recently transferred to national parks. Application of the concept allows designed, relict and associative landscapes to be defined within the broader forest area. It will also enhance public consciousness of the cultural values and hopefully lead to a guilty conscience about management privileging only the natural values. A conscious move to consider history and other cultural values as a fundamental part of forest management should result in greater social concern for the future management of our forested landscapes. There are parallels in other environmental areas such as awareness of air pollution leading to the introduction of lead free petrol and awareness of deforestation leading to community tree planting (Lennon et al. 2001:103-106).

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