



FRIENDS OF THE HEYSEN TRAIL AND OTHER WALKING TRAILS

Patron: His Excellency the Honourable Hieu Van Le AO
Governor of South Australia



The Heysen Trail is South Australia's 1,200km adventure hike

Submission to the Flinders Ranges National Park Draft Management Plan

14 July 2015

Introduction

The Friends of the Heysen Trail (the Friends) is an incorporated body engaged in development, maintenance, with regular walking programmed along the Heysen Trail. The Heysen Trail runs through the Flinders Ranges National Park (FRNP). We have 1,000 members and print a quarterly magazine for community distribution. As such The Friends would be the largest regular user group hiking the Heysen Trail. Our vision is in line with Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resource (DEWNR), To establish the Heysen Trail as a world class long distance hiking trail.

Comments

The plan is well presented and a valuable addition to strategic planning for the region.

We wholeheartedly agree with the investment in upgrading the hiking opportunities in the Park.

We would suggest the plan also provides the vision of a diverse trail network of well managed trails covering the many diverse landforms, and the natural and cultural features of the park.

And as such we would have to disagree on the suggestion to re-align the Heysen Trail.

Disagreement re the Heysen Trail

on P18, -

"Developing a world class multi-day walk (with minimal impact hiker accommodation) based on a realignment of the Heysen Trail along the foothills of the Heysen Range between Bunyerroo Gorge and Aroona Campground"

The management of the Friends wonder what is the reason for realigning the Trail? There is no explanation given.

The most cited comment on hikers completing the HT is that it provides such a variety of experiences. The countryside, vistas, flora and the fauna.

The proposal has the Trail continuing along the valley floor, (mostly accessible by vehicle), rather than climbing to seeing the breathtaking vistas, trekking through geological ages, and through Sir Hans Heysen painting landscapes.

The proposed re-alignment of this section of the Heysen Trail would miss much of the diversity of the Flinders Ranges country. Walkers along the proposed valley route would:

- miss the magnificent vistas looking across the ABC Range to the rugged profile of Wilpena Pound and the Heysen Range, are one of the great iconic features of the Heysen Trail and we recommend this be retained.
- miss out on walking through the 'Three Sisters' from Sir Hans's paintings.

- miss the great vistas from the peaks of the ABC Range, across the hills and valleys to the high, rugged Heysen Range.
- importantly they miss out on the Golden Spike at Trezona – Enorama Creek – Australia's most significant geological feature, a world renown feature. Walkers on the Heysen Trail currently walk past **the defining point, the 'Golden Spike'**. Other features such as the glacier rock are also passed on the Trail.
- miss the historic landscapes which include two hiker huts. These old shepherd huts have been converted to hiker shelter and accommodation. They retain the original architecture and rustic character of the original construction. These would be by-passed with the proposed re-route. Hiker accommodation is currently available at these two huts.

The proposed re-alignment would require significant investment on trail construction and hiker accommodation. We consider this an unnecessary expense.

Working with the Government

The Friends are happy to continue providing ongoing assistance with the management of the trail within the park, working with Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resource (DEWNR) to enhance and improve the trail and walker experiences.

The Heysen Trail

With regard to the Heysen Trail the principal issues we would identify for multi-day hikers in the FRNP are

- Information - both pre walk and while out on the trail - currently very limited
- Availability of camping provisions - the Wilpena "store" is poorly stocked for hikers needs
- Access nodes and transport options
- Camping amenities - most sites are very basic

The Friends would be willing to discuss these issues in further detail.

Any re-routing of the Heysen trail can be an expensive exercise and should only be considered if there are issues of:

- safety
- route sustainability
- enhanced walker experience

NOTES re "The Golden Spike" -

EDIACARA – AUSTRALIA'S OWN GEOLOGICAL PERIOD Fossil finds in the Australian outback have re-written the history books.

For the first time in 120 years, a new geological period has been named. Known as the Ediacaran Period, it is based on spectacular rock formations found in remote South Australia. – Australia's first and only geological period.

The Ediacaran Period's status as an official geological period was ratified in 2004 by the [International Union of Geological Sciences](#) (IUGS), making it the first new geological period declared in 120 years.^{[3][4][5]} Although the Period takes its name from the Ediacara Hills where

geologist [Reg Sprigg](#) first discovered fossils of the eponymous [biota](#) in 1946, the [type section](#) is located in the bed of the Enorama Creek^[6] within Brachina Gorge^[7] in the [Flinders Ranges](#) of [South Australia](#), at 31°19'53.8"S 138°38'0.1"E.

It is the first such 'golden spike' to be defined in rocks of the Southern Hemisphere, let alone Australia. The Ediacaran Period began 635 million years ago and ended 542 million years ago with the Cambrian explosion of animal life, represented by animals with skeletons and shells.

In 2010, naturalist Sir David Attenborough visited the [National Heritage Listed Ediacara at Nilpena](#) in the Flinders Ranges with Museum Palaeontologist [Dr Jim Gehling](#) and the Ediacara volunteers as part of the **First Life** BBC television series.

The "golden spike" chosen for the beginning of the Ediacaran period is a garage-sized piece of tilted, layered rock in the Flinders Ranges, overhung by a giant gum tree. Dr Gehling likes to describe it as a "rung on the ladder of geological time" that other scientists will use to identify rock sequences from the same period in other continents.