



Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc

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Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow

16 December 2025

Dr. Will Batson
Area Manager
NPWS Upper Blue Mountains
E: npws.uppermountains@environment.nsw.gov.au

Dear Dr Batson,

Remediation of Gordon Creek, Leura, Blue Mountains National Park, National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)

Blue Mountains Conservation Society (the Society) is a community-based volunteer organisation with over 900 members. The Society advocates for the protection and conservation of the local and regional natural environment.

The Society is concerned about the highly eroded condition and ongoing poor ecological health of Gordon Creek, south Leura. The NSW NPWS is the relevant management authority.

Approximately 65 per cent of Blue Mountains streams exhibit good to excellent ecological health, as measured by macroinvertebrate (water bug) surveys conducted by Blue Mountains City Council (BMCC) Healthy Waterways Team (<https://www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/waterquality>). Gordon Creek is one of the unhealthiest creeks in the Blue Mountains (<https://www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/waterquality>). Stream health monitoring conducted by BMCC Aquatic Systems Officers reveals that since 1998, Gordon Creek has regularly exhibited poor ecological health. In the past ten years, "Poor" ecological health has been recorded on five occasions: 2015, 2017, 2021, 2022, 2024. This data suggests that the long-term health of the stream is deteriorating. Only in 2019 has a "Good" result been recently recorded. Results for 2020 and 2023 were only "Fair" (<https://www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/waterquality>).

In particular, the upper section of the NPWS managed Spencer Street/Gordon Creek tributary exhibits extensive, severe erosion, including highly eroded Blue Mountains Swamp peat substrate (see illustrations). As you are aware, Blue Mountains Swamps are a protected ecological community.

Frequent, unchecked high velocity stormwater flows are the prime contributor to the generally poor health of Gordon Creek. The fine-grained alluvial soils of the valley-situated stream are easily eroded. The stormwater flows destroy aquatic macroinvertebrate habitat and diversity by undercutting stream banks, destroying indigenous riparian vegetation, widening the stream channel, reducing shaded areas, increasing turbidity and lowering water oxygen levels. Macroinvertebrate populations are literally swept away. Sections of the Spencer Street upper tributary now resemble a canal.



Healthy vegetation and stream banks Gordon Creek (2024)



Eroding peat swamp upper tributary Gordon Creek (2023)



Collapsing stream bank upper tributary Gordon Creek (2024)



Severe erosion upper tributary Gordon Creek (2025).

The Society acknowledges and commends the excellent bush regeneration work that is regularly conducted within the Gordon Creek catchment by NPWS and Blue Mountains City Council volunteer bushcare and landcare groups, and their professional staff. Unfortunately, much of the bushcarers' planting work along Gordon Creek has been eroded and washed away.



Former planted area now eroded upper tributary Gordon Creek (2025)

The Society is of the opinion that intensive, specialised stream restoration work is urgently required. The Society suggests that this work should prioritise effective management of high velocity stormwater flows, and stabilisation and appropriate revegetation of degraded stream banks.

Gordon Creek, with its highly urbanised and modified series of tributaries, is a challenging restoration scenario. Undertaking appropriate analysis of the causes of degradation and poor stream health, and examination of possible solutions, are vital first steps in the process of recovering ongoing, optimal ecological functioning.

The Society proposes that NPWS should arrange assessment of the stream and its tributaries by suitably qualified consultants, with the objective of developing an effective stream restoration plan. In particular, a fluvial geomorphologist should be engaged.

At the current rate of deterioration, it is quite possible that within fifty years the entire plateau section of Gordon Creek will be severely eroded and irretrievably ecologically impaired. Accordingly, the Society is of the opinion that a restoration plan should be developed and implemented as soon as possible.

Your consideration of the Society's concerns and proposals is highly appreciated and I look forward to your response. I would be pleased to answer any further enquiries and may be contacted on my email address: president@bluemountains.org.au .

Yours sincerely,



A. Lam

President,
Blue Mountains Conservation Society