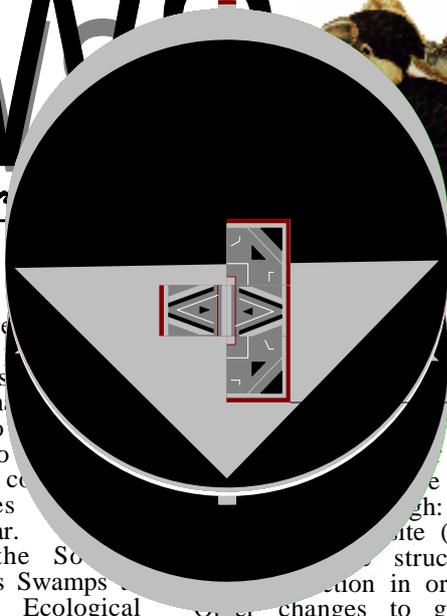


HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"



Protect our Swamps and Keep the Waterfalls Flowing

For millions of years the waterfalls have poured over the Blue Mountains escarpment. The water flows all the year, even during long periods of drought. Blue Mountains waterfalls are kept going by Blue Mountains Swamps. The swamps soak up the rain and slowly release it into the streams.

Blue Mountains Swamps, streams, waterfalls, rivers have flowed undisturbed for millions of years. The swamps are special places, home for a unique collection of flora and fauna. Blue Mountains Swamps occur as both hanging swamps and valley swamps, and include a range of types from those dominated by shrubs to the more easily recognised button grass (sedge swamps).

Blue Mountains City Council's Local Environment Plan 1991 recognises the importance of Blue Mountains Swamps. According to this Plan, Council is not permitted to approve a development unless it is satisfied 'that the development has no significant adverse impact on' a swamp. Yet Blue Mountains City Council continues to approve developments which will affect the viability of the precious swamps that remain.

In December 2001 Council approved a development in a swamp at North Katoomba even though this would result in over 130 sq metres of swamp being cleared. The previous year Council permitted another development in North Katoomba adjacent to the Minnehaha Falls Reserve where it failed to adequately assess the swamp located on

the site and then failed consent conditions when proceeded to dig it up.

The Society has fully explored all legal avenues available to protect Blue Mountains swamps. These are lacking. The community has limited legal rights to force Councils and developers to protect the environment. We will continue to pursue the inadequacies of current legislation over the next year.

In October 2000, the Society nominated Blue Mountains Swamps to be listed as Vulnerable Ecological Communities under federal legislation in order that they may get some legal protection. This involved a detailed report prepared by Haydn Washington who collated all the available relevant information to support the case. The Threatened Species Scientific Committee has assessed our nomination and is now asking for comments from the community.

CAN YOU HELP?

Have you witnessed the destruction or decline of swamp communities (recently or over time)? If so, we need your letter in support of this nomination. Due to the usual tight time frame for public comment (June 11th deadline!!) we have attempted to simplify this process. The following 'checklist' has been compiled to help you complete a submission that specifies the extent of degradation or total loss of swamps in your local area. Have you seen any of the following?

- Direct destruction of or damage to swamp communities through: Residential development; Trail bikes; Mowing; Large-scale weed invasion;

drainage lines
 ... to swamp
 ... Changes to
 ... (eg: stormwater
 ... structures); Bore
 ... in or near swamps;
 ... changes to groundwater or
 ... surface water

- The loss or decline of important species over time: Disappearance of lizards, snakes, birds due to cats/foxes/dogs/pollution
- Changes from swamps dominated by sedges to one with more woodland plant species

Specific information about where you have seen any of these changes is important, give as much detail as you can about: The location of affected swamps; When you observed the changes/ impacts? Size of the swamp in question; Size of the area affected?; Size of the area still intact?

Your comments on swamp condition and threats to their integrity will be assessed against particular criteria. For those who would like detailed information on these criteria please see www.ea.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/index.html or phone Brit on 4782 7659 if you need help in writing your letter.

Letters of support need to be sent by June 11 to David Kemp, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, GPO Box 787, Canberra 2601, fax 6274 2395, or

The Importance of Bats

At our next general meeting the guest speaker will be flying fox researcher and bat conservationist Peggy Ebby.

Although flying-foxes are often referred to as "fruit bats" the main component of their diet is nectar and pollen from at least 40 Eucalypts and 66 other native plants. Their feeding behaviour results in pollen and seeds being moved many kilometres from the parent tree. This process is important in maintaining the diversity of our forests



and cannot be performed by birds or bees. Flying-foxes roost in large numbers during the day in "camps or colonies" in the canopy of our forests.

Peggy Ebby has been responsible for the mapping of known bat colonies in NSW and has co-ordinated population counts which helped to have flying fox species listed as threatened species.

Peggy will be showing slides, and hopefully will have some live flying foxes with her.

The meeting will be held on Friday 28 June at the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls, starting at 7.30 pm. Visitors are very welcome.

World Environment Day

Blue Mountains Conservation Society will participate in the Blue Mountains

World Environment Day Festival at Springwood Civic Centre, Macquarie Road, Springwood, on Saturday 15 June, 10am to 4 pm.

World Environment Day is celebrated in June every year, around the globe. It observes the date of the first United Nations Conference on the Environment when nations recognised formally that pollution and environmental problems transcended national borders and there was an urgent need to work together.

Stalls and displays at the festival will highlight the range of activities undertaken locally and globally to improve the environment, by organisations such as ourselves, Blue Mountains City Council, and Blue Mountains school students.

Come along for an enjoyable and

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Blue Mountains Conservation Society
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Publicity: (VACANT)

(VMO) on public exhibition. It was to replace the Tree Preservation Order (TPO), extending protection to all vegetation. The idea behind this was that it is not only trees which are important but all vegetation — the understorey shrubs and groundcovers too.

The Society has been pushing for such a legal instrument for many years to help protect native vegetation particularly on private land. As members too well know, there continues to be destruction of native vegetation throughout the city area. Whilst it is all important and valuable habitat for our native animals, some areas have special significance, but no clear protection. Residents continue to mow into and bulldoze sensitive heathlands, swamps, etc.

The Council meeting of May 28 saw only four Councillors vote for some real action to protect native vegetation (Clrs Kozelc, Gaul, Searle and Henson. Clr Burridge was absent). The other seven councillors (Clrs Angel, Hamilton, Greenhill, van der Kley, Myles, Egan and Kime) voted to defer implementation of the VMO.

The Society will be calling on all members to help us ensure that the VMO is not buried by the deferral but will survive to become an effective means of stopping the destruction of native vegetation. Watch out for opportunities to attend community workshops and to become informed about the real facts of what is being proposed and our concerns about the inadequacies also. For more information, or to indicate your interest in becoming involved, please contact Claire Wilson 4759.1319 or Lyndal Sullivan 4782.1635.

Council Cuts Spending on Environment

Blue Mountains Conservation Society is concerned that the draft 2002/3 City Budget favours additional expenditure on Council administration at the expense of on-ground environmental management and protection.

This emphasis is particularly inappropriate for a City proud to be located in a World Heritage National Park but where an apparent lack of commitment to implementing environmental responsibilities and monitoring development has already prompted representations to Council and the Ombudsman. BMCS highlights the following points:

- \$99,000 boost to capital costs for "support to Councillors and democratic decision making".
- 25% increase in costs for "advocacy to other levels of government".
- \$200,000 decrease in Bushland/Catchment protection/weed control, mainly from staff time and operating costs.
- The Vegetation Management Order has been deferred, partly due to costs.
- Less provision for monitoring the environment, again less staff time and operating costs. It is not clear to BMCS

or the community that there is now less need for monitoring.

- Reduced operating costs for management plans for natural areas.
- A 99% increase in Community Development awareness contrasts illogically with a reduction in actual resource support.

There is no explanation of why changes have been proposed and what standards will be achieved or reduced as a result of increase or reduction of funding.

The accompanying paper indicates that this is the 3rd of a 4 year management plan. But since the paper presents interminable jargon, it tends to cloud the facts. It fails to use the performance indicators to show how the plan is progressing, whether criteria have been satisfied and therefore funding can be reduced or if additional funds are required to make up a shortfall. It is only clear that the Blue Mountains natural environment is the loser.

The draft budget is to be decided at a Council meeting towards the end of June. Watch the Gazette for the date. Please ring or write to your ward councillors to let them know what you think about this budget and urge them to make changes to enable the VMO to be implemented and other important environmental programs to continue.

Request for Volunteers

★ To help at Sydney Environmental Education Network's Annual Conference at Katoomba, Friday 11 to Sunday 13 October. BMCS is one of the conference sponsors.

Volunteers will be given free admission and asked to help in a variety of ways — field trips, greeting people as they arrive, helping with morning and afternoon teas, etc.

If you are interested in coming to the conference and can volunteer some of your time please keep the dates free and contact Jenny Hill 4782.1303.

★ To help on the Society's displays and stalls at local events, e.g. in June, World Environment Day Celebrations and Winter Magic Festival.

It's a great way to meet people in our community, to give the Society a human face and to educate people about conservation issues. If you would like to help out and you are happy to have your name added to our list of volunteers please contact Jenny Hill 4782.1303.

Welcome to New Members

Liz Rickard, Rozelle
Elizabeth Watson, Katoomba
David Christie, Lawson
Deborah Mackenzie, Tempe
Judy Belnick, Leura
Ben Malina, Leura

**Membership Enquiries
Contact Elizabeth van Reyswoud
Phone 4757.2694
Email: ereyswoud@hermes.net.au
Post: PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782**

VMO Delayed

A significant opportunity to protect native vegetation, not only trees, has been delayed for another year by BMCC's decision to defer the making of a Vegetation Management Order, pending further community workshops. This means that funds will now not be allocated from this year's budget to implement the VMO, even though councillors voted unanimously last November for its development.

The apparent turnaround is the result of intervention by a small group of garden enthusiasts who mistakenly believe the VMO would place restrictions on what they can do in their gardens.

However, Council's general manager, Mr Michael Willis, stated in the Gazette 29 May "It is simply scaremongering to suggest that residents won't be able to carry out normal gardening activities. The proposed VMO exempts the type of work carried out by the average gardener. You can still prune your plants, cut back dead wood, remove dangerous branches, mow the lawn, weed the garden and remove vegetation in an area of up to 250 sq metres, without seeking approval from Council".

In January this year Council put the draft Vegetation Management Order

Blue Mtns Swamp Dweller

Grevillea acanthifolia ssp acanthifolia
Grevillea acanthifolia ssp acanthifolia is restricted to the upper Blue Mountains. It has not got a common name (we could call it Blue Mountains Swamp Grevillea). It is a spreading shrub that may grow to 2 metres high in our swamps and in swampy soil beside creeks, has red to deep pink "toothbrush" flower combs, stiff divided leaves, and the fruit is a follicle. It belongs to the plant family Proteaceae, a large family of plants which includes the Waratah and the Banksia

This grevillea is locally fairly common. Examples where it can be found are the Braeside Walk, Blackheath, Minna Ha Ha Falls walk, Katoomba, Darwin's Walk, Wentworth Falls.

It is known to hybridize with *Grevillea laurifolia*, a groundcover Grevillea, also restricted to the upper Blue Mountains, to form *Grevillea x gaudichaudii* which usually is a prostrate groundcover, although some erect forms of the hybrid have been found in the wild. *Grevillea x gaudichaudii* is cultivated in nurseries and makes an attractive bird-attracting garden plant. It flowers spasmodically all year, and it also attracts butterflies and other insects and is quite common also in our hanging swamps.

In common with other Grevilleas, *Grevillea acanthifolia ssp acanthifolia* is pollinated by birds. Nectar is contained at the base of the tubular flower. The end of the protruding style, known as the 'stigmatic disc', carries pollen. Honeyeaters have a long, often curved beak, and a brush-tipped tongue. When the honeyeater dips its beak into the flower to eat the nectar, pollen brushes off onto the bird and is carried to another flower. After the pollen is rubbed off the style, the disc becomes sticky and receptive to pollen from another flower.

Forests Up in Smoke

A charcoal plant near Mogo on the south coast has received conditional approval from the State Government. The Mogo plant will burn around 200,000 tonnes of forestry "residue" every year for 40 years. The decision is being opposed by the Nature Conservation Council of NSW, the NSW Forests Campaign and local residents, who believe that it is unlikely that only residue will be used, and that it will compromise the area's growing tourist industry.

The charcoal plant approval was the last step in getting the go-ahead for a silicon plant at Lithgow and a quartz mine near Cowra. Altogether the projects will generate up to 90 truck movements each day. A submission by Blue Mountains City Council for all materials to be transported to Lithgow by rail was not put into effect.

The production of silicon and silicon products all sounds pretty high tech and

sophisticated. In fact, it is extremely primitive to turn our native forests into charcoal to produce silicon sealer.

The first step in producing silicon is melting and reduction of silica. The current method used is to mix quartz pebbles with coal or charcoal and heat the mixture to high temperatures in a furnace. The result is carbon dioxide and silicon lumps, known as metallurgical-grade silicon.

There are alternatives to using charcoal in the production. Coals with low ash content can be used. In addition, promising new technology being developed by CSIRO and White Industries is currently under trial in Newcastle.

Approx. 500,000 tonnes of metallurgical-grade silicon is produced each year in the world. Most is used for aluminium alloys (60%) and chemical products such as sinicone resin (30%) or 'gasket goo', only 1% or less by the electronics industry.

We all buy and use these products around our houses, in our cars and in our computers. It is not the production of silicon as such that environmentalists are concerned about; it is the reliance that the proponents place on the use of our native forests that is the worry. It is unacceptable to log and burn our native forests to produce charcoal when there are alternatives.

Unfortunately, we have a historic habit of valuing our environmental resources so low that in effect we give them away. The 200,000 tonnes of public native forests to be burnt in the charcoal plant each year will cost Australian Silicon only \$7.50 a tonne.

This is a critical conservation issue. Let Bob Carr, Andrew Refshauge (c/o Parliament House, Sydney 2000) and Bob Debus (107 Macquarie Street, Springwood 2777) know how appalled you are. Contact Charcoalition, PO Box 521, Batemans Bay 2536, charcoalition@bigpond.com or www.charcoalition_forests.org.au for further details.

Sustaining the Catchments

The Second Draft of the document: "Sustaining the Catchments, A Regional Environment Plan for the Drinking Water Catchments of Sydney and Adjacent Regional Centres" (the REP) is due for exhibition in July.

I have an advance copy, as I serve on the Regional Advisory Committee that has been steering the REP for some years.

The document will (hopefully) lead to no further degradation of drinking water quality due to new development, and to a reduction in existing water quality problems through

Fossicking in Springwood

In clouds, in crevices and on the clifftops
The spirits of Springwood are revelling
Rallying to shelter their earthly relics
From suburbia's drab and morbid spread.

A white cross for a drowned bushwalking
brother
Gazes from the heights of the lost world
Into stony gullies where he led those clambering
Like the novice priests gaping in the wilderness.

A nineteenth century soldier
Stares upwards from a sandstone rock
Where a tribal artist carved his image
With a metal axe lent by the invader.

Above a lonely bushland hydrangea
A rock ledge is missing the Virgin's statue
Her grotto sculpted by the novitiae
And now left to benign neglect.

From pulpits, law chambers, real estate offices
The doom of vibrant Springwood is signalled
But the crimson ooze from the angophoras
Is powerful as the blood from Christ's sharp
wounds.

Face fire, face greed, face demagoguery
This locality patiently gathers its history
Neatly assembling it over the surface
Of a peaceful but accessible townscape.

Archaeologists dig but walkers can fossick
Feeling the past without disturbing it
Blue gum ... shale ... a lone male koala,
Dharug ... Gandangara ... grinding groove.

Fossick now, tomorrow ... and years later
Where art and war and nature blend,
Fight to preserve, enhance and honour
The inspiration where we tread.

implementation of rectification actions by the Sydney Catchment Authority.

This is of course a big ask, as existing and new development pressure on the drinking water catchments is substantial.

This REP is relevant to us in the Blue Mountains because all of the City of Blue Mountains south of the Highway and west of Tableland Road Wentworth Falls is in the Drinking Water Catchments. This includes south of Wentworth Falls, Leura and Katoomba and west of Medlow Bath, Blackheath and Mount Victoria.

We should see, as a spinoff of the REP, amendments to our own Local Environment Plan that ensure no future developments have negative effects on water quality in streams feeding the Drinking Water reservoirs.

An innovative part of the REP is a proposal to assess all new and existing development against the 'Neutral or Beneficial Effect on Water Quality' test. This test will assess whether an existing or new development is having a negative impact.

New developments will not be allowed if they fail the test, and existing developments will have to be 'rectified' if they fail the test. We are yet to see the details of the test and to assess whether it will in fact deliver what is promised.

A controversial part of the REP is a proposal for a Pollution Offset Scheme, which will allow 'rectification' of pollution to occur offsite, possible

Some of the Thursday bushwalkers recently enjoyed a trip to the South Coast and stayed at Green Cape Lighthouse in the Ben Boyd National Park, south of Eden. Accommodation was in the Assistant Keeper's Quarters, with a front verandah overlooking the ocean and facing east for full enjoyment of sensational sunrises.

Waiting for the Sunrise at Green Cape

Fumbling, groping in the dark -
The watch says two a.m.
Dry throat,
Familiar story - too much food and wine!
The toilet is miles away,
Besides, you could meet the ghost -
Or - even worse
Don Morison.

I open the lighthouse keeper's
Front door - which is an easier option
Surely he would have done this
On numerous occasions.

The night is still -
And the moon casts a sliver
Of light across the tranquil water -
Almost reaching the cottage.

Hardly a breathe of air -
Stepping back inside
One tries to envisage
What this place could be like.

Spectacular lightning shows,
Howling winds and torrential rain,
Creaking floor boards, rattling windows
And - of course - the ghost!

The only thing resembling one
Grey, gaunt, ghastly, bearded -
Showed his face yesterday -
With no attempt made at walking
through a wall.

Back in bed, tossing, turning,
Drifting into another world
Of dreams -
Waiting, waiting, waiting.

Five thirty - the pressure
Is too much.
Still dark, I dress
And make a cup of coffee.

Stepping outside, eyes trying
To focus and adjust
In the pre-dawn light,
A slight noise and two eyes meet mine.

Neither of us move - then, satisfied
The Eastern Grey lowers his head
And continues munching -
It all seems so natural.

The light is changing -
Christine is out front - gazing
Out to sea - and who knows, perhaps
On the lookout for a Maori war canoe!

Blissfully unaware of the moment,
Half our party slumber on
As Margaret, Sylvia and Pam appear
Clutching piping hot mugs.

We become aware of the slow, graceful
Movements as the fur seals become visible -
And the shades of pink, blue
Merge with the clouds.

A Richards Pippit scurries by -

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

June 22 (Sat) Management Meeting, 9 am, Mid Mtns Community Centre, Lawson.

June 28 (Fri) General Meeting at The 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.)

June 08 (Sat) Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group. (9 am, 2nd Saturday of every month) Contact Karen on 4757.1929 for the meeting place.

BUSHWALKS:

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

June 10 Mt Piddington/Hornes Point. Meet Mt Vic Station 9am. ☎ Kees 4759.1958. Easy/med.

June 17 Pheasants Cave/Rainforest, Mt Wilson. Meet Mt Vic Station 9am. ☎ Bill 4759.1692. Easy. BBQ lunch at Mt Wilson.

June 24 Dargan's Creek. Meet Mt Vic Station 9am. ☎ Allan 4739.2767. Easy. BBQ lunch.

July 01 Overcliff/Undercliff/Den Fenella. Meet Conservation Hut 9am. Arrange

station pick-ups Kees 4759.1958. Easy/med. Lunch at The Hut.
July 08 Bell to Wollangambe. Meet Mt Vic Station 9am. ☎ Jock 4758.6346. Medium. BBQ lunch.

Very Easy Walks on Thursdays. Slow pace walks for the older walker, parent or grandparent with an infant, family groups or recovering from illness. Walks start at 10 am with lunch at noon.

June 06 Darwin's Walk from Wentworth Falls Station. Meet 10 am. ☎ Bill 4759.1692. Lunch at Conservation Hut.

June 13 Woodford fire trail to Jon's Seat. Meet Woodford Station south side 10am. ☎ Jock 4758.6346.

June 20 Berghofer's Pass and Mount York. Meet Mt Vic Station 10 am. ☎ Bill 4759.1692.

June 27 Queens Road trig station. Meet Lawson Pharmacy, Honour Avenue 10am. ☎ Bill 4759.1692.

July 04 Baltzer's Lookout. Meet Mt Vic Station 10am. ☎ Bill 4759.1692.

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.*

June 08 (Sat) Crossing the Blue Mountains of NSW, Walk No.1: Emu Plains to Blaxland. Meet Emu Plains Railway Station 8.30am. ☎ Jim 4758.6009. Medium. Bring extra water/lunch. Leave vehicles at Blaxland and travel on train that arrives Emu Plains at 8.30 am.

June 16 (Sun) Wentworth Pass to Conservation Hut. Meet Conservation Hut 9.30 am. ☎ Kees 4759.1958. Hard. Bring lunch.

June 22 (Sat) The Camel's Hump. Meet Mt Vic Station 9.30am. ☎ June 4787.7312. Medium. Bring lunch.

June 29 (Sun) Crossing the Blue Mountains of NSW, Walk No.3: Woodford to Lawson. (Walk No.2, Blaxland to Faulconbridge, has been postponed because of bushfire damage.) Meet Woodford Railway Station 9am. Contact Jim 4758.6009. Medium to hard. Bring extra water and lunch. More info on web site www.pnc.com.au/~bmcs

July 06 (Sat) Faulconbridge Point. Meet Faulconbridge Railway carpark 9.30am. ☎ Liz 4754.4966. Easy. Bring lunch.

July 13 (Sat) Terrace Falls. See the regeneration after the bushfires from Alfred's lookout. Meet Hazelbrook carpark 9.30am. ☎ Bill 4758.8545. Medium. Bring lunch.

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

Thence New Hollands, Brush Wattle Birds
Awaken and greet the dawn
From the banksias nearby.

The pink changes to a deep
Wonderful orange, thence a
Glorious red - the ocean becomes
A blood orange.

For a moment - silence, then gasps
As the Sun appears -
The Eastern Grey rises majestically
Silhouetted against the morning sky.

Within minutes we are bathed
In sunlight, but still two more
Sunrises to go -
And bacon, eggs from David to
come.

Ron Hyslop, May 2002.