

HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"



Bushland Preservation Order Passed

Blue Mountains City Council's Bushland Preservation Order was approved at the Council meeting on 5 August, by the narrowest possible margin – it took the Mayor's casting vote to have it succeed.

The BPO aims to protect communities of native vegetation in private property, but provides comprehensive exemptions for gardeners and for land clearing around houses. The BPO represents a good compromise between the objectives of all the parties who have an interest in land management.

We congratulate the Councillors who voted in favour of the BPO—Greenhill, Searle, Henson, Kozelj, Gaul and Angel, with the Mayor exercising his casting vote. Councillors who voted against the BPO were Hamilton, Van der Kley, Kime, Myles, Creed and Egan.

The BPO that came before Council was the outcome of exhibitions and consultation over two years, including three public meetings. The document prepared for Councillors was extraordinarily comprehensive. One hundred and nineteen submissions had been made by the public – 97 in favour, 22 against. Eight of these 22 submissions came from three main opponents.

Council staff had listed all 119 submissions, assessed them all, and compiled a detailed response, referencing every point back to the proposed BPO. This was a high class performance by Council staff—public consultation at its best! The documented case for the BPO was overwhelming!

Councillors in support of the BPO gave comprehensive reasons for their support. Only two of the Councillors who opposed the BPO spoke – Myles and Egan. We are still in the dark about the reasons Councillors Hamilton, Van der Kley, Kime and Creed did not support the BPO.

The closeness of the Council vote was a great disappointment. It is sad that such an important environmental issue in the City within a World Heritage Area, where 90% of residents have indicated strong support for environmental protection, was won by such a slim margin.

There will be a Council election in March 2004. The Society will continue to monitor the environmental performance of all Councillors and will report on how Councillors vote on environmental issues.

(See President's Report on page 2.)

World Heritage Threatened by Sand Mining

A sand quarry at Newnes Junction adjoining the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area has been proposed by Newnes Kaolin Pty Ltd (DA No. 329-7-2003). The current exhibition period ends Monday 8 September, 2003.

We need time to examine the proposal and how it will impact on the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. We are asking the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning Craig Knowles to 'stop the clock' on this massive sand mine proposal and extend the public exhibition period until 8 October, 2003 so that we can have a say.

Large scale quarrying would be intolerable right next to the Wollemi wilderness.

When opposing the mining of Mount Colong in the southern Blue Mountains Myles Dunphy said it all in 1965:

"The bedlam of explosive blast, of drills and crushers, of creaking and groaning machinery, of hooters and shrieks, of time whistles that penetrate far into the peaceful ranges. Also there are the sights that assault the eye, the smashed face of nature, the works, sheds, machinery, roads, tracks, services, cables, posts and wires, drains and fences, in mostly graded hillsides, huts clustered in hollows and terraces, and sludge, dead trees and rubbish choking the beds of narrow gullies."

Nothing appears to have changed, except the location. Anyone who has visited the Wollangambe area must know what Myles was talking about.

The mine proposal will produce 27 million tonnes of sand and muddy waste materials in its 21 year operation. The applicant claims that 'no sedimentation or settling ponds are required' to win the sand. And the developer wants to haul sand to local markets by truck.

The proposed plans for off site treatment to wash the raw sand have not materialized. So the proposal could become a muddy mess, especially as the extractive industry has a very poor record of pollution control.

It's time to get active and defend the World Heritage Area.

Write or fax The Hon Craig Knowles, MP, Minister for Infrastructure and Planning, Level 33, Governor Macquarie Tower, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney 2000 (fax 9228 3716).

We need more time to have our say. The State Government has accepted a responsibility to protect our World Heritage Area. There are many better places to quarry sand than adjoining the World Heritage listed Blue Mountains National Park.

Tropical Bat Caves, Soil Life and Ecological Futures

This is the subject of what promises to be a fascinating talk to be given by Professor Stuart Hill at our next general meeting on Friday 26 September.

It will be "a learning journey from studies in a Trinidad cave that is home to one quarter of a million bats of a dozen species—including vampires—to studies of the hidden life under our feet and its sustainable management by foresters, farmers and gardeners, to visioning sustainable peaceful future based on ecological principles."

Stuart Hill holds the Foundation Chair of Social Ecology and Lifelong Learning at the University of Western Sydney and is one of the world's leading experts in Social Ecology. Prior to 1996 he was at McGill University, in Montreal, where in 1974 he established Ecological Agriculture Projects, Canada's leading resource centre for sustainable agriculture. Professor Hill's background also incorporates chemical engineering, ecology, soil biology, entomology, agriculture, psychotherapy, education, policy development and international development, and working with change.

The general meeting on Friday 26 September at the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls, starts at 7.30 pm. Visitors are very welcome.

NPWS Funding Cuts

National Parks and Wildlife Service has recently had more funding cuts in the NSW budget. We have been told that in our area alone approx 11 staff will lose their jobs as well as cuts in spending on other things.

There has been a constant loss of jobs in NPWS over the past decade, including the loss of scientists doing research.

NPWS has a huge responsibility to look after the Blue Mountains World Heritage National Parks. We have urban pressures on the parks, weeds, runoff, water catchment, feral animals and walking track issues that need addressing. We have a high visitation rate, are close to Sydney and a tourist industry dependent upon the parks.

The Federal Government has declined to directly fund World Heritage.

Write to Hon Bob Debus, Macquarie Road, Springwood. NPWS needs more money, not less. Ask the State Government to increase funding for National Parks and Wildlife Service.

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President's Report

It is very rewarding when an informative and sensible campaign produces a positive result. Such was the case when the Native Vegetation Management Order, now called the Bushland Protection Order (BPO) was passed by Council on Tuesday 5th August. All who made submissions and other contributions are to be congratulated.

However, the Order was only passed on the casting vote of Mayor Jim Angel. Six Councillors - Hamilton, Egan, Creed, Myles, van der Kley and Kime voted against it.

Not accepting defeat, at the next Council meeting on 12th August Councillor Egan proposed a rescission motion which was refused by the Mayor. Members of the public present were then outraged when, with three Councillors

absent from the meeting, Councillors Egan, Creed, Hamilton, Myles and van der Kley joined forces to vote down the adoption of Recommendation 53.1 of the draft LEP2002 (which deals with protection of vegetation), effectively delaying the implementation of the BPO through Clause 53. There were 164 submissions concerning the adoption of the clause, with only one opposed to its adoption. So who are these Councillors representing?

A successful rescission motion against the above decision at the next meeting reversed this pointless action which only served to illustrate that half the Councillors in our City within a World Heritage National Park have little regard for the environment. *Kevin Bell.*

Great Grose Gorse Walk

Now in its tenth year, the Great Grose Gorse Walk is on again, from Saturday 13 September to Monday 29 September 2003. Come and be part of a great group of people tackling Gorse and other weeds. No experience is necessary and there are activities to suit everyone.

Walk down to Blue Mountains Creek for the day, spend a half day at beautiful locations such as Pope's Glen, Water Nymph's Dell and Braeside, or join the popular 'camp-over' in the Grose Valley.

For further information please contact 4787.3112. Thank you, National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Society's Gift to Library

Blue Mountains Conservation Society has donated \$5000 to Blue Mountains City Council so that it can set up an environmental resource collection at Springwood Library. The selection of books was done by librarian Robyn Menzies and approved by the Society. Dr Kevin Bell and Dr Richard Phillipps presented the cheques totalling \$5000 to acting chief librarian Vicki Edmunds who received the gift with thanks.

The Society has already funded an environmental resource collection at Katoomba and the new collection compliments this.

What's a Wombat Worth?

On 7 February 2003 the Sydney Morning Herald reported: "A man who allegedly killed several wombats by running over them repeatedly has been charged with cruelty ... Bathurst police charged the forty six year old man from Portland, near Lithgow, after the bodies of 12 wombats were discovered in the Wollemi National Park last week..."

The incident occurred on 14 Jan 2003 when three RFS personnel were doing night fire patrols in the Newnes camping area and on the road leading into it. The road into the area was closed with a security guard on duty to keep unauthorized personnel out. The next morning crews on the way into the area noticed an unusually large number of road kill wombats. A number of dead wombats were also found in the camping area.

Police investigated and charged John

Bennett from Wallerawang RFS brigade with Aggravated Cruelty, Act of Cruelty, and harming native fauna. He pleaded not guilty to all charges.

On the day of the court case he pleaded guilty to Act of Cruelty with a maximum penalty of \$5,500 and six months gaol. The barrister representing Mr Bennett gave information about the man's community service with the brigade and his financial difficulties and said that this was an aberration of Mr Bennett's normal behaviour. The Judge's comment was that one wombat might be considered aberrant behaviour but running over eight wombats, the number of animals they had agreed to talk about, was way beyond an incident of aberrant behaviour. (16 wombats were killed and an injured macropod was found dying in a toilet block.)

Mr Bennett was fined \$4,000 with a two-year good behaviour bond. Two other RFS personnel in the vehicle were not charged.

Welcome to New Members

Sally Arnold & Stephen Robinson,
 Wollstonecraft
 Robert Whiting, Quakers Hill
 Vicki Lazer & Toni Corbet, Katoomba
 Lisa Giles, Wentworth Falls
 Nerida Murray, Valley Heights
 Jim & Pippy Johnstone, Katoomba
 Judy Lynch, Bowenfels
 Anne McLeod, Blackheath
 Beverley & Geoffrey Harris, Mt. Victoria
 Rudi Adlmayer, Watsons Bay
 Brian Carter, Lithgow
 Steven Ridd & Sue Samuels, Katoomba.
 Jacqui Hickson, Chatswood
 Edna Blanchard, Kurrajong
 Bob Kemnitz, Leura

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

General Meeting: Friday 26 September 7.30 pm, at the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls. (See page 1)

Management Meeting: Saturday 20 September, 9 am, Mid Mountains Community Centre, Lawson. Members are welcome to attend as observers.

Bernard O'Reilly Centenary: Sunday, 7 September. ☎Christine 4787.7246.

Great Grose Gorse Walk: 13-29 September. Lots of activities. (Page 2)

Native Plant Fair: 13-14 September, Glenbrook Native Plant Reserve. (Page 3)

BMCS Native Plant Sale: Saturday 18 October Conservation Hut (see page 3)

Bushcare: Saturday 13 September. Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group meets at 9am on the 2nd Saturday of every month. Tools are provided. Bring morning tea, gloves and drinking water. Contact Karen 4757.1929.

Blue Mountains Conservation Society Bushwalking Group organises a variety of activities for all ages. See page 4.

Membership Enquiries

Contact Elizabeth van Reyswoud
 Phone 4757.2694

Email: ereyswoud@hermes.net.au
 Post: PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

BMCS NATIVE PLANT SALE
Saturday 18 October 2003
9am to 1 pm

Outside the Conservation Hut
 Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls

Tubestock (50x50x120mm) \$3 each
 or 4 for \$10

Supertubes (70x70x160mm) \$5 each

Tree Ferns in larger pots
 \$15 each (limited number)

Tell your friends and bring them along!

If you can't get there on the day remember that we are open for retail sales at our Blackheath Nursery every Tuesday, 9am to 12 noon, in the workshop compound of NPWS, behind the Heritage Centre on Govetts Leap Rd.

David Coleby, Nursery Manager
 Phone/fax 4784 1395

Wildness

On 24 August ABC TV screened the 'Wildness' documentary shown at the Sydney Film Festival. **Wildness** is the fascinating story of Olegas Truchanas and Peter Dombrovskis. As Australia's greatest wilderness photographers, their work has become synonymous with campaigns to protect Tasmania's natural heritage. It is an inspiring documentary with beautiful images of Tasmania's south-west wilderness. Some quotes:

"... as a conservationist I sat through several sessions of parliament ... and observed the parliamentary debate and the thing that saddened me more than anything else was the incredible lack of understanding and knowledge amongst our elected representatives, ignorance of our wilderness areas and what our south west is like." (Olegas Truchanas)

"As a child, most of my thoughts and dreams were of the natural world. I remember spending a lot of time lying in the grass, climbing a tree and sitting on a branch, just looking at what was around me. I think I simply needed nature. It was part of me. I was introduced to rivers and canoeing by Olegas. Over the next decade I made many river journeys. We moved in a glittering sun-splashed world where living assumed a clarity and intensity unknown in ordinary city-bound existence. Our bodies became attuned to rock and rapid. Our senses eagerly absorbed the roar of white water, the silent greens of the rain forest. On

many of those trips Olegas was our mentor and inspiration." (Peter Dombrovskis)

"When I look around, the time is rapidly approaching when natural environment, natural unspoiled vistas, are sadly beginning to look like leftovers from a vanishing world. Is there any reason why the ideal of beauty could not become an accepted goal of national policy? Is there any reason why Tasmania should not be more beautiful on the day we leave it than on the day we came? We don't know what the requirements of those who come after us will be. If we can revise our attitudes towards the land under our feet, if we can accept the role of steward and depart from the role of conqueror, if we can accept the view that man and nature are inseparable parts of the unified whole, then Tasmania can be a shining beacon in a dull, uniform and largely artificial world." (Olegas Truchanas)

Wildness is available on video from ABC Shops.

Quoll Club Coordinator

Our new Quoll Club coordinator is David King. David has some interesting activities planned for the next few months—see page 4 for details of this month's activity. David will also produce the Quoll Club newsletter.

Thank you to Jessica Wellham who started the Quoll Club in 1999 and has organised activities and assisted with the production of the monthly Quoll Club newsletter. Thank you also to Laura Hayes who has been editing the newsletter. (Ross Coster still has the job of having the newsletter photocopied.)

The Quoll Club provides activities for children aged 12 and under. Membership of the Quoll Club is free to children of members. For more information contact David King 4758.8932 (email dking@lisp.com.au).

Native Plant Fair

Glenbrook Native Plant Reserve
Great Western Highway, Glenbrook
Sat/Sun 13/14 September 10-5 pm

Wide range of plants for sale; display of shrubs and flowering plants in garden setting; rainforest display; floral arrangements; films of Australian flora; photographic display of local wildflowers.

Admission free. (Australian Plants Society, Blue Mountains Group)

Sydney's Water

Over the past few years, members of the Society's Water Cycle Sub-Committee have been heavily involved in a number of projects and committees to do with Sydney's Water including: Sydney Drinking Water Catchments Regional Environment Plan; Warragamba Special Area Strategic Plan of Management; Warragamba Catchment Blueprint; Upper Blue Mountains Sewerage Scheme; Upper Blue Mountains Water Supply Augmentation; Rehabilitation of former Sewage Treatment Plant sites at North Katoomba, South Katoomba and Wentworth Falls

In addition, I have spent the past two years representing the Society on the following committees: PENG0 Sydney Water Project; PENG0 Sydney Catchment Project; Sydney Water Western Customer Council (*PENG0 = Peak Environment Non-Government Organisations*).

During this period we have learned a lot about water, sewage, sewerage and stormwater, how the systems work, where they don't work, and what needs to be done.

In recent weeks you may have seen media coverage on Sydney Water Corporation and the several 'failures' of major projects they have undertaken. We are across all of these issues and have been working hard to ensure the environment gets a fair shake in decision making.

Over the next few months, I will be writing a series of articles on Sydney's Water. If there is an issue you particularly want explained, please let me know. My articles will tend to be about Sydney-wide matters, as well as local Blue Mountains issues. Let me know your preference.

Here's a teaser set of numbers to pique your interest.

Sydney currently draws 630 gigitalitres (630 billion litres) per annum from the water storage's. This is about 30 gigitalitres more than the sustainable yield, which is why the dams are running low.

Upcoming decisions on environmental flows for the Hawkesbury Nepean river will mean about 115 gigitalitres per annum will be released from the dams to restore river health.

This means Sydney needs to reduce water usage by about 145 gigitalitres per annum (about 25%), while supporting an extra 56,000 people per annum in growth.

Challenging times are ahead!

We here in the Blue Mountains are also using water at way above sustainable quantities, requiring that our dams be topped up from Oberon daily. We need to reduce, recycle and re-use water far more efficiently if we are to become sustainable.

Ross Coster.



Thanks to Bill Tocher

Bill Tocher has resigned as Bushwalks Convenor. We thank Bill for the work he has done for the Society during the past 17 months, during which time the bushwalks program has increased in scope and popularity.

Bill has recently helped the Society's bushwalking group through a very difficult time. As you will be aware, our bushwalking activities were suspended during August due to the need to clarify our insurance position.

Over the past 12 months Bill has spent a great deal of time and energy communicating with the Confederation of Bushwalkers and the various bushwalking organisations to establish clear guidelines to enable us to make our bushwalking activities safe and enjoyable for participants, and safe for the Society to run such activities without fear of litigation.

One result of all this work is that we have been able to produce a draft Bushwalkers' Guide which will soon be available to all participants.

Our new Bushwalks Conveyor is Bob van Reyswoud. Welcome to Bob, and happy bushwalking Bill.

EcoStove

During a recent bushwalk people were impressed to see David Bowskill's "Ecostove" in action, and have persuaded him to divulge its secrets.

The Ecostove is a small easily made lightweight device which will burn twigs and leaves to quickly boil a billy or heat a pan. It has the advantage of consuming a very small amount of fuel and leaving a minimum impact where it has been used.

Materials: 170 mm length of 150mm diameter stainless-steel wood fire flue pipe; 2 heavy gauge bicycle spokes or thick wires (billy support cross wires).

Procedure: Cut six 25 mm diameter holes equi-spaced around the perimeter on a centre line 40 mm up from the bottom of the stove. These can be cut by drilling a ring of small holes and filing.

Cut 12 'V' notches (using tin-snips) each 20mm wide and 20 mm deep equi-spaced around the top of the stove - these are there to enable the use of billies, fry-pans etc. which have a diameter of greater than 150mm.

Drill 4 holes equi-spaced on a centre line 30 mm from the top of the stove of diameter to suit the bicycle spokes.

Insert the bicycle spokes and bend the ends down to prevent falling out. This is best achieved by grasping the spoke firmly in a pair of vice-gripes on the stove inside and peening the outside down with a light hammer.

The ideal billy to use on this stove is one of 12 to 13 cm diameter which gives adequate clearance all around for the flames.

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY BUSHWALKING GROUP

Our Bushwalking Group provides a range of activities. Membership of the bushwalking group is available to members of the Society. For further information contact the Activity Coordinator (listed) or Bushwalks Conveyor Bob van Reyswoud 4757.2694 (phone/fax), email ereyswoud@hermes.net.au. Membership details are on page 2.

Pre-School Walks, for parent/grandparent/carer with children under 6 years.

Short, easy walks, approx 1 hour, 1st Wednesday of every month, starting at 10.30am. Bring a snack and a drink. Contact Megan 4782.5898 or Kathy 4759.3669 for more information or if the weather is doubtful.

Sept 03 Minnehaha Falls, Katoomba. Meet at car park at end of Seventh Ave.

Oct 01 Rhododendron Gardens, Blackheath. Meet at car park there.

Quoll Club: A monthly newsletter and activities for 12 and under. For more information ☎ David King 4758.8932 (email dking@lisp.com.au).

Sept 28 (Sun) Minnehaha. A short walk, meet the local bushcare group and find out what they do, some craft—a fun and interesting activity. Meet at Minnehaha Falls Reserve, end of Minnehaha Road, South Katoomba, at 9am.

Monday Leisure Walks: Usually 'Short Day' walks of 3-5 hours suitable for walkers of average fitness. Graded Medium, i.e. can include some short rock scrambles or some short sections off-track. Bring morning tea and lunch, plus carry at least 1 litre of WATER, 2 litres on warmer days.

Sept 08 Wonderland Track and beyond. Meet 9.15 am Medlow Bath, near Hydro Majestic. ☎ Jock 4758.6346.

Sept 15 Martin's Lookout/Sassafras Gully. Meet 9am Springwood Shopping Centre carpark, south side. ☎ Allan 4739.2767.

Sept 22 Cremorne Point to Taronga Zoo, Harbour Foreshore Walk. Meet 9.30 am top of escalator at Central (6.39 train from Lithgow) ☎ Mary 4787.6918

Sept 29 Bus Trip to old Boxvale Colliery. Walk disused coal rail track, see tulips at Mittagong. Departing 8.30 am BMCC Depot, Katoomba. Pickups by arrangement. Bookings and deposit required. ☎ Laurel 4784.1554.

Oct 06 Zig Zag Railway Lookouts. Views, historic railway viaducts. Meet last carriage train to Zig Zag, (departs Lawson 8.22 am, Katoomba 8.38 am). Return 1.55 pm from Zig Zag. ☎ Ron 4757.1526.

Thursday Pleasure Walks: These easy to medium grade walks are conducted to suit the walkers on the day. Times given are approximate. Slower walkers are catered for and on longer walks there is an option of a slower group to complete a section of the walk. Phone the contact for any enquiries about the program, starting times and transport issues.

Sept 04 Nepean River Walk, Penrith. Very easy walk along east river bank.

Bring lunch/BBQ. Meet at junction Mulgoa and Factory Roads on SOUTH side of M4 10.30am. ☎ Simone 4757 3416 day before if attending. 2-3 hours.

Sept 11 Lockley's Pylon. Heath walk 8 kms return, on mainly level bush track to lookout over Grose Valley. Meet junction of Mt Hay Road and GWH Leura at 10am to drive 10 kms to start. ☎ Simone 4757 3416. Bring picnic lunch. 4-5hrs.

Sept 18 Minnehaha Falls. Level walk to top of falls, steep descent to base of falls for those who wish to go further. Opportunity to view regeneration after January bush fire. Meet Gearins Hotel Katoomba 10am. ☎ Joan 4782 2218. 2-3 hrs.

Sept 25 Woodford Wander. Another walk with Allan to explore the wonders of Woodford. Meet Bull's Camp 10am. ☎ Allan 4739 2767. 3 hrs.

Oct 02 Asgard Swamp. Undulating bush track, 5 kms return, off Victoria Falls Road. Meet Mt Vic Station 10am. Bring a picnic lunch. ☎ 4758 6009. 4-5 hrs.

Thursday Interpretive Bushwalks: Participants have an opportunity to learn more about the Blue Mountains natural environment. The Spring series of walks will commence on 16 October. Numbers are limited. Enquiries to Christine Davies 4787.7246 (email hutnews@bluemountains.org.au)

Weekend Bushwalks: Always discuss with the contact if the walk you would like to do is medium/hard or hard, before attending. If this is your first walk, or you are in any doubt, discuss with the contact or Bushwalks Convenor Bob van Reyswoud 4757.2694.

Sept 06 (Sat) Valley of the Waters/Jamison Creek. Darwin's walk, Overcliff, Nature Trail. Meet Wentworth Falls Railway station 9.30 am. ☎ Meredith 4782.4823. Medium.

Sept 13 (Sat) Blue Gum Forest via Perry's Lookdown. Meet Blackheath Commuter carpark 8.40 am. ☎ June 4787.7312. Hard, lots of steps, steep climb out. Bring 2 litres water. Finish 4.30 pm.

Sept 20 (Sat) Asgard Swamp. Meet Mount Victoria Station 9.50 am. ☎ Liz 4754.4966. Medium. Finish 3pm

Sept 27 (Sat) Dante's Glen, Empire Pass. Meet Lawson Bowling Club carpark 9.30 am. ☎ Bill 4758.8545. Medium. Finish 2.30 pm.

NOTE: All bushwalkers need to carry water, 1 litre minimum, a snack for morning tea and lunch for all day walks.