

HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"



"Think Globally; Act Locally"

Hardly a week goes by without the media covering yet another current or imminent environmental disaster. We read about the destruction of our inland river system. We read about our government's short sightedness in placing continued reliance on coal fired power stations. The recent diesel subsidy announcements have made it uneconomic for Sydney buses to continue replacing their older buses with LPG powered buses, opting instead for new diesel buses with their associated pollution and asthma impacts. Further afield, we read about the deforestation in Indonesia - and so the list goes on.

The common thread is the short term economic benefit enjoyed by a few and the long term adverse environmental impact for the majority—and for the generations to come.

Many of our members feel powerless in the face of this relentless onslaught! What can individuals do in the face of the powerful vested interests who continue to harm the environment for their personal benefit?

Who has heard the slogan from the Nature Conservation Council's 1996 publication - "Think Globally; Act Locally"? The thrust of that publication was that we can all make a difference - that if "all the people over the world were to take action to improve their local environment, then the planet as a whole would be a much better place to live".

The Society's size and track record gives us the opportunity to have a significant influence on the political process. Last week we were invited to meet with the Federal Shadow Environment Minister. We will now be requesting a similar meeting with the incumbent Federal Environment Minister, during the election campaign.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if every one of our 870 members decided to do something for our local environment in the coming months? We could each write to local parliamentarians about matters we feel strongly about. We could ask our Federal Election candidates about important issues such as global warming and climate change which will affect us all.

We could "Act Locally" by getting involved in local projects. Key issues being pursued by the Society and work of the Land Use sub-committee are described on page 2. One of these might strike a responding chord. If enough people get behind these projects we can make them a reality.

Change only comes about because sufficient committed people make it happen.
We can all help to make this planet a much better place to live.

understanding of the local situation by gathering data. We want information on the number and locations of water bores in the Blue Mountains to assist us understand the extent of possible groundwater extraction.

Members are asked to help with this survey by adding the address of any known bores in the Blue Mountains. Send information to me about the location of any bores in your area. Landowners frequently advertise the fact of their ownership of a bore by a sign on their boundary.

Next issue we begin a series of articles on groundwater in the Blue Mountains. Contact Rosemary Lathouris 4757 2511 (ah), email lath@pnc.com.au

Native plant sale

The Society's Spring Plant Sale will take place on **Saturday 2 October** outside the Conservation Hut at the end of Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls.

Most plants are \$3 each, or four for \$10. Supertubes are \$5 each. There will also be a few tree ferns in larger pots priced at \$15 each.

Come along, support the Society, and buy your native plants to help the environment. Enquiries: David Coleby, Nursery Manager, 4784-1395.

Living water

The current drought is reinforcing what experts from the World Summit on Sustainable Development and World Water Forum have been forecasting, that we are very close to a world water crisis. Over 1.2 billion people currently do not have access to clean drinking water and that number will double by 2025 unless global action is taken.

As a city within a World Heritage Area we have the responsibility to act locally, which will ripple out globally. Our precious groundwater reserves are under threat, which in turn threatens our unique hanging swamps and endangered species such as Dwarf Mountain Pine.

Water that has gone through the complete water cycle—falling as rain onto a fully vegetated catchment, percolating down to the water table, then resurfacing as natural spring water—has special "living" qualities that affect everything from biodiversity to ecosystem functioning.

At our monthly meeting on Friday 24 September BMCC's Natural Systems Team Leader Geoffrey Smith will talk on living water. This talk will focus on the special properties that living water has and the importance of keeping water in its living state or restoring polluted

waters to a living state.

The meeting at the Conservation Hut on Friday 24 September starts at 7.30 pm. Visitors are very welcome.

Groundwater: a not-so-BORING-issue!

By Rosemary Lathouris

There is a great deal of interest in bores and groundwater in the Blue Mountains. At Winter Magic Festival, Society members asked people their views and found considerable concern about the following:

Supply and demand: is our rainfall sufficient to recharge groundwater with bores extracting water?

Sustainability: if use of bores continues and increases, what will be the effects on native communities, e.g. hanging swamps, which rely on groundwater?

Equity and cost: people who have bores are not subject to water restrictions and have unlimited use of free water.

Commercial extraction: how much is being taken to supply the bottled water market?

A groundwater sub-committee has formed and is gaining a better

LEP91 Review Consultant

Blue Mountains Conservation Society is calling for expressions of interest from suitably qualified Environmental Consultants to guide the Society's Management Committee in the preparation of submissions to Blue Mountains City Council on desirable land use controls to be incorporated in the emerging replacement of LEP 91.

The successful Consultant will need to demonstrate a proven track record in the preparation of environmental reports, and have the ability to work well with the community and with community groups.

The work will take place over an extended period – possibly two years. The consultant will be required to present a detailed proposal for the conduct of the work. Once mutually agreed, this proposal will become the basis for the ongoing project. Payment will be based on the achievement of agreed milestones.

For further information phone Lyndal Sullivan on 4782 1635 (ah). An information pack has been prepared. This can be obtained by writing to Blue Mountains Conservation Society, PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782 or by sending an email to office@bluemountains.org.au. Closing date is 27 September, 2004.

"Hut News", the newsletter of

Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.

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Society's environmental objectives for 2004/5

After each Annual General Meeting the elected Management Committee holds a Goals Workshop to decide what the Society's objectives should be for the coming year. Our major environmental objectives for 2004/5 are listed below.

Blue Mountains City Council's review of LEP91: Ensure conservation input from BMCS and community.

Identify local areas that need greater environmental protection by change of zoning. Assist members in each local area to gather information on sensitive areas. Develop ideas on the strategic framework to contribute to BMCC-run consultations.
Contact: Lyndal Sullivan, Heather Hull.

Groundwater: Strategic project to protect Blue Mountains groundwater.

Prepare booklet and information. Initiate a moratorium campaign for bores. Participate in BMCC Groundwater round table. Investigate specific swamp damage. Contact Tony Towers, Rosemary Lathouris.

Hanging Swamps: Achieve legislative protection. Pursue the declaration of Blue Mountains hanging swamps as Vulnerable under legislation. Contact Ian Baird.

Achieve protection for Newnes Plateau, Mt Airlie and Blue Mountains Western Escarpment.

Incorporation of Newnes Plateau, Blue Mountains western escarpment and Mt Airlie into Regional/National Parks. Campaign against the approval of proposed Kaolin mine at Newnes Junction. Contact Brian Marshall, Kevin Bell, John Haydon.

Would you like to join a Blue Mountains Conservation Society sub-committee to help achieve one of these objectives?

Please contact the management committee members listed if you would like to help with any of these objectives or require further information. Contact details can be found in the black box on the left of this page.

Your help would be greatly appreciated.

STOP THE BULLDOZERS before they threaten the bush

Would you like to join the Land Use sub-committee to learn how to be effective in influencing the development that occurs in the Blue Mountains?

We undertake a range of tasks involving various levels of skills including monitoring developments, doing site inspections and reporting, making submissions, gaining a knowledge of legislation, making representation at the Land and Environment Court.

If you are interested in helping or learning more about any of the following aspects please contact Lyndal Sullivan, 4782.1635 (ah), email lyndal@hermes.net.au

Mountain Watch: a network of members who monitor and make submissions on development applications in each local area.

State and federal legislation which will affect land use in the mountains: Will proposed new legislation help or damage the Blue Mountains environment? How can legislation work to protect special plant communities? There are opportunities to speak up on these matters.

Local Council planning instruments: The zoning and associated rules that regulate development are in Local Environment Plans, DCPs and other policies. Use the many opportunities available to shape these.

Land Use management issues.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Monthly meeting: Friday 24 September, 7.30pm, at the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls (story page 1)

Management meeting: Saturday 21 August, 9am, Lawson. Members are welcome to attend as observers. (Contact any committee member.)

Bushcare: Saturday, 11 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.

Native Plant Sale: Saturday 2 October 2004, outside the Conservation Hut.

Workshop: Friday 22 Oct. 7.30 pm. **Stuart Hill, John Cameron and Eugene Stockton will discuss 'A Sense of Place'** Conservation Hut, 7.30 pm, on Friday 22 October 2004.

Welcome to new members

Christopher Allport, Hazelbrook
Margaret Potts, Leura
John King, Blaxland
Lucy Mark, Springwood

Summerhayes—more than just a sporting facility

By Lachlan Garland, Bushcare Group Coordinator, Summerhayes Park

To most people in the Springwood/Winnmalee area Summerhayes Park is a soccer ground. However, it is much more than this. The sporting grounds and their infrastructure cover 5.5 hectares, only 18% of the reserves total of 30.4 hectares. The rest is bushland with a range of vegetation communities and varying in condition.

Blue Mountains City Council currently have a Draft Plan of Management on display. In this Draft Plan Council has finally identified that the threatened ecological community Shale Sandstone Transition Forest (SSTF) exists in the Reserve. At this stage there are some calls for the SSTF areas to be used for an expansion of infrastructure which is needed because of the increase in soccer players in the area. However, a plan has been drawn up that requires almost no removal of bush but provides all the facilities needed by the sporting groups.

A number of actions are required for Summerhayes Park, most importantly support for the bushland that currently exists and in particular the SSTF. The bushcare group needs on-ground support to look after the Reserve. We only have two regular attendees and could do with a helping hand. We plan to continue looking after Blue Gum Swamp Creek and its tributaries as well as taking on the new responsibility of the SSTF.

If you are interested in the Park itself, want more information on the Plan of Management or bushcare please give me a call. I will be very happy to talk to you. Contact Lachlan Garland, by phone on 4754 2796, mobile 0415 317 078, or email lachlan@hermes.net.au

MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES

Elizabeth van Reyswoud

Phone 4757.2694

Email: mcreysw@bigpond.net.au

Post: PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

Threatened Species Conservation

by Ian Baird

The leaflet enclosed with this newsletter is a response by the environment movement in NSW to a White Paper prepared by the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) on proposed reform of threatened species conservation, as part of the broader natural resource management reform process in NSW. This process has been legislated through the recent *Catchment Management Act 2003*, *Natural Resources Commission Act 2003* and the *Native Vegetation Act 2003*.

These Acts provide for the establishment of new Catchment Management Authorities across NSW and for significant changes to the way that development assessment occurs in NSW, with major implications for threatened species conservation.

As the next step in this process, following on from the White Paper and subsequent submissions from and discussions with the environment movement and others, DEC has just last week released the document '*Threatened species conservation in NSW: Reform Proposal*', which provides an overview of the proposed *Threatened Species Legislation Amendment Bill 2004*. This Bill will provide the detailed legislative provisions for threatened species conservation in NSW, as part of the broader natural resource management and development consent reform process.

On the surface, the *Reform Proposal* has incorporated a number of concerns expressed by environment groups in response to the earlier DEC White Paper, including the important retention of the role of the Biological Diversity Advisory Council. There are however still a number of significant concerns with the proposed legislation. This bill is expected to go before Parliament shortly.

Along the Timeline

by Christine Davies

September is National Biodiversity Month. What a wonderful month to observe Nature in the Blue Mountains! Thousands of Honeyeaters are returning from their winter homes, migrating southward across the mountains. What an amazing annual event!

Some other winter migrants will return this month from Queensland, New Guinea and even further afield—Rufous Whistlers, Sacred Kingfishers and Channel-billed Cuckoos. Our local female Magpie is sitting on a nest near the top of a tall Radiata Pine and Satin Bowerbirds have been vocal. They display and mate in September.

We can look for the first snakes to appear—Copperheads and Red-bellied Blacks; lizards will be active and mating.

Wildflowers are spectacular in the lower Mountains in September, a few weeks later higher up where the wattles are now at their best, the Sunshine Wattle soon to fade and the Sydney Golden Wattle coming into full bloom.

A haiku bushwalk

In August I led a group of walkers and budding haiku poets to the Duck Hole in the National Park at Glenbrook. I showed them a little bit about haiku (Japanese - style short poems about nature) and how to write them while walking along. Here are some of the poems that we wrote. *Diana Levy.*

rustling of leaves
surround the path
we disappear into it
Jenny

Thin soles
Resistant shapes
This rocky path
Bernadette

Surrounded by rocks
Encircled by water
Voices soften
Jeanette

Cradled on the sand
crackling fire
billy's boil
Heather H

Calling crows
Chattering humans
Then silence
Sylvia

Frogs keeping time
to the chorus
of birds
Liz

Winter breeze
Against my face
Reminder of spring
Marilyn

Shadows of grass
Across the rock
Steal the heat
Heather H

Grasstree sits
on rocky outcrop—
shining life
Debbie D

ICY COLD CROSSING
BLUE, BLUE LEGS
DRIFTING SMOKE
Ron H

All together
the frogs stop their croak—
a blowfly
Diana L

Holding spring
in purple fists,
the hardenbergia.
Diana L

This winter we've had an influx of Sulphur-crested White Cockatoos into the eastern side of Blackheath and the Grose Valley. Their raucous screeching in the morning chorus seems challenging and discordant. Are they here because of the drought? Could their continued presence be detrimental to our Gang Gangs and Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos and to other animals in the Grose Valley?

You can add your own observations to the Timeline. Contact Christine Davies (contact details page 2) for a copy of "A Timeline for the Upper Blue Mountains" compiled by Jim Smith.

Green Cape & Murrumbidgee Multi-day activity past

by Don Morison.

Fifteen BMCS members returned with fond memories. Who could forget the dolphins frolicking so close to the rocks at Bittangabee Bay ... the unusually active koalas in broad daylight along the rainforest-lined Double Creek ... the massive number of lightning-struck Eucalypts on the shoulder of Mount Imlay ... the enthusiastic caretaker of Green Cape lighthouse who convinced us to watch the sunrise from the top of the tower ... the fur seal who decided to show a board-surfer at Bastion Point exactly how one catches a wave ... or the score at Murrumbidgee Golf Course - Eastern Grey Kangaroos 80: golfers nil.

Individual contributions were too numerous to mention all but the 'Loch

Ard' bore us safely over the waters of Murrumbidgee Inlet - even though it is named after a famous wrecked ship - largely thanks to impromptu first mate Warwick Mosman ... and we enjoyed Marie Morris' rapidly executed paintings and sketches of the coastline, Dina Lee's spring rolls, David Burrell's goulash and Gary Werskey's pool playing.

Next MDA is in the school holidays so perhaps the next time our roving crew discovers a pub with a juke box I won't hear quite so much Chuck Berry and Buddy Holly.

Next multi-day activity

Snowy Mountains summer
wildflowers: 7 Nights, Sunday
9 January to Saturday 15 Jan 2005

Deposits of \$40 per person are now being accepted from BMCS members wishing to book for whole seven nights. Mail to Don Morison, PO Box 170 Katoomba 2780 (money order preferred).

Self-catering accommodation at Perisher Village with diverse and beautiful walks on foot from the lodge or a few minutes away by car pool. Total seven nights accommodation cost is \$77 per person. Balance to be paid at activity.

Under 18s must be accompanied by a responsible adult and should be kept on walking. Walks suitable for toddlers and infant scholars and their adult carers will be included if there is a demand. It is worth bringing a mountain bike though some areas are off limits. Enquiries: Don Morison 8230 2116.

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. For membership enquiries contact Membership Secretary Liz van Reyswoud.

Cost of insurance and affiliation fees for bushwalkers is \$15 per member.

PLEASE PAY WITH YOUR MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

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 Liz Riley 4787 6637 for more information or if the weather is doubtful.

Oct 06 Hat Hill. Meet at the Hat Hill parking bay 5.5km along Hat Hill Rd, just before the gates into the National Park.

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 section off track. Bring morning tea and lunch, plus carry at least 1 litre of WATER, 2 litres on warmer days.

Sept 06: Gordon Falls to Sublime Point, Leura. Views of Jamieson Valley. Meet 9.00 Leura Rly Stn commuter car park, Cnr Mall & GWH. ☎ Mary/Terry 4787 7649

Sept 13 Pope's Glen. Classic Blackheath. Meet 9.15 am B'heath Neighborhood Centre. Contact Norah 4757 4058

Sept 20 Allan's Mystery Walk. Come and be fascinated! Meet 9.00am Faulconbridge Rly Stn commuter car park. ☎ Allan 4739 2767

Sept 27 Bus Trip: Kanangra Walls. Majestic escarpments. Bookings essential. Meet 8.30 am Council Depot, South Street, North Katoomba. ☎ Bill 4759 1692. Pick-ups by arrangement.

Oct 04 Florabella Pass, Springwood. Gullies & forests. Meet 9.15 am Warrimoo Rly Stn commuter car park. ☎ 4757 1526.

Oct 11 Grand Canyon, Blackheath. Magnificent canyon walk. Meet 9.15 am Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre. ☎ Bill 4759 1692.

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. NOTE: Walks to commence at 10 am unless stated otherwise.

Sept 02 Ikara Head, Mt Victoria. Mainly level walk on ridge. Length determined by walkers on the day. Meet Mt Vic Station. ☎ Marie 4787 1257.

Sept 09 Pulpit Rock to Govetts Leap, Blackheath. Bush track descent with spectacular views, car shuffle. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre. ☎ David 4757 3416.

Sept 16 Princes Rock LO to Fletcher St via Darwins Walk, Wentworth Falls. Short ascent at end, car shuffle. Meet W Falls Station car park. ☎ Joan 4782 2218.

Sept 23 Mt Banks and Grose Valley LO. Easy walk from picnic area to lookout. Wildflowers possible. Meet Mt Vic Station. ☎ Bill 4759 1692

Sept 30 Govetts Leap to Pope's Glen, Blackheath. Steps descending at start of walk up creek, car shuffle. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre. ☎ Phil 47875560.

Oct 07 Glastonbell. Spring walk in this delightful venue. Meet Mt Vic Station. ☎ Marie 4787 1257

Oct 14 Bus trip to Newnes Historic Ruins. Full day to visit ruins of Newnes Township, full extent of walk 5km. Bring lunch etc. All members welcome, booking and payment of \$10 cost required by Oct 1. ☎ Simone 4757 3416

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 Convener Bob van Reyswoud, 4757 2694, email mcreysw@bigpond.net.au.

Sep 11 (Sat) Great Grose Weed Walk: Combined Bushwalking Clubs Day at Katoomba Creek. 8am to 4pm, followed by a BBQ provided by NPWS. A vigorous day's walking and weeding (in a beautiful place, of course), with an opportunity to meet members of other bushwalking clubs. Meet at the corner of First Avenue and Wattle Tree Road, North Katoomba at 8am. ☎ Mary 4787 6918.

Sept 18 (Sat) Mount Annan Gardens. Bus Trip. Meet Katoomba bus depot 8.30 am. For bookings ☎ Meredith 4782-4823.

Sept 25 (Sat) Breakfast Creek. Medium grade, long walk. Meet Blackheath Station, 8.30 am, Car Pool. Finish approx 4.30 pm. ☎ June 4787-7312.

Oct 02 (Sat) Carlon Head, Medium grade, long walk. Meet Gearins Hotel, Katoomba, 9.30 am, car pool. Finish approx. 4.00 pm. ☎ Bob 4757 2694.

Oct 09 (Sat) Pipeline track, Glen Davis to Newnes. Medium grade. Meet Mt Victoria station. Possible bus trip - to be advised.

Changing landscapes

by Christine Davies

It was "shorts and t-shirt weather" for our Thursday Interpretive bushwalk along Jack Evans track on 26 August 2004. Spring had arrived! Dick Turner came along as our guest to share his vast knowledge of the plants and birds.

The 2002 bushfire had been a very hot fire, followed since by a long dry period to slow the regrowth. We found the landscape very different to that we had seen in previous years.

The absence of the flowering Wedding Bush (*Ricinocarpos pinifolius*) which had been a feature of this springtime walk was compensated for by the beautiful grass trees (*Xanthorrhoea spp*) with numerous seed spikes and the purple flowers of *Hardenbergia violacea* which since the fire had wandered happily over rocks, up trees and shrubs and across the tops of tree ferns. There were three species of *Boronia* flowering and we came across an uncommon shrub which is found only in parts of the Blue Mountains and on the Woronora Plateau—Native Cranberry (*Lissanthe sapida*). It had delicate white tubular flowers and little red berries.

At Erskine Creek it was very different. The sandy beaches have all but vanished under a dense forest of shrubs and trees which germinated after the bushfire and have been able to grow along the moist creek bank without the floods which would in other times have washed them away.

A Rock Warbler carried food to its nest in a crevice in the rocks above the creek. A Wanderer butterfly wandered gracefully by. Screeching of White Cockatoos increased in alarm and a Sea Eagle soared high over Erskine Creek.

Changing seasons

Pictured: *Xanthorrhoea* in the snow at Blackheath on 15 August 2004.

