

KATOOMBA AND DISTRICT WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Newsletter No.31. February, 1978. Price 10¢

"REGISTERED FOR POSTING AS A PUBLICATION - CATEGORY B."

PATRON. Mr Allen A. Strom, A.M.

"The Commission notes that there is evidence that societies may come to value more highly in future things not included in conventional measurements of economic activity.."

Ranger Uranium Environmental
Enquiry. First Report

OUR SOCIETY

COMING MEETINGS

February 23rd 8pm at The Hut.

Speaker; Keven Tomlinson of the B.M.C.C.
Water, its Origins, Quality etc.

March 30th

8pm at the Hut.

Annual General Meeting at which the
Election of Officers for the Year 1978-9
will be held and Annual Reports and
Balance Sheet given.

Ordinary Meeting then follows.

April 27th

8pm at The Hut. Programme to be
advised. WATCH LOCAL PRESS.

PROBLEM AREAS

On November 24th 1977 John Hibberd, manager of the NSW Environment Centre gave a valuable talk on Conservation Organisation, illustrated by splendid slides. The talk dealt with problem areas on the East Coast, where conflicting land uses threaten the environment. Those present felt we are fortunate to have a person of his training and ability in charge of the N.S.W. Environment Centre.

2,000 MILE, WALKING TRACK

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A most interesting talk.

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Saturday 3rd March '78

4th March '78

Mt. Victoria - Falls Lookout.-----Victoria Falls Lookout,
Victoria Falls and return.

Cars meet at Junction

10am Victoria Falls road about
1km east of old Toll House.
Walking distance about 7km.

Saturday 1st April '78

Blackheath - Walls Cave, Neates Glen, Evans Lookout.

Cars meet at Junction of Evans
Lookout Road and Great western
Highway. 10am. Walk about 8km.

Saturday 6th May '78

Blackheath - Govetts Leap, Pulpit Rock Lookout and return or
return by car from Pulpit Rock Walking distance one way
about 4 km return about 8km. Cars meet at Govetts Leap
parking place, end of Govetts Leap Road from Blackheath at
10 am

N.B. The lack of motor transport does not prevent folk from enjoying
these walks. A phone call to 57 1488(Ken Gorringer) or 57 1573 Winsome
Gregory will enable arrangements to be made.

Bush Ramble - 7th January '78

Hydro Paths to Megalong

Pleasant weather helped overcome a rather confused walk
which had as its aim, to reach Megalong Valley. Unfort-
unately circumstances had not permitted a pre-survey of
the confusing tracks at the rear of the Hydro Majestic,
paths had become obscured, overgrown and lacked good
signposts after years of neglect. However after at least
two false starts the track to Megalong was at last located
and intrepid walkers ignored a 'Closed' sign and attempted
to reach the valley. Glorious views along the various
tracks made the various attempts well worth while and a
pause for 'elevenses' on a rocky spur commanding a superb
view, prepared most of the 'explorers' for the attempt.
Seven of the party of 18 succeeded in clambering down rocky
tunnels, walking the plank and doing a spot of 'bushbashing'
to reach the Megalong road.

The less adventuresome returned to the Hydro for refreshments
whilst a further party set off in cars to meet the dauntless
explorers in the Megalong. The reunion at the Quota picnic
area was followed by belated lunches and a cuppa. The
couple of hours spent there was made interesting by one of
the Society's bird experts. The area was frequented by
by many interesting birds, a male Superb Blue Wren inspected
the party at close quarters, sittellas, tree creepers,
fantails and others including a Black-faced Flycatcher
were identified by Wilson and seen by most of the party.
During the day a number of acacias in full bloom were
identified and many Platysace were also in flower. The
day was certainly different but enjoyed by all and most
agreed that something should be done to repair and reopen
these delightful tracks.

Cutting to McMahon's Point Lookout - Saturday 4th Feb 1978

After meeting at the beginning of Tablelands Road, Wentworth
Falls, 16 folk set out for McMahon's Lookout which is 26 kilo-
metres S.E. of Wentworth Falls. About half of the distance
was through fire devastated bush. In the month since the
fire, many plants were showing amazing regrowth especially
eucalypts, xanthorrhoeas and unfortunately brackenfern;
other species such as woody pear, some banksias and hakeas
were also recovering. The balance of the trip was through
fine bush.

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were also recovering. The balance of the trip was through fine bush which looked fresh and healthy after the recent rains. Just before reaching the end of the made road some splendid turpentines (*Syncarpia glomulifera*) were observed.

The cars were left at the end of the road and the party walked down the track to the actual lookout, about 1/2 hour pleasant walk with beautiful temperate rain forest containing fine mountain ash (*E. oreades*). There were also some fine Deane's Eucalyptus (*E. deanei*) plus some really magnificent Angophora (Sydney Red Gum). Magnificent views of Lake Burragorang were breath taking; finally the lookout was reached and lunch was taken with literally 'a million dollar view' of the lake and surrounding mountains and ridges.

Familiar peaks were identified including Bimlow, Colong and Cloudmaker. A group of pelicans were identified on a sand-spit in the lake and the bush was alive with many birds, probably caused by the recent fires forcing birds to find alternative food sources.

The return was made at a leisurely pace back to the cars, when it was discovered that a number of folk had become hosts to hungry leeches. One lady was a particular favourite and had no less than six large well engorged specimens; there was much searching and examining of socks and feet.

Beautiful weather helped make a most enjoyable outing.

BUREAUCRACY: THE WAY WE ARE GOVERNED

Two representatives from our society were invited to attend the Symposium on Bureaucracies at the University of N.S.W. in November. There were four main sessions; in each two or three speakers were followed by general discussion. The last session was entitled "Future Options" and it was from this that the following notes were made.

NEED FOR CHANGE

It was stated that Bureaucracy needs to be remodelled to meet changing times; the question asked was: can it change rapidly enough?

The original functions of bureaucracies were stability, control, efficiency, impartiality -- characteristics that can be good but which can often become harmful because they lead to rigidity, preoccupation with means and loss of sight of the ends, tending to enslave rather than to serve.

THE NEW FUNCTIONS

To serve humanity bureaucracy must adapt to social development; its new functions were stated as:- facilitation and guidance of change, with involvement of the public. There is a general trend today to more active participation of the public in decision making. Committees of Our Society have participated by contributing to reports which help local and state government reach decisions and policies on matters of land-use planning. (Matters vital to wildlife conservation, as well as educating about the needs for wildlife conservation.)

The aims of bureaucracies today must become:- (1) ENUNCIATION of goals, followed by public Debate and Feedback to the policy-makers from the public they serve. (For this the public will need information, facts not propaganda, availability not secrecy in regard to information.) (2) New STRUCTURAL forms, e.g., Small, temporary task-forces, related to current problems and closer to them. (3) New Methods of change which enable moves towards the new structures e.g., Collaboration of various departments and sections. Use of "social technology", use of

or services. Community centres and Committees as a source of citizen preferences and opinions, and to enable active citizen participation.

IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The importance was stressed of participation in local government; which otherwise can become rigid bureaucracy. Development of a form of industrial democracy that suits Australia. Training programmes to increase the bureaucrats' awareness of themselves and their reactions, thereby to increase their competence.

A big question posed at the Symposium was to what extent Control in bureaucracy should be with the (elected) minister rather than with the (professional) senior departmental officer. Attendance at this symposium prepared your representatives to understand why Prof. Wilenski's recent report on the NSW Public Service should be a subject of interest and debate to all citizens.

--- B.C.

HEMLOCK - TREE AND HERB

Because most people associate the name Hemlock with witches' brews, murder, and suicide by poison, some confusion arose when Lola identified some trees in her slides as Hemlocks. To clear up this confusion I have prepared the following explanatory notes.

Hemlock is the common name given to any of a group of poisonous herbs of the carrot family, especially *Conium maculatum* and some species of *Cicuta*. From these can be extracted a powerful sedative called Conium. Dependent on dosage this drug can produce anything from mental confusion with hallucinations to sudden death from acute cardiac and respiratory depression.

A quite different plant, *Conioselinum* bears a superficial resemblance to *Conium maculatum*, this is also commonly called hemlock, as is also a Dropwort (*Oenanthe fistulosa*) which is quite common in temperate Europe. At this point I must make it clear that *Oenanthe fistulosa* does not resemble *Conium maculatum* very much, and is not the common Dropwort which is actually a member of the rose family *Spirea filipendula*, and to date has not commonly been called hemlock.

If you have followed me thus far you may be able to understand why a group of North American and Asiatic evergreen trees of the Pine family with drooping branches and short flattened needles should commonly be called Hemlocks. If you can, please tell me how we got from poisonous carrots to innocuous pine trees by way of wild rose, it's Greek to me, but after all did Socrates die by drinking hemlock?

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A LAMENT

(Members who went on the monthly outing to McMahon's Lookout, on driving past the property of Mr Jensen, voluble anti-conservation correspondent to the local press, behold a large bill-board on which was a poem attacking Premier Mr Neville and Mr Milo Dunphy).

Died a tear for Mr Jensen
Neighbour of National Park.
For him the future holds no benison,
All is gloomy, all is dark.
Having such a dreadful neighbour
Takes the joy from all his labour.

Spare a thought for Mr Jensen

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Watching out for Milo Dunphy
Watching out for dreadful Neville.
It seems he'd sooner meet the Devil.

Let us hope that Milo gets him
And the local press forgets him!

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The following two notices of motion are submitted by the Management Committee to the Annual Meeting of the Society in March:-

"That the membership fee be divided into three categories; Single, Family, and Junior or Pensioner membership".

"That the annual fees be Single membership \$3, Family \$4;
Junior or Pensioner \$1....."

HONOURS DEGREE

It is good to hear that Richard McCraehas received an honours degree after his thesis on the ecology of the Henderson Road Swamp W.Falls.

The thesis will be available in booklet form soon.

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The Mayor, BMCC Alderman E.N.Lesslie is organising a symposium on Emergency Situations where the public can bring forward their ideas. This arose from the recent bushfires. A committee representing conservation Societies in the Mountains is meeting to prepare a submission with particular emphasis on bushfire control measures.

The area at Ingar Swamp where our Society has been studying regeneration following a controlled burn in 1974, was burnt again in the recent fires. This creates an interesting situation. On saturday, February 18th members made the first count of the new regeneration in the study area.

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Dr Neville Schaefer, University of NSW proposes an answer to the unemployment problem if the Border Ranges Forest is made a National Park. Says a Sydney Morning Herald article. This is to cut out the Soft Woods in the Urbenville Sub-District west of the Ranges in 15 years, instead of the planned 23years. By then the pine plantations nearby should be available for veneer and ply, and Border Range forests with 9 years supply can be saved.

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A redbreasted quail was seen on Jan.25th by Arthur Smith and me. It was on the 3 Sisters track on the edge of the burnt area. This is a new bird for the Mountains. Not much is known about the distribution and habits of the species. A handsome bird, related to the painted quail common in the Mountains, it has a bright rufous chest.

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This version of the Newsletter was re-typed from the original by Phoebe Coster in June 2021 to enable search engines to 'see' the text. Minor changes have been made to correct typographical errors and to add clarity.

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