



Lower Blue Mountains Conservation Society

P.O. BOX 119, SPRINGWOOD. 2777

NOVEMBER 1982 NEWSLETTER

President: Christine Stickley 53-6380

Secretary: Wendy Godfrey 39-1748

Editor: Paul Godfrey 39-1748

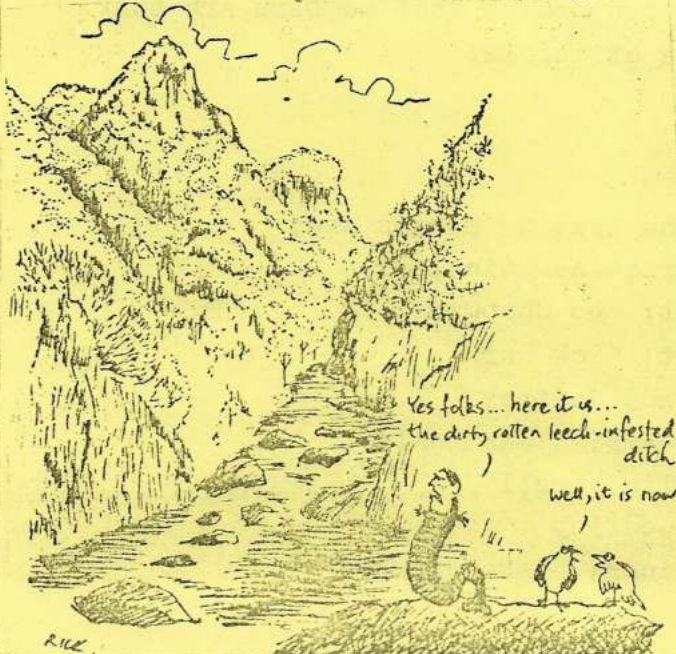
EDITORIAL

OFFICIALS KNOW BEST? - OR WHY ARE WE SUCH DOPES?

We conservationists, as opposed to preservationists, are a dull lot. We protest, write letters, donate money and time, and more than likely close sleep over what? - nothing more than a brown ditch, which is leech ridden (according to the Tas. Premier, Robin Gray). I can see it all now, an international campaign to "Save the Leeches" or "Save the Last Wild Ditch". It must be our overpowering compassion to save all wildlife, even blood-sucking Annelids of the Class Hirudinea, that drives us on.

I don't know why we bother to worry, after all the Tas. officials know all and are there to protect the public's interest. This was revealed recently when Norm Sanders noticed a huge oil slick on the Gordon River. The Premier knew it was only a bit of oil from a chain saw. The H.E.C. later enlightened us all that in fact it was caused by several 200litre drums of diesel being lost overboard from a barge. We are rather silly aren't we to think they might not have informed the public of a true account of the mishap had Norm not been so vigilant!

At least the brown ditch looks more colourful in the reflective brilliance of the multi-rainbow effect caused by the slick. Improvement already!



Perhaps we could suggest a further improvement by adding several tonnes of 'blue' violet colouring to disguise the 'brown' (not Bob - he won't disappear as easily). This would give the Premier a 'flush' of success (his only), but we're only dopes and what do we know? Strange, we thought this issue was far from an aesthetic one, and had been right from the start.

EDITOR.

T.W.S. Newsletter.

SPEAKER - NEXT MEETING, DECEMBER 10th. 8.00pm.

A MUST FOR ALL MEMBERS

A few days before his return to Germany, Gerald Williams, who has been an active member of the "Green Party" in Germany, will be speaking at our meeting. He is returning to Germany for a short period to try to arrange an Australian tour of the Party's Leader.

The Green Party occupy our Democrats position in the German political scene.

We are most fortunate to have Gerald give up some of his valuable time to spend it with us and all members and interested persons are urged to attend what should prove to be a very interesting evening.

AND

At the Annual General Meeting in October, a list of new names for our Society was tossed about. The meeting decided to publicise these in this newsletter to allow members comment. The new title will be chosen next meeting.

Suggestions are; Nepean and Mountains Cons. Soc.

Mountains and Plains Cons. Soc.

Nepean-Hawkesbury Env. Group.

Cumberland Cons. Soc.

Conservationists of the West. (Westcon!)

Blue Mountains Prot. Soc.

West and Mountains Cons. Soc.

Blue Mountains Cons. Soc.

Blue Mountains Env. Soc.

If members can think of a more suitable title: one that encompasses the Western Plains and Mountains without being too long or localised; then by all means phone them in to the Secretary for consideration next meeting.

VENUE - same place, Teachers Resource Centre, Glenbrook Infants School, Ross Street, Glenbrook.

JANUARY MEETING - this has been dropped as most members are away and so are the officials!

PAST MEETINGS

A.G.M. OCTOBER

Office Bearers for the next 12 months are;

President; Christine Stickley

Vice-President; Bob Chapman

Vice-President; Mick Dark

Secretary; Wendy Godfrey

Minutes Secretary; Aileen Hanley

Treasurer; Colin Powell

Editor; Paul Godfrey

Publicity Officer; Besse Bramsen

NOVEMBER MEETING

Alderman David March was guest speaker. The formation of a co-ordinating committee for industrial development has been refused by the Council. This was to be the topic discussed. Nevertheless, the Blue Mountains is never lacking in issues of concern to environmentalists. Discussions covered many issues including;

- Draft State Env. Planning Policy on medium density housing(Works Committee will be analysing the likely environmental consequences of the policy and presenting a submission to Council).
- The Environmental Officer (see advert).
- Sewerage scheme at Winmalee (not likely until the water situation is improved from Emu Plains - see December walk).
- Council's new Site Disturbance Policy. We congratulate Council for formulating guidelines on site disturbance and only hope that all developers, landholders etc will co-operate. But,,,,,,who will 'watch the watcher'? Council itself is involved in many projects of a disturbing nature!
- Statement of Objectives - new revised statement has been delayed but should appear early next year.
- Unemployment(the Works Committee is investigating some job creating schemes that have been on our minds for a while. Any additional suggestions from members are needed now.

Our thanks go to Alderman March for giving up one of his evenings at home to spend it with us.

YEAR OF THE TREE

LENNOX BRIDGE - Brian Mills is co-ordinating a rehabilitation programme for the Bridge and it's immediate environs. The Bridge should be officially opened midway through 1983. All members are urged to participate in this programme. Enquiries to Brian on 53-6566. There is a degree of urgency in this programme as Mitchell's Pass will be open again in December. Yes, to traffic! It's a trifle inappropriate taking the historical significance of the Bridge into account.

EXCURSIONS/WALKS

OCTOBER 24- The last walk of our Society was to the Colo River, from Colo Heights to the junction of Hungryway Creek and the River - known as Bob Turner's Track. Previously advertised in our newsletter as a very rewarding walk, it proved to be all of that. It would be classed by bushwalkers as an easy walk, having a clear track, only short stretches of steep grade and no obstacles to negotiate.

Flowers were profuse and beautiful where they had not been burnt. The greatest display was of mixed *Fultenaea*(small yellow

pea flower) and *Eriostemon hispidulis* (white wax flower). Also varied stands of pink *Indigofera australis*. Flannel flowers in the Wollemi grow the largest blooms of their kind, and at ground level, purple *Patersonia* (Native Iris) abounded. Purple *Dampiera* and *Howittia* twined amongst green Hop bushes heavily festooned with bright winged seeds. Near the River there were many tall shrubs of *Melaleuca* or *Callistemon* (which we could not identify), bright red with new growth, though only one seen was in flower, the mixture of red shoots and cream brushes was a delight to see. Where the Track strikes the River is a long pool between two sets of rapids and edged with a rock banks and expensive sand beaches. Only one "water baby" took to the pool; though trying to glide against the current, did not make it's length. An effort to explore per foot to see what the next pool offered was frustrated by massed boulders and flood debris interlaced with Lawyer Vine, Blackberry and Native Raspberry. No place to explore in bare feet and with extremely poor sight. A retreat, back above the river bank to the party on the flat rock picnic site was not easy; but was made without mishap.

Scenery at this point is beautiful. So far away from atmospheric pollution it is still possible to enjoy the sight of blue haze, now largely lost to these mountains. Softening the dark hillsides mirrored in the long pool, it gives a feeling of being able to breathe more easily.

On the walk many varieties of birds were seen and more heard. Notes of Bell birds, Pardalotes and Rosellas tinkled in the forest, Whip birds whistled and cracked, Cockatoos chatted and screeched, Martins skimmed the water, Thrushes sang; and to the delight of children in the party, a Lyre bird crossed the path.

The day of the walk had been cloudy, though fine. On the way back along the top of the ridge, clear sky appeared and across the gully, shafts of sunlight brought out yellow and orange hues of sandstone cliffs.

Truly a rewarding day.

Besse Bramsen.

NOVEMBER 21 - A small crowd had many questions answered by a 'sunny' personality (John Ballinger Univ.N.S.W.) at an inspection of the Housing Commission's Solar Village at Bonnyrigg. John's group (Solarch first initiated the idea in late 1978. Planning and funding (from state and federal sources) allowed the project to get underway in 1980. It was completed last year. Tenants moved into the 12 homes of a passive solar design and the 3 standard 'control' homes shortly after. Prospective tenants were briefed on the workings of the village and it's function as a centre for a wide range of studies related to passive solar design for both summer and winter, energy consumption and conservation. As a tenant you can be given a detailed analysis of your energy consumption for any set period. There is a monitoring laboratory which is connected up to several points in each house. The lab. can diagnose any source (even children with matches)

of heat and how to alleviate it.

Even in a 'standard' design house, simple measures can make unpleasant climatic conditions quite comfortable. For instance, in

2 houses of the same design; one with modifications such as draft excluders, re-sited windows and insulated walls and roof, the other without modifications; the modified version did not require any heating last winter! (No, the tenants weren't from Siberia). The standard house needed 110 kilowatt hours per week to maintain 15°C.

John explained the intricate design of the village and corrected some common fallacies about energy conservation in design. As we left for home, several of us were overcome by a feeling of guilt for living in such ridiculously inefficient and energy-consuming homes. Appropriate design certainly seems pertinent.

LITTLE ZIG ZAG WALKING TRACK OPENED 17.11.82

A rep. from the Society was among guests at the opening of the Little Zig Zag Walking Track recently. It was attended by numerous officials from the Lands Department, our Mayor Peter Quirk and Member for the Mountains, Bob Debus, as well as teachers and students from local educational institutions.

The track is the second to be opened in the Metropolitan area and part of a new network of walking tracks in N.S.W. It begins at the end of Knapsack Road, Lapstone (near RAAF base). This new outlook of the Dept. (land managers as opposed to land disposers) is welcomed by our Society. After all, contrary to popular belief, land is a finite resource and has to be used wisely. The walk is pleasant and well-signposted. Speakers paid tribute to Mr. & Mrs. McPhee of Lapstone for being the very strong guiding influence in the project.

NEXT WALK

SATURDAY 11th December to SHAWS CREEK (proposed outlet site for Winmalee Sewerage Scheme)

MEET 8am at Winmalee Post Office, on Hawkesbury Road.

This is a difficult trackless walk - wear appropriate clothing and footwear.

CONTACT BRIAN 53-6566 for information.

BUSHROCK - STOP PRESS

The Lands Department has revised their policy of issuing bushrock licences on Crown Lands (a significant portion of the State). These will not be renewed. It's now up to the Forestry Commission to follow suit. We can also help simply by not using this valuable non-renewable resource and to persuade others to do the same.

BELL SAND MINE

Following the recision motion at Council's ordinary meeting on 26.10.82, the meeting resolved to have prepared and completed within 6 months, a Local Env. Plan of the site. The Dept. of Min. Resources has started a study of this particular sand resource.

Strange, we thought that had already been done before the application came before Council. It should have! Decisions on the best long term and rational use of land can not be made without a full evaluation of all the consequences, be they environmental or socio-economic. We wholeheartedly support the decision to prepare an L.E.P. and would also like to see Council re-evaluate all zonings in the Mountains where extractive industries are a 'permissible use'. The 'City in a National Park' theme is a bit hypocritical if extractive industries can be allowed.

Hawkesbury Shire's concern about pollution levels in the Nepean are warranted and we are responsible equally with other Councils. Most of the drainage of the Mountains flows in an easterly direction. Surely we should therefore contemplate closing our doors to renowned polluting activities such as mining!

The Society will be pursuing this matter as strongly as it has done in the past 2 months.

**BLUE MOUNTAINS CITY COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER**

Council is considering the appointment of an Environmental Officer to implement its policy for the protection and maintenance of the unique natural environment of the Blue Mountains. The appointee will be directly responsible to the Town Clerk.

DUTIES: It is envisaged the major duties of the position will include the development of environmental policies and action programmes, liaison with Council Departments, Government Authorities, private enterprise and voluntary groups, planning and initiating a major natural resource inventory, together with appropriate management plans, monitoring pollution with emphasis on water problems and the development of a water catchment philosophy and an associated management plan.

QUALIFICATIONS: A tertiary degree or equivalent in the natural or environmental sciences, preferably with post-graduate qualifications and five years work related experience. A working knowledge of New South Wales Environmental Law and experience in environmental assessment, particularly natural resource inventory and water pollution monitoring. Local environmental knowledge would also be an advantage.

SALARY: Salary will be within the range of \$21,476 to \$23,966.

GENERAL: Applications will close with the undersigned on Monday, 6th December, 1982 and should include full details of experience relevant to the advertised position and be accompanied by three recent references and/or names and addresses of referees who may be consulted.

A sample of a brief environmental report would assist Council in its assessment of applications and Council would be interested to receive comments on the position as perceived by applicants, particularly in relation to the tasks to be undertaken.

Administrative Headquarters,
KATOOMBA. 2780
4th November, 1982.

R. Fennell,
Town Clerk.
O/N 5670

B.Mtns. Gazette

10.11.82.

AT

LONG

LAST!

1982 CONFERENCE - NATURE CONSERVATION COUNCIL OF N.S.W.

The Council represents more than 65 environmental organisations (including us) in NSW and at the Conference in October, more than 60 motions were debated on the following issues;

National Tree Programme

S.W. Tasmania

National Parks, S.R.A's AND other reserves

Development proposals (dams etc) within those reserves and proposed wilderness areas

Environmental Education

Recycling

Forestry (pines, woodchipping, management etc)

Wildlife (sport hunting etc)

Environmental Planning

Land Management

Crown Lands

Bushrock

Hazardous Chemicals

and Ecological Fire Management.

We received support for the Environmental Officer and it was brought to our attention that the same controversial officer in Concord Council has been a success and an asset to that Council.

There was great jubilation about the rainforest decision by the State government and Jim Somerville (a member of the Executive) was presented with a magnum of champers for the significant role he played in the campaign. Congrats were also sent to the Terania Creek people who got this issue rolling right from the start. Were it not for their "radical tactics", the campaign could have dragged on even longer with the loss of more rainforest.

The Conference was opened by Stewart West, Shadow Minister for the Environment (federal) and Jack Munday was a huge success when he spoke at the dinner that evening.

A STUDY OF BLUE GUM SWAMP CREEK by David Harris

Not long ago I had the opportunity to study the effects of domestic sewage pollution on Blue Gum Swamp Creek (B.G.S.C.), Winmalee. The study was done as a requirement for a Masters of Applied Science Degree from the Univ. of N.S.W. The superintendent of Blue Mountains National Park, Jim Govan, suggested the study as there was some concern that effluent seepage and overflow from sewage storage tanks in the Summerhayes Estate area may be causing contamination of B.G.S.C.

B.G.S.C. is a perennial tributary of the Nepean River. It rises in the Summerhayes Estate area of Winmalee and flows through Blue Mountains National Park (B.M.N.P.). This area is easily accessible to the public and a walking track runs for a considerable distance along the creek.

The study was conducted between September 1979 and May 1980. Water samples were collected periodically during this time to represent conditions of normal and extreme high and low flow. The water samples were tested in the Water Analysis Laboratory of the School of Chemical Engineering and Industrial Chemistry of the Univ. of N.S.W.

The parameters of the analysis were chosen to give an indication of the degree of pollution, sources of pollution and rate of self-purification of the creek. Tests were conducted for the following.,

1. Turbidity - an indication of suspended and colloidal matter.

High turbidity can be caused by the presence of micro-

organisms, organic matter, clay, silt and some minerals. Low turbidity is important so as to allow maximum penetration of light for photosynthetic organisms.

2. pH - an indication of the intensity of alkalinity or acidity. The pH value of water has a noticeable effect on many other stream characteristics, such as rates of chemical reactions and life functions of aquatic organisms.
3. Conductivity - an indication of ionized substances dissolved in the water, such as mineral salts.
4. Nitrogen - Ammonia - an indication of excessive organic matter present.
5. Metals - metal ions can highly toxic effects on organisms, especially heavy metals such as Copper, Lead, Mercury and Zinc. Iron in water results in unsightly deposits of iron salts and has a foul taste.
Calcium and Magnesium contribute to water hardness.
6. Foam - an indication of detergent contamination. Foam blocks light penetration and is unsightly.
7. Dissolved oxygen - an indication of the self-purification rate of streams. Inadequate dissolved oxygen contributes to an unhealthy environment for aquatic life.
8. Coliform bacteria - an indication of sewage contamination. Coliforms are the principal indicator of the suitability of water for specific uses. Drinking water should have no coliforms. According to the Clean Waters Act, recreational waters in N.S.W. should have no more than 200 coliforms per 100 ml.

The water in B.G.S.C. was sampled at 10 different locations stretching 3 km downstream from just below Burria Pl to inside B.M.N.P. Samples were taken 11 times over the study period. At the same time samples were taken from another stream which was surrounded by bushland. This stream was the control for the experimental results.

The results of the study showed that the main source of contamination of B.G.S.C. is runoff containing road residues and septic tank effluent. The contaminated runoff comes primarily from the residential area surrounding the headwaters of B.G.S.C. An area bounded by Hawkesbury Rd., Benal Ave., Muru Ave., and Malcyon Ave.

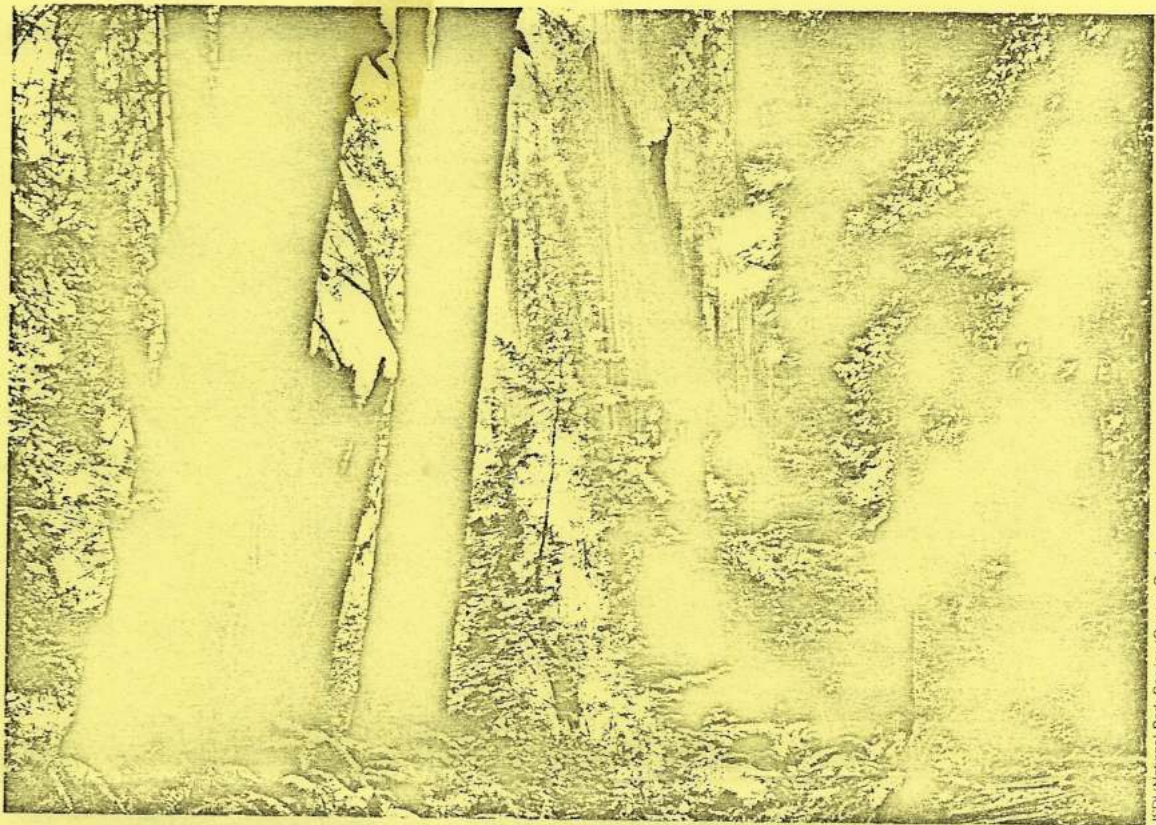
The contamination is indicated by the excessive values of coliform organisms, pH, turbidity, ammonia and foam obtained in the upper reaches of B.G.S.C. However, the values obtained do not indicate a serious pollution problem. The main problem would be that of bacteriological contamination of the upper reaches, particularly after heavy rainfall. These high levels decay within a short distance downstream and are very low when the creek enters B.M.N.P. The waters of B.G.S.C. are of relatively good quality where it flows through B.M.N.P. and this is due to the natural self-purification process that occurs in the stream.

It was recommended that, to best serve the interests of the public using the area, signs be posted indicating that the water of

B.G.S.C. is not fit for drinking. It is possible that the problem may become more serious as a further 200 odd homes are yet to be built in Summerhayes Estate. However, when homes in the area are connected to the sewer the contamination of the creek will be limited to runoff from roads. Anyone wishing to see the study can borrow a copy from Paul Godfrey.

EDITOR: Thanks David for this "insight" into one of the techniques of environmental evaluation. As all would realise this is a problem suffered by most if not all creeks in the Blue Mountains.

Some Concepts of Ecology



Six Environmental Principles*

1. Everything must go somewhere, or we can never really throw anything away. (Law of conservation of matter)
2. You can't get something for nothing, you can only break even, or there is no such thing as a free lunch. (First law of energy, or law of conservation of energy)
3. You can't even break even, or if you think things are mixed up now, just wait. (Second law of energy)
4. Everything is connected to everything, but how?
5. In some cases the greater the diversity of a system, the greater its stability.
6. Up to a point, the bigger the better; beyond that point, the bigger the worse. (Brontosaurus principle)

*Based primarily on statements by Barry Commoner, Garrett Hardin, and Kenneth Boulding.

P.S. HAVE YOU RENEWED
YOUR MEMBERSHIP?