

BIO REVOLUTION

Our guest speaker at the monthly meeting in July was Philip Dolan, a sustainability consultant and member of the Blue Mountains Building Designers Association. He has designed a 10 Star Energy Efficient straw bale house and domestic water and energy saving applications. His talk related to another passion of his, the production of biofuels, which he makes from recycled vegetable oil. He has been running cars with it for nearly 10 years on a variety of vehicles. This was a good follow up to our May talk by Mark Diesendorf who outlined how we can generate bioelectricity from crop residues to supply 20% of Australia's electricity needs by 2020 without using any additional (photo chrismadden) land. Ethanol fuel for petrol cars can also be made from crop residue. This month it was announced that a new low-emission fuel has begun flowing from Adelaide bowlers. Bio E-Flex, a blend of up to 85 per cent ethanol with petrol, known overseas as E85, is the result of a collaboration between a major petrol company, an Australian car manufacturer and the South Australian Government. It will be priced 20 c per litre below regular unleaded petrol. Most cars can already use Bio E10 Unleaded. Whilst Strobos welcomes these moves, there is no substitute for an efficient public transport or cycle system in our cities. Laurie



chain saws to remove debris from a section of the fire-trail. It was hard going. About half way through we reached a creek where we had some lunch and resumed for the rest of the day. Tuesday I arrived again at 7.30am well rugged up because it was going to be a very cold day. At Wentworth Falls we cleared a rock and some bushes from a popular track ending at the Conservation Hut. Back at Blackheath, I was given a tour of the greenhouse where they are growing native plants. The next day we drove straight to Echo point and parked before unloading all the equipment we would need to do



some repair work to the giant staircase. It was very steep and also a hard hat work area. We had to repair a section of the track that had been destroyed by falling rocks (picture). Thursday I arrived to find out someone from a Sydney suburb had left all of their furniture to the National Parks and we had to take a truck and collect it. Although it was boring I realised how necessary it was and was happy to be of some help. Friday My last day, I was asked to go with one of the men as he did the rounds of the park amenities we checked all the toilets. Although not the best of jobs, one of the most important for park visitors. When all was ready for the weekend we returned to the workshop where there were more signs to paint. As I went around the park with Ross he was able to give me lots of different information about the park upkeep and the different areas of work they cover. In only a week I saw areas of the bush I had not been to before as well as learning quite a few things. I enjoyed my week and recommend it to everyone. Daniel

A WEEK WITH NPWS

I am in year 10 at Katoomba High School and was fortunate enough to do my work experience with the National Parks and Wildlife Service based at Blackheath. Monday, we were told to wear work clothes, work boots hat and provide lunch as we would not be able to access shops. I arrived at 7.30am, nervous but happy to have a week off school and be outside. After being shown around the workshop I was given some park signs to paint. Then we drove down to Woodford catchment area, accessible only by a locked gate down the fire trail, where we had morning tea. Afterwards, we used

PLASTIKI

Following the successful launch of the next phase of our Drink Tap water campaign, the distinctive yellow water bottles, we became interested in the voyage of the PlastikI which sailed into Sydney this month. Your teacher should be receiving details how you can get the bottles for your school (picture)



The Plastiki is a boat made from 12500 recycled plastic water bottles and recyclable plastic. It left San Francisco on March 21 to raise awareness about plastic waste in our oceans. Every year at least one million seabirds and 100,000 marine mammals and sea turtles die when they become entangled or ingest plastic pollution. 70% of the Plastiki's buoyancy comes from the plastic bottles strapped to the recycled plastic hull and held together by an organic glue made from cashew nuts and sugar cane. The mast is a reclaimed aluminium irrigation pipe, and the sail is hand-made from recycled PET cloth. Powered by renewable



Photo: Luca Babini

energy such as solar panels, wind and propeller turbines, the Plastiki has a urine recycling unit and rainwater tank fitted to a hydroponic garden. "We proved that a boat made from plastic bottles can stand up to the harsh conditions of the Pacific," said expedition leader, David de Rothschild. He called for "change that can dramatically shift our daily habits away from an unnecessary and destructive addiction to single use plastics ... (and) a change in attitudes towards understanding, valuing and protecting one of our planet's most precious & important natural systems, our oceans." Alastair

HERITAGE BIRTHDAY

Is this what you want to see at the gateway to our National Park? It could happen under new laws passed by our State Government. How can this

happen on the 10th anniversary of the Greater Blue Mountains becoming World Heritage? To celebrate you can 'Make a Wish for World Heritage' on postcards sent to each of your schools, of what you would like for the future of the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. All these wishes will be collected, recorded and placed in the 'wishing well' until the Listing Day community celebration at Govetts Leap on Monday 29th November 2010 when they will be placed into the ceremonial campfire and symbolically released. The overall aim is to raise the profile of our World Heritage area and the get young people involved in protecting it through the Patrimonto youth heritage movement (emblem pictured above) For further information please contact the NSW NPWS World Heritage Unit (Bronwen Maxwell, Special Projects Coordinator, 0414 751354) or us at Katoomba High.

RECYCLED NESTS

Loss of habitat has had a dramatic impact on many native animals. Old growth trees containing natural hollows are now rare in urban and many rural environments. Students at Katoomba High are currently recycling drawers from the soon to be refurbished science rooms. They glue the drawers together to form boxes and attach hollow logs to simulate nesting sites in trees as seen in the picture



If you'd like one for your school contact the Strobos team at Katoomba High. www.bluemountains.org.au