



Lower Blue Mountains Conservation Society

P.O. BOX 119, SPRINGWOOD. 2777.

SPRING/SUMMER NEWSLETTER.

COMING EVENTS

December meeting and Christmas Get-together.

Date: 7th December.

Time: 8.00pm sharp.

Place: Teachers Centre, Ross Street, Glenbrook (opposite tennis courts).

Bring: some liquids and solids and a few slides.

FEDERAL ELECTION - 1984; VOTE DEMOCRAT in the SENATE (extract from Aust. Conservation Foundation Newsletter).

Political parties in recent years have become slick at adopting policies which look good for the environment. Whether or not these policies are put into practice is, unfortunately, a different matter.

The effective positions of the major parties are set out below in relation to the two most important topical conservation issues - nuclear disarmament-uranium and World Heritage Listing for the Daintree Wet Tropics rainforest. The actual positions taken by the ALP in recent months and those advocated by the LNP indicate clearly that environmental issues rank low in their priorities.

The Australian Democrats, on the other hand, have often taken supportive initiatives based on close consultation with environment groups, including ACF. They provide a voice in Parliament on conservation and peace issues. Without their presence, little would be heard of important conservation issues.

After obtaining the views of members on election alternatives, and exhaustive discussions with other conservation and peace groups, ACFs Executive considered strategies which could be adopted by the Foundation. It concluded that the only effective way of ensuring that environmental issues continue to be championed in Parliament and of expressing disapproval of the Labor and Liberal positions is through support of the Democrats.

Following the Executive recommendations, a postal ballot of ACFs full council was conducted. The decision is to support the Democrats in the Senate.

	Uranium	Daintree-World Heritage
ALP	allow mining and export	not prepared to nominate without agreement of State
Liberal/ NP	allows mining and export	not prepared to nominate without agreement of State
Democrat	opposes mining and export	would nominate for World Heritage Listing.

On the local front, Democrat candidates are Kevin Crameri (Lindsay) 047.77.4406 and Dick Jackson-Hope (Macquarie) 047.51.3146 bus.hours. Both these candidates need help handing out "how-to-vote" cards on December 1. This information is provided for those members who may wish to help in a similar way as the Franklin campaign for the '83 election.

Election material in this publication is authorised by Wendy Godfrey, P.O. Box 119, Springwood. 2777.

 MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS.....are now due. To assist members in
 renewing their membership, we have provided renewal cards and addressed
 envelopes. Please renew promptly.

Annual General Meeting.....October

At this vital gathering, the following people committed themselves for the following tasks;

President; George Threlfo 39-5125
 Vice Presidents; Craig Linn 51-4934 and Richard Phillipps 39-2568.
 Editor; Paul Godfrey 39-1748
 Publicity; Christine Stickley 53-6380
 Treasurer; Ross Bridle 53-6380
 Librarian; Aleen Hanley 39-4079

Assistant Secretaries!!!!

Wendy Godfrey....rainforest, uranium, issues outside local area, national
 parks and some Lois Lane work. 39-1748
 Margaret Esson...Blue Mountains National Park including national park
 proposals. 51-1826
 Besse Bramsen....Flora, Bush regeneration, Lennox Bridge. 51-2787
 Craig Linn.....Local Environmental Management Plan. 51-4934
 G. Ravenswood....Water Pollution. 54-2777
 Mick Dark.....Darks Common. 58-7061
 M. Baker.....Penrith District, Eastern escarpment.
 R. Phillipps....Florabella Park, extensions to Southern Blue Mountains
 National Park. 39-2568
 George Threlfo...Subdivision Proposals. 39-4079

Eastern Escarpment

A Public Hearing was held on 16,17 and 18th October to accommodate the grievances of landholders involved. Penrith City Council is commended for its attempts to protect the natural values of the area. It has prepared a Draft Local Environmental Plan which has, as its aims and objectives;

- "a) to protect the native vegetation and natural landscape of the Blue Mountains escarpment at Emu Plains.
- b) to preserve the visual quality of that escarpment.
- c) to preserve the sites of cultural or aboriginal significance of that escarpment.
- d) to otherwise preserve the environmental heritage of that escarpment; and
- e) to devise planning controls and other measures to reflect the aims referred to in paragraphs a) - d)."

Landholders are claiming loss of potential financial reward if this Plan is upheld. Do they deny the need for planning controls on the escarpment? The trouble is that most landholders maintain an individualistic approach to land use on their land. A new wholistic approach to land use will have to be forthcoming from residents. Only then can local councils hope to achieve "real" planning controls.

On sites where controversy rages over desirable environmental protection controls, such as Kings Tableland, residents have adopted a typical short-sighted attitude. What would they have Council do? Swathe the Mountains in houses, flats and industry from one end to another? Thats a bit like biting the hand that feeds you, isnt it? The environment of the Blue Mountains serves its residents well, in tourism especially, but only so far. There is a threshold level in this co-existence between the natural environment and mans activites. It may well have been passed already.

Lets all try to think of the future in future.

WALK TO WOLLANGAMBE

by Richard Phillipps.

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL STROLL!

Eight of us set off from Mount Wilson that sunny Sunday morning in winter. We left Paul behind to watch for late arrivals and set off along the land behind the school, which was founded in 1890.

Mount Wilson is full of history - 100 years of cultivation as an outpost of England. It is about 3400 feet above sea level, volcanic on the top with lush vegetation and huge deciduous trees touching across the roads. Its a mountain at the north end of the Blue Mountains - along with Mount Irvine (2900 feet) and such other romantic-sounding peaks as Derailment Hill, Whistle Hill, Shovel Hill, Cab Hill, Buffer Spur, Brakevan Ridge, Boiler Ridge, Steam Hill, Handbrake Hill, Garratt Ridge, Airbrake Hill, Footplate Spur and Smokestack Spur.

No, theres not a train or rail line in sight. This is the rugged Wollangambe Wilderness.

After leaving Mount Wilson village behind, we quickly descended through the lush vegetation to a part where you could see the sandstone country eliminate rainforest in favour of the Eucalypts, Banksias and so on, similar to the rest of the Mountains. But the difference here is that you are a lot higher up than the lower Mountains. At one barren ridge we thought wed even found a Snow Gum! There was no wind or rain though and walking kept us warm.

The bush was noisy with the sound of Lyrebirds. We found odd sandstone rock formations, weathered with hard ironstone looking like petrified parts of hollow logs.

Paul caught us up before we were halfway down into the deep Wollangambe Gorge. Lunch was beside the swift-flowing Wollangambe, after it joins Bell Creek. After lunch we explored - found more traces of Lyrebirds and saw lots of wildflowers for that time of year.

There were lots of walking parties out that day, so we didnt explore the Bell Creek branch of the track but went north. The narrow sandstone gorges are as good as those famous chasms inland around Alice - in fact better because of the Waratahs, ferns and other vegetation.

Returning to Mount Wilson was a steady climb, again lightened by the sound of Lyrebirds going through their repertoire. The return to volcanic soil is marked by the sight of tree ferns and aromatic shrubs. We couldnt be pleased at how the track is eroding, but we were delighted at the general absence of weeds.

Mount Wilson looks so lush because its rainfall is 50 inches a year on average. Once it must have been a temperate jungle. The Oaks and Liquidambars were bare of leaves when we were there, but festooned with mosses and lichens.

We strolled back to the cars, remarking at how peaceful it was in the Wollangambe in winter. Its worth another trip in summer, perhaps down the gorges by lilo.

Tips for those planning to go on the Societys walks - phone the walk organiser a few days before to say youre coming and make sure of the meeting place and arrive on time please. Co-ordinate transport. We missed one party of members who got to Mount Wilson that day, but didnt know where or who to meet.

LENNOX BRIDGE - DISASTER AREA.

by Besse Bramsen.

When the restored Lennox Bridge was to be officially opened, our Society agreed to plant flowering shrubs, vines and ferns native to the Blue Mountains or the surrounding areas. Also a class of students from Dunheved High School spent a day clearing garbage and debris from the creek and banks. The Blue Mountains City Council supplied fifty-two native plants and some members of the Society donated plants they had propagated. This, of course, after removing weeds; blackberry, honeysuckle and common soft weeds.

Luckily, the end of the drought came a few weeks after plantings; so watering was only done on two or three occasions and we had great hopes when first noting the response to rain.

Many of the plants have disappeared. The area is badly trampled and becoming, again, a garbage tip. We are very grateful to the Four Wheel Drive Club for removal of vehicles from the creek-bed above the Bridge: but, naturally, an amount of vegetation was destroyed when these were first dumped and will take some time to regenerate, even if not consistently trampled.

The creek flows on below the Bridge with its load of foam and the peace and natural restfulness which was once a pleasant feature of the area before development has gone.

PROPOSED "Sensitive" AREAS.

Craig Linn will present the following list of sensitive areas (outside National Parks) to the "Steering Committee" Meeting of the Local Environment Management Plan.

1. Sassafras Gully - whole track.
2. Birdwood Gully and Madeline Glen.
3. Fire trail off Shirlow Ave and Grose Road ridge - for preservation of Faulconbridge Mallee.
4. Frasers Creek system off Singles Ridge road (rainforest species and waterfall).
5. Florabella Pass.
6. Deanii Forest (Hawkesbury Road, Springwood).
7. Glenbrook Lagoon.
8. Darks Common and The Bluff.
9. Eastern Escarpment.
10. Lennox Bridge and surrounds.
11. Jackson Park trees.

This is a preliminary list. Can any members nominate other areas worthy of preservation?

Incidentally.....there is more than one escarpment in the Blue Mountains but only one where planning controls are in force under the Escarpment Preservation Zone. Surely Blue Mountains City Council can start thinking about extending this zone to other appropriate areas under their control. This was one of the revelations that left a certain Commissioner of Inquiry (Leura Resort Hearing) a trifle amazed.

YELLOW-TAILED BLACK COCKATOO SURVEY

The Melbourne Bird Observers Club is trying to find out more about the destination and composition of flocks of the Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo. Dont worry about it being a bit late - it didnt get to us September. The survey is now being conducted over the spring/summer period.

The procedure is simple; while youre sitting on your back verandah supping tea and scones, just keep an eye on the Black Cockies and fill out the data sheet on the next page. "Destination"; there are 4 possibles, drinking, feeding, roosting, unknown. If convenient could you chart the location and direction of travel onto a map (1:25,000).

POSITIONS VACANT

1. RESEARCH OFFICER

The LBMCS seeks a person with an interest in natural sciences. The successful applicant will be required to;

- a) leap tall bulldozers
- b) withstand the impact of H-bombs
- c) possess x-ray vision, able to see through developers prose and propositions

All information would need to be reported to this newsletter.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL LOBBYIST

Experience in liaison with government departments not necessary - any interested person will suffice. The successful applicant will be required to;

- a) write
- b) read
- c) think
- d) know their 2-times tables.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL SPY (002½)

The successful applicant must possess the followings;

- a) eyes
- b) ears
- c) nose (for smelly things or foul deeds)
- d) mouth (for reporting through the supplied "wonga vine")

4. COORDINATOR, ENTERTAINMENT AND SPEAKERS

The successful applicant must possess the following;

- a) phone
- b) voice
- c) note pad
- d) imagination and initiative

It is envisaged that these positions will be honorary and part-time. A wealth of experience can be gained which is both useful for the individual, re personal development and to the environment.

Applicants should make themselves known at the next meeting - you are all most welcome.

Do you need items for gifts soon?

Try;

*The Wilderness Society Shop, 362 Pitt Street, Sydney.
Has...1985 Diaries and Calendars, books, fluffy platypuses?
greeting cards, ubiquitous t-shirts, soaps, real nice
Ceylon tea etc etc. 02-267-7929

*Australian Conservation Foundation, Mail order books,
stickers, maps, stationery, calendars. 03-870-4379
Write to 22 Vista Ave, Ringwood Weast, Vic. 3135 for a
catalogue.

*SGAP Book Service. Great prices on heaps of books ranging
from detailed flora and fauna editions to books for children
Write to Margaret and Mark Baker, P.O. Box 104, Winmalee
2777 or phone them on 047-54-1196.

*Total Environment Centre.
Has...1985 Diaries, calendars, books and posters.
If youre in town theyre at, The Argyle Centre, 18 Argyle
Street, Sydney. 02-274714. Alternately, the same range of
items are available from NSW Environment Centre, 399 Pitt
Street, Sydney. (opposite Wilderness Shop).

Werong Campaign

(Extract from "Canopy", Newsletter of the Native Forest Committee)

On 22nd March, 1984, the Premier announced that areas of vacant crown land and state-owned land are being considered for addition to the Blue Mountains National Park. This announcement came just eight days after Canopy submitted its 'Proposal for Werong Extension to Southern Blue Mountains National Park System'. A rewarding response to 18 months of research and preparation by the Committee.

Werong

A beautiful forested area of 37000 hectares extends from the Kanangra-Boyd National Park near Tuglow Caves in the north, via Mt Werong and west of the Great Dividing Range to the Wombeyan Caves Reserve in the south. Within the proposed additions lie the headwaters of major tributaries of the Kowmung, Wollondilly and Abercrombie Rivers.

Strong Arguments for Preserving Werong

- protection of Sydneys drinking water supply.
- protection of rare species of flora and fauna.
- protection of one of the largest undisturbed western flowing catchments.
- expansion of the magnificent Kanangra Wilderness and its protection within an adequate buffer zone system.
- protection of catchments that flow into Wombeyan and Tuglow Caves.
- to develop and effectively manage one of our great recreational assets.

Pines are the Danger

Although the Forestry Commission has repeatedly stated that it will utilise where possible cleared grazing land its intention to clear fell and convert the Werong area to pines is indicated.

Clearing for pine forests would be disastrous causing pollution to our drinking water supply, widespread landscape degradation, increased fire risks, severe limitations for the long term development of recreation, and would possibly result in the extinction of the river blackfish.

YOU COULD HELP

By writing to the Premier asking him to explain his pre-election statement. (Does it include all freehold, state forest and crown land of the Proposal?) Also by writing to the Minister for Planning and Environment and the Minister for Natural Resources.

The Native Forest Committee is located at;
Total Environment Centre, 18 Argyle Street, Sydney.
02-27-4714

EUROPEAN WASP

(from NPA Journal, Sept.1984)

Readers should keep an eye out for European Wasps when travelling in the bush. The wasp is firmly established in Sydney and Melbourne and is spreading to country areas of NSW.

European Wasps are lemon yellow, with black stripes on the abdomen. They are about the same size as a domestic bee but are much lighter yellow and have distinctly yellow legs.

The wasps usually live in subterranean nests of 20,000 or more individuals. Worker wasps scavenge for sweets and protein foods. They are attracted to anything sweet including drinks, confectioneries as well as meat and fish. Both wildlife and humans are threatened by the European Wasp which can repeatedly sting until its venom is exhausted. The best protection is afforded by preventing the wasps from becoming established in an area. If you encounter a wasp please contact the local office of the Dept of Agriculture or, if in a national park, nature reserve or state recreation area, contact the Park or District Service office. If possible forward a specimen of the suspect insect.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Five pm saw a group of intrepid "spotters" gathered in the failing light of day at Woodford Station. With deep breaths and assured resolution their point of rendezvous was sought. Truck, van and car snaked along rough bush track in a most unceremonious convoy of ups and downs amidst spraying rocks and elongated shadows.

After the final precipitous grade, Murphys Glen loomed large and inviting in the sometimes fictitious light of twilight. Scouts despatched quickly, soon returned with news of an appropriately-positioned b-b-q - most important for the mandatory suasages and steaks.

Darkness, now only teased by the dancing flames of our cooking fire, pressed heavily around. This was the time of imagination and awe for both the young and not so young - the magic and wonder of an Australian bush evening was about to be imprinted on us all.

Sight almost denied us, spurred our other senses, the smell of the fire which engulfed Blue Gum branches and leaves set the stage while our ears drained the cooling air of its every vibration. Close by, rustling leaves and grasses revealed an inquisitive Bush Rat, intent on watching us watch it. This species prefers undergrowth of shrubs and ferns. Of all the native rats, the Bush Rat is the most insectivorous, but it has such a catholic diet that it can survive a period of acute food shortage following a bushfire by eating the mushrooms which rapidly emerge. Bush Rats are most common in forested gullies where understorey is densest.

Further away, the ever-present and reassuring cry of the Boobook Owl comforted us.

Mick extracted the battery from his ute and connected his spotlight - it worked. Soon the darkness was punctuated with stabs of intruding brightness - all was ready.

Mick in the lead with the others in tow set forth to seek - but what. Our targets were the resident Greater Gliders and expectations were high. Childrens laughter and frivolities failed to frighten our foe and it wasn't long before several gliders had been 'bagged', thanks to Micks bright light and equally bright eyes. Soon we were all seasoned 'spotters', accustomed to the glowing and star-like eyes of these magnificent animals.

The Greater Glider is extremely variable in colour, ranging from dark chocolate to white, even in the same area. During the night, we sighted both colour phases. The Greater Glider is the largest of the gliding posums and like the Koala, is adapted to an almost exclusive diet of eucalypt leaves. It is an agile climber and can effect a pincer-like grip on a branch by opposing the first two toes of the forefoot to the other three. Its glides can be over 100 metres and involve changes of direction of as much as 90°.

The Greater Glider is most abundant in undisturbed eucalypt forests. It is absent in pine plantations and rare in regenerating forest which lacks old trees with hollows suitable for nesting.

Happy with our success at sighting these quiet, beautiful creatures, we returned to our vehicles, packed goods and chattels, loaded families and left the locals to wonder about their strange visitors. I only hope that the Gliders enjoyed themselves as we did - a really successful evening, thanks to the efforts and expertise of Mick Dark and the company of participating families.

Paul Godfrey

"IN THE RED"

No, we are not (not at last count, thanks to our previous long term honorary Treasurer, Colin Powell).

Colin has been one of the real quiet achievers that the conservation movement depends so much upon. He has guided our fiscal endeavours and managed (just, at times) to keep our heads above water.

Colin has had to resign due to personal committments. We extend our heartfelt thanks for all his efforts and patience (with amateur accountants) over the past years. We wish him all that he hopes to achieve in his endeavours.

BENTS BASIN

On 24th August, 1984, Paul Godfrey, along with eight others were appointed by Terry Sheahan, Minister for Planning and Environment, as Trustees of Bents Basin State Recreation Area.

The Basin is approximately 7km upstream from Wallacia and 6½km SE of Warragamba Dam.

Trustees have the care, control and management of SRAs and of all improvements on it. The main purpose for establishing SRAs are to;

- a) provide large regional parks to which people may come to relax and experience the natural environment.
- b) provide the opportunity for our predominantly urban society to engage in many and varied recreation experiences in an outdoor environment.
- c) relieve the recreation pressures on the National Parks of the State, which place more emphasis on conservation.
- d) establish recreational areas having a regional significance and also to provide parks for the extensive use of tourists and holidaymakers.
- e) conserve the natural areas for the enjoyment and use of present and future generations.

Point e) above is the most pertinent to the interests of this Society and Bents Basin vegetation is especially relevant. This relevance is highlighted by two species, *Eucalyptus benthamii* and *Hibbertia hermannifolia* which are endangered species in need of special consideration.

Extensive flora, fauna and archaeological surveys have been conducted preceding a detailed Plan of Management for the new year. Any members who need more information regarding Bents Basin please feel free to contact Paul on 39-1748, evenings.

