

# Newsletter

GET ACTIVE - GET INVOLVED - GET OUT THERE!

## From the President's Tent...

What a wonderful time to be in Alice Springs and walking on the Larapinta Trail. With the temps coming down, as well as the rains, the trail is looking better than ever. The Friends of the Larapinta Trail have enjoyed incredible support from the local community, our corporate sponsors along with interstate and overseas visitors. If you would like to join us as a member (it's free!) or come along to a working bee or walk with us - have a look at our website [www.friendsofthelarapintatrail.org.au](http://www.friendsofthelarapintatrail.org.au) for more information. You can also find us in the Todd Mall markets on the last Sunday of every month.

For our next event we are hosting a trail maintenance seminar on Sunday morning 29th of May on Section 10 (Ormiston Gorge), there is free transport available to and from the event - for more details please visit our website or check us out on facebook - Friends of the Larapinta Trail. All the best,

Richard Mayne, President FOLT



Section 2 - photo by Cheryl Baker

## Upcoming Events:

- Sat 7th May:** Section 3 - Jay Creek to Standley Chasm.
- Sun 8th May:** Angkale Junction Walk. Section 3 from Standley Chasm. 8am - 12pm
- 21st/22nd May:** Section 4 (booked out).
- Sun 22nd May:** Todd Mall Markets.
- Sun 29th May:** Trail Maintenance Workshop Ormiston Gorge. 10am - 3pm
- 4th/5th June:** Section 5 overnight walk (16km - difficult).
- Thurs 9th June:** Committee Meeting/Raffle Draw Club Eastside - 5.30pm.
- Sun 19th June:** Hat Hill Saddle Walk. Simpsons Gap - 4.2km return.

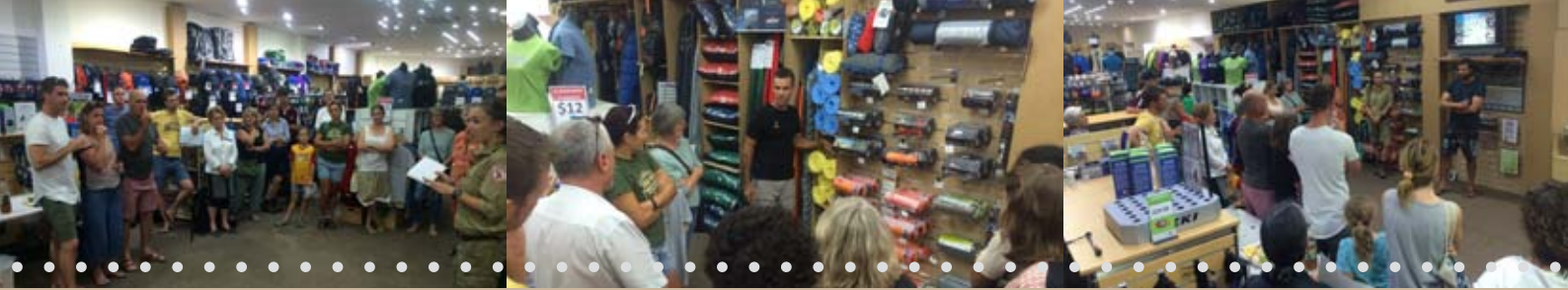
More information and a copy of our full events calendar is available on the website.



## Chickpea Mash

Soak/boil 500g of dried chickpeas  
Put into a mixing bowl and mash  
Add mayo, some mustard, some paprika, some lemon juice and salt and pepper to taste.  
Mix it all together, then garnish with coriander or parsley.  
Want to go gourmet?  
Roast some garlic and mash that in, add some chopped dill pickles... serve as a dip with crackers or on wraps for lunch.





# Product Information Night at Lone Dingo

Thank you to Lone Dingo, the Parks and Wildlife Commission NT and Trek Larapinta for donating their time at our annual Product Information Night on the 21st April.

The event was attended by 25 Friends who heard about new gear, safety on the Trail, as well as helpful hints about clothing, boots, packing your pack, boots, sleeping bags, mats and poles.

There were lots of good questions as well and Lone Dingo were very generous in offering discounts to Friends of the Larapinta Trail members.

Thanks to everyone who bought a raffle ticket and to the people who helped out with drinks and nibbles!

## 1<sup>ST</sup> WORKING BEE OF THE SEASON!



On Sunday 10th April, a small but dedicated team of 7 volunteers gathered at Simpsons Gap for our first working bee of the season. Despite the still warm conditions in Central Australia, the group set to work with Park Ranger Phil's guidance.

The Larapinta Trail camp shelter was cleaned, the tent pads were refreshed, stones were placed under the water tank taps to reduce mud splash, and the area was whipper snipped. The trail itself, leading out West from Simpsons Gap, is currently a bit overgrown as a result of summer rains. Those on the brush cutters did trim the first trails leading out of camp, and some stones were positioned to ensure hikers stay on the trail.

A lovely morning tea was supplied, with beautiful cake and refreshing fruit. Trail tales and the sharing of hiking product knowledge ensued over a cuppa, making the working bee a valuable source of information for those less experienced in the art of hiking.

The next working bee is on Sunday July 10th and will be at the Mulga Campsite on section 2 of the trail. Access to this area is by 4WD only and participants will need to contact Phil on 0408 488 149 due to vehicle access restrictions. A great opportunity to drive into an area only accessible by foot normally, and see what the remote overnight camp sites are really like. Many Hands make light work and we'd love to see you there!







# TREK LARAPINTA VOLUNTEER PROJECT

*Story by Daniel Johansen,  
Park Ranger - Ormiston Gorge  
Tjoritja/West MacDonnell National Park*

In mid-April Ormiston Gorge Rangers were joined by 14 Trek Larapinta volunteers and two guides for a week of trail maintenance, opening the trail for the start the walking season. Work focused on sections 8, 10 and 11 and involved pruning over hanging vegetation, chipping spinifex, erosion control and the replacement of damaged trail markers. A huge amount of work was achieved and with three sections complete the Ormiston Rangers can now focus their efforts on more remote sections of the trail.

Many of the volunteers were attending their second or third volunteer trip with Trek Larapinta demonstrating the strong appeal of the program. The opportunity to meet and work with the rangers, and thus gain an insight into the park and the remote lifestyle, were among the reasons given for volunteer's attendance. In addition to working days a social night was held with rangers and their families sharing a meal with the volunteers and Trek Larapinta staff.

In all it was a very successful week of hard work and good company in a beautiful location. The Ormiston team very much appreciated the efforts and enthusiasm of all involved.



## SPONSOR IN THE SPOTLIGHT:



We are excited to welcome our new Corporate Sponsor, Park Trek who have been providing walking tours all over Australia for the past 15 years. Most recently they have created a new tour on the Larapinta Trail which involves day walks and the comfort of a bed and 2 course meal at Lassetters each night.

If you want to find out more visit their website [www.parktrek.com.au](http://www.parktrek.com.au) or give them a call on (03) 9444 8341.

## GREAT WALKS PHOTO COMP:

Always great to see the Larapinta Trail getting a plug amongst the many other challenging and spectacular walks on offer world wide. This one is for a photo competition in hiking mag 'Great Walks'.

[www.greatwalks.com.au/news/photo-of-a-tough-day-on-the-larapinta-wins-april-comp](http://www.greatwalks.com.au/news/photo-of-a-tough-day-on-the-larapinta-wins-april-comp)

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1/4 page for \$ 75 or 1/2 page for \$ 150



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# EARLY DAYS OF THE LARAPINTA TRAIL

By Alan Ginns, former Planner with the Conservation Commission NT

The NT Tourism Commission had recommended that the brochures be produced in multiple languages, and the translations (especially Japanese) proved very problematic, and interesting. We knew that Japanese visitors weren't going to be a big market, we were mainly aiming at more adventurous Australian and maybe New Zealand visitors as well as a strong representation of Northern European visitors (who we saw as "mad keen walkers"), and I'm sure there are still leftovers from those original boxes of Japanese Trail Brochures somewhere.

Unlike today in trying to get a project of this magnitude, and level of government investment, off the ground we never had to prepare a business case or detailed justification for the Trail. But I simply, and strongly, believed that in such a magnificent landscape and offering relatively easy (in places) walking with multiple access points, and also with the "sense of safety" offered by Larapinta and Namatjira Drives never too far away, that the Lara Trail was always going to be a winner. Well that's what I told anyone who asked anyway, at times it was just so enjoyable climbing around the West Macs under the guise of work that it was easy to forget the effort and resources that were being focused on the Trail and its development.

Despite this sense of the fun, the safety aspects of the project were always a serious consideration during the Lara Trail's planning. We were given specialist advice by a Safety Committee, which included the NT Police along with other emergency and health services. Serious time and thought

went into issues such as the adequacy route signposting, heat and other risks, reliable water supplies, emergency access and patient recovery (including emergency helicopter landing locations), the pros and cons of walker registration, trail closure protocols, emergency communications along the ranges, and a host of other matters. Phil Asmussen, the CCNT's patient Technical Services guru, spent a lot of time looking into these aspects of the project.

Overall it was a gut-busting couple of years to get the Trail happening and the first sections in place, and at times to overcome a degree of internal scepticism and resistance. But as the Lara Trail got up its own head of steam and identity – and the fact the Col Fuller, the then CCNT Director, supported it – most people came on board. Harry Butler (a Commission Board member at the time) was always a big supporter of the Trail, and was regularly asked to open new stages as they were completed. Again this helped with the project's media profile. We also considered the prospect of semi-permanent "safari style" tented accommodation at selected points along the Trail, as an extra attraction and "selling" point. But with the project's long term prospects and popularity not yet confirmed we thought it better to leave this idea in the bottom drawer, and to keep the facilities simple during the Trail's initial evolution.

Completing sections 1 and 2 were comparatively straightforward, although a considerable learning exercise, but Section 3 was a different matter. The high "alternative" route was a particularly challenging area in which to establish a viable track, but we felt that the views from this end of the Chewings Range would be a great reward for those determined enough to leave the low route and make the climb up "Pravda Spur" (as we named the eastern ascent of the Chewings – and like most of the names on the Lara Trail that's a long story). As we headed west for Standley Chasm the Angkale Corporation were especially supportive of the project, and had no dramas with the Trail going through Aboriginal land or Standley Chasm being a trackhead for Stages 3 and 4.



Opening of the Trail



# Trail Tip #8

Share where you can! Sharing a tent, a stove and other gear is a great way to spread the load and avoid a heavy pack. Group cooking also means less food to carry when it is spread around between walkers.



Section 3 - photo by Susan Chambers

NEXT MARKET 22nd MAY - Can you help with a 2 hour shift? Please email us and let us know if you can volunteer. We'll be selling raffle tickets & merchandise, promoting the Trail and helping with Trail info.

## Trail Maintenance Workshop

**WHEN: Sunday 29th May**  
**WHERE: Ormiston Gorge**  
**TIME: 10am - 3pm**

Work with 'Snapper' John from the Tassie track crew to repair Section 10 of the trail from Ormiston Gorge to George Creek.

Work will include benching, grade dips, and step construction. This is an amazing opportunity to learn from some of the best track builders in the country.

Gold coin donation. Bookings essential.

Email [info@friendsofthelapintatrail.org.au](mailto:info@friendsofthelapintatrail.org.au) to RSVP or phone Richard on 0419 866 743.



## Hat Hill Saddle Walk

**WHEN: Sunday 19th June**  
**WHERE: Simpsons Gap (Section 1)**  
**TIME: TBA when booking**

This 4.2km return walk along the western end of Section 1 is a great introduction to the Trail.

The event is being run by Parks and Wildlife and supported by the Friends. Morning tea/brunch will be provided and bookings are essential.

A great chance to join in on a gentle walk and experience some of the Trail so close to town, within a group setting.

Email [susie.armes@nt.gov.au](mailto:susie.armes@nt.gov.au) to RSVP or phone Susie on 8951 8247.





# PROGRESSIVE WALK: SECTION 2

A HUGE  
thank you to the guys  
at the Outback 4WD  
Club for their assistance in  
transporting walkers  
to and from the  
Trailheads.



Photos by Cheryl Baker

Still warm conditions prevailed in Central Australia as 11 of us set off on April 16th from Simpsons Gap for Section 2 of the Larapinta Trail Progressive walk, although not quite as hot as we had endured for Section 1. Section 2 has some surprises and a charm of its own that unfolds as you head west. Settling into an easy pace early in the morning, with dingoes howling in the distance, the meandering trail took us further away from civilisation. An extended break at Bond Gap gave everyone the opportunity to stroll down to the water and take in the beauty of the Gap, with azure skies above, ochre glowing rocks in the morning sun and the white trunked ghost gums topped with green leaves and the occasional high rise apartment of a resident bird or two. A stunning place only accessible to hikers, its here you really start to feel just how special the trail is.

Pushing on, at times the walk seemed a little dull in scenery, but as the kilometres passed, Section 2 started to reveal its beauty. Turn a corner and look up at Arengge, which the trail skirts around offering views of it from three sides before leading across a dry riverbed, up a hill and into Mulga Camp for the night. With some new hikers in the group, the afternoon and evening were quickly consumed by conversations surrounding hiking equipment and freeze dried meals, punctuated by Cheryl's gourmet hors d'oeuvres.

Refreshed from a cool night under a billion stars, even the youngest of our group, 10 yr old Jacoba, were ready to set off in the morning to Jay Creek. Not expecting much after a lot of hiking the day before with only intermittent wow moments, the latter part of Section 2 was a surprise. Its here that you start to see the magnificence of Brinkley's Bluff, and the MacDonnell ranges, and a sense of anticipation for the next stages wells up inside. The sun is starting to relinquish its power over the land and winter is on its way to Central Australia.

Arriving into Jay Creek shelter, we had a little makeshift party with the assistance of our vehicle drivers bringing us some cold refreshments to the shelter – very decadent indeed.







# Parks and Wildlife Commission NT update

Hi everyone,

We are seeing a rapid increase in walkers on the trail now that the weather has finally cooled down. Our 2 newest shelters (at 4/5 junction and Hugh Gorge) have been completed and look fantastic. There are plenty of lovely soft sand 'tent pads' at both shelters so there is ample room to camp and utilise the new toilets and water tanks.

Track building work is about to start around Brinkley's Bluff on section 4, and then on the high route of section 3. This work will improve steps and drainage and will help to prevent future erosion of the trail during rain events.

The rangers have also completed most of their maintenance jobs on the trail, including replacing old arrow markers and removing grass growth to ensure the trail is easy to see. I'd also like to take this opportunity to remind walkers that safety is



New shelter - Section 4/5 Junction

your responsibility. Please make sure that you take the time to plan your walk and provide a detailed itinerary to a friend or family member. Most importantly, take with you a satellite phone and/or a personal locator beacon (PLB), and walk within your abilities.

Safe walking.

*Phil Cowan - Senior District Ranger, West.*

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Main Image: Dining at dusk, Nick's Camp | Brett Boardman



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SECTION 3 - Jay Creek to Standley Chasm: Saturday 7th May... a wet but stunning day out on the Trail. For the full article (and all of our Progressive Walk overviews, visit [www.friendsofthelarapintatrail.org.au/progressive-walk-2016](http://www.friendsofthelarapintatrail.org.au/progressive-walk-2016))



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