

HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow's People"



Blue Mountains Timeline

Jim Smith will be speaking at our October general meeting about his Blue Mountains Timeline Project. The meeting will be held at the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls, on Friday 26 October at 7.30pm. Visitors are welcome.

Jim has been working to produce a first draft of a seasonal nature calendar for the Upper Blue Mountains. Much of it will be based on the research project he carried out at Jamison Creek, Wentworth Falls, between 1979 and 1993. Assisted by TAFE students, Jim banded many thousands of birds and captured and released many hundreds of small mammals.

The findings from this project will be combined with information gathered by other local observers and naturalists to produce a month by month list of the most obvious environmental and nature events in the upper Blue Mountains.

These seasonal calendars are now being produced all over Australia. The Timelines Australia Project is coordinated by the Gould League in Victoria. Jim's brother Michael published a book "Bush Mates" which contains the seasonal calendar for Nelson Bay. It was described in the Timelines newsletter as "probably the best regional nature guide ever written". Jim believes that an equally high quality guide to the seasons of the Blue Mountains is needed and will be an important tool for environmental education in the area. Jim will also discuss how the role of the naturalist, or close observer of nature, has changed within the modern conservation movement.

There is still time if you wish to add your observations to the calendar. Please send details of weather events, mass flowering events, stages in the behaviour or life cycle of local animals, that you look forward to or notice each year. When do they occur? Observations can be posted to Jim Smith at 65 Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls 2782.

Federal Election Fund

Throughout its 40 years, the Society has been active in election campaigns and written letters to candidates asking their views. "Meet the Candidates" nights were held in the old Hut.

During the last Council elections, we asked questions of the candidates on environmental issues and published the answers in an advertisement in the Blue Mountains Gazette. The questionnaire was successful in putting environmental issues before the candidates and the public, and environmental issues played

Society Campaigns for Funding

Blue Mountains Conservation Society is seeking \$12 million Commonwealth Funding for acquisition of Inholdings and \$400,000 per year for pest species management within the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

The Society is asking Federal Candidates to commit this funding to conserve the natural integrity of the World Heritage Area by allocating it to a Trust Fund, such as the Miles Dunphy Fund and dedicate it specifically for this use. This will ensure that when Inholdings come on the market, money is available to purchase them for the National Parks.

We are taking up the concerns expressed by the IUCN advisers to the World Heritage Committee. Our shared concern is that the World Heritage Area is not a consolidated area and has inholdings of State Forests and private land within the National Parks.

The World Heritage Area has 7 National Parks and Jenolan Caves Karst Reserve and covers 1 million hectares. 122 privately owned Inholdings have been identified in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area covering an area of 15,258 hectares.

Privately owned inholdings are parcels of land completely surrounded by Reserves or National Park. Private inholdings pose a threat because they are not managed for nature conservation. They are used for farming, quarries and orchards, so natural vegetation and habitat is commonly changed. Sometimes illegal activities such as hunting and cultivation of prohibited crops occur. Pollution, erosion, introduction of pest species, control burns for human safety rather than conservation are some of the problems arising.

Private Inholdings result in significant work and costs for NPWS who become involved in road maintenance through the National Parks, management of fencing, fire protection and provision of legal access to owners etc.

Only 12,274 hectares of the 15,258 identified have been costed for acquisition. Some inholdings have been excluded from the costing and recommended acquisition, such as those which have current residential occupation and/or capital improvements so are expensive. Others excluded are those with substantial land changes with low conservation value.

Included in the \$12 million is \$750,000 for initial management costs at the time of acquisition.

Currently, introduced species management budget for the World Heritage Area is underfunded and another \$400,000 is needed to bring the recommended budget up to \$610,000 per year.

This funding request is surely a saving and investment in protecting the biodiversity of our World Heritage area and our beautiful Blue Mountains.

a much bigger role in community debate during the election campaign.

To continue this important tradition we are preparing a questionnaire for candidates in the electorates of Lindsay and Macquarie in the forthcoming Federal election. The questions which will be put to the candidates will be published first, to create advance interest

in the minds of the public and hopefully to stimulate discussion and prolong debate on environmental issues. The answers will be published in a full page advertisement.

Cost of the advertisements will be \$2,100, which we need to raise by public and members donations. **If you wish to support this important work please send a cheque, payable to Blue Mountains Conservation Society, to our Treasurer Bart Beech, PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782, or come to a meeting and make a donation.**

Missing Minute Book

Does anyone know the whereabouts of the Minutes Book of the Society dating from May 1963 to March 1964? It was during this period that the opening of the old Hut was held, hence its importance to our records. There is a gap in recordings for this date, otherwise all the records are complete for the 40 years. Please ring the office if you can help

Photographs Wanted

Do any members have photos or slides which could be enlarged and used for a display: (for example)

- Opening of old Hut in 1963
- Land purchased by the Society at Kanangra-Boyd and donated to NPWS.
- Members bushwalking
- Members propagating plants in the nursery

Please phone Meredith (4782.4823) ASAP so they can be ready for the Birthday Dinner of 13 October.

Calico Bags

The Society's calico bags are selling well and helping to reduce the 14 million plastic bags going to landfill in Australia each day.

The bags are available at monthly meetings for \$5 and at the Conservation Hut Cafe during the day.

"Hut News", the newsletter of
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Council Takes a Stand ...

Against the Trashing of the Bush

At the BMCC September meeting, Councillors voted unanimously to implement a policy of blanket restrictions on trail bikes and four-wheel drives using bushland reserves. This policy will apply to all Council-managed Bushland Reserves until and unless more comprehensive assessments can demonstrate that these restrictions can be lifted.

The policy includes enforcement of the prohibitions by Council Rangers and the Police, erecting signs and surveillance.

Residents of North Lawson brought this matter to a head as a result of the damage done to a beautiful hanging swamp in North Lawson Park. With the help of the Friends of Lawson Action Group, they organised a successful public meeting in August, and have brought the matter to the attention of Council and relevant state authorities. Members of bushcare groups have greeted this decision with enthusiasm as it means that finally Council has made a clear stand against the destruction of bushland.

The report presented to council stated that "the bushland reserves of the Blue Mountains have high environmental values and they also form a buffer to the World Heritage listed Greater Blue Mountains National Park. The use of motorised vehicles is often in conflict with the environmental values of the

Our Home & the Environment Energy Use

While we want to live in a comfortable home (though I'm sure Jessica would be happiest if we were generating power from a push-bike) we have tried to influence drastically the three biggest consumers of energy within the house. These are heating and cooling of the home, heating hot water and refrigeration.

Heating and Cooling the Home: Passive solar design (mentioned in a previous article) was the first stage in reducing our energy bills. Our design will keep our house cool in summer, and warm on sunny winter days. Extra energy however will still have to be used to keep our house warm on overcast winter days and in the evenings in winter. For extra warmth we will use a Sunlight Heater (produced locally by Paul Curtis 4757 3096). It is an active solar heater, meaning it mainly uses the sun with a little outside energy (electricity).

The principle is that, heat gained behind black panels on the roof, is fanned through a salt block. The salt melts as it absorbs the warmth. At night as the salt cools it resolidifies and gives off the stored heat. This is ducted through the house, and on a sunny winters day should provide enough warmth to keep us warm until we go to bed. On those very cloudy winter weeks we will need another means of keeping warm. We will then light up our wood heater, using the scrap wood from our building and the garden.

Heating Hot Water: For a few years we have successfully used a solar hot water system, with electric boosting for winter. In the new house we will use an instantaneous gas hot water system to boost the solar unit. Any water not hot enough after going through the solar heater will be boosted to the required temperature by the instantaneous gas unit. This means we only boost the water we use

reserves and the adjoining National Park, and with the enjoyment of public reserves by other users. Resources do not currently permit the detailed study of all reserves to determine site specific opportunities to accommodate these uses. Council cannot demonstrate that the principles of ecologically sustainable development can be met if it were determined to permit motorised vehicles to use bushland reserves under these circumstances."

Unfortunately there is a hitch. The adoption of this policy is dependent on financial assistance and cooperation from the State Government. \$20,000 is being asked for as a contribution to the signage strategy. Support is also being asked for an education/information campaign and also for a Nature-based Recreation Study.

Members are asked to write to Bob Debus expressing your support for this Council policy and asking him to seek the necessary assistance from his government. (Bob Debus, Shop 3, 107-109 Macquarie St Springwood 2777).

If you want further information on this matter contact either Jeanine Redfern 4759 2028 or Lyndal Sullivan 4782 1635.

Join Mountain Watch

Society members are keeping watch

and not the whole tank of water, which is how normal boosters work. We have chosen gas as it produces less green house gases than electricity.

Residents in the Blue Mountains and some other areas in NSW are presently being offered rebates of up to \$900 on the cost of a new solar hot water system. This offer is being made to try and reduce greenhouse gases, Australia being one of the world's worst polluters. For details contact Energy Australia on 131 364.

The Fridge: Fridges can consume the most amount of energy in the home. It is best to use the smallest fridge possible, which has the best energy rating (uses the least kilowatt hours) for that particular size. We would like to not have a fridge at all, since there really aren't any very energy efficient fridges available yet.

Having tried wherever possible to find alternatives in this house we will try a 'cool cupboard' as the main food cooling system. 15m of terracotta pipe has been buried 800 mm under ground below the house. This pipe opens at one end from below the house, passes under the house and then through an insulated cupboard in the kitchen and out through the roof via a black pipe. The constantly cool air in the pipe underground is drawn through the cupboard by convection by the warmed air in the black pipe.

Once we know how well the cool-cupboard works we will decide what if any sort of fridge to get. It will be kept in the coldest room in the house, thus less electricity will be needed to run it.

The next issue will be about how we are making the electricity to run the house. Cheers - Greg Wellham and Jessica Yuille.



A Sustainable Lifestyle

Saturday 13 October (11 am to 2 pm)
Tour of an Ecologically Sustainable
Lifestyle Education Site at Pigface
Point, Georges River, Sydney.

Places are still available for members and their friends who want to come on a visit organised by the Society to Pigface Point, an education alternative lifestyle site set up and maintained by Ted Trainer (senior lecturer at the University of NSW) and his students. Transport will be provided for a small charge.

Information about the site was given in last month's Hut News. It is well worth a visit! ☎ Paul Mannings (4754.4451) ASAP if you would like to come.

'WildAware' ECOhomes tour

Ever wondered about straw bale housing ... what 'passive solar design' means ... how to build in mud ... or how to use recycled materials for your dream-house? Well here's a chance to find out.

There is to be a Blue Mountains ECOhomes tour on Saturday, 20 October.

This follows on from the huge interest in BMCS's eco-site visit in January. Once again there is a chance for members (and others) to be inspired by fascinating environmentally satisfying homes. The ECOhomes tour is being sponsored by 'WildAware' (Katoomba Primary and High schools environmental initiatives) as a fund-raiser for those schools.

On Saturday 20 October the ECOhomes bus tour will visit around seven leading-edge environmental homes in the middle and upper Mountains. A tour of lower Mountains ECOhomes is being planned for early next year. Participation is only for those who book and pay to be part of the tour. It will be led by ECOarchitect Nigel Bell, with plenty of opportunity to talk to Ecohome owners about why and how they did what they did! Cost is \$40.

Houses to be visited include those of earth, straw, Hebel, timber, recycled materials and the like. Some are set in

bushland; others are in town. Some have been designed and built by owner-builders; others have had professional input from architects and builders. Some have won awards — all are remarkable. This is your chance to be inspired!

These properties are only open for inspection on that weekend as part of WildAware's fundraising (and environmental awareness-raising) efforts for the schools. If you want to be part of the tour, ring Vera Costello (4782 5375) or Nigel Bell (4782 5066) to book now as places are strictly limited. Enquire also about Nigel's weekend ECOdesign + ECObuild workshops, held late each month.

Quoll Club Outing

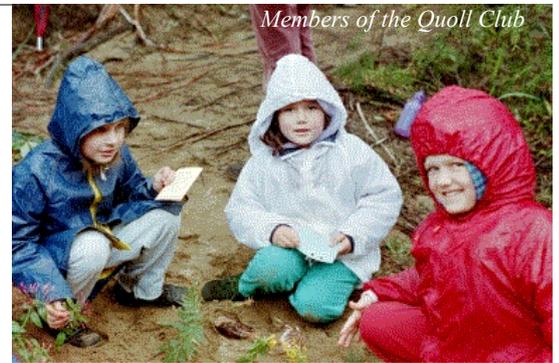
14 children and their carers enjoyed the recent Charles Darwin Threatened Species walk along Jamison Creek. The day was cold and drizzly but a good day was enjoyed by all. Jessica led the group from Wilson Park to Wentworth Falls. Jessica provided information as to why the pine trees have been culled, about the native animals that used to frequent the habitat of the valley, and pointed out the invasion of weeds from uncontrolled gardens into the native bushland.

The children enjoyed building a home and garden area out of natural objects, brought from home, on a sandy stretch of the creek. All in all, an enjoyable learning time together. Thanks Jessica. — Ron Hartshorn (Quoll Club member Brandon Hartshorn's grandfather). For more information about the Society's Quoll Club, contact Jessica 4788.1200.

Green Office

For those of you who work in an office, the website www.ecooffice.com.au could be of great value. On the home page there is a ten-minute, four-step tour as an introduction to a greener office, showing where the current office could be improved to produce less waste and have less overall impact on the environment.

From there you can choose particular sections such as Paper (a major area of waste), Equipment, Office Supplies,



Members of the Quoll Club

Having a Break and Cleaning. There are many articles and short notes of interest, such as the statistic that one office worker can throw away over a quarter of a tonne of materials in a year. Each of these sections and notes contain links to other relevant sites for more information and greater detail.

Under "Paper" there are articles on saving paper, principally by re-using the back of old sheets for photocopying and printing (we do this quite successfully where I work). One article explains how there are higher and lower qualities of recycled paper that can be purchased, and gives links to places where the appropriate paper can be purchased.

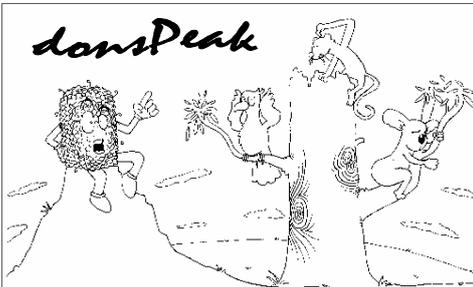
The section on "Having a Break" suggests environmentally-friendly things to do, which may be a bit hard to do in practice, such as buying only local, fresh food for lunch, and avoiding foods which have lots of packaging or which may have been transported for long distances.

Another difficult-to-follow suggestion is to avoid commuting! When you live in the Mountains and work in Sydney, it is not a simple choice just to move closer to work or work closer to home.

Despite these later comments, it is a worthwhile website to check out. Robert Chapman.

Welcome to New Members

Leon and Hilary Smith, Lapstone
Lin Whitham, Blaxland
A Gardiner, Hazelbrook
Julie Berry, Bringelly
Claire Wilson, Lawson



Over the Hill ... and the next one ... and the next!

Patience, persistence, enthusiasm and stoicism. These were among the qualities that enabled BMCS to successfully enter one of the oldest contingents in the Gumtree Songlines Walk which constituted our annual multi-day activity for 2001.

On September 22 a campfire was lit in Blue Gum Forest by Angela Cleary, a descendant of one of the original campaigners from 70 years ago. Watching were several of the 28

walkers who took part in some or all of the 5-day BMCS trek from Jenolan Caves. Also present were over 100 other walkers who had come from many sections of the World Heritage Area far and near — either as members of bushwalking organisations or as individuals — to join the celebration. The urns of gumnut ashes they carried represented the Eucalyptus biodiversity that underpinned the success of the World Heritage nomination in 2000.

The 70 years since the saving of Blue Gum Forest marks the span of the modern conservation movement in New South Wales, and now BMCS has spent 40 years as a part of that. In many ways, the campaign has seemed like climbing a hill with a heavy pack, only to be confronted by another hill. Near Alum River, as we negotiated the Six Foot Track, we met two idiotic trail-bikers and a feral pig, which reminded me of some of the conservation movements' long-term opponents.

But, like campaigning for conservation, marching through the

bush for five days brings rewards that outweigh all the sacrifices ... the limestone spectacles of the Devil's Coachhouse and Carlotta Arch ... the satin bower birds mating outside my tent at Black Range ... the unusual species of wallabies ... watching storm clouds swirl in over the Wild Dog Mountains to envelop us in a rain and hail-storm as we retreated along a stony ridge of Angophoras and paper-barks ... not to mention the excellent company of my fellow bushwalkers.

We admired the beauty of lands near Little River, which have recently been sold and are the subject of a bushwalking access controversy and an appeal to State Minister Bob Debus.

Thanks to the organising committee of the Gumtree Songlines celebration and to all those who provided logistical support to our walk, especially K Putting, Corey, D Burrell, R Mosman, T Flynn and C Davies. We look forward to even more of you taking part during the activity proposed for August or September 2002. Don Morison.

Environmental Law (or Green Campaigners

Saturdays 27 October & 3 November,
10.30am to 4pm, Blaxland Community
Centre (walk from Blaxland Station).

An informal and practical course is to be run over two days in the Blue Mountains by the Environmental Defender's Office (EDO) for volunteers, students, paid workers & activists. EDO is a community legal centre specialising in public interest environment law.

Find out how and when the law can be used to protect the environment. Topics covered include: the legal framework, how the planning and development system works, laws covering threatened species, native vegetation and pollution, relevance of the law to your campaigns, rights of appeal, defamation law and freedom of information law, and what legal resources are available.

Cost per participant is \$80 (waged), \$40 (student/unwaged). Fee includes a copy of the Environmental Law Tool Kit (rrp \$25.00). 10% discount for bookings of 4 or more. Members who wish to attend should contact Lyndal Sullivan (4782.1635) to organise the discount and possibly a subsidy.

For more information contact Natalie Ross at the EDO, phone 02.92626989, email natalie.ross@edo.org.au

Walk in the Snowies

I have booked accommodation in my ski lodge at Perisher Valley for the week Sat 12 to Sat 19 January 2002 for members keen to walk in the Snowy Mountains. The lodge is accessible by car in summertime and holds 16 persons at \$11.00 per night on a self-catering basis with no linen supplied. I will arrange four or five one-day walking trips, according to weather and fitness levels. Phone 4757.1354 for bookings and further details. *Warwick Mosman.*

Thursday Bushwalks

Springtime (September) is a lovely time to walk in the National Park at Glenbrook. Our last walk in this series was Jack Evans track to Erskine Creek.

Wedding bush (*Ricinocarpos pini-folius*), which grows so well perched on the edge of a cliff, was spectacular, as was pink *Eriostemon* (*Eriostemon australasius*). Yellow bloodwoods (*Eucalyptus eximia*) were just starting to flower. Among other lovely wildflowers was a pretty trigger plant with a flower like a butterfly (*Stylidium laricifolium*), and a delicate vine with pale yellow tubular flowers (*Billardiera scandens*).

Afterwards we had a barbecue lunch, shared unwillingly with the Kamikaze Kookaburras of Euroka. Hungry as you may be, you have to have a sneaking admiration for the audacity and skill of the bird as it swoops past you and flies off

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Oct 13 (Sat) 40th Birthday Dinner Party, at The Hut.
Oct 20 (Sat) Management Meeting, 9 am, Mid Mountains Community Centre, Lawson.

Oct 26 (Fri) General Meeting, at the Conservation Hut, 7.30 pm. (See page 1).

QUOLL CLUB (Activities for 12 and under - contact Jessica 4788.1200)

BUSHCARE (Tools provided — bring morning tea and gloves.)

Oct 12 (Fri) Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group. (2nd Friday of every month) Contact Karen on 4757.1929 for the meeting place. (following Friday if wet).

BUSHWALKS:

Monday Leisure Walks: Usually half day walk unless noted, leisurely pace.

Oct 15 Hornes Point and Cox's Cave. ☎ Jock 4758.6346. Mt Vic Station 9am. Medium. BBQ.

Oct 22 Terrace Falls. ☎ Kees 4759.1958. Hazelbrook Stn carpark 9am. Easy. BBQ.

Oct 29 October Creek. ☎ Norah 4757.4058. Mt Vic Station 9am. Easy. BBQ.

Nov 05 Birdwood Gully. Allan 4739.2767. Springwood Stn 9am. Easy. BBQ.

Nov 12 Lithgow Zig Zag & Viaduct View. ☎ Ron 4757.1526. Train to Zig Zag Station arr. 9.16am, leaves Wentworth Falls 8.29, return 3.05pm. Be in the last carriage. Medium day walk. Take lunch. Also Train Museum visit.

Nov 19 Bus Trip to Jenolan Caves (walk on final section of Six Foot Track). Bus leaves Katoomba Depot at 8.30. ☎ Bill 4759.1692 for bookings. Lunch at Caves House or bring your own. Opportunity for cave inspection or other walk in afternoon.

Wednesday "Getting to Know the Blue Mountains Walks" (Half day, easy/med)

Oct 10 Braeside Track to Govett's Leap. ☎ Jock 4758.6346. Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9am. Easy. BBQ.

Oct 17 Walls Lookdown and Mount Wilson. ☎ Bill 4759.1692. Mt Vic Stn 9am. Easy. BBQ.

Oct 24 Walls Ledge. ☎ Jock 4758.6346. Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9am. Easy. BBQ.

Oct 31 Old Point Pilcher. ☎ Jock 4758.6346. Medlow Bath opp Hydro 9am. Easy. BBQ.

Nov 07 Pope's Glen. ☎ Bill 4759.1692. Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9am. Easy. BBQ.

Nov 14 Forgotten Walk No1. ☎ Allan 4739.2767. Faulconbridge, St Georges Terrace 9am. Easy. BBQ.

Weekend Bushwalks: Bushwalkers are requested to phone the contact before 8 pm the day before the walk. The walk may be cancelled if fewer than 4 walkers register, or if other circumstances make conditions unsafe.

Oct 13 Long Swamp, Lawson. ☎ Elizabeth 4754.4966. Lawson Bowling Club carpark 9.30. Easy. Bring lunch.

Oct 20 Mount Solitary. ☎ Warwick 4757.1354. Meet at North Side of Katoomba Station 9am. Six hours with hard climb both ends. Bring lunch and water (1.5 litres at least).

Oct 27 Reinit's Pass. ☎ June 4787.7312. Mt Vic Station 9.30am. Medium. Bring lunch.

Nov 03 Govett's Leap to Junction Rock. ☎ June 4787.7312. Blackheath Station 9.30am. Medium. Hard climb out. Bring lunch.

Nov 10 Mt Wilson to Wollongambe River. ☎ June 4787.7312. Mt Vic Station 9.30am. Medium. Bring lunch and swimming togs.

CHRISTMAS PARTY Bus Trip to Evans Crown and Tarana Hotel Lunch.

Monday 17 December. Please book early. 29 places. All welcome.

Walks are generally Easy to Medium Grade, unless otherwise noted. Easy: Mostly good surfaces, but some rough or steep sections. Suited to people of average fitness. Medium: Includes rough or steep sections, some of which may require clambering over natural obstacles. Suited to people of better than average fitness, but discuss with the contact if in doubt. Hard: We occasionally arrange a walk considered most suited to experienced and very fit walkers but it is conducted at a moderate pace. 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 Bill Graham 4759.1692.

with your steak in its beak, the rest of your sandwich falling to the ground for the cockatoos and noisy miners, and then manages to roll the flat piece of steak into such a shape that it can be swallowed whole. Other, nicer, birds were bower birds, and a pretty bronzewing pigeon.

Springtime in the upper Blue Mountains gets into full swing in October. During the next series of Thursday morning Interpretive Bushwalks we will

see some stunning displays of wildflowers on the exposed heath-covered ridgetops of the upper Mountains.

There will be eight walks, 3 to 4 hours duration, leisurely pace, commencing Thursday 18 October. Guests with expertise in different fields, e.g. birds, plants, will come on some of the walks. Cost is \$20 for the series. Numbers are limited. Contact Christine on 4787.7246.

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