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Value-based Land Management Conflict: Alpine Cattle Grazing in Victoria

Matthew Luciani
SIT Study Abroad

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Luciani, Matthew
Academic Director: Peter Brennan
Research Advisor: Geoff Mosley
Connecticut College
History
Melbourne, Victoria
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Abstract

In Victoria, the practice of cattle grazing in alpine areas has shaped land, culture, and history since the early nineteenth century. Characterized by early gold mining, grazing, and skiing tourism, the Victorian Alps eventually seized the attention of conservationists who understood its ecological significance and need for protection, with beginnings of an Alpine National Park idea in 1969 (Johnson, 1974, p. 180). Not until 1989, however, did the park enter into existence, meeting much resistance from farmers and graziers along the way (Mosley, 1999, p. 80). Today, however, the region remains contested between two very distinct groups of people: environmentalists and mountain cattlemen.

Throughout this research project, I studied how and why the issue of alpine grazing continues to cause such fierce contention in Victoria. To do this, I employed two methodologies: intensive interviewing and content analysis. I interviewed five people, ranging from a cattleman to scientists to employees of environmental nonprofit organizations. I then analyzed these transcripts in dialogue with the results of a content analysis. I split this latter method into three sections, examining folklore and art, differences between environmental and cattlemen publications, and representation in the media. While content analysis facilitated the verification of my data, I used interviewing as my main methodology.

My results concluded in the argument that grazing causes such passionate divide in Victoria due to significant differences in land ethics and management philosophy. This primarily results from a clear value debate between environmental and ecological conservation and traditional cultural heritage preservation. Also, a shared love for the high country of Victoria creates even more conflict in this region, as different groups of people struggle with the land's purpose and value. This paper does not propose a new management plan itself, but rather analyses existing points of view, illustrating the conflict of the region and how such discord shapes the dialogues surrounding the Alpine National Park.

Key terms: Alpine cattle grazing, national parks, land management, fire ecology, environmental protection history

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List of Abbreviations

VNPA = Victorian National Parks Association

MCAV = Mountain Cattlemen Association of Victoria Inc.

FFG = Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act of 1988

CSIRO = The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization

VIC = Victoria

NSW = New South Wales

[1] See figure for full bibliographic information

[2] See figure for full bibliographic information

[3] See figure for full bibliographic information

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1. Introduction

1.1 Review of Existing Literature

Land management and the protection of wild spaces have long generated much debate in Australia. Throughout modern Australian environmental history, different groups of people have subjected their own ideologies and philosophies on land use onto some of the nation's most significant natural spaces. In the Victorian Alps, this remains clearly apparent. Victoria's high country has a long and comprehensive history that ties together the narratives of mountain cattlemen, ecologists, bushwalkers, farmers, miners, politicians, and the very land itself. This paper explores these voices within the context of national park land management and alpine cattle grazing.

Brief Geological History of the Australian Alps

Alpine regions in Australia represent significant ecological and geological entities. The website for Geological Sites NSW provides clear background knowledge on the formation of the Alps and their environmental prominence (Morand, http://www.geomaps.com.au/scripts/australianalps.php). 520 years ago, basalt lave erupted in the current alpine region, marking the first rocks of the area during the Cambrian period (Morand, n.d.). As eastern Australia formed, mountain ranges much higher than the current Alps rose and declined over millions of years, creating the foundation for popular mountains in the park today such as Mt. Bogong, Mt. Hotham, and Mt. Buffalo, as illustrated by geological information published by Parks Vicrtoria (http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/535564/FS-geology.pdf). Today, the high plains of Victoria are defined by basaltic activity, displaying the remnants of basalt lava flow (Morand, n.d.). While most of the current alpine areas of Victoria were not subjected to glacial carving during the Pleistocene Ice Age, two million years of cold climate helped shape the snowy plateaus and peaks of the Alpine National Park today (Morand, n.d.). Due to its dramatic and stirring beauty, the Australian Alps remain very sacred sites to aborigines (Parks Victoria, n.d.).

Squatters, Farmers, and Miners Move into the Alps

Made legend in Australian culture through books and films such as *The Man from Snowy River*, the histories of horsemen, farmers, and miners in the Alps helped shape both the ecological and ideological representation of the high country. Previous to European settlement, aborigines had occupied areas such as the Bogong High Plains for thousands of years. In *Alps at the Crossroads*, Dick Johnson (1974) writes on the Ya-itma-thang people who inhabited vast regions of the Alps, ranging from Mt. Buffalo to the lower Omeo plains (p. 36). Aborigines would summer in the Bogong High Plains, a tradition adopted by European conquerors during the nineteenth century. As settlers and ranchers began to enter the high country, they engaged in combat with different factions of the Ya-itma-thang, eventually claiming the region by either killing or forcing the exile of all indigenous peoples (Johnson, 1974, p. 36).

During this time, the entire state of Victoria entered a gold rush frenzy, significantly shaping the Alps and the way future Victorians would think on land management. In the 1850s, squatters and farmers shouted of gold both north and west of Melbourne, spurning laborers eager to make fast money to leave the cities (Blainey, 2013, p. 43). Most profitable alluvial gold mining occurred in slightly lower regions of Victoria such as Mt. Alexander and Bendigo, areas outside of the high country (Davies and Lawrence, 2014, p. 170). This is not to say, however, the mining did not shape the landscape of alpine areas. By 1856, the alpine town of Omeo had become a booming mining hub of over 600 people, newly constructed churches and schools, and pounds of gold flowing from the Buckland River Valley (Johnson, 1974, p. 43). In his chapter on the gold rush in *A History of Victoria*, Geoffrey Blainey (2013) describes how mining in the Victorian countryside defined the state's prominence in the national market, and thus created a value for natural resource extraction and management (p. 45). This would later facilitate the faction of different styles of land management in later years.

While farmers and miners developed the Alps, they also began to create a culture of summer alpine cattle grazing that would come to shape the Australian mythos. While evidence of grazing occurs as early as the 1820s, concrete examples of cattle in the high country emerged in 1852 (Fraser and Chisholm, 2000 p. 64). Throughout the nineteenth century, cattlemen moved their livestock into the high country in order to avoid the hotter climate, parched and cracked grassland, and abundance of bush rabbits and rats that

created unhealthy vegetation in the lower country (Johnson, 1974, p. 38). Today, Parks Victoria (2014) illustrates the cultural prominence of abandoned cattlemen huts in the Alpine National Park on their website (http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/explore/parks/alpine-national-park/culture-and-heritage).

The 1939 Bushfire and Scientific Criticism of Grazing

A defining factor of the history of alpine cattle grazing in Victoria involves the impact of bushfires on the landscape. On 13 January 1939, a devastating natural forest fire swept across the state, killing 71 people, destroying millions of acres of forest, and obliterating 69 sawmills (Higgins, 2000, p. 6). Known as Black Friday, this fire contributed to the growing conflict of land management in the region. Discord arose between graziers and foresters who each blamed one another for the fire (Soeterboek, 2008, p. 244). In "'Folk-Ecology' in the Australian Alps: Forest Cattlemen and the Royal Commissions of 1939 and 1946", Chris Soeterboek (2008) analyzes how this 1939 fire gave birth to the distrust of the Forest Commission by bush-people and cattlemen, helping further divide the philosophical gap on land management (p. 258). In the following decades, mountain cattlemen would come to adopt the hypothesis and campaign slogan "grazing reduces blazing."

Around this time, early research on the ecological disadvantages of alpine cattle grazing began to emerge. Commissioned by the Soil Conservation Authority, the first papers published were by Maisie Fawcett and J.S. Turner in 1959. In "The Ecology of the Bogong High Plains: I. The Environmental Factors and the Grassland Communities", these two botanists demonstrated the impact of cattle grazing on vegetation and soil erosion, by examining four different grasslands (Fawcett and Turner, 1959, pp. 12-13). Since then, hundreds of scientific papers have been published by academics all over Australia, analyzing the environmental destruction of alpine cattle. In 2006, in affiliation with the Research Center for Applied Alpine Ecology and La Trobe University, Dick Williams et al. published a paper titled "Does alpine grazing reduce blazing? A landscape test of a widely-held hypothesis." In this study, Williams et al analyzed the Bogong High Plains following the intense bushfire of 2003, using twig length analysis as a

methodology to examine fire severity in grazed and ungrazed areas (Williams et al, 2006, p. 925). No significant difference was found, as illustrated in Table 6 of the above paper:

Table 6. Mean minimum twig diameter (mm) of burnt *Grevillea australis* shrubs in open-heath, and burnt *Orites lancifolia* in closed-heath, in grazed and ungrazed regions of the Bogong High Plains

	Minimum diameter			
Species	Grazed	Ungrazed	SED	*P*
Grevillea australis	6.6	6.5	0.7	0.9
Orites lancifolia	11.3	7.9	1.2	0.01

SED, Standard error of the difference between means of minimum twig diameters for grazed and ungrazed treatments for each species. *P*-values indicate significance of difference between grazing treatments.

Figure 1: Table 6 of Published Report Displaying Fire Severity in Grazed and Ungrazed Areas of the Bogong High Plains

Williams, R.J., Wahren, C., Bradstock, R.A., & Müller, W.J. (2006). Does alpine grazing reduce blazing? A landscape test of a widely-held hypothesis. *Austral Ecology,* 31(8), 925-936.

Following this publication, scientists Grant Williamson, Brett Murphy, and David Bowman published another key piece in 2013 titled "Cattle grazing does not reduce fire severity in eucalypt forests and woodlands of the Australian Alps." In this paper, these three researchers used satellite data to analyze tree scorch in the Victorian Alps to determine fire severity (Williamson et al, 2013, p. 1). Similar to the Williams paper, this report found no significant fire severity reduction in areas where cattle had grazed (Williamson et al, 2013, p. 4). Overall, the scientific discourses have disagreed with the cattlemen platform that cattle grazing decreases bushfire intensity.

The Creation of an Alpine National Park

The Alpine National Park in Victoria has a long and distinct history. While Kosciusko State Park became a national park in 1967, protection of the high country in Victoria underwent a slower process (Mosley, 1999, p. 68). Throughout the first half of

the twentieth century, skiing in the Victorian Alps had exploded as a popular pastime, and developers began to build many large and expensive ski resorts (Johnson, 1974, p. 96). Falling prey to a new ski industry as well as the long practiced traditions of mining and grazing, the Victorian high country quickly grabbed the attention of conservationists and activists as a piece of land in dire need of protection.

In *Battle for the Bush: The Blue Mountains, The Australian Alps, and the Origins of the Wilderness Movement*, Mosley (1999) argues that Victoria did not achieve as rapid success with the creation of an Alpine National Park as opposed to Kosciusko in New South Wales not only due to the absences of strong conservation leadership such as Myles Dunphy, but also due to vast geographical differences (p. 74). During the 1960s, the Victorian National Parks Association and the Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs jointly worked together on a plan for a new national park in the high country to present to the government (Johnson, 1974, p. 135). Because the National Parks Act banned grazing and logging in protected areas and made mining leases difficult to obtain, the park endured resistance (Mosley, 1999, p. 80). The value of areas such as the fragile highland bogs and wetlands of the Bogong High Plains, however, garnered enough support in Victoria to allow for a final submission. Parks Victoria proudly notes on its website that the park was finally approved in 1989 (http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/explore/parks/alpine-national-park).

1.2 Rationale for Research

This research was completed in order to answer the question: "Why does alpine cattle grazing continue to raise such contention in Victoria?" Due to the interdisciplinary nature of the alpine grazing issue, ecology, environmental protection history, cultural representation, and sustainability were all incorporated into this study. This research is relevant and relatable to the current discussions on grazing in Victoria, and hopefully offers some new ideas to the existing dialogue. It takes a holistic approach to the grazing debate and attempts to shed light on the different stakes involved. This issue has generated sharp political divide, countless scientific studies, great debate, and ecological damage, clearly reflecting its significance in Victorian environmental policy.

This project also definitely relates to sustainability. In Australia, national parks are protected under multiple pieces of legislature that reflect how the country values these pieces of protected land. National parks encourage people to reconnect with nature, live simple and happy lives, and fight to protect the wilderness. They actively support the integration of sustainable practice in daily life and offer people a wide range of resources, from clean and healthy water to deep spirituality. Any policy or practice that has the potential to threaten the sanctity of a conserved piece of land violates these principles of sustainability.

2. Methodology

2.1 Intensive Interviewing

For this study, the primary form of research chosen was intensive interviewing. Over the course of five weeks, five individuals were specifically chosen to interview, ranging from environmental nonprofit employees to a plant ecologist and a mountain cattleman. Each interview was designed and tailored specifically for the person involved, although a good number or questions remained static to examine trends and address the study question. In the preliminary stages of research, surveys were considered, however, interviews ultimately proved to be a more useful and effective method. Surveys would not have resulted in the same level of expert analysis and personal opinion. Because the purpose of this study sought to examine why the issue of alpine grazing continues to be so contentious in Victoria, analyzing different philosophies, perspectives, and emotional responses was paramount to this research. A survey study would not have facilitated such results. While intensive interviewing was the main method of research taken, it was not the only measure taken (see 2.4 Content Analysis).

2.2 Interview Practice and Implementation

A similar methodology was applied to each interview performed. First, the contact information and background knowledge of each person and his/her corresponding institution was thoroughly researched. After this step, the interviewee was contacted and made aware of the purpose of the research project, availability, and appreciation for a possible interview. From this information, an interview guide of questions was thus created, making sure that each question would eventually help to answer the goal of the research. Space was left open for probes or other questions that would rise conversationally throughout the interview. Once a set of question was created, the guide was reviewed to make sure it corresponded with ethical behavior.

The actual interviews all differed in length, but were all thorough enough to address the study question and gain effective knowledge. A specific time was scheduled for the interview. Two interviews took place in person, one interview occurred over Skype, and two others happened over the phone. During the interviews, pleasantries were exchanged, and then ethical permission was obtained verbally (see Appendix A).

Following this procedure, questions were asked and recorded. Often, some questions would stray from the guide and probe the interviewee towards the study question. All interviewees were enthusiastic, passionate, and eager to share views and perspectives. Once the interview was completed, the date, time, and length of the interview were recorded. This would mark the end of the recording. Interview transcription was the last step of the methodology before analysis. Following each interview, the tape was played and then written down to create a script of the interview proceedings.

To display interview results quantitatively and qualitatively, interview quotations selected and analyzed, trends and patterns were charted, and interview text was placed in dialogue with both background research and ongoing conversations (see Results).

2.3 Rationale for Choosing Interviewees

Over the course of the research project, five people with different stakes and perspective on alpine cattle grazing were selected to interview. The first person interviewed was Phil Ingamells of the Victorian National Parks. Phil was selected due to his extensive knowledge on grazing, insight into the political proceedings regarding the 2011 scientific trial, and wealth of resources. The next interview completed was with Cam Walker, campaign coordinator of Friends of the Earth. Cam's experience as an environmental campaigner provided a unique perspective for this research. Next, Grant Williamson, a plant ecologist research fellow from the University of Tasmania, was interviewed for a scientific and academic analysis. Following this interview, Graeme Stoney, Executive Officer of the Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria was interviewed in order to obtain a better sense of the cultural value of alpine grazing and land management conflict. The last interview completed was with Sean Williams who works for the Wilderness Society.[4]

2.4 Content Analysis

Although content analysis did not form as significant of a base for this research as intensive interviewing did, it still was paramount to the project and helped develop the

[4] The views of Sean Williams expressed in this paper are not necessarily in affiliation with the Wilderness Society, and are uniquely his own.

results. For the content analysis, three different methodologies were employed to represent quantitative and qualitative data. First, folklore of the mountains was analyzed to observe the cultural representation of grazing in Australian history and legend. Secondly, articles from *Park Watch*, a publication of VNPA, and articles from *Voices of the Mountain* were compared to illustrate the dichotomy of two opposing viewpoints on the grazing issue. And finally, magazine and newspaper articles were analyzed to exemplify the representation of grazing in the mass media and examine which ideas, philosophies, and perspectives on alpine land management emerge. This method of research was also added in addition to the interviews in order to make sure the research remained holistic and did not focus on individual perspectives too much.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Phil Ingamells

Overview

According to Phil Ingamells, Victorian National Parks has long battled alpine cattle grazing. In addressing the current court case against the Victorian government referring to the scientific trial of returning cattle to the Alpine National Park to reduce bushfires in 2010, Phil said:

> "It's our organization that's taken the government to the Supreme Court. It's still ongoing. There have been preliminary hearings, and there's one more preliminary hearing in the week before the Victorian election. The scientific trial… 50 cattle were introduced in this place called the Wonnangatta Valley at the end of last summer, there's a plan for another two summers of grazing, and there will be 300 cattle going in on the first of January this summer. This is theoretically to show that they will help prevent fire. But it's rather odd because, as I've said, these research papers show what happens in an actual fire, and they can't run an actual fire. Everybody knows that when you graze down a paddock it's less flammable. But the point is, in the context of the Alps and the whole vegetation of the alpine region, that small local scheme doesn't transfer to a national scale… But anyway, so we're opposed to it. We were trying to create a junction" (P. Ingamells 2014, pers. comm. 31 October).

Here, Phil clearly illustrates the rejection of the scientific community that "grazing reduces blazing." He points to the guise of a scientific trial by the government as a flawed study, questioning how an accurate analysis of fire severity can be completed without running a mock bushfire. Phil also made many references to the *Report of the investigation into the future of cattle grazing in the Alpine National Park*, published by the Alpine Grazing Taskforce by request of the government in 2005. In this report, the taskforce demonstrate the impacts of grazing in the park, the relationship of cattle and fire, the changing face of tourism in the park, as well as many other findings (Maxfield et al, 2005, pp. 5-9).

A crucial part of Phil's interview relates to the section in the taskforce report on economic expenditures. Alpine cattle grazing has cost Parks Victoria millions of dollars in maintenance and repair (P. Ingamells 2014, pers. comm. 31 October). From 1999 to 2000 and again from 2003 to 2004, Parks Victoria has spent over $2 million on management related to grazing (Maxfield et al, 2005, pp. 5-9). These costs along constitute a huge proportion of VNPA's budget. Phil points to the fact that in most

environmental battles, the "conservationists have the picture… the photograph. And the argument we [VNPA] usually have to fight is hard economics. This, however, its totally reversed—our argument is now for hard economics, but they [Mountain Cattlemen Association of Victoria Inc.] have the legend, they have the photograph" (P. Ingamells 2014, pers. comm. 31 October).

Framing the alpine grazing debate economically strengthens the cause, argues Phil (P. Ingamells pers. comm. 31 October). Because cattlemen rely on the rustic imagery and cultural legend of grazing to strengthen their opposition, illustrating the impacts of grazing with numbers fortifies the position of VNPA (see Figure 2). Knowledgeable in the history of parks management in both Victoria and New South Wales, Phil describes in his interview how the Snowy Mountain Hydroelectric Scheme and the scientific proving of grazing's relation to soil erosion swiftly ended cattle grazing in national parks in NSW (P. Ingamells 2014, pers. comm. 31 October). Demonstrating grazing as economically unprofitable re-emerges as a theme in Phil's interview.

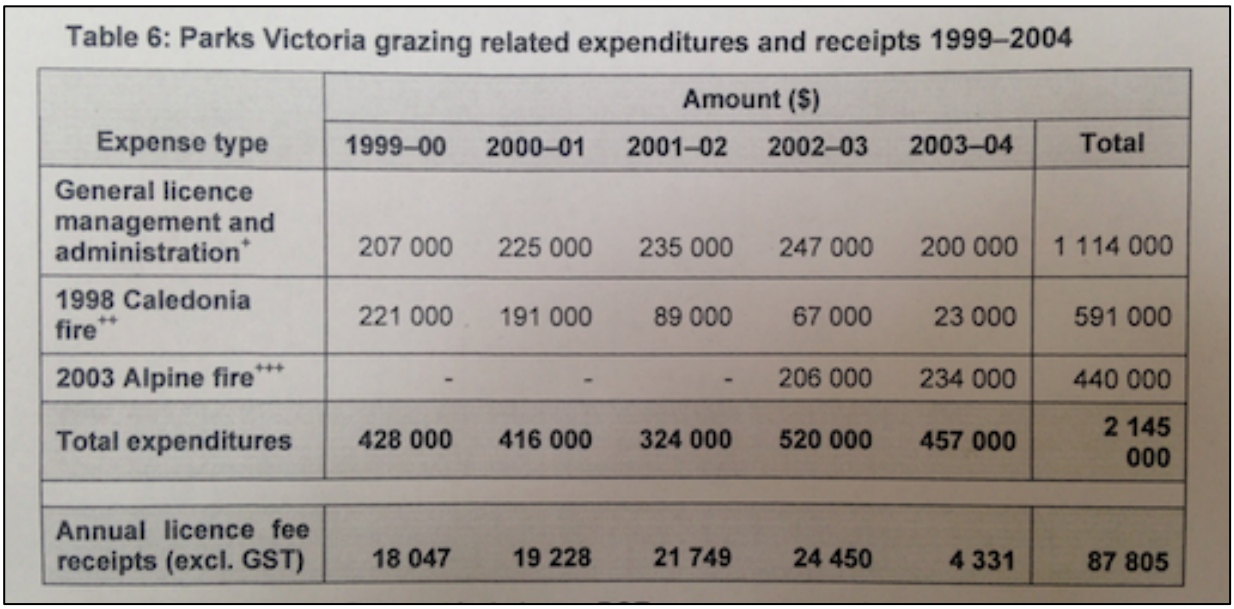

Table 6: Parks Victoria grazing related expenditures and receipts 1999–2004

Expense type	Amount ($)					
	1999–00	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	Total
General licence management and administration[+]	207 000	225 000	235 000	247 000	200 000	1 114 000
1998 Caledonia fire[++]	221 000	191 000	89 000	67 000	23 000	591 000
2003 Alpine fire[+++]	-	-	-	206 000	234 000	440 000
Total expenditures	**428 000**	**416 000**	**324 000**	**520 000**	**457 000**	**2 145 000**
Annual licence fee receipts (excl. GST)	**18 047**	**19 228**	**21 749**	**24 450**	**4 331**	**87 805**

Figure 2: Table 6 from the Alpine Grazing Taskforce Report
Maxfield, I., Lindell, J., Lupton, T., & Mitchell, R. (2005), *Report of the investigation into the future of cattle grazing in the Alpine National Park* (p. 56, Rep.). East Melbourne, VIC: Victorian Government Department of Sustainability and Environment.

Analysis

Phil's interview touched upon several key concepts, including the role of VNPA in alpine cattle grazing, the costs of management, the difficulties in removing grazing from the park, and the histories of the scientific data produced on grazing. All of these components, however, share a commonality in the concept of biocentric land management. The interview with Phil invoked sentiments of deep ecology and intrinsic value of endangered ecosystems and species. To Phil, the most important aspect of a national park lies in the protection of fragile and significant natural spaces (P. Ingamells 2014, pers. comm. 31 October). "We're a totally independent nongovernmental organisation, so our job is to get parks management up" (P. Ingamells 2014, pers. comm. 31 October, noted Phil at the beginning of the conversation.

Ecological and biological conservation, especially when threatened by practices in national parks, are key values to Phil. Currently, there are four vegetation communities in the Alpine National Park that are listed as threatened under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act of 1988 (Maxfield et al, 2005, p. 34). This includes the alpine bog community, a habitat characteristic to the Bogong High Plains and subsequent cattle grazing (Maxfield et al, 2005, p. 34-5). Phil also touched upon in his interview the decline of alpine amphibians such as the alpine bog skink and tree frog (P. Ingamells 2014, pers. comm. 31 October). The report by the Alpine Grazing Taskforce also quotes section 11 of the FFG Act, pointing to the potential threats presented by alpine cattle grazing to fragile flora and fauna (Maxfield et al, 2005, p. 35). Clearly, Phil's perspective as a national parks employee, researcher, and advocate for biological and ecological integrity gives him a biocentric lens through which he views grazing.

Phil's philosophies on land use and parks management are also shaped by his values and position with VNPA. Testimony from the interview demonstrates Phil's opinion that national parks should have the funding and resources to create management plans that will effectively protect and conserve ecologically significant spaces (P. Ingamells 2014, pers. comm. 31 October). This is not to say that all land management should fall to the scientists, researchers, and intellectuals who work for National Parks, but rather that the papers and reports on the hazards of alpine cattle grazing should be incorporated into management. In the case of the Alpine National Park, VNPA should have a say in removing cattle grazing (P. Ingamells 2014, pers. comm. 31 October).

3.2 Cam Walker

Overview

In his interview, Cam Walker (campaign coordinator of Friends of the Earth, Melbourne) discussed alpine cattle grazing from a perspective of environmental action. He began answering questions in his interview by discussing and analyzing the history of grazing, drawing upon scientific research and papers that have emerged over the last six decades. Fluent and knowledgeable in environmental politics, Cam also tied in the political representation of the grazing issue, discussing how the contention of grazing has been politicized over the years (C. Walker 2014, pers. comm. 5 November). "The National party is still fiercely pro grazing and have sworn to sustain grazing in the high country, the LAP remain opposed to it, as do the Greens, and both parties have said they will act to end the current grazing trial in the Wonnangatta Valley" (pers. comm. 5 November), explained Cam (2014), also describing how most cattlemen and countryside residents tend to vote for the National-Liberal Coalition.

Cam's interview also reflects the powerful imagery of mountain cattlemen in Australian history and culture:

> "If you think about it, the vast majority of Australians live in big towns and cities—we're one of the more urbanized populations on the planet, but we have this myth of the outback, so the mountain cattlemen are popular in the sense that they've got the horses and the hats and you know they're like how Australia really is in our hearts—it's like the cowboy in America. People look to this idealized tough, independent, egalitarian figure. It ties together the ethos of Australia that we are egalitarian and independent and kind of free of reliance on authority…" (C. Walker 2014, pers. comm. 5 November).

Here, Cam illustrates the dichotomy in Australian politics revolving around the grazing debate. Alpine cattle grazing becomes synonymous with rustic individualism, freedom, and the very incarnation of Australia itself. Cam's interview transcript also notes that the party's position on grazing often reflects ideology and ideals rather than the ecological or management issue itself (C. Walker 2014, pers. comm. 5 November).

Cam also addressed the prevalence of bushfire in Australia, explaining how the "grazing reduces blazing" slogan exploded in popularity. In particular regard to climate change, Australia is very prone to bushfires. Because of this fear, Cam argues that people

are eager to accept mantras that demonstrate a decrease in bushfires (C. Walker 2014, pers. comm. 5 November).

Figure 3: Photograph Propagating "Grazing Reduces Blazing"
Dove, M. F. (2014). ***Placard in paddock, advertising a rally.*** **[Photograph]. 2/20 Archival print, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.**

Analysis

In his interview, Cam reflected upon several environmental philosophies and ideas on land management. Similar to Phil, he also spoke on the integrity of national parks and their purpose to protect and preserve endangered natural spaces. According to Cam, impact of grazing on ecosystem health not only harms the flora and fauna of the habitat, but also has dire consequences on mountain erosion, agriculture and stream quality, and other anthropocentric activities (C. Walker 2014, pers. comm. 5 November). While aspects of Cam's interview reflect deep ecology and a love and appreciation for the intrinsic value of nature, his testimony also relates to the way humans interact with the natural world, through personal musings and politics.

Other themes that emerged in the interview involved the relationship of environmental philosophy within the context of the politicization of grazing. "Obviously for a lot of people it's about politics, so underlying this is a conservation vs. wise use

movement that's going on" (C. Walker 2014, pers. comm. 5 November), explained Cam in his interview. Clearly, the issue of alpine grazing has begun to remove itself from the scientific and cultural discourses, and instead has attached itself to political ideology. Different groups of people with different stakes in alpine grazing are wedded to philosophies and traditions that reflect values on the land.

Another aspect of Cam's interview involves his point of view and experience as a political campaigner. Because he has had experience campaigning on climate change and other environmental issues, his lens is more political. This parallels the opinions of Phil Ingamells that national park management should maintain the value of fragile ecosystems. When an issue becomes politicized to the point that people simply vote on an issue along party lines instead of analyzing the impacts, costs, and integrity of a practice such as grazing, effective land management becomes more difficult to instate.

3.3 Grant Williamson

Overview

Grant Williamson was interviewed for a critical and scientific edge, as he has published on cattle grazing and is knowledgeable in plant ecology. In his interview, he began by highlighting a paper he wrote with fellow researchers at the University of Tasmania. In describing the research's rationale and methods, Grant said:

> "In an effort to bring the practice back, they [Victorian cattlemen] promote the idea quite strongly that cattle grazing reduces wildfire intensity. This sounded to us like an impossible proposition, simply to us because cattle graze on grass, and the most intense wildfires you see in the alpine areas in Australia are forest fires, burning Eucalypt forests and wood on the ground and so forth. So we saw the opportunity to do a fairly simple desktop analysis using satellite products, which measure the severity of fires" (G. Williamson 2014, pers. comm. 13 November).

Grant continued to discuss the efforts undertaken by their research, explaining how canopy scorch was examined in order to assess fire severity. No significant results between grazed and ungrazed areas were found (G. Williamson 2014, pers. comm. 13 November). He also continued to describe some of the ecological impact caused by cattle on alpine environments. Cattle tend to trample delicate upland bogs and wetlands,

overgraze vegetation, and threaten fragile species (G. Williamson 2014, pers. comm. 13 November).

Grant also spoke on the culture of grazing, describing the practice as "part of the Australian mythos that high country grazing takes place, that people take their cattle up to the mountains to graze during the summer and so forth" (G. Williamson 2014, pers. comm. 13 November). According to Grant, the tradition of grazing makes the practice more accepted in communities that value cultural history and customs. When asked if he knew why grazing was phased out in New South Wales far before Victoria, Grant said he was not entirely positive, but he would hazard a guess as to it had to do with different grazing practices and cultural traditions (G. Williamson 2014, pers. comm. 13 November).

Another key component of Grant's interview dealt with the scientific trial of 2010 and how this impacted the park. When questioned on how he felt national parks should be managed, Grant said:

> "I think the public expects a protected area to be a protected area. There's a fairly reasonable understanding that the reason why national parks are set up is to conserve some aspect of pre-European ecological interactions. And there is an issue with feral animals in protected areas. In the Alps, we have horses and cattle—most protected areas in Australia have animals of some sort, which the public expects to be controlled. But to have what's supposed to be a publically protected and managed area provide leases within it or pasture activity degrades the perception of how protected the area really is, and what other activities might be permitted there in the future" (G. Williamson 2014, pers. comm. 13 November).

Grant continued to further explain the need for effective communication between supporters and opponents of alpine grazing. Noting that in often cases environmental debates are issues of perceptions and values, Grant voiced the opinion that "greater public communication on the natural assets that are in the park might be useful" (G. Williamson 2014, pers. comm. 13 November).

Analysis

Grant's interview highlighted several key themes. Firstly, his scientific and research background demonstrate analytical academic environmentalism in regard to grazing. Clearly, ecological research and environmental action are interlinked. While

critically edged, Grant's responses were also holistic. While addressing the current scientific trial in the Wonnangatta Valley, Grant said, "But that grazing trial is actually different, it's in a lowland valley. Those cattle won't be extending upward to the alpine bogs and so forth. But it is I guess a bit of a test case to gauge public acceptance of cattle again. This trial probably won't have the same ecological impacts that we were concerned about" (G. Williamson 2014, pers. comm. 13 November). In the Alpine National Park, there are regions of more fragile ecosystems that require more serious attention and protection. Removing cattle from the park, therefore, should be strategic and stratified according to which areas need removal the most.

Grant also addressed land management. In his statements on the functions of a public national park, Grant explained how people deserve a protected space that truly is protected and free from environmental degradation (G. Williamson 2014, pers. comm. 13 November). When a protected space is violated by a practice that is harmful to flora, fauna, and ecosystems, this defeats the purpose of a national park. Not only do these practices create a poor image of park management, but they also set a precedent for allowing future activities in the park that could also cause harm.

The final theme that ran throughout Grant's testimony involved communication, cooperation, compromise, and language. In response to a question regarding approaching graziers about environmentalist views, Grant said:

> "That's a good question, Difficult. I guess the facts are out there—it's been known for a long time the ecological impact of cattle. That isn't really under question by the scientific community. I suppose it's an issue of perceptions. When the graziers aren't necessarily concerned with the fate of some specific alpine bog or plant. So I don't think it involves pushing scientific knowledge on them. I think it's probably much more of a cultural thing in terms of understanding an appreciation of the systems that are there and the severity. I'm probably not a skilled person to make that sort of impact on people [laughs]. Certainly, greater public communication on the natural assets that are in the park might be useful" (G. Williamson 2014, pers. comm. 13 November).

Here, Grant draws upon discourses of compromise, understanding the importance of phrasing an issue in the language and sensibilities of a group with different values and traditions. Significantly, progress in either direction can be made only if effective communication and debate occurs. Clearly, many different people are needed in

environmental issues, ranging from scientists to public speakers to community organizers.

3.4 Graeme Stoney

Overview

Graeme Stoney, a cattleman, former politician, and member of the Mountain Cattleman's Association of Victoria offered a different outlook. Involved with the MCAV since 1958, Graeme worked in public land management in the high country, collaborating with different people on maintaining cattle grazing. In his interview, Graeme said, "The Victorian High Plains are very suitable for grazing and cattle, and since 1834, cattle have been going up into the high country" (G. Stoney 2014, pers. comm. 14 November). According to Graeme, the Victorian Alps offer good land for cattle grazing and should function as pasture opportunity.

The interview then turned to discussion on the history of grazing in the alpine regions of Victoria, with Graeme discussing the creation of an Alpine National Park in 1989, the removal of cattle, the creation of seven-year renewable leases, and the eventual discontinuing of these leases in 2005 with the labor government's banning of grazing (G. Stoney 2014, pers. comm. 14 November). He also discussed his personal involvement in the political debate on grazing:

> "It had a very high profile in Parliament. Our family was given a seven-year license, and I was in Parliament negotiating. Within these seven years, these licenses were renewed. In 2004, the labor government created a committee that we call a kangaroo committee, you know what I mean? And they said that the cattlemen would be banned in 2005, licenses would not be renewed. So there was an agreement broken here. And that caused a huge uproar in Melbourne and so forth, the cattlemen were fighting" (G. Stoney 2014, pers. comm. 14 November).

As well as explaining his personal stakes in grazing, Graeme continued to explain the cultural and historical significance of the practice to cattlemen. Mountain families have brought their cattle into the high country for generations, defining it as an important value of summer in the Alps. According to Graeme, many of these families suffer from poor treatment by the government (G. Stoney 2014, pers. comm. 14 November). Significantly, the practice of bringing cattle into higher altitudes during the hotter months finds commonality all throughout the world, with evidence of the practice in Switzerland,

Germany, Austria, and the Americas. Graeme referred to this as a "pilgrimage of farmers" (G. Stoney 2014, pers. comm. 14 November).

The interview then turned to discussion on environmentalism and opposition to alpine grazing. Most opposition comes from the green party (G. Stoney 2014, pers. comm. 14 November). Critical of the methodologies of environmentalists, Graeme described the motivation behind environmental political action as "something to rally behind and raise funds—they can pick an issue that creates interest in the community, and they go for that issue… it's all done in the name of the environment, but you know there's an argument that want some groups want to do is lock the land up" (G. Stoney 2014, pers. comm. 14 November). In the interview, Graeme addressed land management and the dichotomy between two schools of thought. One body of science fervently advocates for the maintenance and manipulation of land for the good of both people and the environment, and another ideology offers a hand off approach. This creates faction among different people with different land ethics and values (G. Stoney 2014, pers. comm. 14 November).

Another concern that Graeme expressed included academia and the prevalence of academic discourses in activism. Critical of CSIRO scientists who investigate the ecological hazards of grazing, Graeme said:

> "They've been kicking off each other's work and working collaboratively, and then any scientists who disagree, they turn on and belittle—it's quite scary the way it works really. And it's been working the same way in the timber industry. There's a group of academics working in a similar way. They get together, they work collaboratively, they encourage each other, they kick off each other's work in order to achieve a particular outcome—it's quite scary what they've done. It's really like a campaign, where you can come up with any figure you want, you know with the books" (G. Stoney 2014, pers. comm. 14 November).

Graeme continued to discuss his disappointment not only in academic activism, but also in the politicization of the issue, pointing to the fact that many people simply vote along party lines instead of really understanding the complexity of the issue (G. Stoney 2014, pers. comm. 14 November 2014).

The final segment of Graeme's interview addresses park management and the special nature of national parks. "National parks should be something that are really special" (G. Stoney 2014, pers. comm. 14 November), said Graeme. Graeme continued to

criticize the management of the Alpine National Park, explaining how the immense size of the park allowed for poor finances and a small budget. The management of the park also intersected the lives of people who lived in these areas, closed the Wonnangatta Valley trek to horse traffic, and drew many boundaries (G. Stoney 2014, pers. comm. 14 November 2014). Graeme illustrated his final opinions in a last statement on the national parks system in Australia:

> "National parks should be *really* special places of high significance, and we create something like the Alpine National Park of very inaccessible country, the ranges from getting into Wonnangatta —it's a twelve-hour drive to get in and out, six hours each way. And you're not allowed to camp there because of regulations, so if you're going to make it, you go in for about half an hour and then you have to come back out. The concept of national parks is really good, but the implementation in Australia, and more specifically Victoria, has been appalling because some of the national parks that are created are not significant (or sections of them are not significant), and the creation of national parks has really affected a great number of people who enjoy these areas or are close to them, and who used to in the past take their dogs to a particular spot—now in the national park, you're not allowed to take your dog in… you know, all that sort of stuff. And there's just not the budget to maintain it" (G. Stoney 2014, pers. comm. 14 November 2014).

Analysis

The themes and ideas that run throughout Graeme's interview offer a different interpretation on the grazing issue. Primarily, Graeme's identity as a mountain cattleman and politician shape his philosophies on land management and national parks. His early testimony reflects a disappointment and distrust in the labor government's decision of 2005 to suspend leases. Because "politics is all about compromise and deals" (G. Stoney 2014, pers. comm. 14 November 2014), a breaking of an agreement or promise by the government only creates more divergence and discord. Graeme also shares a frustration with the politicization of the issue, finding some common ground in environmentalists who feel the same way, although for different reasoning. This further reflects the conflict of grazing in the political arena, characterized by ideological partisan split.

Another significant component of Graeme's interview that illustrates cattlemen philosophy includes ideas on who should have management jurisdiction in the Alpine National Park. Graeme's criticism of scientific academia, national parks, and Parks

Victoria specifically demonstrate two key points. Firstly, people who have lived in a geographic region for generations should have a say in the management of the region. This hints to musings of shallow ecology, arguing that a purely bicentric lens on land should not dominate all decisions made. Secondly, academic scientific data and analysis should not influence the management of national park land as much as other factors. Graeme argues that the collaborative efforts of scientists to stop grazing practices in the Victorian Alps are "quite scary" (G. Stoney 2014, pers. comm. 14 November). Because scientific reports and data form a solid foundation from which conservationists groups work to manage land, other points of view can be overlooked.

Throughout the interview, Graeme's value of alpine grazing as an important cultural narrative emerges. When discussing the tradition of grazing, Graeme said, "that skill, knowledge, and tradition became engrained in Australia; this is the way it's done in the high country" (G. Stoney 2014, pers. comm. 14 November). Significantly, the celebration of mountain cattlemen grazing occurs throughout Australia through representation in books, poetry, art, and films (Maxfield et al, 2005, p. 48). The legacy of the cattleman, while romanticized and idealized, has definitely formed a very real part of Australian history. Graeme argues, for example, that the obstruction of the Wonnangatta Walking Trek prohibits cattlemen from living the ways they have lived for generations, impacting the integrity of a significant piece of Australian tradition.

Graeme's identity as a cattleman clearly shape this position and views. For Graeme, the high country's significance results from a love and appreciation for the land in different ways than the ecologists. His political background gives him a very knowledgeable perspective on the ongoing conversations on grazing in Parliament as well as the history of conflict between graziers and environmentalists. To Graeme, the primary value of national parks includes time in the great outdoors, reflecting management that does not discriminate and allows cultural practice and integrity to remain in balance.

3.5 Sean Williams

Overview

Sean Williams's interview began with questions about the politicization of grazing and its representation in politics. In the late 2000s, grazing began to explode in awareness, as complicated breaking of agreements and unethical state-led research initiatives entered the media (S. Williams 2014, pers. comm. 21 November). Once the government shifted from labor to the coalition in the following years, the state government shifted legislation (2010) to allow cattle back into the park (S. Williams 2014, pers. comm. 21 November). Sean continued to explain how both the state and federal government politicizes the issue by acting purely out of ideological tendency rather than one based on policy. The fact that this environmental issue occurred in a national park also complicated matters (S. Williams 2014, pers. comm. 21 November).

The interview then turned to a discussion on land management and the future for grazing in the park:

> "I think once they [the cattle] are out, and if they can be kept out for an extended period, you know 4-10 years, if they can keep them out, the attempts to put them back in will be seen as quite socially subversive. The change has begun, and it's a lot like most environmental issues, we've had a step forward and then a couple steps back, and then the public's consciousness around the issue changes. So I think ultimately, in the long term, yes, they will be taken out of the Alpine National Park for good; it's just a bit of a process to make that happen" (S. Williams 2014, pers. comm. 21 November).

As well as seeing an eventual end of grazing by eventual public disapproval, Sean also described the economics of the issue, arguing that many people do not want to finance the costs of grazing that only benefit a number of families (S. Williams 2014, pers. comm. 21 November).

The final section of this shorter interview dealt with ideology on land management and the significance of national parks. To Sean, national parks offer people a wide range of resources and activity, including conservation value, natural beauty, carbon storage, clean and safe water, an escape from the cities, spirituality, localized economies, and state pride (S. Williams 2014, pers. comm. 21 November). In response to how a practice such as cattle grazing can damage the integrity of a natural space, Sean said:

> "The integrity of national parks is very important. And I guess when there are dangerous practices allowed in them, be in cattle grazing, or more recently the allowance of private leases to develop in national parks, it hurts both the people

> and the government who passes the laws. The integrity of national parks must be paramount. When you have damaging practices like alpine grazing, the reality is that national parks can recover from those sorts of things, as long as they have the proper resourcing and management. So if you take the cattle out, it won't recover overnight, it might take a couple of decades, but the national park and the environment can recover and be restored. If you allow those practices to continue, eventually you're going to undermine the whole purpose of the national park. You're going to destroy the natural environment, and then all you have is an unhealthy protected area that looks terrible. You've got to manage them properly, I mean, you have to keep in mind that Australia is a country that suffers from a massive influx of feral species that cause a lot of damage to our ecosystems and environment" (S. Williams 2014, pers. comm. 21 November).

As well as proving environmentally disadvantageous, Sean argued that grazing also bears negative political impacts. Overall, the Victorian public greatly supports the protection of national parks (S. Williams 2014, pers. comm. 21 November). Damaging protected spaces can cause politicians to lose office, the media to represent people poorly, and the public to lose faith.

Analysis

A very politically aware person, Sean offered political commentary during his interview that touched upon several reoccurring themes and introduced a few new ideas. Primarily, Sean discussed the unfortunate nature of the politicization of grazing, agreeing with most other interviewees. Politically based ideology has caused the grazing debate to lose focus, shifting attention away from problems in dire need of response. Describing cattlemen as having an "ideological marriage to the idea of alpine cattle grazing" (S. Williams 2014 pers. comm. 21 November), Sean questions the very necessity of continuing the practice in the park. These views tie directly to Sean's ideas on land use. Sean's testimony reflects a strong appreciation for national parks while also acknowledging their practical use for people. This viewpoint bestows land management to an institution capable of preserving the integrity of national parks, for the purpose of maintaining many different benefits. Sean's background in environmental politics and working for the Wilderness Society no doubt shape his views on grazing, land, and national parks management.

3.6 Common Trends Across Interviews

	Phil Ingamells	Cam Walker	Grant Williamson	Graeme Stoney	Sean Williams
Politicization of grazing	"There's also a bit of [political] support by people who just like the tradition."	"…proof that this was about politics; it wasn't actually about land management."	"A new trial has been started this year with the change of government in Victoria."	"Oh totally politicized… pretty sad really."	"It's long been a politicized issue."
Politics is about compromise	"They're a very powerful group of people, and they're obviously, you know, if I grew up in the tradition of taking my horses up to the country with my kids and everything, I'd love it, you know that's understandable."	"…the national-liberal coalition came to power in 2010, and one of the strategies was to reintroduce grazing, and they have managed to do it, but they've also struggled to do it."	"I suppose it's an issue of perceptions."	"You know, politics is all about compromise and deals and such."	"Protecting national parks is definitely a vote winner, and it's something that the public in Victoria very much supports."
The high country is valuable	"The other thing that's on our side of course apart from economics is just the huge number of scientific reports over the last 60 years about the damage."	"It's a historical land use that dates back to the 1860s, but from the 1940s onwards, it became apparent that there were significant ecological costs attached to it…"	"We don't have many alpine areas, so those alpine bogs are a quite rare and protected ecosystem."	"The original families who still have cattle in the mountains, not the alpine park, but other sections of the mountains bring their cattle to these areas every summer, and they've been doing that for generations."	"…To conserve or allow the opportunity to restore landscapes and provide some natural beauty that surrounds the cities and towns in which we live."
Management is in need of revision	"Reducing the area of grazing in the high country… [it] should eventually be phased out of the high country. So there's been a very consistent position."	"And that was also quite badly done initially; however, they were a bit shamed I think…"	"Certainly, greater public communication on the natural assets that are in the park might be useful."	"The concept of national parks is really good, but the implementation in Australia, and more specifically Victoria, has been appalling…"	"If you allow those practices to continue, eventually you're going to undermine the whole purpose of the national park."

Figure 4: Interview Commonality

Figure 4 represents trends and themes that the interviewees demonstrated, regardless of point of view, ideology, perspective, and value. Importantly, these themes may emerge from different reasoning, although the commonality proves significant. All interviewees agreed that the alpine grazing debate suffers from politicization. Partisan party-based politics dominate the discourses on grazing, distracting from other productive conversations. They also all acknowledged the need for conversation and compromise, no matter how staunchly they held their beliefs. While cattlemen and ecologists may have little in common, they both realize the importance of working towards a common solution, no matter how difficult it may seem. This directly leads to the third commonality of the interviews: people love and care for the high country, albeit under different motivations. Ecologists, for example may value the natural space as a fragile ecosystem in need of protection, while mountain-goers might fight to preserve culture, heritage, and tradition. This special land spawns passionate and emotional sentiments from people, making the issue that much more complex. Even though many different philosophies on land and methods of land management exist, all the interviewees could agree upon the significance of the Alpine National Park. "It is important to note that there seemed to be common ground in a shared love of the high country. It clearly is a special place" (p. 1), notes Ian Maxfield (2005) in the Alpine Grazing Taskforce report. And lastly, all five interviews agree that the park needs a new management plan, although they all have different ideas for what that may entail. These proposals range from banning grazing to conducting more scientific studies to once again allowing grazing and leases to define the Alpine National Park.

3.7 Content Analysis

Folklore

Alpine cattle grazing reflects itself in many different cultural art forms, engraining itself in the Australian mythos. These range from books to films to festivals and constitute a significant form of pride for mountain cattlemen (Maxfield et al, 2005, p. 46). Of these publications, one of the most impactful pieces of alpine grazing folklore is *The Man from Snowy River* poem and subsequent film (Maxfield et al, 2005, p. 45). Written by "Banjo" Patterson in 1890, *The Man from Snowy River* tells the dramatic story of an

escaped horse pursued by cattlemen across the high plains. The young protagonist ultimately heroically captures the colt (Patterson, 1890, p. 1-3). Figure 5 displays a table of the frequency of reoccurring words throughout the poem.

Word	Tally
His	**21**
Mountain	**11**
Man	**11**
Horse	**11**
River	**7**
Snowy	**6**
Ride	**5**
Wild	**5**
Stockwhip	**4**
Fiercely	**3**
Rough	**3**
Bush	**2**

Figure 5: Word Frequency of *The Man from Snowy River* (1890)

Throughout the poem, words such as "man," "horse," "fiercely," and "rough" reflect values of cattleman culture such as masculinity, individualism, freedom, and ruggedness. The poem paints a patriarchal image of a tough, spirited young man who embodies all the values of traditional Australia. The terms of Figure 5 then become synonymous not only with a high country identity, but to a larger extent, an Australian self. The mapping of this mythos onto Australian culture reflects the sheer weight and significance of the cattleman legend in Victoria.

The folklore of alpine cattle grazing also emerges throughout music, known as "bush songs." Every year the MCAV hosts an annual festival, engaging in song, poetry, skills demonstrations, and other festivities (Maxfield et al, 2005, p. 46). In 2014, the winner of the Don Kneebone Heritage Award at the MCAV festival at Omeo issued a clear pro-grazing stance (L. Campadelli, 2014):

> "Yeah we're talking about the cattlemen in Omeo
> Like Clancy of the overflow
> He was born in the saddle of a wiry mountain horse
> And if we change him, you know it'll be our loss
> Yes, the cattlemen that drove the plains on high
> Are Australian through and through until they die

So you office sitting caucus
Better have another think
Too late, and another Ozzie legend's extinct" (M. Harkins, 2014).

Rife with language representative of cattleman cultural pride, the chorus of this song eludes to themes of masculinity, rugged individualism, and mountain pride in the same manner of *The Man from Snowy River*. The reference to the "saddle of a wiry mountain horse" illustrates the value of bush horsemanship projected onto Australia. The song also connotes cattlemen with the essence of Australia, reminding the listener of the simple, hard-working cattleman, also criticizing the bureaucracy and comfort of the city.

An earlier song by Australian folk singer Slim Dusty illustrates similar sentiments:

"In their rain batter hats and their oil skins,
From the high plains, come real cattlemen,
They're a part of Australia's hist'ry,
Their heritage all be the same,
If nobody cares what is happn'nin',
To the cattlemen from the high plains" (S. Dusty, 1988).

Here, the song mirrors the very history of Australia with the legend of the cattlemen, painting further images of masculinity and strength. The word "real" implies that cattlemen of the Victorian High Plains embody the spirit of the mountain better than cattleman of other regions; they offer skills, knowledge, and culture. The song also addresses what would happen should Australia forget about the cattlemen, similar to the song by Harkins. Nobody cares for the plight of the cattleman.

Representations of cattlemen in folk literature and music constitute a significant base of Australia's cultural identity. In the poem and two songs analyzed above, reoccurring themes of strength, individualism, and a distrust of government emerge. Although the folk tradition of cattle grazing bears significant cultural stake, many researchers agree that the actual practice of grazing offers little value to the tourism industry in the Alps that bring in people who want to experience mountain cattlemen. Instead, the historic huts and grazing structures scattered throughout the park prove more culturally significant, draw in tourists, and do not bear negative ecological impacts (Maxfield, 2005, p. 48).

Park Watch vs. Voices of the Mountain: A Split Debate

***Park Watch* Article Titles**	**Connotation on Grazing**	**Connotation on Cattlemen**	***Voice of the Mountains* Article Titles**	**Connotation on Grazing**	**Connotation on Cattlemen**
"Parks open to development" by Phil Ingamells (2013)	Negative	Neutral	"Recording the real history of the High Plains" by Chris Commins (2010)	Positive	Positive
"Park management plan update: the alps and the SW" by Phil Ingamells (2012)	Negative	Neutral	"High Plains Cattlemen Misunderstood in the Past" by James A. Commins (1973)	Positive	Positive
"Alpine grazing: How $50,000 buys $1,000,000… or more" by Phil Ingamells (2014)	Negative	Negative	*The Last Pioneers* [poem] by Laurence Webb (2004)	Positive	Positive
"Can this be true? Cows again!" by Phil Ingamells (2013)	Negative	Negative	"Still battling: Fictional extracts from the diary of a mountain cattleman" by Sharna Johnson (2006)	Positive	Positive
"The Silver Brumby did it" by Phil Ingamells (2013)	Negative	Neutral	*Our Australia* [poem] by Jim Brown (2006)	Positive	Positive
"Cattle 'trial' on trial" by Phil Ingamells (2014)	Negative	Neutral	"World heritage means little when the living heritage is banned" by Anon. (2009)	Positive	Positive
"Alpine cattle grazing—it's not science, it's politics" by Peter Lawrence (2014)	Negative	Negative			

Figure 6: Opposing Perspectives in Two Different Publications
***See References for complete bibliographic material for each article**

Park Watch, a publication of VNPA and *Voice of the Mountains*, a publication of MCAV hold deeply contrasting views, as illustrated by Figure 6. By doing a basic content analysis of the connotation held on both grazing and cattlemen of various article titles over the last few years, a few clear trends emerge. Firstly, while publications from *Park Watch* tend to examine grazing and politics, articles in *Voice of the Mountains* often highlight cultural history and actively criticize Parks Victoria. In *Voice of the Mountains* No. 26 (2004), for example, one page displays two images, one of the Bogong High Plains after the 2003 fire, and the other of a boat harbor on the River Yarra operated by Parks Victoria (Anon., 2004, p. 17). Titled "Which is the damaged environment," the image is clearly meant to illustrate the prevention of future fires by cattle on the plains wile also demonstrating the environmental harm caused by a boat harbor on the river. This ignores the practicality of needing a boat harbor for water quality testing and scientific research, but sends a powerful message to a casual reader who does not know which sort of land management to trust.

Another theme involves the reoccurrence of cultural pride and patriotism in articles from *Voice of the Mountains*. The poem *Our Australia* by Jim Brown, published in 2006 in *Voice of the Mountains* (No. 29), highlights folklore similar to the songs and poems of old, but also offers a new ideology:

> "You caress me with the warm winds, swirling in from Western Plains
> You delight me with a vision when wildflowers rise with rain
> And the Shoosing sheoaks comfort me in ways I can't explain
> No wonder that we love you, our Australia" (Brown, 2006, p. 10).

Here, not only do mountain men become synonymous with Australia, but the very *land* of the High Plains does as well. Imagery of wildflowers, gentle winds, and rain evoke a closeness and special relationship with land and nature, strengthening the MCAV's stance. Not only do they fight for their cultural heritage and patriotic closeness with Australia, but they now also drawn upon ecological dialect to connect with environmentalists who may view the policies of Park Victoria as insensitive.

Park Watch, of course, offers a very different point of view. Although critical of politics and some policies, most articles on grazing published in *Park Watch* bear neutral connotations towards cattlemen. This is not to say VNPA approves of mountain cattlemen activity, the focus just shifts away from personal and emotional critiques and

instead to the ecological damage of grazing, frustration with the scientific trial of 2010, and the importance of proper land management to maintain the significance and integrity of national parks. In "Five more years of grazing?" (not mentioned in Figure 6), for example, Nick Roberts (2014) criticizes the Napthine government and highlights some "fast facts" on grazing, but does not even mention cattlemen (p. 16-17).

The two different publications reflect both different land values and different management techniques. While *Park Watch* tends to focus on ecology, biology, politics, bushwalking, and national park significance, *Voice of the Mountains* stresses culture, the importance of individual cattle families, the problems with current park management, and political protesting and rallying. While both newsletters reflect a love and value for the Victorian Alps, there are many sharp differences that cause tensions to run high.

Media Representation

Over the last ten years, alpine grazing has flared across headlines of major publications. Specifically around the banning in 2005 and the trial of 2010, mainstream news presses have illustrated public opinion and the prominence of the issue in Victoria.

Article	Main Points	Key Terms	Connotation
"In Australia, a Battle over Cattle as Firefighters: Environmentalists Object to Letting Cows Munch on Dry Brush in National Park" by Rob Taylor (2014)	--Overview of grazing issue for an American audience --References to both sides of the issue --Efforts to continue putting cattle in park	--Cattle --Wildfire --Farmers --Environmentalist --Government --National parks	--Very neutral --Explains both sides of debate well --Applies it to some land management issues in the United States
"Alpine plea to labor" by Cimara Doutré (2014)	--A win for Labor at the end of November could mean the end of grazing	--Labor --Coalition --Cattlemen	--Neutral, quotations from both Labor and cattlemen
"Greg Hunt gives alpine cattle grazing trial green light despite 'flawed' science" by Darren Gray and Thomas Arup (2014)	--The "scientific" trial of the government is not scientific at all --Cattlemen are thrilled	--Trial --Cattlemen --Research --Science	--References to many scientists and several papers as well as overall tone lead slightly towards anti grazing
"Studies make a mockery of alpine grazing bid" by Phil Ingamells (2014)	-- This trial will not measure fire severity effectively	--Trial --Flawed --Fire --Studies	--Opinion piece --Anti grazing
"Cattlemen warn on fire risk" by Cimara Pearce and Chris Mclennan (2014)	--Cattlemen have the knowledge and skills to effectively manage land	--Bushfire management --Grazing trial --Experience	--Neutral, leans towards illustrating the practicality of cattlemen managing park land

Figure 7: Grazing in the Media

***See References for complete bibliographic material for each article**

2014 in particular offered a large number of news articles. Figure 7 illustrates a sampling of media articles from 2014. These articles do not represent the entire literature, but simply demonstrate a few examples of the issue's representation of the media. While some publications offer opinions, most articles on grazing represent both sides of the issue, illustrating both environmentalist and cattlemen dissatisfaction. The government's scientific trial receives a significant amount of press. Key words that reappear throughout articles include "fire," "management," and "cattlemen." Although grazing has taken a bit of a backseat to the creation of the Great Forest National Park this year, it clearly still has a place in media (C. Walker 2014, pers. comm. 5 November).

4. Conclusions

4.1 Summary of Results and Cross-verification of Data

Both the intensive interviews and the content analysis studies completed during this research illustrate similar themes and verify overall results. Primarily, the conflict between environmentalists and cattlemen on the issue of land management regarding cattle grazing the Alpine National Park emerges from a sharp disagreement over the value, purpose, and functioning of protected land. While organizations such as VNPA and environmental nonprofits view national parks as natural spaces of ecological significance with the potential of offering humanity great resources, culturally focused and anthropocentric institutions such as the MCAV value the tradition and practice of grazing as something innate and natural to the Alpine National Park.

The five interviews draw upon a wide range of philosophies and viewpoints, offering political, ecological, cultural, historical, and agricultural commentary. All the interviewees, however, found agreement in a love for alpine areas in Victoria. This shared love causes stakes to be risen even higher, tempers to flare, and viewpoints on land management to wage war with one another. Articles from *Park Watch* and *Voice of the Mountains* from the content analysis also reflect this value division. Because the park holds dear value in the hearts of so many different people, its protection, management, and use becomes critically controversial. Value-based land management in this particular region differs from other national parks, where there is less at stake, both culturally and environmentally.

4.2 Future Directions

Plenty of opportunities for future research arise from this project. Primarily, because this study only lasted five weeks, a further analysis into this very topic could benefit the ongoing research greatly. Due to the time constraint and limitations of the research project, as well as the inconsistent responses from various people contacted, only five interviews were completed. A study done over a year with many interviews with cattlemen could prove highly significant. Another direction to which this research could lead includes the comparison of alpine grazing in Victoria with the grazing history and practices in New South Wales, primarily in Kosciuszko National Park. This

comparative analysis could prove powerful and attempt to explain why Victoria has had such a difficult time banning alpine grazing. Finally, a research project that examines the value of sustainability to cattlemen as well as exploring the philosophies of shallow vs. deep ecology in more depth could find its basis and foundation in this research paper.

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Appendix A: Informed Consent Example

Script:

"The purpose of this study is to examine the different values and representations of alpine cattle grazing in Victoria. This project is being complete for a study abroad program run by the School for International Training, called Australia: Sustainability and Environmental Action. I am using this data for my own personal research alone, and these recordings will not be made public. Do you have any questions for me so far? (Pause). Do I have your permission to record this interview? (Pause for yes/no). How would you like to be referenced in this interview? Would you like for me to use your name, or do you wish to be anonymous? (Pause for response). Do you wish to elaborate on this? (Pause for response). I will now read the date and time and begin recording. Please stop me if you have questions, concerns, or wish to stop.

Appendix B: Phil Ingamells Interview Transcription

31 October 2014

Matt: How long have you been involved with Victoria National Parks?
Phil: Well that's a really hard question to answer because I've had a fairly gradual entrance, I used to do volunteer work for them in the 80s, but I've been working with them probably for about the last ten years.
Matt: So what does your position entail?
Phil: Basically the job includes park management. We're a totally independent nongovernmental organization, so our job is to get parks management up, and that obviously involves in this case cattle in the high country and other issues as well, all the stuff on fire, things like that.
Matt: I know that one of the parts of the grazing issue right now is that some people believe that grazing reduces bushfires. I was wondering if you could speak to that a little bit? Is it legitimate?
Phil: Basically, no. There's been a lot of research on the matter, and the most effective way you can find out—you do lots of modeling and theoretical stuff and tests and set up experiments and things like that, but the most effective thing you can do is look at the actual real behavior of bushfires. And this was done in regards to grazing first of all in 2003—there was an alpine fire that burned for a couple of months through the high country. I don't know if you know this, but there was a paper that was done by a guy called Dick Williams and they looked at the northern and southern high plains which have been both grazed and ungrazed, and they looked at the severity of the fire through grasslands, through open heathen grasslands which are like grassy heathlands, and through closed heathlands. And they measured the severity, which they quantified by the remaining twig measurements, you understand what I mean?
Matt: Twig measurements?
Phil, Yeah, so if a very fine twig is left after a fire, than the fire wasn't very severe. And these were all measured very accurately. They did a huge number of measurements, just hundreds and hundreds of sites taken across the high plains, and there was no significant statistical difference between any of the systems (grazed and ungrazed areas), and no significance in the severity of the fire. So that was a very comprehensive study, but there was criticism from the cattlemen and their supporters that this was only looking at the Bogong High Plains, that it didn't look at the more wooded areas. But in the meantime, there was another fire in 07. But this time, there was a different group of people who picked it up, and this time they looked at all of the data for the whole 2003 fire and then the 2004 fire, and they also looked at the satellite data for the 2006/7 fire. This time they looked at the fire occurrence, and they measured severity in woodland areas by the degree of canopy scorch, so if the fire is more severe, it tends to dry out the leaves or kill off the leaves in the tree canopies. So they measured severity by degree of canopy scorch, and once again, they found that there was no significance between grazed and ungrazed areas, through the whole of the 2003 fire and the whole of the 2006/7 fire. That is every single inch of it. Actually, not only that, they then looked at all of the literature, and they said that if anything, some parts of the alps grazing would increase the fire severity by promoting shrub growth.
Matt: Shrub growth, right. So cattle don't graze on shrubs?

Phil: No, they actually often let shrubs grow, and the shrubs are much more flammable than the grasses. So I can send you a copy of both those papers.
Matt: That would be fantastic, thank you. I was also wondering if maybe you could talk a little bit about the evolution of the grazing issue since you've been working for VNPA and where it was and where it is now?
Phil: There has been a lot of focus on grazing pretty much since we were formed in 1953, long before my time. It's been to systematically remove grazing practices from the more valuable things. But even as it had sort of objectives back in the 70s and so on at various times to reduce grazing in the high country, it's always had the objective of removing it. Geoff Mosley might have mentioned a book called *The Alps at the Crossroads*, and that book actually looks at reducing the area of grazing in the high country, there's a section that says it should eventually be phased out of the high country. So there's been a very consistent position.
Matt: So where does most of the opposition come from?
Phil: It comes from the cattlemen themselves. They're a very powerful group of people, and they're obviously, you know, if I grew up in the tradition of taking my horses up to the country with my kids and everything, I'd love it, you know that's understandable. In the past, they've gotten very cheap… [shows me pamphlet]. This is the Alpine Grazing Taskforce Report, published by the Victorian government in 2005. It's a very objective look at the pros and cons of grazing. Fire, how much it costs and so on. It's a very thorough inquiry on grazing from Parliament. This is actually a Parliamentary inquiry.
Matt: So this was a government issued study?
Phil: Yeah, it was published by the government department, but it's a report for Parliamentarians, members of Parliament were charged by the environmental ministry to investigate the pros and cons of alpine grazing [shows me information in the book, including table on p. 56]
Matt: Thanks for showing me that.
Phil: So that's the reason for the cattlemen going up, there's also a bit of a support by people who just like the tradition. These tend to be the horse riders, the mountain goers. There's a whole legend behind it all. And the legend's been very powerful, and this is why it's been so hard to fight. Because normally, in any conservation battle, the conservationists have the picture, it might be the threatened bird or the beautiful forest that is going to be destroyed by the timber industry—we have the photograph. And the argument we usually have to fight is hard economics. This is totally reversed. Our argument is now for hard economics. But they've got the legend, they've got the photograph, the man on the horse in the high plains—they've got the image. The other thing that's on our side of course apart from economics is just the huge number of scientific reports over the last 60 years about the damage. And this has been in New South Wales as well as in Victoria. In fact it goes back to the 1850s.
Matt: Do you know anything about the grazing in New South Wales and what happened there?
Phil: It was actually first banned in the 1930s in Victoria, the 1920s in Mt. Buffalo National Park… [showing me information on the map] That had sheep grazing in the 1920s, and it was fouling the water supply up there. It was banned in the 1920s, and then it was reinstated. But it was finally banned in 1952. So that's actually before the New South Wales one. But in New South Wales, it was largely because of the water supply

again from the Snowy Mountain scheme, which was a huge hydroelectric scheme in the Snowy Mountains. And the scientists proved beyond doubt that grazing caused soil erosion. So that was why it was primarily banned in New South Wales. [explains map a bit more]
Matt: I don't know if this is still happening, but I read a press conference release in May of a court proceeding. Is that still ongoing?
Phil: It's our organization that's taken the government to the supreme court. It's still ongoing. There have been preliminary hearings, and there's one more preliminary hearing in the week before the Victorian election. The scientific trial… 50 cattle were introduced in this place called the Wonnangatta Valley at the end of last summer, there's a plan for another two summers of grazing, and there will be 300 cattle going in on the first of January this summer. This is theoretically to show that they will help prevent fire. But it's rather odd because, as I've said, these research papers show what happens in an actual fire, and they can't run an actual fire. Everybody knows that when you graze down a paddock it's less flammable. But the point is, in the context of the Alps and the whole vegetation of the alpine region, that small local scheme doesn't transfer to a national scale… But anyway, so we're opposed to it. We were trying to create a junction.

Appendix C: Cam Walker Interview Transcription

5 November 2014

Matt: Can you give me your understanding of the grazing issue and any history you might know?
Cam: It's a long running dispute. Over the last twenty years, there's been a shift in the politics around grazing. So it's a historical land use that dates back to the 1860s, but from the 1940s onwards, it became apparent that there were significant ecological costs attached to it, and probably from the 1970s onwards, the leases started to not be renewed. There was a ramping down of the hectares that are under grazing licenses, and this culminated with the creation of one large alpine national park—previously there had been a number of smaller parks, and when the overarching park was created, grazing was banned by the government. That was a labor party government, and subsequent to that, the national-liberal coalition came to power in 2010, and one of the strategies was to reintroduce grazing, and they have managed to do it, but they've also struggled to do it.
Matt: I know that there were a bunch of scientific papers being written and studies being done on the ecological impacts of grazing—could you just comment on that a bit?
Cam: So the cornerstone work on that is Maisie Fawcett and her research work in the 40s. Earlier than that, there was the soil conservation authority in the Snowy Mountains—they realized that summer grazing up there was incredibly problematic in terms of erosion. So they didn't come at it from a conservation perspective, they looked at it from a land management perspective. And if the headwaters of the mountains are eroded, they head downstream and have impacts on agriculture and stream quality, and then later on the flora/ fauna manual is introduced by Maisie, which was in the 40s or 50s I think from memory, and then there's been a growing number of researchers at places like La Trobe University that have tracked the issue of high country grazing and particularly the impacts on flora and fauna. And the most recent developments have been the scientific conversations as to whether or not grazing is a management tool that reduces fire intensity. So it's like the third stage in the scientific conversation.
Matt: I know that one of the big campaigns for people who are pro grazing is that it reduces bushfires, but from the reading I've done that really doesn't seem to be the case at all.
Cam: No, it doesn't, yep. So as we say, it's a hypothesis—it's just an incorrect hypothesis. But they will not let go of that, and obviously for a lot of people it's about politics, so underlying this is a conservation vs. wise use movement that's going on, and then connected with that is the fact that in the coalition, the nationals are the junior party—they have a lot less members, but are disproportionately powerful. So they came into the 2010 election with a big shopping list of what they wanted, and mountain cattle grazing was top of the list, and they got all there things through very quickly, so the government was elected in November, 2010, and by early January 2011 they put cows back into the Alps—they wasted no time, and they actually did it secretly, and it was subsequently challenged and they were forced to withdraw the cattle for they had actually done it in an improper fashion. So it was always clearly around politics, and that gestured they wanted the photo op of saying "here it is, we've delivered our promise."
Matt: So that was 2010?
Cam: Yes, and then cattle were reintroduced in 2011.

Matt: But brought back out?
Cam: Yes. And that was following a court case, which was brought forth by Victorian National Parks Association. So if you haven't spoken with them, Phil Ingamells would be a good person to talk to.
Matt: I actually met with him last week. Very informative conversation.
Cam: Yep.
Matt: I think there are actually some court proceedings still happening, right? Do you know anything about that?
Cam: Yeah, well there was this second attempt—so this is in theory around a high terrain landscape management, and the alpines start around 1500 meters, and they were comprehensively kicked out of the higher mountain areas. So the second investigation is in the Wonnangatta Valley which I think is lower, I think it is 7-800 meters. So it's kind of montage habitat, it's bottom valley habitat. But it's native grassland as opposed to the subalpine grasslands and woodlands that were put in earlier. And that was also quite badly done initially; however, they were a bit shamed I think by the fact that they had done such a bad job preparing the methodology first time round, that by the end, they came up with a very good methodology, and that's what's currently being contested in the court case. And I think that was more about the process of how they did it. And that was because their own government department had recommended against it, and the minister overrode the department. And the department, whose job it is to, you know, tell us how the experiment went—you know, based on all the research of this, we don't think there's any validity in doing this because we already have the answer. And they said that was proof that this was about politics; it wasn't actually about land management.
Matt: It's such a contentious issue.
Cam: Yeah.
Matt: It seems there's a lot of cultural stake, do you think that's accurate?
Cam: Yeah, yeah. That's very powerful. If you think about it, the vast majority of Australians live in big towns and cities—we're one of the more urbanized populations on the planet, but we have this myth of the outback, so the mountain cattlemen are popular in the sense that they've got the horses and the hats and you know they're like how Australia really is in our hearts—it's like the cowboy in America. People look to this idealized tough, independent, egalitarian figure. It ties together the ethos of Australia that we are egalitarian and independent and kind of free of reliance on authority and so on, and mountain cattlemen tick off that box. They're quite popular. There's also a deep issue there, which is the fact that almost without exception the mountain cattlemen are Anglo-Saxon. So they do appeal to the older Anglo-Saxon community, who generally don't like the twenty-first century, they don't believe in climate change, they don't share conservationist views, multiculturalism is only an idea. They play to a particular demographic. And they're deeply popular in that demographic.
Matt: How would these people vote?
Cam: National party, or even further right than that. So there's the country alliance, and a couple others beyond that. It's had literal actual election impact, so that the place to look at was the last federal election which was in 2013, in the seat of McEwan, and it's kind of… (explaining grazing operations and political breakdown on map)… So Rob Mitchell (LAP) said "no this is a privileged small group, and I don't support them," and there was a national swing against the LAP—they lost government (that's when Tony Abbot came

in). He (Rob Mitchell) held on in spite of the fact that he was anti grazing. And that was actually in the areas where it matters the most and people make their livings off grazing. That kind of suggests that their support is overstated.
Matt: I know that at the end of November there are state elections coming up in Victoria. Do you know if the grazing issue will be addressed?
Cam: It hasn't been an issue, which is really weird. It just hasn't come up. The National party is still fiercely pro grazing and have sworn to sustain grazing in the high country, the LAP remain opposed to it, as do the Greens, and both parties have said they will act to end the current grazing trial in the Wargaratta (sp?) Valley. However, it has not been a big issue, it's had very little media attention. It defeats the category of a dark green issue, an environmental issue. We work mostly in the realm of climate change which has been very big. In this campaign, the big deep green issue has been the campaign for a new national park in the central highlands, so east of Melbourne, which is called the Great Forest National Park. So that's where all the effort is going. And the grazing thing is a bit of a sideshow.
Matt: What do you envision for the future?
Cam: I think it's inevitable it will be banned eventually because the science is so resounding. The problem is that Australians are really freaked about bushfire. We live in a very bushfire prone part of the planet, and climate change is making bushfires worse. More and more people live in areas where fires are likely to happen. So we've got this other pressure where people think, "if there's anything available to prevent a bushfire, let's do it." So the danger is that enough people swallow the bullshit that grazing will reduce fires. So that's the danger in there. If you listen to the science, there's no future for it. Because it has disastrous ecological effects, but yeah there's a danger that it gets caught up in the fear around bushfires.
Matt: Some people write that grazing can actually increase the prevalence of bushfires, right?
Cam: Yes, well cows will selectively eat the succulents, you know the nice juicy daisies and stuff like that, and if they have a preference, they won't graze on the prickly shrubs. So they remove the less far prone vegetation from the ecosystem, which creates bare ground, which creates space for the shrubs to arise, which raises more flammable areas. So if you had an area let's say where half of it was succulents and half of it was bush, they'll graze the succulent half and allow encroachment of the shrubs into the second half. So yeah, there is quite a reasonable argument that says "grazing can increase blazing." But you know, I've spent all my life hiking and skiing in the mountains, and remember when I was a kid seeing cattle grazing operations, and they are very destructive. And I talk to mountain cattlemen, and they flatly deny that. They say "oh it's the wild deer that are trampling the bogs and wetlands," so there's a denial that exists there, a blind spot.

Appendix D: Grant Williamson Interview Transcription

13 November 2014

Matt: Could you give me a brief overview of your research and the papers you've written?
Grant: Yep, sure. This research was part of the National Environmental Resource Program, where we're looking at new landscape solutions to ecological problems I suppose, the intersection between ecology and human populations. For the alpine grazing work in particular, this has been an issue in the Alps for a long time. There have been concerns raised for a number of decades now on the affects of cows grazing in alpine areas. In New South Wales, this practice was banned some time ago, but in Victoria, it's continued until rather recently. And in an effort to bring the practice back, they promote the idea quite strongly that cattle grazing reduces wildfire intensity. This sounded to us like an impossible proposition, simply to us because cattle graze on grass, and the most intense wildfires you see on the alpine areas in Australia are forest fires, burning Eucalypt forests and wood on the ground and so forth. So we saw the opportunity to do a fairly simple desktop analysis using satellite products, which measure the severity of fires. There are two fires of extensive damage that occurred in the Australian Alps over the last decade, and we looked at the intensity of burning inside and outside the areas where cattle grazed. And quite simply, we found some effect on vegetation type. We found no significant reduction at all in fire severity in the areas that had been subject to grazing. So it's a fairly simple conclusion. But it agrees with previous studies that people have done, looking at where the cattle graze.
Matt: So what exactly are the ecological impacts that cattle have on the park when they graze?
Grant: They tend to graze in the upland areas that have a lot of wetlands and bogs. Essentially, once you get above a certain altitude, it reverts back to a grassy system, with a lot of lakes, bogs, and wetlands and so forth. The cattle tend to trample those. There's overgrazing. And as you can imagine in Australia, these are quite restricted ecosystems. We don't have many alpine areas, so those alpine bogs are a quite rare and protected ecosystem, and the cattle graze extensively around these areas and create significant damage.
Matt: Do you have any guesses to why grazing was banned so long ago in New South Wales but only recently in Victoria in regard to politics?
Grant: I think it's a relatively low number of people who actually engage in this grazing, and it's essentially a nationalistic pastime where it's part of the Australian mythos that high country grazing takes place, that people take their cattle up to the mountains to graze during the summer and so forth. In these communities, there is a wider acceptance of grazing because it's so traditional. In terms of why it's so much stronger in Victoria than in New South Wales, I'm not sure about that, I wouldn't hazard a guess as to why it's a stronger issue in Victoria rather than in New South Wales, I guess just different grazing practices and cultural traditions.
Matt: Can you help me understand the difference among the various regions of the Australian Alps?
Grant: I don't know a huge amount, but I do know the Australian Alps are quite unique in having a multijurisdictional park. There are actually a number of parks as you suggested,

the Alpine National Park is in Victoria, Kosciuszko National Park is in New South Wales, and also areas cover the Australian Capital Territory as well. But there is actually a joint management group that looks at the interest of all three of those parks. So I think that's the only set up in Australia where a particular protected areas is managed by multiple states. I think that part of that means that New South Wales has influence over the decisions made on the Victorian side of the park. I'm not sure about the history of when that all came together.
Matt: Can you talk about the 2010 trial to reintroduce cattle?
Grant: I think 2005 was when the leases were suspended. So we've gone from a period from 2005 to about now without cattle. But we did our analysis on the area where cattle had grazed on the basis that they would have reduced the ecosystems of those areas. However, a new trial has been started this year with the change of government in Victoria. But that grazing trial is actually different, it's in a lowland valley. Those cattle won't be extending upward to the alpine bogs and so forth. But it is I guess a bit of a test case to gauge public acceptance of cattle again. This trial probably won't have the same ecological impacts that we were concerned about.
Matt: Is that going to be something that will be debated during the elections at the end of November?
Grant: Well that's an interesting question. I haven't heard too much about it myself, but then I'm in Tasmania so I'm not paying too much attention I suppose.
Matt: When practices such as grazing are allowed in the park, how do you feel that impacts the integrity of the park?
Grant: I think the public expects a protected area to be a protected area. There's a fairly reasonable understanding that the reason why national parks are set up is to conserve some aspect of pre-European ecological interactions. And there is an issue with feral animals in protected areas. In the Alps, we have horses and cattle—most protected areas in Australia have animals of some sort, which the public expects to be controlled. But to have what's supposed to be a publically protected and managed area provide leases within it or pasture activity degrades the perception of how protected the area really is, and what other activities might be permitted their in the future.
Matt: How would you approach telling a supporter of grazing your opinions?
Grant: That's a good question, Difficult. I guess the facts are out there—it's been known for a long time the ecological impact of cattle. That isn't really under question by the scientific community. I suppose it's an issue of perceptions. When the graziers aren't necessarily concerned with the fate of some specific alpine bog or plant. So I don't think it involves pushing scientific knowledge on them. I think it's probably much more of a cultural thing in terms of understanding an appreciation of the systems that are there and the severity. I'm probably not a skilled person to make that sort of impact on people [laughs]. Certainly, greater public communication on the natural assets that are in the park might be useful.

Appendix E: Graeme Stoney Interview Transcription

14 November 2014

Matt: How long have you been involved with the Mountain Cattlemen?
Graeme: Since about 1958.
Matt: Correct me if I'm wrong, but you're a former Victorian politician?
Graeme: Yeah I was.
Matt: When you were in office what were your major accomplishments?
Graeme: I was involved in Parliament with the land management of all the high country, and I took a particular interest in public land management issues. And also in creating railways.
Matt: Does public land management in the high country refer to the Australian Alps?
Graeme: Yes, the Victorian Alps—the northern fall of the high country.
Matt: I know that in Victoria right now, and especially in the Alpine National Park, there's been a whole lot of debate over alpine cattle grazing. And I was wondering if you could explain to me how the debate over grazing has evolved over the years?
Graeme: Well it would take quite a while [laughs]. The Victorian High Plains are very suitable for grazing and cattle, and since 1834, cattle have been going up into the high country. In the 1960s, there was pressure to create a major park up there, and we wanted to use the park to support alpine grazing. In the 1960s, the Mountain Cattlemen Association fought to keep alpine grazing in the high country, and throughout the 1980s, there was a lot activity in politics, with faction between labor and the left. The cattlemen helped in a couple of elections, and in 1989/ 1990 there was a deal struck with the alpine park (a political deal) that a park would be created, in return, most of the cattlemen would terminate their licenses, and some would be removed. So there was a deal done, and I was involved in this, to remove cattle from some areas, issue seven-year renewable licenses, and in return, we would be agreeing with the forming of an alpine national park.
Matt: And what year was this?
Graeme: 1989/ 1990. It had a very high profile in Parliament. Our family was given a seven-year license, and I was in Parliament negotiating. Within these seven years, these licenses were renewed. In 2004, labor government created a committee that we call a kangaroo committee, you know what I mean? And they said that the cattlemen would be banned in 2005, licenses would not be renewed. So there was an agreement broken here. And that caused a huge uproar in Melbourne and so forth, the cattlemen were fighting.
Matt: This was the labor government?
Graeme: The labor government overturned it in 2005. Eventually, they did a deal, because they had the numbers. You know, politics is all about compromise and deals and such.
Matt: Can you explain to me the cultural and historical value and tradition of alpine grazing and what it means to cattlemen and Australians in general?
Graeme: There has been a lot written about it. The bottom line is that the original families who still have cattle in the mountains, not the alpine park, but other sections of the mountains bring their cattle to these areas every summer, and they've been doing that for generations. A lot of these families were very badly treated by the government, but the enduring culture of the cattle going up to the mountains and back—throughout the world, there are pilgrimages of farmers taking their cattle up to the high country in the summer.

And staying with them. All throughout the world, in the Americas and Europe—Switzerland and Germany and Austria, long standing tradition. And that's what was developed in Australia. It's quite an acknowledged situation. And that skill, knowledge, and tradition became engrained in Australia; this is the way it's done in the high country.
Matt: Where did most of the opposition against grazing emerge?
Graeme: Oh well from the greens, from the environmental group. Environmental groups need a cause, they need an excuse, and they need something to rally behind and raise funds. And if they can pick an issue that creates interest in the community, they go for that issue. And that's where, you know, it develops. And it's all done in the name of the environment, but you know there's an argument that what some of these groups want to do is lock the land up. There's a body of science that says the worst thing you can do is not to control public land, not have regular fires in there, and not have management, and not maintain weeds. So there's this huge debate over who should manage public lands. The purists say that almost anything you do in these areas damage the land, and there's another body of science that says we must go in there. So those are really the two scientific sides. And there has been what's called "academic activism" which involves CSIRO scientists who have alike minds, and they have been instigating academic activism against alpine grazing. They've been kicking off each other's work and working collaboratively, and then any scientists who disagree, they turn on and belittle—it's quite scary the way it works really. And it's been working the same way in the timber industry. There's a group of academics working in a similar way. They get together, they work collaboratively, they encourage each other, they kick off each other's work in order to achieve a particular outcome—it's quite scary what they've done. It's really like a campaign, where you can come up with any figure you want, you know with the books [laughs].
Matt: I know that in Victoria there are some state elections coming up at the end of November. Do you know if the grazing issue will be discussed or if it's park of anyone's platform for the election?
Graeme: Yes, the government says it's going to continue the alpine grazing trials in Wonnangatta, but it's quite clear that it's not a big election issue this year. Everyone just understands that's just the position of the party
Matt: What do you personally view for the future of alpine grazing? What do you envision for the future?
Graeme: I'm pretty disappointed that it's become totally political. It's really the rights and wrongs and the advantages and so forth and all about the position of politics, which is alarming.
Matt: So the issue has become pretty politicalized?
Graeme: Oh totally politicized. And the federal labor government got involved and commissioned regulations that made alpine grazing have to be controlled under what's called the environment protection and biodiversity conservation act (the EPBC). So the previous labor administration issued a regulation, and now everything's changed, it's all pretty sad really.
Matt: Having a background in politics and public land management and with your being a cattleman yourself, what do you think national parks offer people? What do they mean to you?

Graeme: National parks should be something that is really special. When the Alpine National Park was created, it was made far too large, and the boundaries were not drawn with any care. It intersected many, many people who lived there and had property close to the park. They drew boundaries 100 meters over very well used treks that were being used by horse groups. Suddenly one of these major treks that led into the Wonnangatta Valley could no longer be used by horses. There was a lot of very poor planning of the park. It was far too big, and the budget—they just can't finance the management of it. Public land management is like health—it's kind of like a bottomless pit. Every new government wants to check off a new national park in their tick box, you know? Parks Victoria has to manage the park from their existing budget. And in the end, they pay wage bills, and not much else. There's just no budget for the amount of area. And it ceases to become special. National parks should be *really* special places of high significance, and we create something like the Alpine National Park of very inaccessible country, the ranges from getting into Wonnangatta —it's a twelve hour drive to get in and out, six hours each way. And you're not allowed to camp there because of regulations, so if you're going to make it, you go in for about half an hour and then you have to come back out. The concept of national parks is really good, but the implementation in Australia, and more specifically Victoria, has been appalling because some of the national parks that are created are not significant (or sections of them are not significant), and the creation of national parks has really affected a great number of people who enjoy these areas or are close to them, and who used to in the past take their dogs to a particular spot—now in the national park, you're not allowed to take your dog in… you know, all that sort of stuff. And there's just not the budget to maintain it.

Appendix F: Sean Williams Interview Transcription

21 November 2014

Matt: How has the issue of alpine grazing become politicized?
Sean: It comes back to sort of an exchange a few years ago between the federal and state governments. So cattle grazing in the high country has long been a controversial issue, particularly when it means the cattle are entering the Alpine National Park, which is supposed to be set aside as conservation preserve. A few years ago, the then labor environmental prime minister passed down a ruling basically saying that the cattle had to get out of the national park, and that that was final. At about the same time, the then Victorian environment minister approached the University of Melbourne and commissioned them to do a study on whether cattle in the high country actually helps with wheat control and fire mitigation. But it was leaked to the media that he actually tied the funding for that research downtown. So the Victorian government at the time actually said, "we want you to research this, and by the way your research is going to tell us that we're right, and it actually helps with wheat control and fire mitigation. They said, "no, we won't do that," and obviously it went straight to the media, and they said, "the government just tried to tell us what the outcomes of our research are going to be," and so then obviously we had a liberal-national coalition in Victoria at that time, and so once the federal government changed, the state government shifted the legislation and all that to allow the cattle back in. It's long been a politicized issue. There are a lot of environmental issues in Victoria, but over the last four to five years, it's really changed a lot of prominence, because the federal government had put us in a position where we had this issue in a national park. Cattle were trampling the native flora and fauana, and then the state government decided in the interest of its constituents (national party) that they were going to allow that to happen again. So this was for pretty much ideological reasons, and they tried to manipulate one of this country's premier research institutions to justify for them. And that's where the issue reached a high level of public awareness.
Matt: Do you know if the grazing issue will be discussed at the state elections at the end of November?
Sean: It has had a little bit of prominence, but it's certainly taken I guess a bit of a backseat to other environmental issues recently. Obviously, I'm working on a campaign to have a new national park in the central highlands north of Melbourne, there's very, very strong campaigning around the renewable energy targets, around a ban on coal seam gas extraction, and the creation of marine parks, so all of these things have really washed over grazing. So it's there, and land management groups have made it clear that it's something they want to see reversed, but it is not a very top-level environmental issue in the public's consciousness at this point.
Matt: What do you envision for the future? Do you think grazing will be ultimately banned for good in the Alpine National Park?
Sean: Well, I'd like to see the cattle once again removed from the Alpine National Park. I think it's a social awareness issue. You see, initially, a lot of Victorians didn't really know about it, didn't really care either way, but what achieved a high level of public awareness was when the controversy in the media when the cattle were allowed back into the park was massive. So I think once they are out, and if they can be kept out for an extended period, you know 4-10 years, if they can keep them out, the attempts to put

them back in will be seen as quite socially subversive. The change has begun, and it's a lot like most environmental issues, we've had a step forward and then a couple steps back, and then the public's consciousness around the issue changes. So I think ultimately, in the long term, yes, they will be taken out of the Alpine National Park for good; it's just a bit of a process to make that happen. I mean, the other thing that people are becoming aware of is the fact that it costs a lot of money for that to happen. At the end of the day, grazing in the Alpine National Park actually really only serves a handful of large graziers in the district, so it's four or five families doing tens of millions of dollars worth of damage to public assets, so they can line their own pockets with the profits from their cattle ranches. I think the public is becoming more aware of the fact that it's not a zero cost effort to let them wander around in there. We actually have to repair the damage they do, and that's starting to annoy people as well.

Matt: What do you think national parks offer people? When ecologically disastrous practices such as grazing are allowed in protected areas, how do you feel this impacts the integrity of the land?

Sean: To answer the first part of your question—everything really. I mean national parks obviously at their most basic level are there to conserve or allow the opportunity to restore landscapes and provide some natural beauty that surrounds the cities and towns in which we live. They have huge levels of environmental value in terms of carbon storage, and Melbourne's water supply comes from a lot of these forested areas, so national parks provide real protection for the quality of water we enjoy in Melbourne, which is some of the best in the world. They provide an escape for people—you can spend a day up there hiking or relaxing, you can go out there camping if you want to. The jobs that come off the back of that in terms of jobs in hospitality, tourism for local communities, the jobs in terms of mitigation, parks and land management are absolutely massive. So you know, the national parks themselves—Australians and Victorians in particular like the idea of national parks, and I think that is because the reality of national parks is that they are so beneficial for our state, even if you live in the far off western suburbs and have never been to the high ranges, a lot of Victorians are still aware that they exist, and they improve the quality of life in Melbourne, more broadly. The integrity of national parks is very important. And I guess when there are dangerous practices allowed in them, be in cattle grazing, or more recently the allowance of private leases to develop in national parks, it hurts both the people and the government who passes the laws. The integrity of national parks must be paramount. When you have damaging practices like alpine grazing, the reality is that national parks can recover from those sorts of things, as long as they have the proper resourcing and management. So if you take the cattle out, it won't recover overnight, it might take a couple of decades, but the national park and the environment can recover and be restored. If you allow those practices to continue, eventually you're going to undermine the whole purpose of the national park. You're going to destroy the natural environment, and then all you have is an unhealthy protected area that looks terrible. You've got to manage them properly, I mean, you have to keep in mind that Australia is a country that suffers from a massive influx of feral species that cause a lot of damage to our ecosystems and environment. So a big part of national parks, particularly in Victoria is the control of introduced pests such as feral cats, foxes, and rabbits. There are quite extensive fencing and trapping programs that go on in national parks anyway, and this helps to maintain the integrity and protect the wildlife that lives

there. And alpine cattle grazing is absolutely no different, in the fact that it is something that is damaging the integrity of the park, and we can fix it up, we just need to make sure that people understand that the political will doesn't really exist anymore. It's been done once, and the public broadly supported it. The decision was reversed, and the public broadly condemned it. So for a party to get up and say "just get the cows out of the national park," you might hurt them in a couple of rural areas that have an ideological marriage to the idea of alpine cattle grazing, but people on the whole would be supportive of that call. Protecting national parks is definitely a vote winner, and it's something that the public in Victoria very much supports.