

HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow's People"



COUNCIL ACTS TO PROTECT JAMISON CREEK

It was good news for the environment at the Blue Mountains City Council meeting on 22 April 1997, when, by a 7 to 3 majority, Council re-confirmed its decision to reject an application to build holiday units above Jamison Creek.

Council had previously rejected the proposal at its 8 April 1997 meeting, but a rescission motion (moved by Councillors Williams, Egan and Harris) threatened to undo this. If the rescission motion had been carried, Council would have been saying to the developer — "Whilst we didn't like your first proposal, we are prepared to consider another application that is less extensive".

As it now stands, Council is saying to developers — "**Jamison Creek is special, it is in need of protection, and we are going to enforce the zonings that were established to provide this protection**".

Long term society members will recall the battle that was fought in the 1980's to stop a proposed conference centre in the Jamison Creek catchment. The outcome of that battle, and the subsequent Interim Conservation Order, was the present restrictive zonings — especially in the area upstream from Weeping Rock and Wentworth Falls.

It is these zonings that were re-affirmed by Council in its landmark vote on 22 April 1997. Councillors voting to reconfirm the decision to reject the holiday cabins were Terri Hamilton, Carol Gaul, John Derum, Angelique Henson, Duncan Berriman, Bob Clarke and Colleen Kime. Those opposing were Ralph Williams, Michael Neall and Dick Harris. Absent were Jim Angel and Jeff Egan.

Well done BMCC!



March 1997.

Is it possible to reduce travel costs, protect our heritage, reduce aircraft noise and air pollution by locating the aviation industry at a better site? Notice of The Alliance for Airport Location Outside Sydney's May 3 forum arrived too late for *Hut News* readers.

BMCS member Meredith Brownhill believes that there is no need for a second airport. Green solutions to the airport issue include building a **quality** National Rail System, using fast trains between all major cities, fast comfortable trains around Australia to encourage people to holiday within Australia, and to promote tourism, more freight by rail, promotion of communications technology as an alternative to flying, a Buy Australian-made goods campaign to reduce air imports, and Government taxes on airlines and their users to pay for the pollution effects of flying.

Guest Speaker

Graham Roberts of "Nepean Earthworms" will be the guest speaker at the Society's general meeting at The Conservation Hut on Friday 30 May at 7.30.

Recycle your garbage with earthworms. Have your own fertilizer factory. Do your bit for the environment.

Our new management committee has been very busy. Come along and find out what we are doing. Visitors are welcome.

World Environment Day — 'For Life on Earth'

The Society will participate in World Environment Day celebrations on Sunday 1 June between 10 am and 4 pm at the Town Centre Arcade, Katoomba.

Living in the Blue Mountains environment is worth celebrating! World Environment Day provides an opportunity for us to learn ways to preserve and protect our environment. Activities will include static displays, 'hands on' exhibits, school involvement, entertainment by local musicians and performers, film festival previews, food, outdoor exhibits, educational games and a visual arts exhibition.

If you can help out at our stall, even for a short time, contact Jessica Yuille (57.2783) or Marie McInnes (82.7110).

Weed of the Month

English Ivy (Hedera helix) A vigorous ground-cover and climber, Ivy changes the habitat on which it grows so that native plants cannot compete. Ivy-covered trees are robbed of light and nutrients and eventually die.

This is another berry-bearing weed whose seeds are spread by birds. Council's leaflet is enclosed.

Don't plant it! Rip it out! **Who needs to grow a weed!!**

Gift to Library

Mourners at the funeral of our late life member, Gretta Vanry of Leura, were asked to send donations to BMCS in lieu of flowers. As a consequence, it was



resolved at Management Committee meeting that books to the value of \$500 be donated to Blue Mountains libraries in memory of Gretta.

Feral Animals

A new column starts this week "The Ferals" (page 2).

In Australia we have 30 species of well-established introduced animals. They all have a terrible impact on the natural environment and on native wildlife, destroying habitats, competing for food and nesting sites, or preying on native animals.

Like weeds, feral animals have a high reproductive rate. Most reproduce at a younger age and have more offspring than the native animals, and can adapt to a range of environmental conditions enabling them to spread into different habitats.

Second Airport

The Penrith Association Against Airport Noise has obtained a leaked copy of a report by Airplan Pty Ltd which concludes that Badgery's Creek is the place for an airport, with runways aligned to funnel air traffic directly over Penrith and the Blue Mountains. It is reported in the Penrith Press that the Mayor, Kevin Cramer, said this would mean aeroplanes taking off and landing every 30 seconds 24 hours a day. Blue Mountains Councillor Terri Hamilton said it would have a devastating effect on the national park and residents at least as far as Katoomba would be greatly affected by noise 24 hours a day. Wollondilly Mayor Marina Voncina said the report was an "insult" to people in western Sydney. (From *Colong Bulletin*,

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| "Hut News", the newsletter of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc. | | |
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Land Use

World Heritage Nomination

NSW Environment Minister Pam Allen has invited BMCS to be represented on a new Reference Committee to carry forward the Blue Mountains World Heritage nomination. Pam Allen's action heralds a new attempt to achieve agreement between the NSW and Federal Governments on the future of the nomination. Our Secretary Les Coyne, and our new Macro-Projects Officer Andrew Reiner, will be responsible for the BMCS campaign for World Heritage nomination.

State Environment Protection Plan 19

This important SEPP protects urban bushland but currently only applies east of the Nepean River. Blue Mountains urban bushland, such as Mount Sion Park, Glenbrook, remains at risk because of this deficiency. BMCS is asking local member Bob Debus to make representations to Cabinet to extend the SEPP to the Blue Mountains.

Blaxland at the Crossroads

Who would want to see any Blue Mountains town so much under siege as Blaxland in 1997? The largest subdivision ever put forward in the Mountains — 73 lots in Winicoopa Road — is the subject of two Land and Environment Court actions. Another large subdivision proposal, (also involving Councillor Ralph Williams) in Cougran Road, was on public exhibition during April and BMCS engaged an environmental consultant to analyse it.

A medium density residential development in Hope Street is also in the pipeline while many local traffic problems, including the Blaxland Shops Highway Black Spot, remain unresolved.

Before BMCS Management Committee on 17/4/97, representatives of Residents Against Improper Development (RAID) outlined their objectives in the Winicoopa campaign. They told us they wished to prove their case against the development both in the legal and political spheres. RAID has overcome early hurdles in securing legal aid for the case in which it is a party.

—Don Morison.



am to 5 pm, Centenary Theatre, St. Leonards. More info. Gordon Hocking (02) 9528.6091.

Save The Forests — Forest Countdown Campaign

The Forest Campaign Group of the Australian Conservation Foundation is appealing for the involvement of bushwalkers to ensure that decades of hard work will lead to the permanent protection of old growth, wilderness and other high conservation value forests in NSW.

The Carr Government has temporarily stopped logging and woodchipping in over 800,000 hectares of forest along the east coast. These have been identified as likely additions to a permanent forest reserve system, in new National Parks. Final reserve decisions will be made over the next two or three years, starting this year with the far south coast around Eden.

BUT the woodchip industry and the timber workers union have vowed that these areas will not be reserved. The pressure on the government to backslide is already immense.

The Forest Countdown Group feels that bushwalkers and their clubs are critical to the support needed and is appealing for club members to visit the areas under contention and to adopt them, to lobby politicians, write letters and support the conservation groups who are on the front line.

There will be a Familiarisation Trip to The South Coast Forests on 7th to 9th June (June Long Weekend) in the forest areas between Kiama and Narooma, specifically focussing on some of the following areas: Termeil, Conjola, Kiola (Durras), Monga, Clyde River, South Deua.

The aim of the reconnaissance is to provide participants with a general idea of the area so that walk leaders can plan walks for their own club members. The Forest Campaign Group will organise information packs, itinerary, local guides, one overnight camp, to treat you to an evening meal.

There are lots of other ways to help in this vital campaign! If you want to book for the Familiarisation Trip (before 30 May) or want to know more please contact ACF office on (02) 9247 4285. —Noel Plumb and Peter Write, Forest Campaign Group.

Hinchinbrook Still in Jeopardy

The initial court challenge to the approvals by the Federal Environment Minister, Robert Hill, for the mega-resort at Port Hinchinbrook has been defeated on technical grounds — the judge made no decision whether the development was good, bad or just appalling!

The future of Hinchinbrook's dugong population and the unspoilt beauty of the Hinchinbrook World Heritage Area remain in jeopardy. Equally worrying is the Howard Government's lack of commitment to withstanding development in a World Heritage Area.

The Friends of Hinchinbrook are determined to continue the fight. You can help: Write to the Prime Minister and Senator Hill, at Parliament House, Canberra 2600, and express your disgust at their failure to protect Hinchinbrook; make a donation to the Legal Fighting

Membership Enquiries:

The Society is keen to have new members who are concerned about the welfare of the Blue Mountains natural environment. Contact membership secretary, Ross Coster: Work (047)59.1247, Home 59.1837 FAX 59.1095, or write to P.O. Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782.

Fund (ACF, 340 Gore Street, Fitzroy Vic 3065). —Noel Plumb, NPA, National Parks Journal, April 1997.



The Foxes

FOX (*Vulpes vulpes*)

Next to the dingo and the dog, the fox is the largest terrestrial predator on mainland Australia — far larger than any marsupial carnivore. Within its range the fox can adapt to any habitat where food is available. Both sexes become sexually mature in their first year and average litter size exceeds four young, factors which lead to a high reproductive rate. Foxes have contributed to the extinction of small native rodents and marsupials. Others are threatened with extinction.

Foxes were released in Australia for hunting. It wasn't easy! Aspiring fox hunters found it difficult to acclimatise their quarry and had to make do with dingoes and kangaroos until improved shipping enabled foxes to be established in Victoria and South Australia in the early 1870s. By 1885 they covered an area of 12,000 sq.km. as they proceeded to expand across Australia in the wake of the rabbit and eating anything else they could find or catch.

The fox is an opportunistic predator and scavenger. Foxes eat wild fruits, insects, birds, birds' eggs, mice, frogs, fish, lizards, bats, small marsupials and rabbits.

A study of vertebrates in fox droppings collected in Kuring-gai Chase National Park revealed: Birds 31; Reptiles 2; Mammals 121 (bandicoots, brushtail possum, ringtail possum, native rats, swamp wallaby). Only about 9% of the mammal diet of these foxes was rabbit.

Foxes breed in early winter. Young are born in a den and first appear in late spring. Dispersal takes place in late summer/early autumn (explaining recent sightings of young foxes in Blue Mountain towns).

What can be done to control the Blue Mountains fox population? (More next issue.)

Dung Beetles do their Bit

Since October 1995, Warringah Council has released 20,000 dung beetles into the local area in an attempt to reduce the amount of dog faeces.

Warringah Council has 9,500 registered dogs and an estimated 3,800 unregistered dogs in its area. The EPA estimates that in Sydney 10% of dry weather coliform pollution of stormwater is due to dog faeces and this can increase to 50% during heavy rain. The EPA estimates that **100 tonnes of dog faeces are produced daily** in Sydney.

(Source: Riverpost)

Welcome to New Members

Valerie Odewahn, Canada Bay
David H Burrell, Mulgoa

Important Conferences

Our National Parks: New visions for a new century. (Nature Conservation Council of NSW Inc.), 18-19 July, Centenary Theatre, St. Leonards.

National parks are an idea conceived in the 19th century. New visions are needed to sustain our parks into the 21st century. Further information (02) 9241 2052.

Stabilising Australia's Population — Today's Action, Tomorrow's Reward.

Australians for an Ecologically Sustainable Population 1997 annual conference, Saturday 30 August 1997, 8.30

WIRES Needs New Members

During the past twelve months Blue Mountains WIRES has received about 7000 calls from the public — 5000 in relation to injured, orphaned or misplaced native wildlife, and 2000 enquiries for information and advice. It is a vital service, increasing in volume every year with higher population, loss of habitat, more traffic, more domestic animals, and increased public awareness.

More volunteers are urgently needed. There will be a general training course for new members on the weekend of 17-18 May. To register (before 12 May) or to find out more, phone WIRES on 54.2946.

A Native Garden

Five years ago Peter and I moved into a house in Blackheath which had a neat lawn with borders of pansies and other annuals, azaleas, roses, and other exotic shrubs, and for a brief time in spring, lilac, daffodils and bluebells. The wildlife was sparrows, Indian mynahs, starlings, currawongs and snails.

It is not easy to start a native garden in an established exotic garden. Many of the shrubs and trees are familiar to us and are pretty. The annuals didn't last long —

neglect soon took care of them.

The lawn was next! I have a strong dislike of lawns, and Peter a strong dislike of mowing them. The first attempt failed. The layer of newspapers beneath the mulch was too thin, and the grass soon reemerged. The second attempt, using thick wads of newspaper, was much more successful, though the battle continues.

Native plants were planted too close together, and many were lost. Others have grown and merged in with their neighbours to make a lovely mass of shapes and textures. Exotic shrubs are disappearing one by one, cut up as mulch for the garden.

Daffodils and bluebells continue to give a lovely display of colour in spring and the roses are beautiful in summer, their perfumes blending with the year-round fragrance of native mint bushes.

Native birds soon arrived. A pair of eastern spinebills took up residence and brought their baby to sip the nectar. Native bees hover around the Eucalypt and Hakea blossoms. Native flies also pollinate the blossoms. There are butterflies, ladybirds, spiders and little lizards. This summer a tiny thornbill perched in the young gum and sang a delightful song. — *Christine Davies.*

Slow Walking in My Bush

In sandstone sclerophyll step slowly!

After rain you'll surely find
Your faint bush tracks have
vanished,
Gone beneath the leaves
To a compost for the trees.

Clamber over long dead branches
Where the trunks of ancient trees
Fell in storms before the summer.
Summer so wet it banished
bushfires
Making we who feared them safe,
And the autumn flowers came:
Almost hidden orchid beauties
And much more than I can name.

There are pteristylus nutans:-
Stiffening backs and nodding heads
At vines and ferns about them,
Lomandra longifolia, strong cissus
and the rest.

Step slowly in the sandstone bush.

— Nella.

In The Bush

My last contribution covered a journey I made towards Wilsons Promontory and I had just reached its outskirts.

Here I was, back to Nature again — well almost! The eternal problem — how do you stop people loving a place to death? A heat wave over southern Victoria saw many refugees seeking relief at Tidal River, the furthest road penetration permitted into the park. Fortunately we had booked lodge accommodation but the camping areas were jam-packed. A great fuss is raging between conservationists and National Park management over plans by the latter to clear more bush for camp-sites.

The need is obvious and the solution easy so I feel the conservationists are banging their heads against a brick wall in a society which promotes immigration and has no population ceilings.

Lakes Entrance was our next stop. A vast sheet of water always attracts humans and this spot is no exception. Boats of all shapes and sizes and prices are tethered at numerous wharfs and houses tucked in at every vantage point. However a most unpleasant smell wafts up from algae bloom which flourishes from the modern influx of agricultural chemicals washed in from four surrounding rivers. Flood controls on these rivers prevent the periodical flush-out which the Lakes once enjoyed so it seems to be an insuperable problem.

On we went by the Princes Highway which skirts the immense National Parks of

Croajingalong and Nadgee. Forests abound and one would regard the woodchip industry as non-existent, however it is said that much thought is given to the selection of areas to be chipped. They are well screened from sight and sound.

The run from Eden to Sydney was through a land plagued not by woodchippers but by other humans. Ribbon development runs its full length. Any spot where the highway touches the coast there is a surge of development clearly seen and any side road running east to the coast had large hoardings extolling the virtues of beach-front estates.

One pleasing sight was the presence of many kangaroos that exploited a caravan park at Pambula. They sheltered in the shade of trees and nibbled at grassy spots on the site and hovered around picnickers. As the gates were always open they bounded off to their own world at night.

Development is proceeding at a faster rate than the map makers can handle, i.e. some places can't be found even on the newest of maps. To my eye they are soulless places; true every human need is catered for at the adjoining shopping centres — TAB, video outlets, cafes with umbrellas and chairs, car yards and bustle, bustle, bustle.

Bunyip was glad to slink home and submerge in local rusticity and mountain mists.

Vale Allen Strom

By now, those who knew of Allen Strom will have learned of his death. It was on the 28 March, the same day that our old friend Greta Vanry died.

For those who knew nothing of him or his connections with this Society the following information may be enlightening. I pluck a few of his achievements from an eulogy in the Sydney Morning Herald.

He was a school teacher — in 1946 he became the Australian Museum's first education officer and later taught at Balmain Teachers' College. In 1945 he started the Caloola Club, a bushwalking group with strong conservation leanings. In 1958 he was appointed NSW Chief Guardian of Fauna, a post he held until 1967 when the National Parks service was established in its stead. He then became adviser in Conservation to the Education Department.

It was in that role that he made contact with this Society. Our first president Fred Astle was a school inspector who knew Allen Strom personally and sought his advice and guidance in the early formative years of the society. In recognition of these services Allen was made the Society Patron in 1970.

Permit me to boast of my close acquaintance with this unique man. He was my woodwork teacher at Nerrandera Intermediate High in 1936/37. In no time he formed a boys' club and endeavoured to instil conservation ideas and ideals. After the war I joined his Caloola Club and did many a bushwalk with him until country teaching severed that association.

I feel sure he influenced my interest in conservation. I can only marvel at the never flagging zeal he displayed right to the end of his life. — *The Bunyip.*

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY NATIVE PLANT NURSERY
OPEN TUESDAY MORNINGS 9 am to 12 noon
PLANT SALES VOLUNTEERS ARE WELCOME TO HELP
CONTACT DAVID COLEBY 84.1395**

MAY

- 12 (Mon) **Leisure Walk — Mount Banks.** Meet 9.30 at Mount Victoria Station. Contact Christina Jones 84.1101.
- 14 (Wed) **Bushwalk — Six Foot Track, Megalong Cemetery to Cox’s River.** Meet 9 am at Blackheath commuter carpark. Contact Gillian Janus 87.6181. Grade 5. (**Note that starting time has been changed**)
- 17 (Sat) **Weekend Bushwalk — Mount Solitary.** Contact Christine Davies 87.7246.
- 19 (Mon) **Nature Track Bushcare Group, 9-12.** Meet at The Hut at 9 am. Contact Jessica Yuille 57.2783.
- 19 (Mon) **Leisure Walk — The Nature Trail.** Meet 9.30 at The Hut, (Wentworth Falls). Contact Jan Cutler 84.3079.
- 22 (Thu) **Committee Meeting.** 7 pm at Mid Mountains Community Centre, Lawson.
- 26 (Mon) **Leisure Walk — Mount Boyce.** Meet 9.30 Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre. Contact John Gaynor 87.6071.
- 30 (Fri) **General Meeting at The Hut at 7.30 pm.** Guest speaker: Graham Roberts of “Nepean Earthworms”.

JUNE

- 01 (Sun) **World Environment Day.** At the Town Centre Arcade (near the library), Katoomba, 10 am to 4 pm.
- 02 (Mon) **Leisure Walk — South Lawson Waterfalls.** Meet 9.30, Honour Avenue, Lawson, near Memorial. Contact Kees Putting 59.1958. (Kees will provide gas barbecues for lunch afterwards — bring meat, etc.)
- 7-9 (Long weekend) **Familiarisation Trip to The South Coast Forests** (see Forest Countdown Campaign article on page 2). Book before 30 May by phoning Ros or Libby on (02) 9247 4285.
- 11 (Wed) **Bushwalk — “There is Life Below Woodford”, Walk 1.** Emu carvings and old saw mill site. Meet Bulls Camp, Woodford at 9.30 am. Contact Allan Macaulay 39.2767. Grade 5. Duration 4-5 hours.
- 16 (Mon) **Leisure Walk — Exploring Shipley.** Meet Blackheath commuter carpark (w.side) at 9.30. Contact Norah Gaynor 87.6071
- 19 (Thu) **Committee Meeting.** 7 pm at Mid Mountains Community Centre, Lawson.
- 21 (Sat) **Bushwalk — The Lost World.** Meet at the carpark beside Springwood Library at 9.30 am. Contact Ron Wheeler 57.1526.
- 23 (Mon) **Leisure Walk — Valhalla Head.** Meet Mount Victoria Station at 9.30. Contact Gillian Janus 87.6181.
- 27 (Fri) **General Meeting at The Hut, 7.30 p.m.**
- 30 (Mon) **Leisure Walk — Berghofer’s Pass.** Meet 9.30 Mount Victoria Station. Contact Norah Gaynor 87.6071.

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| <p>SCRIBBLYGUM MOTH- by Graham Alcorn</p> <p>Ogmograptis scribula, The bush graffiti artist, Of the order Lepidoptera, Family Yponomeutidae, Long ago has found a way To avoid the strife Of graffitiists’ life, For it lives in the dark Under the bark Of various species of gum tree.</p> <p>It is easy to see where ogmo went, Chewing and chomping and scribbling away, Long after Ogmo’s days are spent, Off to the left for a week or two, Gulping and gorging as Ogmos do, Gormandising along the line, There in the dark, Under the bark Of various species of gum tree.</p> <p>Eucalyptus sclerophylla, Racemosa, rossii, Haemastoma and signata, Pauciflora, dendromorpha And dalrympleana — Here come the Ogmos, doing fine. Chewing the left right, right left line, Delicate calligraphy, Ogmograptis graffiti On all of these species of gum tree.</p> | <p>Some chew up and some chew down, This the philosophers might explain, But the thing that causes me to frown, The thing that I’d dearly love to learn Is what makes every Ogmo turn? Off to the left, then to the right, Another about turn, very tight, Chomping a track, Forward and back, On various species of gum tree.</p> <p>Very young Ogmos tend to wander, Skittish, no doubt, as young folks are, Filled with the spirit of adventure. Suddenly they get much fatter. Adventurings no longer matter. But what I yearn and yearn to learn Is how they now know just when to turn There in the dark Under the bark Of various species of gum tree?</p> <p>At last there comes that glorious day When this gyrating artistic grub Turns into a moth and flies away. No more chewing and scribbling and showing. Now is the time for dancing and loving. Having thus drained life’s cup to the dregs, Before it dies it lays its eggs Into the dark Beneath the bark Of its chosen species of gum tree.</p> | <p>Although the new Ogmos can’t be seen, Next year when the gum tree sheds its bark, It becomes quite obvious where they’ve been. Off to the left for a week or two. Gulping and gorging as Ogmos do, Then to the right for a similar time, Gormandising along the line, There in the dark Under the bark Of various species of gum trees.</p> <p><i>A Collective Poem:</i> <i>A number of Society members contributed to “The Scribblygum Moth” composed over several weekly bush outings. David Thomas the amusing scientific name; Jill Dark the scientific names of scribbly gums; Carol Proberts, Deirdre Morton, Mick Dark and Shirley Brown gave unflagging encouragement. Graham Alcorn wrote it all down. (The Blue Mountains Folkbook)</i></p> |
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