



TALLAGANDA TIMES WEDNESDAY AUGUST 15, 2001. MONGA PROTEST RESUMES: Protesters gathered again recently in the Monga forest to demonstrate their concern at what they see as the destructive and uneconomic logging targeting icon conservation areas in the first year of a 20 year logging schedule.

Monga Magic

The art of the banner

Christine: We learnt that the camera would always go to a banner if you could read it and if it was provocative.

Michael: Now, we need to talk about Robyn Stellar's banner. Robyn was a very, very sweet woman. Butter would not melt in her mouth. She always had quarter pound of butter in her mouth and it wouldn't melt. Tell us about Robyn's banner, what did it say?

Christine: Monga magic.

Michael: Monga is magic. She was such a nice person we thought ...

Christine: We said no.

Michael: We said, "Robyn, you need to kick them between the legs, and 'monga is magic' is not ... and she said, "Fine, I understand. Do what you like Chris and Michael". This is what we liked [the other banners shown here].

Christine: She said, "I'll come and help you paint". Well, she was the most terrible painter. She wouldn't stay inside the lines.

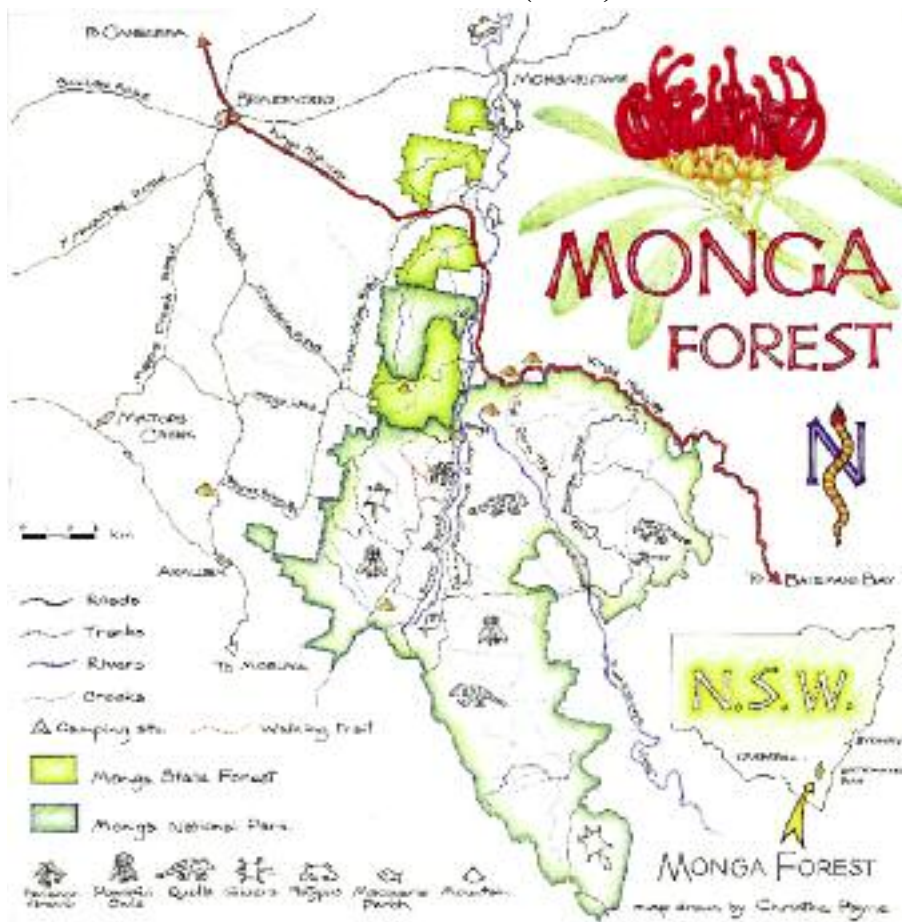
Michael: She was a wild woman. She'd come over at midnight and the whole workshop was dedicated to banner making by that stage. We had fifty different colours of one litre pots of paint. She was so fast, she could make six banners in a night but — she couldn't stay between the lines.

Christine: That's it, monga magic.

Harry: Monga is magic!



SOME OF MICHAEL'S LETTERING STYLE AND (BELOW) CHRISTINE'S MONGA MAP.



I don't think we can exaggerate the importance of Monga forest to this district and in our lives. And that's what I think we need to become aware of.

Almost a third of our fauna is endangered in Australia. That, after two hundred years of occupation, constitutes the worst conservation record in the world. We must become aware of the role of nature in our lives and understand nature's limits.

Here we are again trying to log Monga forest; to wound it again. Those of you who've been in and looked at it, have probably seen that it consists mostly of very old individuals of high conservation value and very young individuals.

I want to talk about the way in which we have come to ignore nature's limits, and the reasons why we must become much more sensitive to that. I think they come both from our western background, and also from our own specific nature as colonists of this country. I think both of those things have come together to make a record of which we have little to be proud.

The one thing we can be proud of is that Australia has a very strong conservation movement. It is one of the strongest in the world and that's because we need it to be one of the strongest in the world.

In Monga's case, we have to become aware of what the forest provides for us. It's not only the water we get from the wonderful Mongarlowe River that the logging will have a serious effect on. But it's also the way the forest provides something for this area, for everyone who comes to see it; but for this area particularly it provides a really important place for this district.

I see it as an origin place. A place we can go back to and see the past. We can see there vegetation that comes before the last ice age and we can enter a world that's so very different from our own.

So understanding limits should also encourage us to see why we can't just say, "it's been logged before, so we can go on doing it." That's just a fallacy, many things there are just hanging on or have been destabilised in the past and recovering. That's certainly true of the rainforest I think. But it's also true for much of the fauna which is endangered.

It's also true that many of the methods that are going to be used in the new logging proposals will be different from the past. They'll involve burning for example, which could have a very



VAL HERBST, REG SILVESTER, PETER HERBST AND VAL PLUMWOOD.

Remembering our limits

Val Plumwood spoke at The Old School House in Mongarlowe on March 31 1996. Twenty-one years later her observations are as pertinent today as then, perhaps even more so

serious effect on many of the communities there.

Regarding our 'western' relationship to nature, I would characterise it as that of the Aristotelian theory of reproduction. This theory of reproduction held that the woman only contributed the matter, while the man contributed the form to the joint reproduction activity of the human couple.

It was the man that produced a fully formed and created child which the woman merely nursed. So the woman's role was totally backhanded in that. It was a concept of a joint process of production; but one in which one party contributed everything of importance and the other party was merely a background nurse.

That, I think, is the way we view our relationship with nature. We think that we contribute everything of importance and that nature is a background environment which has no real

limits and from which we can just extract whatever we want.

The Aristotelian theory of reproduction of course, gives a completely false picture of the actual process of human reproduction, but it was held as the main theory for a large part of the past two thousand years. And if we continue to think about our relationship to nature in those terms, we're in for a really nasty shock.

I would urge anyone who hasn't seen Monga forest to go and have a look at it. It's very accessible and you can see a lot of it very easily without having to walk very far. It is a truly wonderful forest and I hope you'll contribute to our efforts to save it.

Thank you all very much for coming along today to help us in the effort of bringing it into the foreground of our minds, rather than having it in the shadows.

