

HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"



Sustainable housing ...

Derek Wrigley, architect and industrial designer with some 59 years professional experience, has a retrofitted (modified) suburban house in Mawson ACT. Following requests from visitors to the house during Solar House Tours organised by the ANZ Solar Energy Society in 2002 and 2003, Derek, in 2004, published a book, "Making your home sustainable". The book is written and fully illustrated to encourage and instruct those of us who are concerned about the state of the environment to take remedial action in our own home to reduce emission of greenhouse gases, consume fewer resources and utilise available renewable energies.

At our Monthly Meeting on Friday 29 April at the Conservation Hut Derek will firstly give a brief introduction to the problem of climate change and how it is affecting personal comfort in our homes, with some predictions about the situation. The problems of existing housing as a major source of greenhouse gas emissions will then be discussed, and what can be done about them.

Derek will illustrate the modifications that have been made to his own house since 1991 and comment on the results. Several new solar devices have been utilised to optimise use of the sun's beneficial powers and to improve summer heat control by way of vertical naturally-induced ventilation, rather than the customary horizontal which relies on wind to have any effect. Aerobically-treated grey water from the kitchen sink and the clothes washing machine is used effectively on the garden outside, by means of subsoil storage and distribution piping. He will reveal several other devices which are not difficult to make but can change the livability of a house interior with sunshine in southern rooms, warmth in winter and coolness in summer, without the need for air conditioning.

Cumulatively, Derek says, these devices and techniques create a win-win-win situation – not only from indoor climate control, but in ongoing reduced power bills, reduced pollution from greenhouse gases and the cosy inner glow that comes from knowing that you are doing the right thing for the environment – and incidentally contributing to a cleaner world.



... the worm turns

After supper, Rebecca Brown, Waste & Resources Project Officer for Blue Mountains City Council, will be talking about an organic device, another "wriggley", that contributes heartily to the health of our environment - the lowly earthworm. Rebecca will enlighten us on worm biology, tell us how to get the best use from worm farms and show us a worm farm in operation. Many members were looking forward to Rebecca's talk some weeks ago when she had to cancel due to illness. She's back!

(The illustration is from EPA/Worm farming, www.epa.nsw.gov.au/environm)

The meeting will be of vastly **sustainable** interest, from 7.30pm at the Conservation Hut at Wentworth Falls. Be there!! Visitors are very welcome.

Autumn plant sale

The Society's Autumn plant sale will be held from **9am to noon on Saturday 9 April outside the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls**. There will be a large variety of native plants suitable for all areas of the mountains.

As well as the regular prices (small tubes, 4 for \$10, large tubes, 5 for \$20, there will be some outstanding half-price bargains.

Bring a box and make your selections. We also offer free advice on what's best for where!

Grass identification workshop

At the time of writing there are five places left in the workshop to be held at the Emergency Services Centre, Katoomba on Sat/Sun 23/24 April, 9-4. Cost is \$85 (\$60/75 concessions).

The presenter is botanist and professional bush regenerator Van Klaphake who has recently completed a simplified 'easy to use' grass manual for the Blue Mountains which contains all but the rarest Mountain species. Cost of

Invasion of the drought-proof plants

Imported drought-proof plants favoured by suburban Australian gardeners as a way of beating water restrictions are threatening native species and taking over farmland, a report says.

The report *Jumping the garden fence* by CSIRO scientists for WWF-Australia has, for the first time, documented how many invasive grazing weeds have jumped the back fence. The report says that Australia is home to over 27,000 known alien plants. About 10% of them are established in the environment, and the list is growing by 10 new species every year.

The introduction of large numbers of plants in the past 30-40 years has created a massive reservoir of potential new pests. One of the biggest threats comes from the trend to cultivate so-called drought-proof gardens prompted by water restrictions in parts of the country. Many of these plants thrive in the Australian environment.

One of the report's authors, CSIRO weed and pest expert Dr Mark Lonsdale, says water-conscious gardeners should be looking for drought resistant native species only.

Weeds of Blue Mountains Bushland website http://weedsbluemountains.org.au/weeds_gallery_a-z_common.asp has recently been updated to include three new weed species - Crofton, Coreopsis and Cootamundra Wattle. The inclusion of a "native" Cootamundra Wattle shows that while we should be looking for drought resistant native species it would be better if we chose local native species.

(reference: *Invasion of the drought-proof plants* by Judy Skatsooon, ABC Science Online, abc.net.au/science/news/enviro/EnviroRepublsh_1317624.htm)

the grass identification manual is \$15. Bookings are essential. To book your place email hutnews@bluemountains.org.au or phone Christine 4787 7246.

Membership secretary

The position of Membership Secretary in the Society's Management Committee has not been filled. If you have some time to spare and computer skills and would like to find out more about this important position contact **Liz van Reyswoud** 4757 2694, email mcreysw@bigpond.net.au

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Welcome to new members

Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute
 Ross Bridle, Warrimoo
 Kim Hopkins, Hazelbrook
 Jose de Koster

Book review

by Christine Davies

After witnessing the spectacular migration of the Caper White butterflies in November last year, I bought a book: "The complete field guide to Butterflies of Australia" by Dr Michael F Braby, published by CSIRO Publishing.

The book is beautifully illustrated with colour photographs of each of the

GROUNDWATER

Article 7: Groundwater management (B)

By Brian Marshall

The Blue Mountains urgently needs a Groundwater Management Plan (GMP) that recognises the interdependence of ground and surface waters.

In 1997, the Department of Land and Water Conservation (DLWC) considered that the Blue Mountain's groundwater resources were at risk due to: (a) the potential for contamination of recharge areas; (b) the number of unlicensed bores; (c) the dearth of data on extraction rates and quality; (d) the importance of surface base flow (SBF) to maintaining flow in watercourses under dry conditions; and (e) the vulnerability of hanging swamps and valleys, and upland wetlands, to small watertable fluctuations [Sinclair Knight Merz, *Groundwater sustainability, A Management Plan for the Blue Mountains/Richmond Region*, Land and Water Conservation, April 1999]. To these factors, I would add: (f) the paucity of data on licensed domestic bores in relation to the depth drilled, aquifer(s) tapped, groundwater quality, and amounts extracted; and (g) the lack of knowledge regarding sites of natural and engineered recharge and discharge, and aquifer distribution and hydrologic properties.

The Blue Mountains City Council (BMCC) recognised the scope of the problem in concluding that [BMCC, Ordinary Meeting item 9, June 8 1999]: (a) management of groundwater resources is a critical component of environmental management, but it is poorly understood; (b) significant additional work is needed to yield results that are relevant and useful at a local level; and (c) the considerable potential for adverse impact from unauthorized use of groundwater means that more effective regulation is necessary.

BMCC indicated that [BMCC, Ordinary Meeting item 9, June 8 1999] a comprehensive Blue Mountains GMP (BMGMP) must address and be based on: full documentation of extraction rates, quantitative understanding of the

416 currently identified species (yes, even in this very conspicuous group of insects new species continue to be discovered!) with a distribution map for each species on the Australian mainland.

Identification is made easier by dividing the butterflies into six family groups. Information given for each species includes wingspan, similar species, variation, behaviour, habitat, status, larval food plants, larval attendant ant if any. The introduction to the book covers adult structure, classification, distribution and habitats, as well as life

local environmental impact of watertable fluctuations, appreciating the effects of land-use planning on groundwater, and rigorous evaluation of licence applications. Unfortunately, there seems to have been little progress. Although concerned over the need for a detailed, useable BMGMP, neither BMCC nor DLWC (now subsumed by the Department of Infrastructure Planning and Natural Resources - DIPNR) would seem to have pursued the issue.

From the viewpoint of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society (BMCS):

- The BMGMP should be given top priority.
- BMCC and DIPNR should urgently convene a meeting with affected government agencies, BMCS and other concerned parties, with the aim of restarting the studies needed to produce a comprehensive BMGMP.
- BMCC and DIPNR should develop a database of all licensed and (where practicable) unlicensed forms of extraction; the database should include elevation of the extraction point, depth of bore, amounts extracted, aquifer tapped and height of the watertable (initially and over time).
- Until such a database and a detailed BMGMP exist, a moratorium should be placed on all new forms of extraction, and notice should be given that all unlicensed extraction must cease immediately.
- Consideration should be given to having an amnesty period for registration of currently unlicensed bores.

A strong argument exists for proper metering and licensing of all extraction sites, for stipulating and monitoring extraction limits, and for billing the extracted amounts at rates commensurate (at least!) with those charged by Sydney Water.

There should be no opportunity for a free lunch!

cycle and behaviour.

'... while enjoying watching or collecting Australian butterflies with the help of this magnificent field guide, you also have the opportunity to add to scientific knowledge and contribute to the preservation of biological diversity' Paul Ehrlich, Stanford University.

MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES

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Soliloquy of a Scribbly Gum

by Steven Ridd, Katoomba, 23.10.2004

A Scribbly Gum here I stand
My species iconic, proud, but now condemned
They cast the red die on my girth, the red mark of death
So numbingly final

Glazed thoughts I can only muster
My roots here so ancient, means nothing to them
Scribbles flourished this land since Gondwana dawn
Pervading this old stone country high and deep
Once a wild place, us part of it, it part of us
Of times past, these primitive escarpments hosted wilderness
When old men Scribbly Gums knew no saw

Came the getters, the settlers, the saws
For conquest, for progress, for their plot with a view
Wilderness they castrate, deeming it 'battleaxe'
Ridges and valleys to the slaughter
Slaughter they sanitized, deeming it 'clearing'
Some saw the wrong
Some good laws got through
Some Scribbles were saved the slaughter

So why don't these laws protect me now?
Heritage denied me just trees away
Relegated from their Listing, on the fringe
Zoned a resource, a commodity
Decisions cast from the hill, to serve those from distant hills
Now they reason I block their view, I block their way
They cast the red die on my girth, the red mark of death

I'll miss the rain most, the best time
When nature regains control
When the cloud drifts in, when it feels wild again
Wild escarpment days

Motors approach. They come for me
Only a bus, it slows, they take photos, it groans away
Quiet again
Below the cloud, a piercing sunset glows my bark gold
Down the valley, the bush blanket surges
A breeze rising up the escarpment, fans me fresh
Around me branches sway, then settle, restful
Still again
Quiet again

Soon they come
They cast the red die on my girth, the red mark of death
My death an extinction wedge
When they scatter my woodchips on their plot
Will they know I was once a Scribbly Gum, free and wild?
Their photos a torment of treasure lost
This wild country locked in myth
Motors approach. A saw starts. No!



This tree stands on the Jamieson escarpment off Cliff Drive Katoomba. It is one of a number of mature Eucalypts due to be killed to make way for development in the next few months.



by Christine Davies

When Don Morison and I wrote about our bushwalking trip to the Snowy Mountains in January 2005, a member phoned to ask why we didn't mention the environmental problems in the region. I wrote about the beauty of the Alpine area but did not mention the stark ugliness of Perisher village with its enormous asphalt car park, unsoftened by a covering of snow, or the pretty lupins which we used to decorate our dinner table which are environmental weeds, or the possible overabundance of Australian Ravens caused by artificial feeding by summer and winter visitors ... and I knew little of the major threats facing Kosciusko National Park

"The Australian Alps are considered to be one of the three most vulnerable ecosystems under potential climatic warming because of their restricted range and cold climate" (National Biodiversity and Climate Action Plan, page 11) and "Kosciuszko's snowline has been rising for 50 years" (Colong Foundation).

Threats include proposed sell-off of leasehold land and major four-season resort development, continued cloud seeding, increased artificial snow making, road clearing in snow bound areas to allow access to future development, lobbying for more fragile parkland to be put aside for high impact users such as four wheel drive vehicles, trail bikes and horse riders, and lack of control of feral horses.

You can find out more on the Colong Foundation's website www.colongwilderness.org.au. There too you will find beautiful photographs by Henry Gold of Kosciusko and other wilderness areas.



BMCS bushwalkers cross the headwaters of the Snowy River during January 2005. Photo: Jenny Miller.

Slow walking in my bush

In sandstone sclerophyll step slowly!

After rain you'll surely find
Your faint bush tracks have
vanished,
Gone beneath the leaves
To a compost for the trees.

Clamber over long dead branches
Where the trunks of ancient trees
Fell in storms before the summer,
Summer so wet it banished bushfires
Making us who feared them safe,
And the autumn flowers came:
Almost hidden orchid beauties
And much more than I can name.

There are pteristylus nutans:
Stiffening backs and nodding heads
At vines and ferns about them,
Lomandra longifolia, strong ciccus
And the rest.

Step slowly in the sandstone bush.

Nella.

Capertee Valley tree planting: 7-8 May 2005

Come along and get your hands dirty for a good cause at the next Capertee Valley tree planting weekend.

Volunteers are needed on 7-8 May to plant another 3500 trees and shrubs in this beautiful valley to restore habitat for the endangered Regent Honeyeater and other declining woodland species.

Since 1994, the project has seen over 60,000 trees planted by volunteers with the aid of funding from the Save The Bush Fund, NSW Environmental Trusts, NSW NPWS and the Natural Heritage Trust.

Both last year's planting weekends were a huge success with about 120 people attending each time. Good rain since then has resulted in excellent growth. This May we will be planting on a single property on Crown Station Road in the southern section of the valley. The soil moisture profile is good so we are anticipating another great start for these young trees and shrubs.

On Friday 6th we will be laying out the plants and any extra help on that day would also be appreciated.

Accommodation ranges from camping at Glen Davis to staying in one of the cottages available throughout the valley (at a cost of around \$25 per night). The Saturday night dinner provided by the Glen Alice P & C is always a great social event, but you will need to cater for your own breakfast and lunch. Advance booking is necessary to ensure a bed and a place at the dinner.

The Capertee Valley project is an inspiring example of co-operation

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY BUSHWALKING GROUP

Our bushwalking group provides a range of activities. Membership of the bushwalking group is available to members of the Society. For further information contact the Activity Coordinator (listed) or Bushwalks Conveyor Bob van Reyswoud. **Cost of insurance and affiliation fees for bushwalkers of \$15 per member is payable with your membership renewal.**

Monday Leisure Walks: Usually 'Short Day' walks of 3-5 hours suitable for walkers of average fitness. Graded Medium, i.e. can include some short rock scrambles or some short section off track. Bring morning tea and lunch, plus carry at least 1 litre of WATER, 2 litres on warmer days.

Apr 04 Dark's Cave., Leura. Meet 9am Leura station commuter car park. ☎ Laurel 4784 1554.

Apr 11 Radiata Plateau. Meet 9.15 Gearins Hotel, Katoomba. ☎ Jock 4758 6346.

Apr 18 Long Swamp, Lawson Ridge. Open temperate forest. Meet 9am Lawson Bowling Club car park (near Station). ☎ Allan 4739 2767.

Apr 25 No walk.

May 02 Ross Cave, Pulpit Rock, Mt Victoria. Meet 9.15 Mt Victoria Station. ☎ Mary 4787 6918. BBQ

Thursday Pleasure Walks: These easy to medium grade walks are conducted to suit the walkers on the day. Times given are approximate. Slower walkers are catered for and on longer walks there is an option of a slower group to complete a section of the walk. Phone the contact for any enquiries about the program, starting times and transport issues.

Apr 07 Conservation Hut to Nature Trail, Wentworth Falls. Classic mountain walk past Lillian's Bridge in Valley of the Waters. Many steps down and up. Car shuffle. Meet 10am Wentworth Falls car park near the clock. ☎ John 4757 1558.

Apr 14 Martin's Lookout, Springwood. Round walk with short steep sections to creek. Level walk along creek. Meet 10am at Springwood commuter car park, north of the station. ☎ Marie 4787 1257.

Apr 21 Lyrebird Dell and Pool of Siloam, Leura. Some steep descents and ascents on good track. Meet 10am at junction of Leura Mall and Megalong St. ☎ Joan 4782 2218.

Apr 28 Dunns Swamp Bus trip. Full day bus trip to lovely picnic and camping area with walks to suit all abilities. Some seats available, cost \$10. Meet 8.30am at bus depot South St North Katoomba or at locations previously arranged with Simone. ☎ 4757 3416

May 05 Horne's Point Mt Victoria. Walk along fire trail to spectacular lookout over the Kanimbla Valley. Option of extending walk length. Meet 10am Mt Victoria Station. ☎ Phil 4787 5560.

Weekend Bushwalks: 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 Bob van Reyswoud, 4757 2694, email mcrevsw@bigpond.net.au

Sat. Apr 2 Florabella Pass. Meet Warrimoo Station at 9.30am. Medium June 4787 7312.

Sat. Apr 9. Kowmung River. Meet Mt Victoria station at 8.30am. Medium. Car Pool. ☎ Meredith 4782 4823

Sat. Apr 16 Empire Pass. Meet Lawson Station Car Park 9.30 am. Medium. ☎ Bob 4757 2694

Sat Apr 23 Prince Henry Cliff Top walk. Echo Point. Giant Staircase, Boardwalk. Return by Furber Steps or Railway. Steep Steps. Medium. Meet Gearin Hotel, Katoomba, 9am. ☎ Mary 4787 6918

Apr 30 Mt Banks. Meet Mt Victoria station at 8.30am. Car Pool. Medium. ☎ Ron 4757 1526.

May 7 Bell Exploratory walk to Wollongambe River. Meet Mt Victoria station at 9.00 am. Medium/Hard? ☎ June 4787 7312.

New Wednesday Walks:

Apr 13 Half day exploratory walk to Lawson Point. Medium. Meet Lawson Station car park at 9.30am. ☎ Bob 4757 2694.

New Activity:

Sun Apr 16 Plant Identification walk at the Conservation Hut. Meet 9.30am. ☎ Meredith 4782 4823

between private landowners, birdwatchers and conservationists for the benefit of the environment. If you would like to become involved, please register by contacting the National Regent Honeyeater Recovery Coordinator, David Geering on (freecall) 1800 521 056 or email: david.geering@environment.nsw.gov.au (photo: Capertee Valley)

