

## CO-ORDINATOR & COURSE SETTER REPORT – by TREVOR GOLLAN

This year the 12-hour Autumn gaine moved to Tarlo River National Park, 30km north-east of Goulburn. TRNP is unusual in that there is one public access point, in the south, and the rest of the 8,000 hectares is surrounded by private lands. Access to the rarely visited, rugged, northern section requires approval from a private landowner, which we only just achieved for this event.

Participants were overwhelmingly positive about the area, praising the attractive valleys (especially Kerrawary Creek) and the long, open ridges and spurs. Control points were deemed to be accurate and, though the course was constrained by the narrow point of access into the Park, there was ample choice for teams to spread out and choose different routes.

The 12-hour event was won by Ronnie Taib and David Williams who managed to visit all controls (2,700 points) with just 5 minutes to spare. Peter Preston and Ben Rattray won the 6-hour event with 1,800 points



343 people participated which is well above average for a bush event that is a 3-hour drive from Sydney. Proximity to Canberra did boost the numbers but higher attendance can also be attributed to good promotion on the NSWRA website and FaceBook. Quite a few people commented that they attended because it was advertised as a one-off chance to visit the area

We were fortunate with the weather. Apart from smoke haze from Blue Mountains control burns the typically strong winds that were extreme on Thursday eased for three days while our marquee was up - then they returned for the Monday. Nights were chilly, not frozen, and walking on Saturday was comfy in a single layer shirt.

Prizes were acquired from the local Taralga visitor centre, focussing on local produce (jams, chutneys, olive oil and potatoes) and tourist mementoes (tea towels, calico bags). This was another way to contribute in small manner to the local community. Standard NSWRA prize mugs were also given to each member of the category-winning team

## CREDITS

All our helpers are greatly appreciated – this is a volunteer non-profit organisation that depends on people putting in time, effort and enthusiasm. I especially want to thank Ian Almond for many hours on the map and some very big days exploring the National Park, thanks to Jenny & Kay for tolerating our passion (er, regaining passion, that is), and to Mike Hotchkis for his sagacity and energy in reviewing the course and hanging the flags

**Course Setting:** Trevor Gollan, Ian Almond (map-maker), Mike Hotchkis (vetter), Peter Watterson

**Administration:** Vivien de Remy de Courcelles, Anita Bickle, Jenny Almond, Ros Atkins

**Catering:** Nigel Welsh & Keith Fone, with 1<sup>st</sup> Waitara Scouts

**Safety:** Middle Arm Wayo Rural Fire Service

**Admin Trailer:** Bob & Pam Montgomery

**Flag Collection:** Jenny Friend, Matt Bell, Julian Ledger, Vivien de Remy de Courcelles, Phil Whitten, Vince Carolan & Pawel Wagner

**Landowners and Carers:** Thankyou to Wallace Ashton and NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service

**Photography:** Mike Hotchkis and any participant with a Samsung S5

**Hash House setup and cleanup:** Andrew, Nic, Jenny, Matt, Anita, Bert, Nihal, Richard, Dom... others

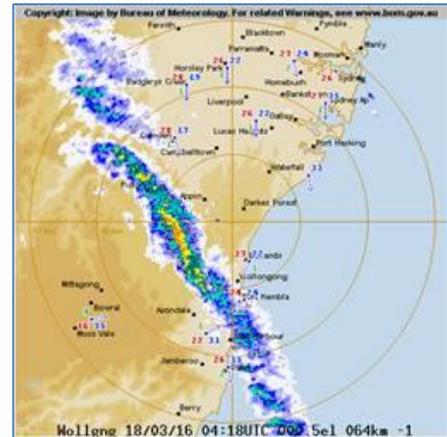
There were a **FEW UNUSUAL FEATURES** of this event:

- The landowner to the north of the HH had pre-booked a pig-shooting weekend for the same time as our rogaine. Neither parties could change their party, so we wrote “Shooting” clearly on the Out-Of-Bounds section of the map, and warned at the Event Briefing that people near that boundary should avoid piggy snort-snort calls. Gunfire was certainly heard by competitors but we maintained a reasonable distance. (Note to future course setters: write Shooting on your OOB’s and people will stay out)
- National Parks asked us to look for interesting or unusual animals and it was disappointed that there weren’t many such reports. We did hear about the common animals plus a sugar glider south of CP63, a big carp in the Tarlo, and a possum. As course setters, we spent much more time on the course and perhaps we travel more quietly and serenely than teams with a time limit. We saw many grey kangaroo, goats, pigs, swamp wallaby, wombats, and occasionally black snakes, fox, rakali, wedgetail eagle, lyrebird, azure kingfisher and many other birds
- The uncertainty of vehicle access into the Park lead me to not install a Water Drop. Instead we clearly specified the situation in Final Instructions and Course Setter Notes, recommending use of Kerraway Creek and the Tarlo River with appropriate water treatment techniques
- Checkpoints worth 200 points are unusual but was justified in this case to entice teams to the far east side of the course

## EVOLUTION OF THE COURSE

Setting this rogaine was a long, sometimes stressful journey. The northern half of Tarlo River National Park was one of the potential sites on my to-do list. The Park Ranger, Audrey Kutzner, is supportive of rogaing, confirmed we could use the Park, and confirmed that there is no public access apart from the distant, southern side, near Long Point and Greenwich Park – used for previous rogaines

Preferring to avoid hot weather (well, it was an Autumnrogaine!) I waited for this south-westerly change (at right) to herald the end of summer then commenced the protracted, sensitive negotiations to find a way for 200-300 people to camp and walk across someone's land. The first foray to Bannaby on the north side of the Park was (surprisingly) successful, a bloody handshake with a guy just after he had killed one of his sheep. "Sure, you can camp in the paddock over there", he said, "but you'll need to walk through the brothers' property to get to the Park"



There are some genuine grazing properties in the area, and the large wind farm of course, but Developers continue to slice up the land into 50-100 hectare lots that cater for absentee, Sydney-based retreaters, farmers and escapees. They're nearly all reluctant to have a few hundred people camp and walk across their land: stretching fences, leaving gates open, breaking electric road-grids, losing their crocs... hah, as if that would happen!

We progressed. By the end of April I had agreement to use four properties off Bannaby Road to get into the Park, we had set more than 30 controls accordingly, then one of the brothers, the one I hadn't met face-to-face, called to say they had decided not to allow us access. You can't really argue with someone when you are asking them for such a favour. With just over three weeks to go I seriously contemplated cancellation

May Day – the 1<sup>st</sup> of May – and the landowner at the end of Hillcrest Rd was positive about our use of his land to access the Park. Wallace Ashton (right) has had disagreements with National Parks & Wildlife Service about use of the Park. He's ridden horses through there for decades, but not recently. His response to my request to use his land?

"It would be a delight to assist a community enjoy what was our park ... 20,000 acres on the edge of the Sydney basin should be enjoyed by Australians and bring business to the area"

Thankyou very much Wal



20 days until 21-May and this had turned into a just-in-time rogaine. We had to abandon 10-15 controls that had been taped in the north and re-orient to a west-east course. BTW the 200-pointers were originally only 4-5km from the first Hash House

14 days until 21-May: Peter Watterson and I spent two days setting the mesh of controls in the west. We discovered and mapped the big blackberry thicket and agreed to not place any more controls in the far east

7 days until 21-May: Mike Hotchkis vetted the course and hung most of the flags on his own, involving two 9-hour days. We agreed that people wouldn't head to the two eastern controls when they were only worth 100 points. The simple solution was to make each worth 200 points

It was all rather smooth after that – apart from a map reprint because the colours hadn't been printed on the map. They were good in the Legend though

And that is the evolutionary story of this rogaine course

## COMMENTS & COMPLIMENTS

“We wanted to thank the organizers for providing such a tremendous event. The set-up at registration through to incredible feast in the evening and genuine but low key presentations rounded off a most memorable experience” [Rick Cavicchioli]

“All the rogainers had nothing but good things to say about the course. The Scouts did a great job also, food was yummy” [Mary Booth, Middle Arm RFS]

“The trouble with 12-hour events at this time of year is that we only had around 5 hours of daylight. So a lot of nice places we only saw in the dark” [Andrew Haigh]

“It is to be noted that besides complimenting the map and the course setters, many participants thanked the whole organization including all volunteers contributing to the event - and to rogaining if taken more broadly” [Vivien de Remy de Courcelles, Event Administrator]

“The first I heard of Tarlo River Gorge was when I was looking for new places for the 2014 NSW Champs. I wrote it off because of the access issues, so I'm impressed you managed to get in at all” [David Williams]

