

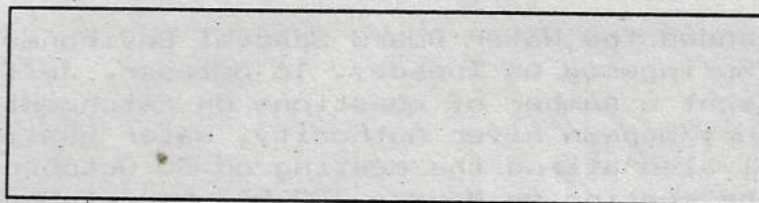


Oct.-Nov.-Dec. 1990

Lower Mountains Eco-News

NEWSLETTER OF THE LOWER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

RETURN ADDRESS:
LBMCS
P.O. BOX 119
SPRINGWOOD 2777



Notice of Meetings

GENERAL MEETING

Held at the Neighbourhood Centre
Springwood, at 7.30pm:

Oct. 26: AGM followed by Cath Ireland, Ranger, NPWS, Will give a talk on the work of a Ranger in the Blue Mountains National Park. Cath is well known for her enthusiasm and informative, entertaining talks, so roll up.

Sat. Nov. 17: Warrimoo Station, 10 am
Florabella Pass to Blaxland. Leader R. Phillips. 392568

COMING EVENTS

Dec. 1: Spotlight Christmas BBQ around 6pm at Murphy's Glen, Woodford. Bring your sausages etc. After tea we will check out the wonderful Eucalypt deanii trees for Greater Gliders.

WALKS

Sun. Oct 28: 10am, Blaxland Station. Bring lunch. Mystery walk in Lower Mountains. Book with Leader, Belinda McKenzie, - 392264.

Aims

To inform the public on environmental and conservation issues; research into population and distribution of flora and fauna in the Blue Mountains and neighbouring regions.

Memberships

Blue Mountains Environment Council
Nature Conservation Council of NSW
Australian Conservation Foundation

Other Group Involvement

Society for Growing Australian Plants (Blue Mountains Branch)
National Parks Association (NSW)
Australian Museum
Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society
National Parks and Wildlife Foundation
The Wilderness Society (NSW)
C.H.A.N.G.E.
The Total Environment Centre

Glenbrook Lagoon Society
Eastern Escarpment '530A' Committee
Darks Common Trust
Nepean River Committee
The Colong Foundation (Inc)

Society Contacts

President: Richard Phillipps (39-2568)
V.Presidents: Margaret Baker (54-1196)
Margaret Esson (51-1826)
Secretary: George Threlfo (39-5125)
Publicity Officer: George Threlfo
Editors (acting):
Eileen Brammall, Aleen Hanley
Treasurer: Eileen Brammall (39-6420)
Librarian: Wynne O'Brien (58-6504)
Gen. Enquiries and Talks
Organiser: Aleen Hanley (39-4079)

SECRETARY'S REPORT

1. Members attended the Water Board Special Environment Program meeting at Springwood on Tuesday, 16 October. Jeff Oxley was able to present a number of questions on catchment controls, the Hawkesbury/Nepean River Authority, water quality etc. Members will also attend the meeting on 30 October at Orchard Hills and the meeting on Monday, 22 October at Springwood on the sewerage plan for the Upper Mountains. Please come.
2. Our Society requested a second meeting of the groups involved in the Londonderry gravel and sand mines. We presented a large number of concerns on the DA's with regard to water quality and site management. The issue will go to Penrith Council soon and we will need to lobby aldermen to ensure the highest standards are put in place.
3. Prospect Powerline Springwood/Warrimoo to Winmalee. Our criticisms of the EIS have been given good media treatment so far and we intend to keep the process going until a meeting is convened in Springwood to persuade Prospect to place the lines underground.
4. Environment Management Plan. At least six members recently examined the revised plan and supplied comments on the plan and the Lower Mountains, Springwood/Winmalee and Falconbridge areas.
5. Our requests to the State Opposition have met with the Eastern Escarpment, Agnes Banks and various western Sydney bushland areas being included in their policy for inclusion as National Parks or Nature Reserves.
Now all we need is a good quality submission prepared for each area. How can you help us?

NATURE CONSERVATION COUNCIL ANNUAL CONFERENCE 27/28 OCT.

The following motions have been put by L.B.M.C.S. :

Faulconbridge Mallee

That the NCC support the request for acquisition of 143 ha of land described in the submission " Linden Creek Tributary and Precincts " with finance from the Open Space and Heritage Fund or any other funds which may become available.

Police Powers in Relation to Pollution Offences

That the NCC seek clarification of the powers of police in detecting, apprehending and charging persons involved in the pollution and destruction of the natural and built environment.

If the current police powers are found to be inadequate, the State Government be urged to amend legislation to provide the necessary powers.

Henceforth, a program of education through the police force on its duties and obligations in these matters should be instituted.

Proposed Mulgoa Nature Reserve

That NCC request the State Government to form a viable Mulgoa Nature Reserve by ensuring the inclusion of the four parcels of land (approximate area 250 ha) as identified in the most recent NPWS submission to Minister Moore. These include the original nature reserve proposal, the area west of School House Creek adjacent to Glenmore Park Estate and the ruins of Regentville House and environs, adjacent land identified in the Mulgoa Regional Plan as 7 Environment Protection and the area identified by the submission to Penrith City Council in 1988 by P. & J. Smith.

Turbidity Problems In Waters From Urban Developments

That NCC request the State Government to examine the feasibility of using mobile membrane technology filtration plants on waters emanating from large urban, commercial and industrial developments during the construction phase. Such an examination would be carried out by agencies such as the State Pollution Control Commission, the Soil Conservation Service and the universities.

Population Growth Centres in Western Sydney

That the NCC calls on the State Government to reassess the population projections given in the Department of Planning document 'Sydney Into Its Third Century' for western Sydney and particularly the strategy to add 1 million people in the North-West, South-West and Macarthur South areas by 2010.

Such a reassessment must be made in the light of increasing evidence that the Hawkesbury/Nepean Valley is incapable of supporting the current population without significant environmental degradation.

In addition, the Government must seek to change the prevailing public attitude that western Sydney can provide construction and water resources for continued growth in Sydney and serve as a dumping ground for various waste materials.

Such a reassessment must consider current State and Federal policies on urban consolidation, decentralisation and immigration and their future applicability.

Hawkesbury/Nepean Riverbank Protection

That the NCC adopt the following as policy on Hawkesbury/Nepean riverbank protection :

1. Riverbanks must be re-vegetated urgently with endemic tree species such as *Casuarina cunninghamii* and shrubs with an emphasis on riverbank protection properties.
2. Waterskiing must be contained to limited locations where the activity causes a minimum of damage e.g. broad sections in Broken Bay.
3. Re-grading of riverbanks and rock-toe reinforcement have a limited usefulness in the long term. Due to past lack of knowledge about road and residential construction on riverbanks and usage of the river and its banks, a limited amount of re-grading and rock-toe reinforcement may be necessary for the protection of public and private property and of roadways.
4. General boating should be subject to additional control in keeping with environmental considerations. Tasmanian waterway regulations are far superior to the NSW MSB regulations and should be adopted.
5. Sand and gravel mining in the river bed and riverbanks must cease.
Widening and deepening the river in one or more areas can cause increased river heights, riverbank erosion, raised riverbank water tables and salinity problems in other areas.
6. A river management plan is urgently required for all sections of the river incorporating the above policies. Section plans will form part of a broader plan for the total catchment.

Wetlands

That NCC calls on the State Government to institute appropriate protection measures on all wetlands identified in the NCC study of the Sydney region by Jay Stricker.

Wood Heaters

That NCC calls on the State Government to carry out research on the use of wood heaters in urban areas with special reference to :

- a. The contribution of wood smoke to Sydney's air quality problems
- b. Sources and types of wood
- c. Fuel properties e.g. moisture content, smoke and ash levels
- d. Effects on surrounding bushland by wood gatherers
- e. Efficiencies of catalytic converters on chimneys
- f. Heater efficiencies

In relation to f., a heater certification system should be introduced in line with the Standards Association of Australia and heaters not meeting the standard should be discontinued.

Policy

1. Local and regional management plans including fire hazard and suppression plans, should be prepared for all bushland areas. The plans should include a series of management options from no action in certain areas to detailed hazard reduction measures in other areas.

2. Plans should be freely accessible to the public.
3. Management plans should incorporate full public participation measures. This involves a specific ongoing review role in annual planning with the public being invited to make public comments by exhibition in the local media and council offices and/or libraries.
4. Different growth cycles exist for different areas and the frequency of management reviews for hazard reduction should reflect this.
5. Large conservation reserves, especially wilderness areas, should not be subject to broad area intentional burning.
6. Where a fire risk is clearly identified to life and property and all other avenues of hazard reduction including education programs for local populations have been utilised, limited burning may be appropriate at the boundaries of urban settlement. (boundaries of urban settlements to be separately defined).
7. The network of existing fire trails and fire watch towers in reserve lands should be rationalised.
8. Where a real hazard exists in a small urban reserve, fuel levels should be reduced by using selective hand clearing, and ensuring that the hazard is mitigated on adjoining developed properties.
9. Areas of severe bushfire hazard should be identified and zoned under regional and local planning instruments with the effect of excluding or restricting development. Other disincentives should be incorporated in insurance and rating policies.
10. To reduce fire hazards, scientific controls should be exercised over urban planning design and house construction materials used in fire prone areas.
11. Research programs should continue with an emphasis on the :
 - a. Ecological responses of native plants and animals to fire
 - b. Ecological behaviour of identical and similar species in non fire prone areas
 - c. Effects on fuel load and flammability of withdrawing fire from different communities for significant periods.
 - d. Effectiveness of fire retardant plants.
 - e. Effectiveness with different plant communities of various hazard reduction methods
 - f. Effectiveness of fire retardant chemicals and their longer term effects on the environment
 - g. Feasibility of installing individual and community sprinkler systems on the perimeters of properties.
 - h. Threat to the continued existence of particular plants from too frequent hazard reduction burns.
12. N.S.W. legislation should be enacted to achieve common references to Aims, Objectives, Charters, Missions etc. for all affected State and local government authorities.

13. The responsibility of individual property owners for the preservation of their properties in defined areas should be clearly assessed by insurance companies and by brigades who should not be required to risk lives or property protecting such properties.
14. Hazard reduction must occur in autumn and early winter if at all possible and not in spring.
15. A greater emphasis should be placed on the utilisation of resources to fight fires at night.
16. A ban should be imposed on control burns within all tall closed forests (rainforests) and tall open forests (wet sclerophylls).
17. Education and awareness programs should be strengthened and increased with a particular emphasis on encouraging people to be responsible for appropriate fire hazard reductions.

Note on Education Programs

Land management and fire prevention and suppression authorities should be adequately trained to recognise the ecological significance of the change of fire regime consequent upon repeated prescribed burning.

Different education programs should be directed to volunteer firefighters and the general public.

- e.g. Volunteer firefighters should be educated on endemic plant types and their vulnerability
Specific education programs should be directed to newcomers to the mountains.
Specifically, education items should be included with Section 149 Certificates.
Regular articles should be published in the local press on fire management issues.

TREASURER'S COMMENTS

As the books of account are with the auditor I am unable to provide a proper financial report.

However, in spite of reduced membership the Society is in a better position this year than it was in 1988 or 1989. Thanks must go to the tireless workers who provide regular incomes. I will not name names, but we all know these wonderful people.

At September 30 the balance at the Blue Mountains Credit Union was \$621.78.

The auditor's report will, most likely, be available at the Annual General Meeting on Friday 26 October 1990.

EILEEN M. BRAMMALL