

Land Use

A Call to our Membership

In the next five months, BMCS will be making important submissions on Planning changes affecting all settled areas of the Blue Mountains as well as Plans of Management for the three National Parks in the area.

The new Local Environment Plan 97 could bring about zoning changes for large areas of Mountain townships and amendments to other areas' planning controls will also be on display.

Exciting voluntary positions are available now to help Blue Mountains Conservation Society develop its input. Write to PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782, or phone Don Morison 4759.2471.

'The Golden History of Blue Mountains Evangelism'

During the 1880s, when lonely single men camped at the foot of the Ruined Castle to mine kerosene shale, the Salvation Army visited them every Sunday to bring their message of comfort.

Climbing back up the track to Narrow Neck they used to sing a hymn, "Climbing up the golden stair" (to glory), and this is how the track came to be known as the "Golden Stairs" (*Source: Jim Smith*)

I would emphasise that these traditional Salvationists climbed the golden **stairs** — they did not ascend clutching helium-filled balloons.

Some BMCS members were concerned that the Salvation Army was giving out these golden balloons at the Winter Magic festival, and the balloons were escaping from their owners and landing in the National Park.

Our BMCS Education Officer has written to the Salvation Army and we hope that their golden message may be promoted with air-filled balloons in future.

— Don Morison.

Welcome to New Members

Pat and Cathy Cavanagh, Glenbrook
Margaret and Doug Mavay, Wentworth Falls
Frances Kelly, Leura
Anne and John Dillon, Epping
Gordon Pendlebury, Winmalee
Patrick Fitzgerald and Lucy Bainger, Leura
Robert Goodwin, Katoomba
Helen Carse and Maureen Howe, Katoomba
Mervyn Bird, Blackheath
Michael Abbott and Family, Turramurra

Membership Enquiries: The Society is keen to have new members who are concerned about the welfare of the Blue Mountains natural environment. Contact membership secretary, Ross Coster: Work (047)59.1247, Home 59.1837 FAX 59.1095, or write to P.O. Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782.

History of Walking Tracks

—Conservation Society's Involvement

(Extracts from Jim Smith's recently completed *Heritage Study for NPWS.*)

BMCC aldermen resolved in July 1966 to lobby the state government for extra funds for the tracks stressing the "national" significance of the Upper Blue Mountains reserves. However, these representations were unsuccessful. During 1967 a number of visitors to the Blue Mountains wrote to the local media expressing in strong terms their "disgust" with the poor condition of the local walking tracks and their associated facilities.

Volunteer Activities in the 1960s.

During the 1960's there was volunteer activity on two fronts. The Blackheath Rotary Club, during the period 1965 to 1968, constructed the first new walking track in the upper Blue Mountains since 1941. The Coachwood Glen Nature Trail was a 'first' in another way also. It was designed as an environmental education walk, with plaques giving the names and information about trees and shrubs. These have unfortunately disappeared and have not been renewed.

Volunteer work, centred on the area around the Valley of the Waters, was carried out by the Katoomba and District Wildlife Conservation Society (KDWCS) with some assistance from other groups. (*KDWCS is now the Blue Mountains Conservation Society.*) It involved the restoration of old tracks that had fallen into disrepair.

The KDWCS began in 1961 and by 1963 had started the renovation of the old Valley of the Waters tea room as an environmental education centre and meeting place. This work and the landscaping of the area around 'The Hut' consumed considerable time of the society's volunteer workers. From the beginning, the society took a deep and practical interest in the condition of the walking tracks in the adjacent reserve. An early project was to purchase 160 railway sleepers from the Railway depot at Lawson for 6 pence each and transport them to The Hut where they were used "for the construction of permanent retaining walls and steps along the eroded and dangerous sections of the bushwalks."

In 1964 the society received a £100 grant from the Department of Lands. This was supplemented by the society's funds to build sandstone retaining walls at the top of the tracks near 'The Hut'. The large slabs of milled sandstone can still be seen there. In the following year another £200 grant was received which was used to build the steel ladders between Queen Victoria lookout and the National Pass track. The original wooden ladders built in the early 1930s had burned in the 1957 bushfire. In addition, two bridges were built across the Valley of the Waters Creek connecting the (then closed) Vera Falls track to the (also closed) Wentworth Pass. One of the intentions of the society was that this would stimulate Council's interest in the reopening of the tracks. In 1966 the society, in association with the NSW Federation of Bushwalking Clubs lobbied

for the reopening of tracks in the valley, in particular the Roberts, Lindeman and Wentworth Passes. They asked Mr. Willis, Chief Secretary and Minister for Tourism for a \$2000 grant for these works when he visited 'The Hut'. They offered to assist the Federation with the marking of Lindeman's Pass. No grant was forthcoming and in 1968 the KDWCS expressed "deep concern" about the deterioration of the area's tracks to Council. Council responded with the formation of a 530A committee for the area. Even though council had taken over from the trustees in 1957, the 530A Committee was not formed for eleven years. Funds were allocated by the Committee who worked with volunteers from the KDWCS, some of whom had to take chainsaws out onto the tracks to clear accumulated regrowth and fallen trees. The Springwood Bushwalking Club assisted with this work.

In 1969 the society's biggest track project was begun. This was the reclearing of the track, originally constructed over the period 1898 to 1910, connecting the National Pass track to West Street. It had probably not been maintained since the late 1930s. As it had never been given an official name the society christened it "The Nature Trail". This work took some five years to complete. Apart from a contract between the 530A committee and Kevin Browne for \$170 worth of work, the entire project was completed by volunteer labour. A feature of the project was the set of notes interpreting the environment along the track prepared by Isobel Bowden. The Nature Trail project was entered into the 1972 Daily Telegraph—Bank of New South Wales Operation Earth Day competition. This was described as "Australia's largest Conservation Contest". It won the regional prize of \$65 and another \$200 for third prize in the state.

In November 1972, 60 Senior scouts from the Cumberland Scout District cleared and restored the clifftop tracks in the reserve. It is of note that one of their main projects was the reclearing of the tracks connecting Lyrebird Lookout to Queen Victoria Lookout and Murphy's Lane. After 1973 the society, although it carried out much work on 'The Hut' and its immediate surroundings, was not involved in further track restoration activities.

Wildlife Crossing Sign

Members of Blue Mountains WIRES became concerned about the number of animals being killed by cars at Oaklands Road at Hazelbrook. The final straw came when Jill Dark, a member of WIRES and the Blue Mountains Conservation Society, was called out to rescue a yellow tailed black cockatoo that was hit by a car. Sadly the bird was dead by the time Jill got there.

Jill suggested that WIRES request that BMCC erect a wildlife crossing sign. Jill and several other WIRES members wrote to Council and were pleased when their requests were so quickly responded to.

Wildlife crossing signs have now been erected at Oaklands Road and Hall Pde.

Walkers Find Travelling Trees

Participants in the inaugural Forest Campaign Group (FCG) Field Trip were astounded to learn that some of the tree ferns they were looking at were actually travelling across the forest floor — albeit extremely slowly — taking thousands of years to move a few feet. They grow, topple over, and grow again from the new site!

This was just one of the amazing facts shared by local forest experts who met and escorted the group to some of their favourite and little known places in the Southern Forests of NSW.

The group saw giant Turpentines, giant Brown Barrels and Pinkwoods and heard a Sooty Owl (listed as 'vulnerable' under the Threatened Species Conservation Act).

The FCG are inviting Walk Leaders from Bushwalking Clubs to join them on these field trips in an effort to highlight vulnerable areas of forests in Southern NSW. These forests are not in National Parks and could well be logged in the future. The Government is currently deciding their fate, with a decision due in the latter half of 1998. The FCG is hoping that increasing knowledge and awareness of the areas and encouraging bushwalkers to visit will convey a strong message that these forests are being used, are valuable and should be protected.

There are lots of ways to help in this vital campaign — if you want to know more contact the ACF office on (02) 9247 4285. (Alex Sansom, Forest Campaign Group)

"Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land ... we abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong we may use it with love and respect." (Aldo Leopold 1953)

Boycott Woodchipping

The Australian conservation movement has announced an official campaign to boycott Amcor Ltd (Australian Paper) paper products on account of the company's connection with the woodchipping of native forests.

The campaign will initially concentrate on a consumer boycott of **Reflex** photocopy paper, in favour of recycled alternatives.

Amcor Ltd is the largest domestic user of woodchips in Australia, sourcing most of their timber from the Central Highlands and the Strzelecki Ranges in Victoria, and from forests in northern Tasmania bordering the Tarkine Wilderness. One of Amcor's main sources of timber, the Central Highlands, contains magnificent Mountain Ash forests, remnant old growth and rainforests, and habitat for many endangered species. The Leadbeater's Possum — Victoria's faunal emblem, is facing extinction with almost half of its known habitat lying within Amcor's

logging area.

Don't buy paper that destroys our forests, including the following:

•REFLEX PAPER: made from 100% virgin eucalypt fibre mainly from native forests and chlorine bleached.

•COPYRIGHT: made from 100% virgin eucalypt fibre mainly from native forests and chlorine bleached.

•AUSTRALIAN PAPER - made from 100% virgin eucalypt fibre, mainly from native forests and chlorine bleached.

•RENEW 100 - promoted as '100% recycled'. Contains approx 10% pre or post consumer milk carton material, 20% cotton linters and 70% pre consumer waste. This 70% is native forest fibre. Beware of false recycling claims.

•RENEW 80 - similar content to RENEW 100 with a greater proportion of virgin eucalypt fibre from native forests.

By choosing to avoid Reflex and Copyright photocopy paper, you as a consumer are helping to stop native forest destruction.

For more information: Boycott Woodchipping Campaign, PO Box 2461, Fitzroy, VIC. 3065.

A Funny Ending?

Seen recently on the telly: A group of people holding placards protesting against the proposed mega-resort at Hinchinbrook. The person walking beside the Prime Minister said to John Howard, "I think they want you to save the dugongs". The Prime Minister laughed. (Christine Davies)

In the Bush

Lord Howe Island, Part 2

Ancient land bridges to New Zealand to the south and Malaysia to the north are reflected in the island's flora and fauna. Nevertheless some birds of Australian origin are readily noticed such as slightly modified silvereyes, golden whistlers and currawongs. The golden whistler is very common and its melodious calls are heard on most walks. The currawong's call is nowhere as strident as its mainland ancestor but it has the same habit of arriving at walkers' lunch-spots for handouts. Magpie larks (pee wees) and black-birds are common but are relatively recent arrivals.

I learned that most of the vegetation has ancient links with New Zealand and New Caledonia. Though the island is only 11 kms long and about 1.5 kms wide it provides a variety of environmental sites

ranging from coastal foreshore to the moss covered trees on the summit of Mt. Gower (875m). To the casual observer the palm trees are symbolic of the island. They surround the guest houses and provide a characteristic rustle even when touched by the lightest of breezes. There are many varieties and one, the kentia, provides

the administrative board with \$1,000,000 a year. Its seeds are raised on the island and the potted plants exported world-wide. Their great popularity is due to the fact that they can tolerate European conditions as indoor plants.

Numerous walks are available but are very slippery after rain because of a surface of slippery tree roots and basalt stones. A bonus however is the absence of leeches and snakes.

Mt. Lidgbird and Gower

dominate the view from most areas and the ascent of the latter is quite an adventure. Though Gower 875m is only about the same height as the Lockley Pylon track the walk starts at sea level whereas a walk from say Blue Gum (300m) rises about 500m.

The main environmental problems of the island are rats, goats and weeds and their eradication is a never-ending struggle. The NSW National Park Service cooperate with a local trust to handle these problems.

Most of the island's nooks and crannies can be covered by a week's stay. It is a very tidy little island— no vagrant plastic bags, no tins or bottles on the beaches, no graffiti. It is a manicured island. Hibiscus blooms of striking variety and other flowering exotics surround most guest houses.

After a week's stay Bunyip's rustic mind started to long for the more challenging environment of the Blue Mountains.

— The Bunyip

**BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY NATIVE PLANT NURSERY
OPEN TUESDAY MORNINGS 9 am to 12 noon
PLANT SALES VOLUNTEERS ARE WELCOME TO HELP
CONTACT DAVID COLEBY 84.1395**

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

AUGUST

- 10 (Sun) **Excursion — Airley Historic Site.** Visit to beautiful Mount Airley (near Capertee) and exploration of 100 year old coal mining relics. Beautiful views and easy walking. Meet 9 am at Mount Victoria Station. Contact Christine Davies 87.7246. (NOTE DATE CHANGE)
- 11 (Mon) **Leisure Walk — Gladstone Lookout.** Meet 9.30, bottom of Fairmont car park, Leura. Contact Fay Arnold 84.3225, Jan Cutler 84.3079.
- 16 (Sat) **Bushwalk — The Lost World.** A beautiful lower mountain walk. Meet outside Springwood Station, Macquarie Street, at 9 a.m. Contact Ron Wheeler 57.1526.
- 18 (Mon) **Nature Track Bushcare Group, 9-12.** Meet at The Hut at 9 am. Contact Jessica Yuille 57.2783.
- 18 (Mon) **Leisure Walk — The Wonderland Track.** Meet 9.30 outside Hydro Majestic, Blackheath end. Contact Gillian Janus 87.6181.
- 20 (Wed) **“There Is Life Below Woodford” — Walk 3.** Kanuka Brook, Crayfish Pool, Red Hands Cave area. Meet Glenbrook entrance to National Park at 10 am. Contact Allan Macaulay 39.2767. Grade 4. Duration 4-5 hours.
- 21 (Thu) **Committee Meeting .** 7 pm at Mid Mountains Community Centre, Lawson.
- 25 (Mon) **Leisure Walk — Rocket Point.** Meet at the bottom end Wentworth Falls picnic area carpark (Falls Road) at 9.30 am. (Bring lunch if you would like to see Lee’s travel photos/videos afterwards.) Contact Lee Tredinnick 57.4030.
- 29 (Fri) **General Meeting at The Hut, 7.30 pm.** Joint Public Meeting between BMCS and the Colong Foundation. Open forum to discuss Wollemi Wilderness proposal, with a presentation and slide show by Keith Muir of the Colong Foundation and Felicity Wade of the Wilderness Society.

SEPTEMBER

- 01 (Mon) **Leisure Walk — Red Gum Park.** Meet end of Noble Street, Bullaburra, at 9.30 am. Contact Carolyn O’Neill 57.3141. **WATTLE DAY.**
- 08 (Mon) **Leisure Walk — Witch’s Leap.** Meet Katoomba Falls Kiosk, Katoomba Falls Road (opposite Caravan Park) at 9.30 am. Contact Marie McInnes 82.7110.
- 15 (Mon) **Nature Track Bushcare Group, 9-12.** Meet at The Hut at 9 am. Contact Jessica Yuille 57.2783.
- 15 (Mon) **Leisure Walk — Wall’s Cave.** Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre at 9.30 am. Contact Norah Gaynor 87.6071.
- 17 (Wed) **Bushwalk — (To be advised)**
- 18 (Thu) **Committee Meeting .** 7 pm at Mid Mountains Community Centre, Lawson.
- 20 (Sat) **Bushwalk — Exploring Mount Hay.** Contact Imrie Gahl 84.3286.
- 22 (Mon) **Leisure Walk — Mount Wilson Rainforest.** Meet Mount Victoria Station at 9.30 am. (Consider staying on afterwards to look at Spring gardens). Contact Jan Cutler 84.3079.
- 26 (Fri) **General Meeting at The Hut, 7.30 pm.**
- 29 (Mon) **Leisure Walk — Newnes.** (Day bus trip — fully booked.) Contact Mervyn Bird 87.7959.

❄️❄️❄️❄️❄️❄️❄️❄️❄️
❄️ Dear Granny, ❄️
❄️ Winter is here ❄️
❄️ and summer is soon coming ❄️
❄️ Snow all around ❄️
❄️ Deep below the ground. ❄️
❄️ —Amy Davis ❄️
❄️❄️❄️❄️❄️❄️❄️❄️❄️

The Lyrebird
The Lyrebird shows off all day
Attracting females is his way
To attract her into his charm
For the rest of day he is very calm
Waiting for more females to be
attracted and charmed.
The next day he shows off his beauty
When he attracts a female
He says U Beauty.
His life is busy in the bush
Scratching and thumping is his way
Going through the bush.

Now in the mountains and valleys so
high
He still attracts the females
Even when he is so high.
Hi, little Lyrebird and goodbye.

*Joshua Holland, Millie’s grandson.
(age 11)*

What to do if you find an injured native animal
There are many factors putting pressure on Blue Mountains wildlife. Habitat destruction, ferals and cars take an enormous toll. Blue Mountains WIRES has rescued everything from a nest of day-old Silvereyes to adult Eastern Grey Kangaroos.
If you find a distressed native animal you should put the animal in a warm, dark, quiet place and call WIRES as soon as possible. (It is also very important to remember exactly where you found the animal).
Your quick action can greatly affect the animal’s chances of survival.
Some animals are best left for the experts. WIRES has trained and experienced members who can deal with things like adult kangaroos and venomous snakes.
The WIRES rescue number is 047.54.2946.

POSITION VACANT: BUSHWALKS CO-ORDINATOR
Duties: Organises and publishes a walks program. Actively markets the walks program to non members.
Qualifications: Knowledge of Blue Mountains bushwalks (i.e. able to advise walk leaders on length and suitability of proposed bushwalks).
Benefits: Able to help the Society to promote and protect the Blue Mountains environment. Being part of a great management committee.
Contact Christine Davies 87.7246.

This issue of *Hut News* has been printed on 100% Recycled Paper