



Lower Blue Mountains Conservation Society

P.O. BOX 119, SPRINGWOOD. 2777

SEPTEMBER : OCTOBER 1983

NEWSLETTER.

FUTURE EVENTS MEETINGS

Unless otherwise advertised, all meetings are held in the Teachers Resource Centre, Glenbrook Infants School, Ross Street, Glenbrook. They commence promptly at 8.00pm.

NOVEMBER 11th

Dr. John Chapman is our guest speaker. His topic is Water Pollution in Kosciusko National Park.

DECEMBER 9th

Paul and Wendy Godfrey will show some slides of their recent escapades.

DECEMBER 10th, Christmas Party

It will be held at 20 Gwen Crescent, Warrimoo, in the evening. Always a favourite event for many members, come along and have an evening of merriment and munchies (supplied by yourselves of course!).

REMEMBER - January meetings have been abandoned as most of us are on hols trying to enjoy the places we are fighting for.

WALKS

NOVEMBER 13th

Faulconbridge Point to Grose River and return. Meet 10am in Grose Road, Faulconbridge next to Faulconbridge Public School near Gt. Western Hwy. A steepish walk, but well worth it.

OTHER EVENTS

NOVEMBER 5th - Eager beavers (??water rats or wombats please) needed to help Blue Mtns Tree Planting Committee at Bulls Camp, Linden. 10am.

NOVEMBER 13th - Native Plant Day, Wirrimbirra Reserve, Bargo.

DECEMBER 3rd - Christmas Party, Upper Blue Mtns Cons. Society. The Hut, Wentworth Falls, BBQ and short walk.

DECEMBER 14th - South West Tasmania Committee are arranging a Blockade Anniversary, combined film night and concert. Phone TWS Sydney for details. 02-267-7929.

"How quickly we can poison the earth's lovely surface - but how wondrously it responds to the educated caress of conservation."

Donald E. Carr.

PAST EVENTSTo be or not to be.....Meeting 4.10.83.

Well, for a while there, things looked grim, but its amazing what a few resignations will do. Now, we're back in the thick of it. At first we thought we could get away with nominal executive positions and work on a collective basis, but officially, the Constitution wouldn't allow it. At the A.G.M., the following volunteers were elected, if only in the short term.

President Craig Linn 514934
V. Presidents Bob Chapman 536107
 Christine Stickley 536380
Secretary(s) Aleen Hanley 394079
 Elizabeth Fagg 311440
Publicity Richard Phillipps 392568 (local papers)
 Christine Stickley 536380 (radio)
Treasurer Colin Powell 393189
Editorial Team Paul & Wendy Godfrey 391748
Librarian Aleen Hanley 394079

28th November

In accepting these positions it does not mean that 1 or 2 people will be laden with the business burden. All mail and matters needing attention will be dealt with by members present at workshops; the next one will be held at 52 Boomerang Rd, Springwood. 8pm! Workshops will now be held half way between each monthly meeting to shorten the contact time within the Society. This will allow us to deal with pressing issues more effectively. Several of the regular duties will be rotated between members including chairperson at monthly meetings, recording minutes and host venues for workshops.

WALK (September)FLORABELLA PASS by Besse Bramsen

On the glorious Spring day of our last walk, the seven members who went along were met at the entrance to Florabella Pass by absolute destruction. Golden Boys were making the most of the end of "Control Burning Season". Very well controlled was the area where Christmas Bells should have been heading up to flower. Ash and smoke was the order of the day. A profusion of Christmas bushes, in bud, was scorched off; and close to the path was one Boronia floribunda in full bloom, burnt at the base and lying in the ashes. As this was an area once noted as a wildflower scenic area, no doubt there would be many more burnt.

Proceeding down the track we found heaps of Christmas bush which had been recently cut off and were drying; though these were not being burnt at the time. The "control" was toward Valley Heights and down the hillside toward the creek.

After crossing the first little creek, the scene became more natural and eventually we did find more Boronia floribunda and fraseri, still struggling to recover from previous fire. Waratahs and Flannel flowers were conspicuous by their absence. The various yellow pea flowers, Pultenaea, Bossiaea, Dilwynnia and even a few Gompholobium made a brave show with a number of Patersonia and some particularly good specimens of Hybanthus scattered amongst them.

There was a pause and rest at Glenbrook Creek and a cooling off before the steep ascent. On the flatter area above the cliffs, amongst the hopbush and softer greenery were many terrestrial orchids. There were little forests of Pterostylis and some Acianthus, Calochilus and Caladenia.

Birds were rather quiet, the Grey Fantails accompanied the walkers as usual, and a few of the small Whistlers and Warblers were heard.

The walk was taken steadily and once in the green bush, was most enjoyable.

LBMCS LIBRARY

The Society has accumulated quite a substantial amount of published and unpublished literature over the years. Dont forget its accessible to all members, phone Aleen Hanley if you would like a look-see.

by Christine Stickley

Conservation is no longer purely a matter of standing up for protection of the environment. It has become a complex of politics, personalities, legal procedure - such that one needs to be a super-person skilled in the subtleties of diplomacy, parliamentary acts, local government planning and ordinance procedures, debate, public presentation, careful submission writing and a wisdom beyond our years.

It would seem that the very basics - the earth, the flora and fauna, the natural ecosystem - become lost in all the dealings for its protection. This was true not only in the debate over the Franklin River; it is a constant experience in the administration of this Society.

Of course, it is too much to expect one or two people to have all these qualities and it is why we need to combine the skills of all our members. For this Society to function at the levels demanded in the struggle to conserve our environment, more participation and skill-sharing on the part of all members is required.

It was such input from one of our new members, Craig Linn, that led to one of the Society's greatest achievements this year - the initiation and realisation that we could push for a total local environmental study of the Blue Mountains, based on ecological principles. This idea was adopted by the other conservation societies on the Mountains, the Australian Conservation Foundation, the Total Environment Centre and the Colong Committee.

At the opening of the reconstructed Lennox Bridge recently, Premier Wran declared his support for such a study to be undertaken, and Mayor Peter Quirk has indicated that discussions with the Society will be under way soon.

The involvement of the Colong Committee in the environmental problems of the Blue Mountains was seen as a major step forward (hailed in the press as the prelude to a major environmental battle), and recognition on a statewide level of the need for conservation action in the Blue Mountains.

We need more than a development-by-development defensive - we need an overall plan, a local environmental plan.

We helped win the battle of the Franklin

The Tasmanian Hydroelectricity Commission's horrific Gordon-below-Franklin Dam proposal involved our members in a great deal of time and energy this year:

- First, thanks to the very generous offer of professional musician and conductor Gerald Williams, we were able to stage a beautiful, moving and very successful concert at the Springwood Civic Centre.
- Second, our Society helped organise the "blockade" on the Nepean River at Penrith, following the bridge-to-bridge swimmers with banners and Tasmanian Wilderness Society balloons flying.
- Thirdly, a folk evening featuring Garry Tooth was held at the home of Mick and Jill Dark, with proceeds going to the Tasmanian Wilderness Society.
- Fourth, during the Federal Elections in March, our members helped in the manning of every booth in the Calare Electorate west of the Mountains.

The result, thanks to a swing in Calare and other marginal and not-so-marginal seats, was a win for the Franklin! During the Federal Elections, conservationists certainly showed Australia we were a force to be reckoned with.

Other funds were raised during the year at our popular stall at the Springwood Ivy Market, with special thanks to Jill Dark and Aleen Hanley. We also had a cake stall at Blaxland. There was a raffle of a terrarium; thanks to Wendy's mum, Mrs McGroth, for the donation.

Our fund-raising is vitally important, allowing us to assist in conservation issues Australia-wide, and we need constant support from our members with items for sale at the Ivy Market.

Restoring the bush at Lennox Bridge

Tree-planting and weeding at Lennox Bridge has been a major project for the year, under the direction of Brian Mills. A great deal has been achieved already, with students from Dunheved High School with George Threlfo clearing away an incredible pile of rubbish from the creek, followed by blackberry weeding with the assistance of students from Blaxland High. Planting will continue, the funds for the plants supplied by Blue Mountains City Council.

A book was presented to Dunheved High library in appreciation of the work done by the students, the presentation being a launching of the "Operation Noah" appeal. Wendy and myself attended schools and boys' brigade groups in the Lower Mountains presenting an audio-visual program on the work of "Operation Noah" which raised money for the National Parks and Wildlife Foundation.

Exchanging ideas on conservation

Meetings have been held with various government officers at sites such as the Winmalee Treatment Works, Glenbrook Sewerage Treatment Works, the "Green Gables" Gatehouse, the Electricity Easement on the Eastern Escarpment; meetings which all helped open channels for communication and exchange of ideas. The Society has been involved in steering committees for Blue Mountains City Council unemployment programs - to train tourist guides and to brief those undertaking a track construction and upgrading project in the Mountains.

Representatives of the Society met with the firm carrying out the Blue Mountains Heritage Study, although this proved extremely disappointing as only one week in the field was being spent by one person doing the natural environment aspect.

A number of members attended the all-day and also the night sessions of the Leura Resort Inquiry, with Mick Dark reading our submission. Other written submissions have been made on Urban Consolidation, Surplus Crown Lands, the Senate Select Committee on the Environment, the House of Representatives Committee on the Effects of Control Burning, the Regional Environmental Study of the Mulgoa Valley, and of course, letters on many, many other issues Australia-wide. On the sand mine application at Bell, the Society is awaiting the case to come up in the Land and Environment Court, when we will present our case.

A major concern to the Society has been the failure of the Blue Mountains City Council to appoint an environment officer. This, too, was the subject of an announcement by Premier Wran at Lennox Bridge. Let us hope our long wait will be over soon.

The appointment of this officer to Council was one of our major questions in a questionnaire circulated to candidates for Mayor and Wards 3 and 4 in the recent Council election. Conservation was already to the forefront as a major issue, although it appears the new Council is still fairly evenly divided in their attitudes.

Conservation walks popular

On the lighter side, our walks this year have proved popular, especially for family groups. The companionship offered has been most enjoyable. We hope that even more walks will be organised in the year to come. Walks this year included Berghoffer Pass, the Duckhole at Glenbrook, Collier's Pass, Green Scrub near Mountain Lagoon, Florabella Pass (Warrimoo to Blaxland), a camp on the Colo River, a trip to the Bonnyrigg Solar Village and an eventful walk to Erskine Creek that unfortunately resulted in a call for a helicopter to come to the aid of one of our party.

Less talking, more information and entertainment

The new format for the Society's meetings, dealing with less business, has been successful in attracting large numbers to hear our forums and interesting guest speakers:

- . Jill Dark gave a very interesting slide presentation on native plants in the Blue Mountains, including pictures of many rare and endangered species
 - . Bev Fielder stunned us with her wonderful slides of insects and flowers
 - . Margaret Baker enlightened us on the secret lives of wombats
 - . Paul Gobert presented the dangers and thrills of Kakadu National Park
 - . our forum on Fire and the Ecosystem, with Ann Jellinck, Ross Bradstock and Mr Damon, was very informative, as was
 - . our forum on Water Pollution, presented by Dr Robin MacDonnell, Dr Hughes and the smartly-suited men from Envirocycle, and
 - . one suitably cold night we had the pleasure of meeting the new National Parks and Wildlife Service Chief Ranger, Graham Warboys, with his talk on the Kosciusko Park Management Plan.
- I trust that the new meeting format is finding approval with members. Everyone is welcome to attend the workshops at which much of the business is now being discussed. Our thanks to all who attended those meetings during the year, with special thanks to Wendy Godfrey for all the work that she has put into the position as Secretary.

Thanks to Aleen for handling the demanding job of Minutes Secretary and Librarian, to Besse Bramsen for her press releases, to Colin Powell for keeping tabs on our spending, to Paul Godfrey for our welcome newsletters. And of course, most important, thanks to Besse for all our delicious suppers.

A long report, but really it covers only part of the work of the Society over the past year. I sincerely hope that we will not allow the pressures to get the better of us, and that our work will continue at its high standard in the year ahead on issues that concern us - both in the Blue Mountains and in the rest of our country. I hope that we will have the strength and support to initiate education projects, etc, in 1984 and that these will prove popular amongst our members - and, equally, benefit our environment.

AUSTRALIAN CHRISTMAS.

by C. Stickley

Are you looking for some Australian presents for Christmas? Here are a sample from catalogues sent to the Society. If you are interested in further details of these items and others please contact Christine 536380.

The NPWS have a number of different items for sale.

Poster include: Venomous reptiles

Aboriginal Cave painting

Kangaroo and Joey

Subtropical rainforest

Nature's boarding house

Kosciusko National Park

Myall Lakes National Park.

Habitat Game

Mammals, Birds and Flowers etc.

Prices range from \$2.00 to \$4.00

Note Paper: Historic Hartley 6 notelets for \$2.00

Available from NPWS, Sales Section, P.O. Box N189, Grosvenor Street P.O., Sydney.

The Fund for Animals have Some lovely stuffed toys and hand puppets including:

Penguin (15 cm.) \$4.50

Mother and Baby Kangaroo (28cm) \$9.50

Wombat (35cm) \$11.00

Koala and baby \$10.50

Orca Whale 28 cm \$4.50

42 cm \$10.00

Giant Orca \$30.00

Coackatoo Puppet \$8.00

Platypus puppet \$8.00

Kangaroo Puppet \$8.00

Koala puppet \$8.00

All synthetic materials

Prices include postage etc.

Available from;

Mrs Doris Hulbert,

P.O. Box 139,

Boronia VICTORIA 3155

The Wilderness Society have their beautiful range of books and posters, plus toy platypus at about \$4.00, or felt mobiles featuring platypus, kangaroo, wombat, kookaburra, emu and koala for \$15.00 Ring Lloyd 512101.

The Lower Blue Mountains Conservation Society is selling the beautiful NSW Wilderness calendars for \$6.95. Ring Craig 514934.

The old Bakery craft shop and Gallery in Lane Cove sells beautiful (but expensive) life size Australian toys.. eg. Wombats, possums, Koala, cockatoos, and also wooden Australian animals. eg echidna

The World Wild Life Fund are selling Australian wildflower notes, 10 to a pkt. \$1.98 and an Australian jig saw puzzle featuring animals by a waterfall, 500 pieces, 48 cm diameter \$6.98. from: PO Box 412 Noble Park, Victoria 3174.

WALK

by Besse Bramsen

Sunday, 16th October was an excellent day for a walk amongst the flowers from The Hut at Valley of the Waters to Wentworth Falls. With only an occasional cloud in the sky and a gentle cool breeze, along a mostly level track on the upper cliffs, even the aged and the infant enjoyed it to the full. Young Andrew was a very happy bushman.

With Jill Dark amongst the clan we discovered many plant names. There were 48 species noted in bloom. Only odd stretches of the track were not lined with Caladenia carnea in all shades of pink. Other terrestrial orchids were 2 species of "greenhoods", Acianthus and Calochilus. Rimacola was hanging from wet moss areas, but only in bud.

Very much in evidence were the many varieties of yellow pea flowers, white rice flowers, purple wild iris and brilliant blue Dampiera. In all moist spots there were carpets of Viola - much darker in colour than it is in our sunny gardens. At intervals along the track were delightful patches of Boronia thujona and occasional

Waratahs, and at the Falls a lovely patch of Grevillea acanthifolia. Crevices in rock faces were festooned with Sprengelia incarnata and some Epacris rectinata.

Where we stopped for lunch at Lady See Lookout, the Boronia was profuse. Also at this spot three skinks came from their rock-crevice homes to partake of crumbs and scraps of chicken.

In this age one has to go further from human habitation to discover much bird-life. One Kookaburra was heard. A pair of White Cockatoos cavorted in the valley and eventually rose on the updraught at the Falls to be chased by a lone Currawong. A very rare twitter of small birds was heard. They are becoming more rare every season.

Weeds claim some privilege along the track and even further into the bush: but are thickest near cleared areas and habitation. Some are quite bright and pretty, though are detracting from the natural scene.

EDUCATION.

The Society is purchasing a cassette course on "Environmental Law and Urban Development" from the Division of Postgraduate Extension Studies at Uni of NSW. The Cassettes and accompanying notes will be available for loan to members when it arrives.

The Faculty of Law at NSW University is holding a weekend seminar entitled "Citizens' Rights to Protect the Environment" on Friday and Saturday, November 18th and 19th. (4pm - 7.30pm and 9am- 4pm respectively.) Fee for both days, including refreshments is \$50.00.

Topics include:

- Political lobbying and environmental protection
- The role of the Ombudsman
- The role of the State Pollution Control Commission
- Planning and management, the citizen's role
- Legal rights against private bodies.
- Legal rights against public bodies.
- Environmental information; importance, Availability and use
- Freedom of information and environmental protection
- Evaluating and using environmental impact statements.

Registration to; Citizens rights to protect the environment
Faculty of Law,
University of NSW,
PO Box 1,
Kensington. 2033

WHAT'S ON, ELSEWHERE.

NOVEMBER:

- Fri. 4 - UNAA Badge Day in city.
- Sun. 6 - Fair Well for Women leaving for Pine Gap plus anti- Kissinger rally details not finalised.
- Mon. 7 - Kissinger demonstration outside Centre Point, cnr. Pitt and Market Sts., approx 4-6pm.
- Fri. 11 - START WOMEN'S PEACE CAMP AT PINE GAP.
 - PINE GAP SUPPORT ACTION, park at Circular Quay West from 3pm-3pm Sat., NO tents, wear black, bring musical instruments, banners etc.
 - BIKE FOR A BETTER WORLD, men's support bike ride Pine Gap Camp, leaves Sydney Town Hall at 11am., arrives Canberra Thurs. 17, 212 4538.
- Sat. 12 - EUROPEAN NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT MOVEMENTS EAST and WEST, AICD seminar, speaker Peter Jones, Graphic Arts Club, Regent St., 10-4.30pm, 264 6831
- Fri 18) - CITIZENS' RIGHTS TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT, Law Faculty UNSW, \$50,
- Sat 19) 662 3435.

Nov. 10 - COMMUNITY ENERGY ORGANISATION - meeting 5-15pm at
Thurs. NCOSS, 4th floor, 34 Liverpool St, 274 714.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

In past years the Society members holding Executive positions have carried a heavy load. The following proposed changes in the Constitution are designed to allow the Society to function in years where particular Executive positions cannot be filled. We hope that this will encourage more members to become actively involved in the management of the Society. This motion will be put at the December 9th General Meeting.

Page 6 part 5, Management

Present Constitution.

reads, "The management of the Society shall be vested in an Executive Committee consisting of the Office Bearers and up to five other members."

this is proposed to be altered to,

"The management of the Society shall be vested in an elected Executive Committee of at least five Society members."

This Committee may consist of the traditional office bearers, of President, two Vice-Presidents, Secretary and Treasurer; or may consist of a non-hierarchical group which must include a Treasurer.

Meetings of the Management Committee may include non-elected members."

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

The Society is finding it increasingly difficult to judge just how many members we have because some of us are veeeeerrrry slow at renewing. Please renew promptly by filling in the details on the form below and post it to P.O. Box 119, Springwood, 2777. Fees have been increased to \$7, family and \$5, single and concession. We cant remember the last time our fees were increased and we need it to cover costs. Donations, of course, are always appreciated and spent wisely.

DONT MISS IT!!!!!!!!!!

N.S.W. Leader of the Opposition, Nick Greiner, opened the Annual Conference of the Nature Conservation Council in Sydney at the end of October. It was an interesting experiment, to say the least. Some of the more enlightening moments in that speech will be included in the next newsletter together with a personal critique from yours truly.

Wendy Godfrey.

EDITORS NOTE

Seeing as how thats coming up, Id better put something in the newsletters to the effect that,

"the views expressed in this publication are not necessarily the views of the Lower Blue Mountains Conservation Society".

snip snip

APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

.....

PHONE.....

SUBS. SINGLE & CONCESSION.....\$5

FAMILY.....\$7

My research into Wombats was formally done in the later half of 1979, when I made a preliminary investigation of the effect of Wombats on soil and the downslope movement of soil and rock material.

I considered that some of the large amounts of material produced by burrowing and then formed into distinct mounds, must be eroded away from the area after rainfall (by raindrop splash and sheet wash). Secondly I investigated soil disturbance in feeding areas. Wombat trails were studied to see if constant trampling by the wombats made them impermeable and thus good pathways for runoff after rain. Finally I investigated the makeup of the wombat mound and compared it to the surrounding soil.

My study area was in a small unnamed valley, overhanging the Nepean River. It is part of the Blue Mtns National Park. The valley was narrow and surrounded by relatively steep cliffs. The central portion of the valley has been infilled by a large sandy alluvial fan. Geologically, the walls of the valley consist of Hawkesbury sandstone, with thin layers of shale. Average annual rainfall is about 950mm in this area. Dry sclerophyll forest covers the sides and floor of the valley. The main arboreal species are Ironbarks, Grey Box and Woody Pear. On the alluvial fan and lower slopes were found dense stands of Bracken Fern, Blady Grass and Indigofera australis.

The results of my study are briefly as follows:-

1. A map of burrows, trails and feeding grounds was produced.
2. The most popular place for burrows was in the stream banks which were easy to excavate. Burrows were also found on the south facing slope (which is more gentle and cooler than the north facing). Here the upper 5 burrows were very new; each contained fresh nesting material, dung and wall scratchings. The small size of the dung suggested the work of a juvenile (6 weeks prior to their discovery dung of 2 sizes were found in the area suggesting mother + juvenile).
3. From the size of the burrows an estimate of the amount of material excavated was made. This was about 58 tonnes. This exposed material was then made available for erosion which occurred rapidly in the stream and steeply sloping areas. Movement downslope of this material was observed.
4. Extensive wombat feeding areas were found here. In their search for roots of Blady Grass, wombats turned over and exposed large areas of soil. At the time of study fresh feeding grounds covered about 700m² with 3m² being added each week.
5. Wombat trails were only briefly investigated. Constant trampling on well worn tracks does make them impermeable and water was observed to run down them during rain. An amusing section of this study was Mark's measurement of a wombats feet to determine the pressure it exerts - a 21kg wombat with a total paw area of 150cm² exerts a pressure of .28kgs/cm².
6. The investigation of soil material in the wombat mounds was most interesting. It appears that prior to burrowing the wombat removes (eats?) vegetation from the future burrow entrance where the mound will be built. He then digs away the topsoil with his rump towards the burrow entrance so that this material goes on top of the burrow. He then reverses and digs into the subsoil which forms the major part of the mound. Careful study of one mound showed that there were at least 4 mound surfaces indicating that the burrow was dug out over a long period of time, perhaps by different wombats. Burrow renovation periods could also be noted in the mound material.

My work was used as a basis for an ecological study of this area by Gwyn Addicott in 1981. The main conclusion of her study was that a considerable reduction in wombat activity had occurred. Fewer burrows and feeding grounds were used. Dung sites were fewer. Careful observation indicated that 1.2 burrows were used each night. There was then probably only 1 wombat in the area at that time.

EDITORS NOTE: "After Ash Wednesday" as promised is not available as yet, but beginning next issue, "Fire and the Australian Aborigine, an Enigma", an extract from "Fire and the Australian Biota" by the A.A.S. This will be the first article in a series of extracts from this widely-acclaimed book. Permission has been granted.

CONTRIBUTIONS have been forthcoming from many members for this newsletter, keep 'em comin'.