

HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow's People"



Life of the Gundungurra

The guest speaker at the Society's general meeting on Friday 29 November will be Jim Smith.

Jim has been searching for information on the Gundungurra speaking people of the Blue Mountains, on foot and in the archives, for 15 years. His talk at the November meeting will concentrate on what is distinctive about Gundungurra people, compared with other Aborigines—their names, artwork, language, appearance, personalities, movements, food sources and legends.

He will try to explain how the unique environment of the Gundungurra shaped their character, culture and lifestyle.

The environmental messages contained in Dreamtime stories will be discussed and the talk will include the first public reading for a non-Aboriginal audience of a recently discovered legend.

Jim will discuss those places in the Blue Mountains where the spirit of the Gundungurra can still be felt.

The meeting will be held on Friday 29 November at the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls, commencing at 7.30 pm. Join in the "green quiz" at the beginning of the meeting and find out what the Society is doing. If you are a new member and don't know anybody please introduce yourself to one of the committee members (wearing a red name tag). Visitors are very welcome.

Draft Vegetation Management Order 2002 will be on Display until 13 December at Blue Mountains City Council Offices (Katoomba and Springwood) and at Blue Mountains City Council Libraries

Meetings will be held in the Lower, Mid and Upper Mountains to discuss environmental issues in each sector.

Meeting venues and dates are:

KATOOMBA Council building
6pm - 8pm Thursday Nov 14th
(notify us if you may be late to arrange access).

SPRINGWOOD Neighbourhood Centre
7.30 pm, Friday Nov 8th
organised jointly by SWAG and BMCS

BLAXLAND Neighbourhood Centre
7.30pm, Tuesday Nov 12th
Organised jointly by RAID and BMCS
(If you would like us to arrange child care, please contact us ASAP)

A Council planner will attend
And be able to answer questions.

Please read the information in this newsletter and visit the exhibitions to become familiar with the Draft LEP.

Contact Monica Nugent on 4787.1631, or email monican@bigpond.com.au

Better Planning Rules ...

Have you been frustrated by Council approving a bad development because it said it HAD TO under existing planning rules? Here is your chance to change the rules!

The long-awaited Draft Local Environment Plan 2002 is on display.

We have until 13 December to look at the draft plan which is on public exhibition at Katoomba and Springwood Council offices, and the libraries at Blackheath, Katoomba, Lawson, Springwood and Blaxland. (see the Gazette for when Council Planners will be available to help).

It is inevitable that there will be loud opposition to the draft LEP from people whose speculative ventures may be threatened by having a good environmental plan in place. It is essential that the good aspects of the DLEP are supported by letters from each of us as individuals as well as by the Society as a whole.

This is our best chance to protect our natural environment and stop urban sprawl and over-development of the Blue Mountains.

An insert is included with this newsletter. Please take the time to read the information presented in this article; visit the exhibition and ask questions of the planners; fill out a form (available at the exhibition); make a submission to Council; come to one of the planned meetings. Contact Monica Nugent on 4784 1631 or email monican@bigpond.com.au for more information.

The Society will be compiling a submission and would like to hear the views of as many members as possible. So far, the natural area protections look good, but we have not yet analysed how this affects each locality. Your help is needed.

If your mailing address is outside the Blue Mountains and you have a special interest in a particular locality, please let us know soon by contacting Monica.

Land Not Covered by DLEP2002

If you are interested in land which is not covered by DLEP2002, it will have been zoned under LEP1991. There are three matters that you need to take an interest in NOW.

The general framework and principles of the DLEP2002 are relevant. These are likely to be used when the review of LEP91 takes place, which is promised to occur after this DLEP2002 process is

complete. Look at the written document and background studies—you may wish to comment on these?

The development of a Vegetation Management Order is provided for in this DLEP and will inevitably extend to LEP91 if adopted. You could give your support to this (see page 2 of the insert under "Better Environmental Management in Urban Areas").

The proposed increase in the number of protected 'significant vegetation communities' in LEP91 is now on exhibition and needs your support and suggestions (see page 2 of the insert under "Vegetation Mapping").

Success of SEEN Conference

Blue Mountains Conservation Society, the Sydney Environmental Education Network, and Blue Mountains City Council recently held the 25th Annual Environmental Education Conference in Katoomba. The theme of the conference was 'Echoes into the Future'. Robyn Williams from ABC radio who also chairs the National Environmental Education Council gave the Allen Strom lecture.

Many thanks to the Society's volunteers who gave their time and energy to help make the conference so successful.

Looking for 1000th member

The Society's membership has been hovering between the 800 and 900 mark for over a year. Let's try and make it up to 1000 members by the end of 2002.

We have produced a new brochure to promote the Blue Mountains Conservation Society. A copy is enclosed with this newsletter.

Please pass the brochure on to somebody who is interested and encourage them to join the Society.

Waratahs from Blackheath

By Monday night's mail two thousand waratah blooms were forwarded to Melbourne for use as decorations at the ball given by the Governor-General during Cup week. This consignment, which is, perhaps, the largest ever forwarded from this State in one lot, weighs nearly half a ton, and comes from Blackheath. All the flowers are beautiful specimens, in first-class order, and were gathered within a few miles of Blackheath railway station. Waratahs are plentiful this year about the locality, and large bunches were gathered every day by visitors to this mountain resort.

(Lithgow Mercury. 6.11.1912)

"Hut News", the newsletter of
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New Book of Gundungurra Legends

One of the founders of Blue Mountains Conservation Society and its first patron was the bushwalker, author and naturalist Frank Walford. In the 1930's Walford befriended the Gundungurra man Jimmy Shepherd who was living in the Katoomba Falls Gully camp.

Walford obtained many local Aboriginal legends concerning the dreamtime origins of such places as the Ruined Castle, Devil's Hole, Narrowneck, Boar's Head and Orphan Rock. These stories which also included a true Gundungurra myth of the origin of the Three Sisters, were read on ABC radio in the early 1940's. Jim Smith has put these radio talks together into a book. The book includes a commentary by Jim Smith on the environmental and anthropological significance of the stories, none of which has been published before. Jim has written the life stories of Walford and Jimmy Shepherd and examined the friendship between the two men as an early example of reconciliation.

The book is being produced in a limited edition for subscribers. Only 160 copies of Jim's last book, on the history of the Federal Pass, were published and

the book of the legends will be produced in a similar quantity. To obtain a copy send \$25 (includes GST and postage) to Jim Smith, 65 Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls 2782 by mid December. The books will be delivered to subscribers in January.

Early next year a second volume of previously unpublished and uncensored Gundungurra legends will be produced in the series.

Wild Spaces 2002 Environmental Film Festival

Hosted by Blue Mountain Greens

Nov 15,16,17, Gearin Hotel, Katoomba

The Seventh Annual Wild Spaces Film Festival will be screening on 15-17 November in 13 venues around Australia. Wild Spaces is a unique independent media forum dedicated to the distribution of information relating to environmental and social justice related issues. The program for 2002 is a strong and diverse blend of local, national and international produced feature films, shorts and animations.

In addition, the Katoomba festival will feature a special Blue Mountains World Heritage multimedia presentation by Lenore Lindsey.

For full program details, see the Wild Spaces 2002 brochure available from the Gearin Hotel and supportive businesses in Katoomba and other upper mountains townships.

Tickets will be available on the night, \$14 unwaged, \$8 unwaged. For further information, contact Brent Hoare, 0417 478268 or brent.hoare@bigpond.com

Help Sydney Water Restore Bushland

Sydney Water has been extending the network of sewer lines between Hazelbrook and North Katoomba since 1997. Whilst this is a good thing, it can damage bushland.

Sydney Water has made an undertaking to restore bushland to a condition equivalent to or better than that prior to construction. This means bushland on public and private land.

Some members have noticed that this does not seem to have happened in all areas, and some sewer lines have become corridors of weeds or tracks of bare earth.

We want to assist Sydney Water to meet its obligations by informing them of bushland sites not yet rehabilitated. If you are aware of any such site please contact Joy McDonald, phone 4757.2725, email jl2@tpg.com.au.

Writing Press Releases

If you missed out two years ago on the Writing Press Releases workshop, it's happening again on November 24. If you are involved in environmental issues, are an artist or work in business or community, the media can get your message out.

In one day and a follow-up evening you can learn to write press releases which are interesting and likely to run. Michael Burlace

has taught hundreds of people to write well and enjoy it. There is a 30% discount for Conservation Society members.

Contact Michael on 4758.9200 or Michael@organicexchange.com.au. He will also run a workshop on how to make a website work for you and your readers the day before (November 23).

Help Wanted

Exercise and help the Environment

Walkers wanted to deliver Hut News, particularly in Faulconbridge, Woodford and Springwood. Please phone Liz van Reyswoud on 0418.206.899 or email ereyswoud@hermes.net.au.

Blue Mountains Our Future

Draft Vision for the next 25 years

Blue Mountains residents have received a glossy brochure in their mailboxes and a request from Council to 'have a say'. Were the outcomes for the last 25 years what the people of the Blue Mountains wanted in 1975? Some people say no.

Will today's vision guide our decisions over the next 25 years? Will we see a time when we have "protected the World Heritage environment that surrounds us" and "The Blue Mountains is recognized as a centre of excellence for sustainable living and sustainable communities". Perhaps so with good Government, good Council, educated Blue Mountains residents. We have to ALL realize that we live in a special place and are surrounded by a beautiful and diverse World Heritage Area which deserves our protection.

Let's send the forms back with our comments.

The Bird Baths of Umbigumbi

The bird baths of Umbigumbi
Are a bustle of bathing on Monday,
And Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday,
Also Friday, Saturday, Sunday.

The reason for all this activity,
As Candy explained to me,
Is it hasn't rained for a month or more
Where the bush runs down to the sea,
And so there's a shortage of water
Except for the water that she
Pours into the earthenware bird baths,
Numbers one and two and three,
Where the spotted gums, E. maculate,
Stand straight and tall and free,
On the slopes of Umbigumbi
Running down to Lake Cuttagee.

There are whipbirds and bower birds and
thrushes

And robins, yellow and rose,
Thornbills and honeyeaters -
Many species of those -
Even a lone tree creeper,
A shrike tit, a firetail, a wren,
Puffing their feathers and splashing about,
Again and again and again.

Sitting at Candy's windows
All of this we can see,
While the spotted gums, E. maculate,
Surround us with dignity,
Where the forests of Bermagui
Sweep down to the booming sea.

Graham Alcorn

Blue Mountains Swamp Dwellers

One the more spectacular groups of swamp dwellers at this time of the year are the *Xyris* (say "zyris") species. They are tufted rush-like plants, with bright yellow flowers borne on heads at the top of long stems. The yellow flowers look like lily flowers except that only 3 stamens are now functional (6 in lilies), the other three are sterile "staminodes" conspicuous with bright yellow hairs.

Nineteen species occur in Australia, five in the Blue Mountains area.

Xyris gracilis ssp *gracilis* (Slender Yellow-eye) has egg-shaped flower heads on stalks up to 60cm tall. The flower heads are narrow egg shaped, 6-8mm long, 3-5mm wide, with 6-14 bracts. There are 1 to 4 yellow flowers in each head. Found coast to tablelands in sedge swamps and in deep sandy soils near margins of coastal swamps. Flowers November to January.

Xyris juncea (Dwarf Yellow-eye), a small tufted plant distinguished from other members of the genus by a combination of its smaller leaves and flower stalks, with rounded flower heads. Found on swampy margins and other damp sandy places, flowers November-December.

X. complanata occurs in the lower Blue Mountains, differs to other *Xyris* in its flat leaves and stalk and long cylindrical flower head.

Xyris operculata, (Tall Yellow-eye) and *Xyris ustulata* are closely related. The arrangement of bracts on their egg-shaped flower heads separates them. Flower heads are on stalks which in *Xyris ustulata* may be more than 1m tall. *X. operculata* is found Coast to Mountains, also Qld, Vic, Tas and SA, and flowers August-November. *X. ustulata* is restricted to Woronora Plateau and Blue Mountains and flowers November-December.

Watch out for the bright *Xyris* flowers decorating our swamps this month, adding to the splendour of the Blue Mountains springtime

Bushfire

Nearly all the brigades in the Blue Mountains responded to a fire on the Mt Hay Road in the Grose Valley early this morning. Four separate fires either side of the trail—almost certainly deliberately lit. Despite our best efforts we could not control it. It is now a going fire and further control efforts will not start until tonight. It is hoped the southerly change will assist.

This is bad news for the Grose Valley. This is the fourth big hot fire in the last 40 years. This change to the fire regime is damaging the biodiversity which is the main value for which Blue Mountains was listed as world heritage. (Hugh Paterson, Saturday 19 October 2002)

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

Yesterday our brigade worked on the northern end of Lawson Ridge. Our aim was to secure the south eastern perimeter and prevent spread in that direction. Our sector's task was to cut a trail down a steep slope from the end of the fire trail on Lawson Ridge to Wentworth Creek then light along the trail and black out the edge. Half a dozen brigades were involved. No one thought we could do it. But we completed our task by dark. I am proud of this achievement and so are my colleagues in Valley Heights.

I hope that the work we are doing will reduce the area burnt and therefore reduce the amount of biodiversity lost from the Grose Wilderness and the Blue Mountains National Park. But given weather forecasts the chances are the fire will break containment lines. (Hugh Paterson, Tuesday 22 October 2002.)

The fire dropped down into the Grose Valley below Lockley's Pylon today (Thursday 24 October 2002). We were watching from Govett's Leap lookout as the large helicopter dropped its load of water and then returned with another load, again and again. He was going beneath the cliffs and so close to them but couldn't get close enough. The other little helicopters were coming and going, dropping water on the fire, working in the valley behind, looking like tiny insects in the depths of the Grose Valley. The helicopters left for the night and the flames flickered on the cliff below Lockley's, another red line of flame slowly inching upwards on the cliffs of the Perry's Lookdown Headland on the other side of the valley. There was smoke in the valley behind the two landmarks.

Friday 25 October 2002. In the darkness, from Govett's Leap lookout, we could see a thin, almost straight, red line stretching all the way across the valley from Lockley's Pylon to Perry's Headland. There was another short red line on top of Perry's Headland where it was burning. It didn't really look like fire, just a thin red line, and no smell of smoke, the westerly wind blowing the smoke away from us.

We went to the general meeting at the Conservation Hut then came back to the lookout. There was a crowd of people there, watching the fire, and the smell of smoke and a cold easterly wind blowing up from the valley, the line of fire taking the shape of two giant arrows pointing towards the cliffs between Bridal Veil and Horseshoe Falls.

Away from the lookout there was barely the slightest breeze, all was still and clear. In the morning we woke to find the haze surrounding us was not smoke but a cool, moist, mountain mist. Christine Davies.

donPeak

Long Live the King

'When the governor sent Ensign Barrallier as an ambassador to meet the King of the Mountains, he thought he was joking.' — So writes bushwalker and historian Andy Macqueen.

On 4 November 1802, a French-born member of the British forces set out from Nattai to cross the Blue Mountains.

The favourite explorers for economic rationalists are Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth. Their motives for seeking a trans-Mountain route and their actions in their later lives would be applauded by the world's bean-counters. For those of us not quite so concerned about economic benefits, our favourite explorer is Francis Barrallier. He was the first white man to see the wilderness which would later inspire Myles Dunphy to propose a Greater Blue Mountains National Park system which would become the World Heritage Area declared in 2002.

Barrallier engaged with the Gandangara Aborigines. Macqueen writes, 'Barrallier did meet with a King of the Mountains. His name was Goondel, chief of the Aboriginal people in the area.' There is even a legend that he was led astray by Gogy who was in fact a criminal and outcast among local Aborigines.

Andy Macqueen is glad that Governor Phillip Gidley King's difficulties in finding an excuse for Barrallier's explorations led the governor to invent the term 'The King of the Blue Mountains'. In his book, 'The Life and Journeys of Barrallier', he writes:

'The King of the Mountains is not a mountain, nor a person. The King of the Mountains is that spirit, that presence which inhabits that region of massive quartzite, granite and sandstone mountains, ridges, valleys, ravines and canyons in the southern Blue Mountains ...

'I keep going back to meet the King ... I have yet to meet the King: but he knows I am there and he looks after me because I respect him. He refreshes me and gives me life. It is a fulfilling search.'

Vale, Francis Barrallier, the intrepid explorer who found nothing of purely economic value for the rampant developers of early New South Wales!! Hear, hear, Andy Macqueen, Barrallier's biographer! Long live the King of the Blue Mountains!

Don Morison.

Welcome to New Members

Peter Wilson, Winmalee
Jenny Pryor, Blackheath
Lynn Georgiou, Hazelbrook
Robert Rowe, Blackheath
Monica Nugent, Leura
Ruth Lambert, Blaxland
Jenny Rich, Blackheath
Jessica Huybrechs, Avalon
Ian and Julie Chamberlain,
Wentworth Falls

Ben & Joshua Clement-Churn, Woodford
Don Cameron, Faulconbridge
Tara Geldard, Faulconbridge
Steve Campbell, Faulconbridge
Kerrie Sebbens, Katoomba
Gordon Stevens, Katoomba

10th Anniversary Celebration

Congratulations to the Leisure Walkers on their 10th anniversary.

The group kept me on my feet from 1992 or 93 until I could walk no longer, about 1997 or 98. I was so very grateful that Christine started it just when I needed it, after a second major operation.

Best wishes from K.Rachel Makinson (now 85 and about to have a second hip replacement).

All leisure walkers past and present, and their friends are invited to Lunch at the Bacchante Rhododendron Gardens at Blackheath on Monday 11 November at 12 noon. Bring a plate of finger food. For those who are able, there will be a 10th Anniversary Walk starting at the Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre at 9am.

Seldom Seen

I recently had a two week camping trip to Croajingalong NP, a coastal park in Victoria running 100 km from the border, then to Native Dog Flat in the Victorian Alps. Unfortunately I had packed the wrong stuff—light sleeping bag and thermals, so couldn't go on the extended walk—or perish! Never mind, there were Brumbies around each night, adding their fresh pooh to the pooh heaps and neighing, snorting and anything else to disturb. They are lovely animals but they should not be there—they are destroying much of the creek and river sides and sphagnum swamps. It's a beautiful area.

On the way home I needed petrol so turned into a place called Seldom Seen—nothing there except this strange petrol station. There were used cars—old and not so old, about 12 of them—everywhere, effigies made from junk, old skulls, the office a fibro shack with a variety of signs, one saying that if no one was there beep three times and if no one comes go to the house.

I beeped three times and no one came so went to the house but couldn't open the gate. I had to climb over, being careful not to step on the many chooks of various sorts running about, and saying g'day to the cocky in the cage. Once over the gate I was met by geese and their goslings giving the alarm that a customer was there, and an Emu—nearby an Ostrich. When I finally found the front door and the bloke opened it, I could see that there was a lot more stuff inside that he didn't want to lose. Tied to another car was Lucy. I fell in love with Lucy and would have taken her off his hands for \$200 but sense prevailed—I can't have another dog as I am SELDOM THERE. This puppy is a Dingo and she was gorgeous.

Then we went to travel over the McKillops Bridge which spans the Snowy River. The drive would have been spectacular had I been game to look. Of course it was a dirt road and

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Nov 23 (Sat) Management Meeting, 9am, Mid Mtns Community Centre, Lawson.
Nov 29 (Fri) General Meeting at The Hut, 7.30 pm. (See page 1.)

QUOLL CLUB (Activities for 12 and under) ☎ Jessica 4757.3686 for more info.

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

Nov 09 (Sat) Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group. (9 am, 2nd Saturday of every month) Tools provided. Bring morning tea, gloves and drinking water. Contact Karen on 4757.1929 for the meeting place.

BUSHWALKS:

Monday Leisure Walks: *Usually half day walk unless noted, leisurely pace.* During October, walks were cancelled due to Safety Closures of National Parks walking tracks and early fire season. We request walkers call the contact or Bill G (4759.1692) before 8pm the day before the walk to verify whether the published walk is on, or an alternative arranged. This arrangement will continue for the duration of the season.

Nov 11 Tenth Anniversary Walk. Meet for walk at Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9am. ☎ Terry and Mary 4787.6918, or meet for lunch at Bacchante Rhododendron Gardens 12 noon. Bring a plate of finger food.

Nov 18 Twiss History Walk. ☎ Allan 4739.2767. Meet Bull's Camp, GWH, Linden 9am. Medium.

Nov 25 Horne's Point to Fairy Bower. ☎ Jock 4758.6346. Meet Mt Victoria Station 8.30 am. Medium.

Dec 02 Blair Athol mine and Ikara Head. ☎ Allan 4739.2767. Meet Mt Victoria Station 8.30 am. Medium.

Dec 09 Spit Bridge to Manly. ☎ Bill 4759.1692. Train 6.39 from Lithgow (Lawson 7.42) second carriage. Lunch at Manly.

Dec 16 Evan's Crown Bux Trip. ☎ Jock 4758.6346. Leaves Katoomba depot 8 am. Easy/Medium. Book with Kees 4759.1958 for travel plan.

Very Easy Walks on Thursdays. These walks are conducted at a slow pace to suit the walkers on the day and are usually 2 hours starting at 10am. Lunch follows for those so inclined. Contact Bill 4759.1692 for any enquiries about the program.

Nov 07 Mount Annan (car pool). Meet Springwood commuter carpark **9am.** Full day, bring lunch/BBQ.

Nov 14 Valley of the Waters, upper section. Meet Wentworth Falls Station carpark 10 am.

Nov 21 Down Lawson's Long Alley TO Car Shuttle. Meet Mt Victoria Station 10 am.

Nov 28 Glastonbell. Meet Mt Victoria Station, carpool, 10am.

Dec 05 Blue Gum Swamp. Meet Winnmalee at end of Whitecross Road 10am. Check for alternative if fire hazard.

Dec 12 River Lett Waterhole. Meet Mt Victoria Station 10am. This is the final walk for the year, bring picnic celebratory lunch.

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. 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 Tocher 4758.8545.

Nov 09 (Sat) Glow Worm Tunnel in the old coach road Newnes. Meet Mount Victoria Station 8.17am. ☎ June 4787.7312. Medium. Bring lunch and extra water and a torch for the tunnel walk.

Nov 16 (Sat) Walk to Zig Zag at Mt Victoria and on to Wilson's Glen. Meet Mount Victoria Station 9.50 am. ☎ Mary/Terry 4787.6918. Medium with a hard climb. Bring lunch.

Nov 23 (Sat) Ruined Castle. Meet Katoomba Station, Gearins Hotel carpark 8.30 am. ☎ Ron 4757.1526. Medium with hard climb out. Bring lunch and extra water.

Dec 01 (Sun) Wonderland Track. Meet Medlow Bath outside Hydro Majestic 9.35am. ☎ Bill 4758.8545. Medium, some steep downhill track. Bring lunch/water.

Dec 07 (Sat) Crossing the Blue Mountains of NSW, Day 7. The final walk of the series from Woodford to Blaxland. Bushfires and National Park closures may affect route. ☎ Jim 4758.6009 for information closer to the date. Some off track walking may be expected. May be hard in parts. Bring lunch and extra water.

then we came to a sign that said unsuitable for caravans and that there very few places to pass another vehicle for 11 km—true, true! And it was winding and steep and mostly a ghastly drop to one side. The Snowy looks good now, but still not and probably never will be the big river it was.

After a long day we reached Berrima

where there is quite a nice free camping area and in the Wingecarribee River we saw Platypus. Stream Watch have been working hard on this river and it's really showing, and what a thrill to see these elusive animals. *Mary Jane Shaw.*



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DRAFT LOCAL ENVIRONMENT PLAN 2002

What is Draft LEP2002?

Draft Local Environment Plan 2002 is great news for the environment! If it goes ahead it will be a big step towards protecting creeklines, Blue Gum forests, hanging swamps and many other special features of the Blue Mountains.

This is the draft of the legal document which will set out the rules about how land can be used and developed in most of the Blue Mountains. (Other parts of the mountains are covered by LEP 91.)

Since 1984 there has been a prolonged community effort to replace LEP4 with one which would give better environmental protection. Council planners have put in a huge amount of work over the last four years to identify what needs to be protected within the city area and what needs to be done to reduce impacts of urban development on the surrounding World Heritage area.

BUT, this is only a DRAFT and Council needs to hear from us all

There will undoubtedly be vocal opposition. If we don't speak up the plan could be delayed or shelved or be so watered down as to be ineffective. We have until December 13th to speak up.

It is very easy to find out about it and have your say. Draft Environment Plan 2002 will be on display until 13 December at Blue Mountains City Council Offices (Katoomba and Springwood) and all Blue Mountains City Council Libraries except Wentworth Falls. See the Gazette for the places and times of where it is displayed and when planners are available to help. Ask a planner to help you understand the proposed zonings for your area, and fill in a form.

If you would like some help with identifying how the Plan will effect your locality or in writing a response, please don't hesitate to contact us. We are happy to bring the maps to small groups at your home or to the bushland you are worried about. Please contact the Land Use subcommittee through Monica Nugent on 4784 1631 or email (monican@bigpond.com.au).

Will DLEP 2002 limit population to what is ECOLOGICALLY sustainable?

The principles of sustainability are clearly defined in the Plan, which is a great starting point. The Society has not yet been able to study all the details to know what the anticipated results will look like on the ground. It appears that this Plan will reduce the size of the population from what was possible under the existing Plan (LEP4).

Some of the questions we will be asking are:

- Will the urban expansion be contained within the existing developed areas?
- What will be the indirect impact of increased densities permitted in village and some residential (living) zones?
- Has an assessment been undertaken of the adequacy of services and facilities for the current population level (both resident and visitor)?
- What extra land will be required to supply the services and facilities for any increase in population? Can this be provided without extending the urban footprint?

On page 2 you will find more information to help you understand Draft Local Environment Plan 2002.

DRAFT LOCAL ENVIRONMENT PLAN

Zones: How can they help the bush?

The Draft LEP consists of a written document and a set of maps. Each local area has 12 maps, each of which provides useful background information for that area, such as the proposed zones, the Protected Areas, aerial photos, steep slopes, significant vegetation communities, public land, etc.

If you want to know what is proposed for some particular patch of bushland, look at BOTH the Zone map and also the Protected Areas map for that locality.

Environmental Protection Zones: The best protection that can be given to an area is to have it zoned Environmental Protection (EP). There are two different EP zones depending on whether it is publicly owned or privately owned. Development will not be allowed in these areas.

Some of the areas we are pleased to see zoned EP include the land in North Katoomba known as 'Minne Ha Ha Falls lost lands', most of the St Columba site in Springwood, and View Street Blaxland. Please tell Council if you agree. All of these areas need the utmost protection under EP Zoning.

Living-Bushland Conservation Zone: In spite of its name this does not guarantee the retention of bushland, however if it has a Protected Area hatching on the map, that will help. Some properties have two zones identifying the parts where development can and cannot occur.

What are Protected Areas? Some Living-Bushland Conservation Zone areas are also classed as Protected Areas (PA). Unlike areas zoned EP, these areas are not guaranteed to be safe from development, however any development proposed in these areas will need to satisfy council that it will minimise the impacts on the slope, the escarpment or vegetation (whichever has been identified as having a special value). This protected area status has been given to:

- Areas around creeklines
- Significant vegetation communities
- Steep slopes
- Escarpment Constraint Areas
- Riverine Scenic Quality Corridor
- Water Supply Catchment Area

Better Environmental Management in Urban Areas

The DLEP has recognised that the protection of the surrounding National Park depends on how we live up-slope. The DLEP introduces a number of tools which will be available to Council to ensure new developments do not add to the problems of silt in creeklines, weed invasion and polluted water.

When assessing a new development Council will be able to keep developments away from sensitive areas (creeks, slopes, special vegetation), or at least limit the impact.

Council will have some ability to stop the planting of Environmental Weeds around new developments in one zone only—Living-Bushland Conservation. This will be good news to Bushcare groups who work on reserves adjacent to housing with this zone. Unfortunately weeds will still be planted elsewhere with the blessing of Council and travel down creeklines or be carried by birds into our World heritage Area.

The DLEP also gives Council powers to introduce a Vegetation Management Order. The Society has been supporting such an Order to protect native vegetation in existing residential areas. Many existing houses have important habitat in their backyards, which need ongoing protection by a mechanism such as a VMO. This is another opportunity to demonstrate to Council your support to stop bushland being cleared for unjustified reasons. In your submission, please urge Council to protect native vegetation throughout the mountains, not just on new developments, by introducing a Vegetation Management Order.

Buffers

BMCS, together with other local groups, has been advocating the use of "buffers" to protect creeklines and other sensitive areas (eg heaths and swamps) for many years. In 1997 we contributed to the funding of a study, carried out by Judy and Peter Smith, to investigate the width of buffers needed to protect sensitive vegetation from urban impacts. Based on their findings in this study, they recommended 60m as the minimum width needed for protection against human impacts such as rubbish dumping, weed invasion, and tracks.

Clearing for development or agriculture also leaves the edge of bushland without any protection afforded by trees or shrubs. These edges suffer from higher wind speeds, higher light levels and more extreme air and soil temperatures which effects the moisture levels in the leaf-litter etc.

DLEP 2002 recognises the need for buffers to creeklines, sensitive vegetation areas and escarpments. We need to support this in general and also look at how this is applied in your local area.

Buffers to Significant Vegetation communities. 24 different types of 'significant' communities were identified in the extensive survey undertaken by Council.

- Where Council has been able to verify all the details of the vegetation communities identified in the Vegetation mapping Survey, these have been zoned as EP together with a 10 m buffer, then an additional buffer of 50m has been classed as a "Protected Area-Ecological Buffer Area".
- Where Council has not verified the Significant Vegetation community in any particular place, it has been classed

as a "Protected Area - Vegetation Constraint Area" which does not include any buffer.

- However if anyone intends to build or clear land in what should be the buffer to such a community, Council must consider the impact on the community. Only in the case of new lots created by subdivision are buffers specifically named for consideration. *This is an obvious weakness.*

Buffers to creeklines. Council has developed a model which has identified how wide the buffers should be along each creekline and watercourse. The creekline corridors have been zoned as EP and the watercourse buffers around these have been mapped as "Protected Area - Ecological Buffer Areas". These are critical to the protection of creeks and water quality downstream; even if they are degraded it is important that the areas are protected from future development and may one day be rehabilitated. This level of detailed mapping gives our creeklines the best chance possible as any challenge should now be restricted to questions about measurements, and not so much about 'merits'.

Buffers to Escarpment Areas - The "Protected Area - Escarpment Constraint Area" includes both the sensitive escarpment areas and also a buffer, which varies according to its location.

Vegetation Mapping

Council has recently mapped the vegetation across the whole of the mountains, not just in the DLEP 2002 areas and not just the 'significant' vegetation. These maps and an accompanying report which describes these communities are now on display also (closing date Dec 13). This has been an immense task and provides some good base data for the whole community, both to learn more about our flora and also to help us protect it.

Council is inviting comments about this. You may know of something that has been left out please let them know and thank them too!

In addition to this there is an amendment to the LEP 1991! It is to expand the number of "significant vegetation communities" to include the extra ones identified in this mapping survey. This will then give greater consistency between both LEPs. The amendment which will bring this into force is also on exhibition until 13th December.

We urge you to take the time to have a look at the maps for the areas you know and let us (and Council) know if you believe there are any problems and what you agree with.