

HUT NEWS

Issue No. 363
October 2018



"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"

The ancient threatened species of Radiata Plateau – a new video

Local botanist and poet, Wyn Jones provides a fascinating insight into the truly ancient plant species that inhabit Radiata Plateau (Elphinstone) in our latest campaign video.

Having been involved with the Plateau since the 1980's, Wyn's knowledge of the area is unrivalled – from the complex and convoluted cliffs to plants of the heath, shrublands and swamps. Accompanied by dramatic aerial footage, Wyn discusses some of the rare endemic species on this very ancient land and why Radiata protection is crucial.

You can see the new video here <https://bluemountains.org.au/leaveradiataplateauwild/updates.htm>

The Society is committed to see the Plateau's future secured and continues to campaign with the community and liaise with local politicians, the government and the Plateau's owners to ensure this happens. For more information about the campaign please visit <https://bluemountains.org.au/leaveradiataplateauwild>



Wyn Jones, speaking at our recent Threatened Species event (read more on pages 4 and 5). Photo by Alan Page.

BMCS NURSERY PLANT SALES

We offer the home gardener, landscaper or contractor a big variety of quality local native plants at economical prices.

Blackheath Community Market, 1st Sunday of the month at Blackheath Public School, 9am to 1pm

Magpie Market, 3rd Sunday of month at Lawson Public School, 9am to 2pm

Tube stock \$3. Discounts for bulk orders.

Enquiries: Hugh Brougham 0407 955 028
nursery@bluemountains.org.au

A Cleaner Greener NSW and Blue Mountains— Policies for the 2019 election and beyond

As part of the Society's activities leading up to the state election in March 2019, we will be holding a public meeting:

**Wednesday, 31 October, 6.30 pm start
Mechanics Institute, Lawson**

Guest speaker: Kate Smolski, CEO of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW

The society will outline key local issues.

Local candidates from the Liberal, Labor, and Greens parties will also be invited to attend and speak briefly if they wish.

More information at www.bluemountains.org.au

The Mick Dark Talk for the Future

**Thursday 8 November, 7pm to 9pm
Wentworth Falls School of Arts**

This annual talk honours the contribution of Dr Mick Dark and is jointly organised by Varuna and Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

**Speaker: Charles Massy - It's time to wake up:
Can regenerative farming save both the planet and human health?**

The exciting and growing movement of regenerative agriculture (and a connected healthy food culture) appears to be one of our best bets in addressing profound existential threat. In healing the degraded inter-related Earth Systems, regenerative agriculture could well prove our planetary saviour. This new farming and healthy food movement - where landscapes and people (both rural and urban) are joined at the hip - comprises a true underground insurgency.

Charles Massy's new book, *Call of the Reed Warbler: A New Agriculture – A New Earth* (UQP Sept. 2017) concerns the emergence of a regenerative agriculture in Australia and its positive implications for both addressing humanity's emerging Anthropocene crisis and also for human health (physical and mental).

More information at www.bluemountains.org.au

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

www.bluemountains.org.au

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Membership renewals and payment

Just a quick note to those of you who pay your annual fees by electronic funds transfer or direct bank deposit.

Issue 1 – Who paid?

You *must* include your name or membership number as a reference. If you write as your reference 'Consoc Subscription' or similar then I *cannot* identify who the payment came from! The bank does not tell me who the payment comes from, *you* need to do that in the reference.

Every month I get a payment that I can't identify, which causes wasted time and effort from you and me in finding and fixing the error. In several cases this has caused a membership to lapse and never return, which none of us want to see happen.

Issue 2 – What is it for?

After you make your payment, can you *please* send me an e-mail detailing: date paid, the amount, and a breakdown of the payment. Otherwise, how can I tell if you have changed your membership type, added or removed bushwalking, intend to make a donation, etc.

Issue 3 – Wasted Postage

Some Members pay by EFT, then post me their renewal form all neatly filled in with payment details. This costs you a dollar in postage, and a significant delay before I see the paperwork. Send an email. Save time and money. Make my job easier if you can.

Ross Coster

Membership Secretary
Blue Mountains Conservation Society
membership@bluemountains.org.au

Black Birds Alan Page

I'm used to seeing male Satin Bowerbirds in the garden. Their dark blue satin coats shine in the sunshine.

To be able to wear this fine apparel, a male Satin Bowerbird needs to have celebrated his 7th birthday. Younger males have the distinguishing white beak but wear their mother's green and brown clothes.

Recently, another bird has appeared in my garden. On first glance I took it for a male Satin Bowerbird, but then noticed its orange beak. Cheezels maybe? No. It's the introduced Common Blackbird (*Turdus merula*).

The male is black with a bright orange beak; the female's brown with a dull orange beak.

It was introduced in Melbourne in the 1850s and can now be found throughout South-eastern Australia including Tasmania. Although a declared pest in NSW, it is Sweden's National Bird.



Common
Blackbird
(*Turdus
merula*).
Photo by
Alan Page. .

NSW Govt to change National Parks and Wildlife Act to allow flooding of wilderness areas in National Park

NSW conservation groups have condemned the Berejiklian government's move to change the National Parks and Wildlife Act to allow the flooding of the Blue Mountains National Park. The legislative changes are being sought to legalise the NSW Government's proposal to raise the Warragamba Dam wall, a project that is currently illegal under the National Parks and Wildlife Act.

Colong Foundation for Wilderness Campaign Manager Harry Burkitt:

"This Bill is an existential attack on the National Parks and Wildlife Act, World Heritage, the Blue Mountains, wild rivers and wilderness. It is unprecedented in modern times. Not since the Franklin Dam proposal have we seen such a blatant disregard for a World Heritage site in Australia. Over 65 kilometres of wilderness rivers and thousands of hectares of World Heritage-listed wilderness would be submerged under the equivalent of two Sydney Harbours if the dam wall was raised."

Oisin Sweeney of the NSW National Parks Association: "What is deeply concerning is that the Minister for Primary Industries Niall Blair is amending the National Parks and Wildlife Act. Why is Environment Minister Gabrielle Upton not defending our national parks? There has been no EIS or expert consultation on this proposal. Now the government is asking the parliament for consent to flood one of Australia's most iconic national parks."

134,000 people would be added to the Hawkesbury-Nepean floodplain over the next 30 years a key NSW government report on raising of Warragamba Dam wall has stated. (Infrastructure NSW, January 2017, Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley Flood Risk Management Strategy. Available online: <https://goo.gl/b9N2rW>)

But the government proposal to raise the dam wall by 14 metres will not solve the problem for flooding. The SES have found nearly half of all flood waters at Windsor originate from catchment areas not upstream of Warragamba Dam. Lives would be at risk.

Impacts on the World Heritage Area would include:

- Drowning of 4,700 hectares of World Heritage listed National Parks from sedimentation, erosion and invasion of exotic plants
- Over 65 kilometres of wilderness watercourses inundated
- 48 threatened species will be pushed closer towards extinction
- Damage to hundreds of Gundungurra cultural heritage sites, including artwork, camp and ceremonial sites

Find out more: https://www.wilddrivers.org.au/world_heritage

Why does Kosciuszko National Park need saving?

- An escalation of environmental damage by wild horses over the past 5 years
- The passing in June 2018 of legislation by the NSW Parliament that gives wild horses in Kosciuszko National Park more protection than native animals.

A number of members of bushwalking clubs and the NPA have responded to this by setting up a new organization, **Save Kosci Inc**, to run a protest walk from Sydney to the summit of Kosciuszko. The walk is supported by NPA (ACT and NSW branches) and Bushwalking NSW. It will commence in early November.

Members of Blue Mountains Conservation Society are invited to help by participating in the walk or helping as non-walking supporters.

We need walkers, drivers, writers, desk-based researchers and other helpers, from now till December 2018. And although this is a low-budget kind of protest, we need some financial support as well. You can choose the kind of help you'd like to provide, when you register.

Find out more and register now at <https://savekosci.org/>

Kosciuszko – keep it as a Park, not a Paddock!

ECOhomes Tour Saturday, 20th OCTOBER 2018 Bookings Close at 6pm Friday 19th October

The next Blue Mountains ECOhomes Tour (which has now been running for 17 years!) will be Saturday 20th October 2018. Bookings are now open.

This is an all-day bus tour led by ECOdesign Architect Nigel Bell, and is fun and informative. It is a 'must see' for those thinking of building or renovating within the Mountains and elsewhere. Participants learn from those that have done it – be it straw, earth, recycled or conventional materials, sustainable renovations, solar-cells, passive solar and/or funky home design! Mostly, these are not 'grand design' but achievable and homely, contextual and sustainable, community-level design.

Nigel seeks out what's interesting and different, explaining the sustainability issues, regulations and performance. When visiting the homes, it's over to those

who've done it – be it the owners, builder, architect or designer! Be inspired by the thought, the skill and the lifestyle – those who've made the transition from idea to reality. We usually visit five very different homes (upper Mountains, lower Mountains) with an occasional demonstration of construction techniques. The tours are very popular, with many people coming back for more. So register your interest and book early on-line to ensure your place on the bus.

It's a low-cost community event, with all money raised going towards Cittaslow Katoomba Blue Mountains projects. Cost for Individual Registration is \$90; and cost for Group Registration (2 or more) is \$85 per person.

Go to <http://ecohomestour.com.au/> to find out more and to book your seat.

Threatened Species Day event—a review by Don Morison

Wentworth Falls School of Arts was packed for our highly varied Threatened Species Day event. After President Madi Maclean's welcome, experienced bird guide **Carol Probets** spoke first. For 17 years, Carol's career has been heavily dependent on the Regent Honeyeater. With only 350-400 birds left, it is a species that Australian and overseas bird lovers wish to witness in its natural habitat. Carol took us from her sightings of large numbers in the Capertee Valley at the turn of the century through that valley's ongoing role as the honeyeater's most important area of habitat.

Carol drew attention to the significance of nectar-providing plants like Yellow Box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*), Box Mistletoe and Needle-leaf Mistletoe. She emphasised how susceptible nectar providing plants are to drought and how easy it is for natural enemies like the Australian Noisy Miner bird to attack Regent Honeyeaters once their numbers dwindle. Carol's own property and other private properties provide the major usable honeyeater habitat and covenants are proving crucial in preserving it.

The long-established author and TAFE teacher, **Margaret Baker**, gave an address on the Silver-leaved Mountain Gum *Eucalyptus pulverulenta*. Her contribution, along with that of botanist **Doug Benson**, who spoke about Deanes Boronia

(*Boronia deanei*), gave attendees considerable food for thought about the future of threatened native plant species in the Greater Blue Mountains.

Eucalyptus pulverulenta was named in 1819 at Kew Gardens in London after a sample was collected during Governor Lachlan Macquarie's first expedition from Emu Ford to Bathurst. Currently, of only about 5,000 plants still believed to exist, 3,000 of them are located in a narrow band from the Bowenfels-Hartley area to Orange.

Boronia deanei was first collected by the railway engineer Henry Deane when he was investigating the route for the Newnes shale tramway near Clarence Siding in 1906. Today, small numbers of the sub-species *deanei* are found in swampy areas of the state forest on Newnes Plateau and in Kanangra-Boyd National Park, while the sub-species *acutifolia* is found at three locations near escarpments in southern NSW.

Both Margaret Baker and Doug Benson made an effort to explain the context of the natural and geological history in which these examples of threatened species might have come to occupy their modern-day ecological niches and how important they were likely to be in allowing scientists to continue addressing unsolved puzzles about the ecological systems of eastern



Kalang Morrison-Jones spoke about Glider possums in the Blue Mountains Australia.

Margaret Baker especially emphasised the close association of the *Eucalyptus pulverulenta* with rhyolite formations in the Coxs River catchment and how much could be lost if the present level of quarrying rhyolite continues. Doug believed the *Boronia deanei* populations were remnants of what existed in glacial times 15,000 years ago when mallee ecosystems were widespread. Margaret and Doug thought that planting new seedlings was no substitute for strict preservation of existing habitats.

Kalang Morrison-Jones gave a summary of his efforts to spend time in areas like the Kedumba Valley where native mammals were easy to observe. He mentioned that various glider possum species were present in the Greater Blue Mountains including Greater Gliders, Yellow-bellied Gliders, Squirrel Gliders, Sugar Gliders and at least one species of Feather-tailed Gliders. However, the first three species are declining in numbers.

In a 2017 survey, Kalang informed us, Peter and Judy Smith were able to find Greater Gliders at only 13 of 20 locations where the species had previously been detected.

Kate Smith took us on a fascinating history trip through artists' efforts to depict Australian native bird species. She began with George Raper's 1789 watercolour of a Glossy Black



An oversized Regent Honeyeater stares back at Carol Probets

Cockatoo. It pleased her that, by 1793, the convicted forger Thomas Watling had been assigned to a master at Sydney Cove who directed him to draw the Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo.

Thomas Davies drew a specimen of a Gang Gang Cockatoo found in Victoria in 1803 and John Lewin obtained a specimen of a Galah from John Oxley's expedition along the Macquarie River in 1818. Kate acknowledged the Goulds and the Caleys and gave a special tribute to William T Cooper for representing the ecological habitats of Australian parrots in his images. She lamented that, if loss of natural food and habitat shifted most species to tiny remote parcels of land, city and town based artists would, in the future, be practising their skills entirely on Galahs and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos.



Greater Glider (Kate Smith)

Photographer **Akos Lumnitzer** gave a good summary of the six owl species found in the Blue Mountains. The photographs of all the owl species that he presented were so good that they overshadowed his carefully prepared text. I hope we all got the message that owls are threatened by unintentional secondary poisoning, loss of tree hollows, habitat clearing and loss of prey species, including the backburning of areas during active fires removing massive numbers of the species that owls prey on from the owl's traditional habitats.

The main impression from Akos' delightful images was that even the swooping birds and the hatchlings were right there in the auditorium with us.



Leionema lachnaeoides, one of the "Cliffhanging five" in Upper BM

Blue Mountains songwriter **Jim Low** performed his songs about the *Wollemia nobilis* (Wollemi Pine) and the Thylacine. Jim's memories of the sentiments that spurred him to write the songs highlighted the depth of the sense of loss felt when a species is lost. Jim was followed by **Vera Wong and Michaela Jones**, National Parks and Wildlife Service scientists stationed at Katoomba. They gave us an overview of State Government programs designed to preserve threatened species in the wild including the "Save Our Species" program, scheduled to run until 2021. We were informed that the Regent Honeyeater, Spotted-tailed Quoll, Blue Mountains Water Skink, Booroolong Frog, Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby and Koala were among animal species to protect. Michaela took particular pride in progress with the Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby in the Jenolan Caves area. The "Cliffhanging Five" refers to five threatened plants of the Upper Blue Mountains. These are *Leionema*

lachnaeoides, *Euphrasia bowdeniae*, *Epacris hamiltonii*, *Pherosphaera fitzgeraldii* and *Isopogon fletcheri*. More details are available on the Blue Mountains Conservation Society website.

Haydn Washington from the Pangea Research Centre spoke about the "extinction of caring" as a threat to species that are still with us but could easily become extinct. Haydn's latest book is called "A Sense of Wonder Towards Nature". He referred to four threatened plant species found in the Greater Blue Mountains, the *Prostanthera stricta*, the *Veronica blakelyi*, the *Pultenaea* species Olinda and the *Leionema scopulinum*. He recited a poem he had written, "Kinship song", a poem celebrating the Glossy Black Cockatoo.

Wyn Jones, Blue Mountains botanist, referred to the "perpetual pentagram" which relates environment, ethics, education, ecology and economics.

Our sincere thanks go to all the presenters who so generously donated their time and expertise. It was the passion of the speakers that made the day a success. We also thank Jacqueline Reid, Executive Officer, Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area for her support. The planning and running of the day was truly a team effort and we thank the many Conservation Society volunteers who helped in so many ways.

Photographs in this article by Alan Page.



An appreciative audience

Youth activists claiming their right to a future Clare Power



A recent conversation about the demographics of climate change activists has prompted me to share some examples this month of youth-led climate change activism in Australia and abroad. The more I looked into this, the more hope and inspiration I felt. These are only a very few short examples of thousands of actions being taken by young people actively working towards assuring a liveable climate for theirs and future generations.

Australian Youth Climate Coalition (AYCC) which is Australia's largest youth-run organisation has over 150,000 members, and their mission is to build a movement of young people leading solutions to the climate crisis. Their major campaigns at the moment are Stop Adani, Protecting the Reef, Switched on Schools to repower schools with renewable energy and Banning Fracking in the Northern Territory. See more at <http://www.aycc.org.au/> An important AYCC initiative is Seed, which is Australia's first Indigenous youth climate network whose vision is for a just and sustainable future with strong cultures and communities, powered by renewable energy. Amelia Telford, a young Bundjalung woman is the national director and founder of Seed. Amelia was awarded National NAIDOC Youth of the Year in 2014, Bob Brown's Young Environmentalist for 2015 and Australian Geographic Young Conservationist in 2015. <https://www.seedmob.org.au/>

Frontline Action on Coal is involved in civil disobedience and non-violent direct action against the world's largest coal port in Newcastle. Recently, two young members of Frontline Action on Coal were involved in direct actions at Newcastle Port. Ballyn Teagle, 17, who was arrested for this act, stated "I'm worried about my future and the future of my peers. The fact that we have no meaningful plan to transition from fossil fuels frustrates me beyond belief. We have had the technology for years and still our leaders drag their feet, actively ignoring the obvious warning signs of a world heating up." University student Sarah Barron, who was also involved, stated "Australia exports more coal than any other country, this makes us one of the worst

contributors to climate change. Setting domestic emissions targets — something our governments have so far failed to do — is not enough. Mining and exporting coal in the face of what is an already spiralling climatic crisis is to condemn my generation and those to follow". Members of Frontline action are also blockading the Adani site. See more at <https://www.frontlineaction.org/>

On a global scale the UN Climate Change body has recognised youth as an official constituency called "YOUNGO" (Youth + NGO). YOUNGO functions as both the official conduit for youth participation in UN climate talks and as a global network of youth and youth-focused organisations

that work on climate change and engage with UN Climate Change. YOUNGO provides constituency submissions on various topics as and when called for by UN Climate Change, sends representatives to various UN Climate Change meetings throughout the year, and engages directly at annual COPs (Conference of the Parties) and intersessionals.

In the USA in 2015, a group of 21 youth filed a constitutional climate lawsuit, called Juliana v. U.S., against the U.S. government. Their complaint asserts that, through the government's affirmative actions that cause climate change, it has violated the youngest generation's constitutional rights to life, liberty, and property, as well as failed to protect essential public trust resources. Despite many hurdles, and interventions from the fossil fuel industry and Trump's government it seems that the U.S. District Court's trial start date is now October 29, 2018. Follow this case at <https://www.ourchildrenstrust.org/>

Earth Guardians is an organisation plaintiff in this case. Their 18 year old Youth Director Xiuhtezcatl Martinez is an indigenous climate activist, hip-hop artist, and powerful voice on the front lines of a global youth-led environmental movement. He has been an activist since the age of six when he began speaking to United Nations summits. He has worked locally on many environmental issues, travels globally to educate and support campaigns and has written a book called 'We Rise: Earth Guardians Guide to Building a Movement that Restores the Planet'.

Simultaneously the Zero Hour movement in the US is gaining momentum. It was founded by 16-year-old Jamie Margolin and is led by young people of colour, most of whom are between 16 and 18 years old, with some as young as 13 and some in their twenties. They marched on Washington in July 2018 and organised 'sister' protests around the globe. They lobby, protest and educate. Their platform is summarised as: Respect the rights of Indigenous people; Recognize the constitutional

Continued on page 7.

Youth activists claiming their right to a future

Continued from page 6.

right of youth to a liveable climate"; Eliminate all fossil fuel subsidies "immediately"; and Ban all new fossil fuel infrastructure and make massive investment in local solar and wind energy companies" in the coming years.

Meanwhile, in our region, 350 Pacific is a youth led grassroots network working with 15 Pacific Island nations to fight climate change from the Pacific Islands. They work to highlight the vulnerabilities of the island countries to climate change while showcasing their strength and resilience as a people. Their key approach is to empower young people to understand the issue of climate change and to take action to protect and enrich their islands, cultures, and oceans and to achieve global action on climate change with the knowledge that the future of their islands depend on their actions. These Pacific warriors explain that for 20 years their people asked world leaders to take action to stop polluting the

atmosphere. In the face of inaction, warriors of the Pacific are rising peacefully to protect the Pacific Islands from climate change with the message: We are not drowning. We are fighting. <https://350pacific.org/>

In closing, although this is not directly youth related you might like to watch a recent and very powerful video described as a poetic expedition between two islanders, Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner from the Marshall Islands and Aka Niviâna from Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland), connecting their realities of melting glaciers and rising sea levels. These two women use their poetry to showcase the linkages between their homelands in the face of climate change, providing a glimpse of how large, and yet so small and interdependent our world is. <https://350.org/rise-from-one-island-to-another/>

Images: (page 6) our future is our constitutional right <http://ecomerge.blogspot.com/2017/03/suing-for-right-to-habitable-climate.html> (page 7) pacific warriors <https://takvera.blogspot.com/2014/10/pacific-climate-warriors-join.html>



"Hidden in Plain View: the Aboriginal People of Coastal Sydney"

Paul Irish, New South Publishing, 2017

A wonderful account.

This is a detailed, "zoomed in", compassionate, understanding and close look at the lives of Aboriginal people in the Sydney coastal area from 1788 to the end of the 19th century. That small community was always there, always present and adapting, always "entangled" with the ever more disruptive European influence, though not always noticed – hidden in plain view.

Read this book in parallel with other more "zoomed out" accounts of these interactions for deep and intimate insights into what it was like for the Aboriginal people – individuals, families and clan groups – who lived through these times, and for their descendants, who are still here, who "continue to live in the landscape, in plain view for all who care to look."

[“Zoomed out” accounts to read include: *The Sydney Wars* (Stephen Gapp); 1787 (Nick Brodie); *Dark Emu* (Bruce Pascoe); *The Biggest Estate on Earth* (Bill Gammage); *Aboriginal Biocultural Knowledge in South-Eastern Australia* (Fred Cahir et al.); *Searching for The Secret River* (Kate Grenville); *Blue Mountains Dreaming* (Eugene Stockton & John Merriman).

Alan Lane

New lease to be issued for Katoomba airfield, Medlow Bath

The Department of Industry (Crown Land and Water) is currently considering issuing a new long term lease over Katoomba Airfield at Medlow Bath to a private commercial operator.

Short term licence issued

After the previous lease over the airfield expired, the Department advised it conducted an Expression-of-Interest (EOI) process in 2017 seeking parties interested in entering into a new lease. As a consequence of submissions received via the EOI process, a short term licence was issued to private commercial operators Derek and Floyd Larsen commencing on 1 February 2018. The Department has assured the Society this licence is “terminable at will, and represents an interim tenure” while conditions of a future long term lease are negotiated with the licensees.

Since commencement of the new licence, the Department has said the new licensees have undertaken works at the airfield including removing various obsolete and dilapidated structures and equipment, abandoned waste materials, chemicals and asbestos, as well as improving site access controls to prevent illegal access and vehicular disturbance to vegetation and soil.

The Department advises that it anticipates receiving from the licensees within a matter of weeks a business plan that will set out the scope of future activities it proposes to conduct on the site, as well as a proposed environmental management plan for ongoing environmental rehabilitation and conservation of the site. The Department has assured the Society that “environmental management is at the forefront of the Department’s leasing negotiations for Katoomba Airfield” given “the sensitivities of the land and its location within a world heritage area”.

Community consultation

The Society asked the Department what community consultation will be undertaken prior to the issuing of any long term lease. The Department confirmed that at a minimum any proposal to grant a lease over Crown land must be notified on the Crown Lands website for at least 28 days. However in terms of any new lease at Katoomba Airfield, the Department stated that “having regard to the location, nature and history of the site, more intensive community engagement may be expected”.

The Department advised that they are currently identifying potential stakeholders in terms of future community engagement in relation to the new lease and that the “Blue Mountains Conservation Society is considered to be a key stakeholder, and will be actively consulted”.

Potential impacts of a new lease

Whilst the Society recognises the value of Katoomba Airfield for emergency uses, we are concerned about the environmental impacts of any new long term lease issued to a private commercial operator. The airfield is completely surrounded by the Blue Mountains National Park. Any new lease arrangement with a private commercial operator must provide adequate safeguards

to protect the threatened ecological community on-site as well as endangered species likely to be present. Other concerns in terms of operations at the site include soil erosion, groundwater contamination and weed invasion.

Depending on the frequency, duration and intensity of air operations proposed by the new licensees, there is also likely to be noise impacts as well as loss of amenity and privacy for local residents.

Support for the airfield to be included in the National Park

Previous government assessments of Katoomba Airfield have consistently recommended that the site be added to the Blue Mountains National Park and only used for emergency uses. In December 1999, Blue Mountains City Council resolved to oppose the continuation of the private lease and requested that the land be incorporated into the Blue Mountains National Park. In 2000, an assessment of the site was undertaken by the then Department of Land and Water Conservation. As one of the contributors to this process, the Society received a letter dated 2 Nov 2000 in which the department stated it

“proposed to add the area to the Blue Mountains National Park upon expiry of the current lease subject to discussions yet to be held between the relevant stakeholders....Upon addition of the area to the National Park it is proposed that those facilities required for bushfire surveillance and suppression including emergency use of the airfield and any infrastructure will be maintained by agreement of the relevant authorities. The areas of the site not required will be returned to natural bushland.”

In 2008, the then Department of Lands undertook yet another assessment in terms of the site, and invited Blue Mountains City Council to participate in a consultation process for the future use and management of the site. Council’s submission objected to the sale of the land or the reissuing of a private lease. Council’s preferred option was again that the site be limited to emergency use and be incorporated into the Blue Mountains National Park.

The Society strongly supports the recommendations of Council and the relevant state government agencies in 1999, 2000 and 2008, and that the land should not be privately leased, and that the site be incorporated into the Blue Mountains National Park and used for emergency and bushfire air operations only.

This support by Council and the relevant agencies for the airfield to be included in the national park unfortunately has not continued. The Department of Industry has advised the Society that in recent discussions with other government agencies and Council in regard to the new license that neither “expressed its opposition to the planned EOI campaign...nor has either raised any objection to the outcome”

What can you do?

(Details in the continuation of this article on page 9)

Continued from page 8 ... New lease to be issued for Katoomba airfield, Medlow Bath.

What you can do

Write to Mr Mark Maloney, Projects Manager, Crown Property Services, Department of Industry - Crown Lands and Water, 10 Valentine Avenue Parramatta PO Box 2185 or email mark.maloney@crownland.nsw.gov.au

- Express your concerns about the impact of any new lease, including potential negative environmental impacts, noise and loss of local amenity;
- Ask that the local community, including potentially impacted residents, are properly consulted on any new lease;
- Ask that you be considered a key stakeholder in any upcoming community consultations in terms of the new lease over the airfield.

An interlude Christine Davies

Once a bustling mine site, Hartley Vale is now a sleepy little village. All is quiet and peaceful, with kangaroos, sheep, cattle, alpacas and the occasional wombat seen grazing in the paddocks.

The production of oil product from shale was a highly significant Australian industry - Hartley Vale was one of two areas of shale developed in 1865 and continued productively for longer than any of the oil-shale works in Australia, for 48 years. (You can read more at <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails.aspx?ID=1960033>)

Still standing is the historic Comet Inn, built in 1879, where workers found refreshments. The inn was named for a brand of kerosene produced in the valley.

During a journey from Lithgow to Blackheath it is sometimes nice to turn off the highway and take a leisurely drive through Hartley Vale to the Darling Causeway and Mount Victoria. It was late afternoon and we slowed down and stopped to look at three kangaroos grazing quietly in the paddock on the other side of a dam.

A Willy Wagtail danced along near the fence, catching insects. And then we spotted two birds in front of the dam - we decided they might be peewits, too small for magpies. We noticed there were sandstone pagodas on the surrounding hills and the scenery was lovely.

A Pied Cormorant flew out of the dam and landed on the grassy bank to shake and then stretch its wings to dry. A raven flew from behind and landed beside the cormorant and the cormorant flew back into the water. The raven walked around the dam and then flew away. After the raven had left the cormorant came back out of the water and eventually returned to the same place to dry its wings.

11 wood ducks wandered towards the dam, feeding on the short grass. Trees were reflected in the water. The three kangaroos continued grazing quietly in the paddock on the other side of the dam.

Gardens of Stone Visitors Map

The Visitors Map is full of suggested walks and trips. It is in full colour, 60 by 85 cm in size, and covers the entire Gardens of Stone region at a 1:100,000 scale, making it ideal for planning your next trip to the area. You can buy a map on the society's website at

www.bluemountains.org.au/GoS_VisitorsMap.htm

You can become a member of Blue Mountains Conservation Society

- **Post** this Application Form with your cheque or money order to: Blue Mountains Conservation Society, PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls, NSW 2782, OR

- **Join online** at: www.bluemountains.org.au

(Use capitals please—even for email address)

Name(s) 1.
2.
3.

Address: PC

Phone(s)

Email

I/We agree to support the aims and objectives of the Society as set out on reverse side of this membership application:

Please sign if named above.

Signature(s) 1.
2.
3.

MEMBERSHIP FEES (please circle one item)

Single \$35 Concession (Senior/Student)\$25

Household \$40 Household Concession \$30

Corporate (negotiable)

Membership (circled above) \$

Donation (tax deductible) \$

Bushwalkers: please add

\$20 per walker per annum. \$

TOTAL AMOUNT \$.....

Send my copy of Hut News by

Please tick box mail internet only

Would you like to be involved in any of the following activities or working groups? (Please underline):

Land use/development issues; Environmental Education; Threatened species issues; Website and social media; Plant nursery assistance; Bushcare; Publicity/photography; Water quality/sourcing studies; Administration;

ENQUIRIES: Phone 02 4757 1872

Email: membership@bluemountains.org.au

BMCS Planning & Development Resource Kit

Do you want to take action on an environmental issue in your neighbourhood or the Blue Mountains more broadly?

Do you want information about the laws and procedures relating to development and environmental protection?

Find out what **YOU** can do! Go to the Planning and Development Resource Kit www.bluemountains.org.au/pdtk>Welcome.shtml

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Blue Mountains Conservation Society is a community organisation working to achieve the preservation and regeneration of the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains.

The Society believes that World Heritage status provides an opportunity for local community members to become custodians of the unique biodiversity and scenery of the Blue Mountains.

The Mission of the Society is to help conserve the natural environment of the Blue Mountains.

The Aims and Objectives of the Society are to:

- Disseminate and foster an understanding of the ideals of Conservation.
- Promote the need for ecological sustainability.
- Protect the natural environment—flora, fauna, habitat, water, land and air.
- Actively oppose those human activities which degrade or destroy the natural environment.
- Repair the adverse effects of human activities upon the environment.
- Encourage the love of the natural environment by conducting a regular program of bushwalks.
- Increase the pool of expert knowledge about the natural environment, through meetings, excursions, research and other activities.
- Provide information to the public on matters of Conservation, especially through the Conservation Hut at the Valley of the Waters, Wentworth Falls.
- Maintain close and friendly relations with like-minded groups.

A BEQUEST: Please remember us in your Will.

The Law Society of NSW recommends the following wording: "I bequeath the sum of \$..... to the Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc. for its general purposes and declare that the receipt of the treasurer for the time being of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society shall be complete discharge to my executors in respect of any sum paid to the Blue Mountains Conservation Society".

Roadside carnage Christine Davies



In mid September, during a drive from the Blue Mountains to Batemans Bay via Goulburn, we were distressed to see so many dead native animals on the road, sometimes two or three together.

The countryside is very dry and, with natural food already reduced by land clearing and introduced grazing

stock, native animals need to travel further afield to find food and they find it on roadsides where moisture runoff makes the grass greener.

There was road kill on all roads, but the Kings Highway (between Canberra and Batemans Bay) was the worst by far.

It was sad to see so many dead kangaroos, some of them very large, and it was of real concern to see an equal number of dead wombats. While this species of wombat (*Vombatus ursinus*) is commonly called the Common Wombat, it is a solitary animal and the usual single offspring develops and lives with its mother for 14-20 months before becoming independent. This is not a high reproduction rate and how long can local populations survive this rate of unnatural fatalities?

According to the Australian Museum website (<https://australianmuseum.net.au/common-wombat>): "At the time of European settlement, the Common Wombat was widespread from southeastern Queensland, through New South Wales along the Great Dividing Range to most of Victoria (except the northwestern corner of the state). It was also present in the southeast of South Australia, in Tasmania and on many of the larger Bass Strait Islands." But today it has a discontinued and fragmented distribution and is absent from many parts where it formerly ranged.

On the way home from the coast, I decided to count wombats on the Kings Highway between Braidwood and Bungendore, a distance of 46 kilometres. In the first 25 kilometres after leaving Braidwood, I counted 26 dead wombats by the road, another 5 in the next 21 kilometres.

Sue, Marilyn and Rosemary, travelling the same route in another vehicle on the same day, had the same idea but counted dead wombats all the way back to Hartley ... 108 in 330 km.

It appears that somebody checks marsupial's pouches for live joeys and marks each animal with a painted cross. Should the animals be moved off the road and out of sight so that road travellers don't have to witness the carnage? I don't think so. We need to be made aware of what is happening.

What can be done to protect native wildlife on our roads? Can anybody provide information about what is being done and what can be done?

What can we do personally? We could avoid driving between dusk and dawn and slow down. If by chance you do collide with a female marsupial, you could check the pouch and contact WIRES 1300 094 737 if you find live young.

Photo: Mt Airlie Wombat - Phil Turnedge.

Threatened plants of the Greater Blue Mountains: The 'Cliffhanging Five' plus two

Judy Smith

'Saving Our Species' (SOS) is a statewide program that aims to secure threatened species in the wild. SOS, in partnership with the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, has recently produced a brochure and some short videos to raise awareness of five threatened plant species restricted to cliff-line habitats in the upper Blue Mountains.

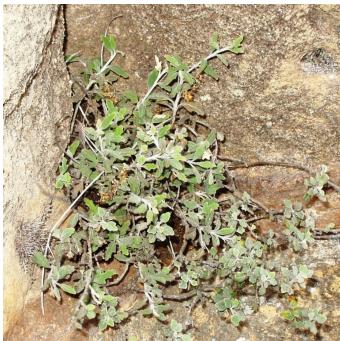
At the Society's recent Threatened Species Day event we were fortunate to have two local SOS officers, Vera Wong and Michaela Jones, tell us about the 'Cliffhanging Five'. *Leionema lachnaeoides*, *Euphrasia bowdeniae* and Dwarf Mountain Pine *Pherosphaera fitzgeraldii* (previously *Microstrobos*) hang out around south-facing cliffs between Wentworth Falls and Blackheath. The other two cliffhangers, *Epacris hamiltonii* and *Isopogon fletcheri*, live on more northerly clifflines around the Grose Valley in the Blackheath area. The well-illustrated brochure urges rock climbers and bushwalkers who venture into the fragile cliffline habitats to take care.

Living with the 'Cliffhanging Five' of the upper Blue Mountains are two other small threatened plants: Evans Sedge *Lepidosperma evansianum* and *Xanthosia scopulicola*. Evans Sedge grows on wet cliff faces and has long, narrow hanging leaves with a shallow channel on either side. The small, greyish *Xanthosia scopulicola*, only described in 2002, survives and flowers in tiny crevices in drier parts of the cliffline. The distributions of

these two species are tiny: *Xanthosia scopulicola* is only known from the cliffs above the Jamison Valley (Wentworth Falls - Katoomba) and Evans Sedge from three locations in Blackheath and Wentworth Falls. Most records of these two are from within but near the perimeter of Blue Mountains National Park.

The sandstone cliff-lines of the upper Mountains provide limited but immensely varied habitats for plants. Small crumbly shale lenses squeezed between the massive sandstones of the cliff faces provide opportunities for plants as do crevices in the sandstone. Cliff habitats range from very dry to perennially wet. South facing cliffs are a world apart from those facing north and west. The seven threatened cliffhangers, which occur nowhere else in the world, are a treasured part of the outstanding biodiversity of the Blue Mountains.

So too are the many other rare plants that also grow on our cliff-lines, species such as *Goodenia rostrivalvis*, Rock Sprengelia (*Sprengelia monticola*, photographed below), Cliff Teatree (*Leptospermum rupicola*) and others. These species were included on the old National List of Rare or Threatened Australian Plants, but with the subsequent introduction of State and Commonwealth threatened species legislation, conservation efforts have become increasingly directed towards threatened species and other rare, near-threatened species, which lack legislative protection, are too often forgotten.



Photos (left to right)
Evans Sedge
(*Lepidosperma evansianum*),
Xanthosia scopulicola, and
Rock Sprengelia
(*Sprengelia monticola*) by
Peter Smith

To a waterfall

Valley of the Waters, Wentworth Falls

No photograph could say your secret charms,
therefore let me try with these my words...

your murmuring tinkle delights my ear,
gentle, timeless music of water on stone

your patient waters wedded to ancient grooves
fall like jewelled hair over sandstone shoulders

rock-ledges dark and green
now flash silver in a streak of sun

a slater skates on a bubbling pool,
a crayfish pokes an eye from under a stone

and the fragrance of your moist, ferny bed
is cool and heady as a Bordeaux wine cellar.

Brendan Doyle

VALLEY OF THE WATERS BUSHCARE GROUP

The Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group meets on the second Saturday of each month, 9am - noon. Tools and gloves are available. Bring a drink, a snack and a sunhat.

NEW MEMBERS ARE WELCOME.

Phone Karen 4757 1929.

A BLUE TRAIL will return in
November 2018 Hut News

Hut News, No. 363, October 2018— Page 11.

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY Inc: BUSHWALKING ACTIVITIES

Membership of the bushwalking group is open to Society members. The BMCS Bushwalking Guide which explains the numbered grades can be found on the Society's website www.bluemountains.org.au or can be posted on request. For more information call Maurice Kerkham 4739 4942, mobile 04024 02783, email mauricekerkham@hotmail.com or write to PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782. **Late changes to the program will be published on the website.**

SATURDAY WALKS: Usually a full day longer walk at a faster pace. Bring morning tea, lunch and adequate water. If you are a new walker to Saturday walks, before attending contact the designated contact person or the Group Co-ordinator Harold Thompson harold.thompson@bigpond.com 6355 1762 or mobile 0409 010 737

Saturday Walks driver reimbursement: *In an effort to ensure that car drivers are adequately compensated for the use of their vehicles a driver reimbursement policy applies* (Check www.bluemountains.org.au Saturday Walks page for details)

- Oct 13 Bungleboori. Crosscut Ridge and the delightful Midsummer Night's Grotto.** Some off-track. 7km. Gr3. Map Wallangambe. Contact Hugh 0423 309 854.
- Oct 20 Waterfalls Walk out of Hazelbrook.** Leader Bob 0408947325. Meet at Hazelbrook Stn CP South Side. 8.30am, 8km, Gr3, Map Katoomba
- Oct 27 Sassafras Gully,** Mike 47573660. Meet at Falconbridge Stn CP North Side. 12km, GR3, Map, Springwood.
- Nov 3 Mt Wilson Fire Stn.** To Wollangambe River. Leader Alice 47393086, Meet at WF stn CP 8.00am, or ring Alice. 10km. GR3. Map Mt Wilson.
- Nov 10 Kamarah Head.** Leader Bob 0408947325 Meet at Wentworth Falls stn CP 8.30am. 7km. Gr3. Map Mt Wilson.

MONDAY LEISURE WALKS: Short Day walks of 3-5 hours, suitable for walkers of an average fitness. Bring morning tea and lunch and adequate water. The Group Co-ordinator is Keith Dorrian, 4736 1010, 04111 62345, keithdor53@hotmail.com

- Oct 8 Bowtell's Bridge.** 15 km on fire trail and bush track. Approx 400m ascent overall. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 8.40 am. Chris Smith 4787 6979. Grade 3. Oct 15 **October Creek, Mt Wilson.** A mix of on-track and off-track walking in Heath and Bushland. Map Mt Wilson. Mt Victoria Station 8-50am. Car Pool Fare \$5. Meredith 4782 4823 Grade 3
- Oct 22 Cronulla to Kurnell and Captain Cook's Landing Site.** About 11.5 Km one way via beach and cliff top tracks. Exit at Kurnell abt.3-40pm. Return by bus from Kurnell to Cronulla Station. Long day Meet Central at top of escalators 8-40am Then Plt 25 for 8-50am. train to Cronulla Tracy Ph 0434 362 611 Grade 3.
- Oct 29 Up Coxs Road and Down Lockyers Pass. Mt Victoria.** 9.5km circuit. Mt Victoria Station 8.45am. Car Pool. Fare \$5 Ros Ph 0417 261 465. Grade 2/3
- Nov 5 Iron Pot Ridge Megalong Valley** Blackheath Station 8-40am Car Pool Fare \$5-00 Meredith Ph 4782 4823 Grade 3
- Nov 12 Ikara Head and Girraween Cave Mt Victoria.** Following the ridgeline to Ikara Head visiting Girraween Cave along the way. About 6Km Mt Victoria Station 8-50 am Car pool Freda email fredanarr@outlook.com Grade 2.

THURSDAY PLEASURE WALKS: Walks 2-3 hours conducted at a leisurely pace to suit walkers on the day. Bring morning tea, adequate water and lunch if noted. Group Co-ordinator is Beverley Thompson, 4757 2076, denfenella12@bigpond.com

- Oct 18 Bents Basin.** Meet Springwood Station behind Westpac Bank 8.30am. Leaders Jeanette and Alan 0414 956 060. Car pool \$5. **Bookings essential.** Take lunch. Grade 2
- Oct 25 Sculptures by the Sea.** Meet top of escalators Central Station 9.30am. Leader Beverley 4757 2076. Take lunch. Grade 1
- Nov 1 Bundeena.** Meet top of escalators Central Station 9.30am. Leader Keith 0411 162 345. Bring your cossie and lunch. Grade 1
- Nov 8 Dargan's Arch, Bell.** Meet Mt Victoria Station 9.50am. Leader Maurice 4739 4942. Car pool \$5. Take lunch. Grade 2
- Nov 15 Rigby Hill and Wall's Lookout.** Views of Grose Valley towards Hanging Rock. Meet Mount Victoria Station 9.50am. Leader Beverley 4757 2076. Car pool \$5. Take lunch. Grade 2

Bushwalkers, support the protest walk to save Kosciuszko Christine Davies

In June, the NSW Parliament passed the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act 2018, which sets a disturbing precedent by giving an introduced species greater protection than native animals in Kosciuszko National Park. In response, environmental groups and bushwalking clubs are organising a protest walk. The walk is from Sydney to the summit of Mount Kosciuszko and will happen between 27 October and 9 December 2018. You can do all the walk, some of it, or help in other ways. Register now as a walker or a supporter. Find out more and register now at <https://savekosci.org/>

This Government decision affects the Blue Mountains too. In recent years, feral horses have been released on Newnes Plateau in areas which are included in our campaign to have the Gardens of Stone Stage 2 protected. Our native species are at risk.

Bushwalkers, why not join in the walk for a day or a couple of hours. You could form a group or go along yourself to offer Blue Mountains Conservation Society support.

In 1992, Wyn Jones organized a walk from Muswellbrook to Mittagong to promote World Heritage for the Blue Mountains. A few people did the whole walk. Others did parts of the walk for a few hours or a few days and supported the walkers in many other ways. I joined the walk for six days from Katoomba to Kanangra. It was an unforgettable life experience and good to be part of an important environmental campaign.

Kosciuszko – keep it as a Park, not a Paddock!

Society bushwalks on facebook:
Visit <https://www.facebook.com/bmcslongerbushwalks/>

Plant Study Group Thursday Interpretive Nature Group

For information, go to our website www.bluemountains.org.au and click on "Activities"