

HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow's People"



A Sustainable Lifestyle

A different view on how it can be developed

The Australian Energy Audit, published by Sydney University, cited the average Australian lifestyle as being central to our environmental and social problems.

The challenge we need to face is to find a viable and attractive lifestyle which could be enjoyed by any number of the world's people who might choose it, while leaving an intact world for our children's children.

Chris Baulman and Alex Baumann of Caretakers — a sustainable lifestyle project — will be guest speakers at our general meeting on Friday 25 May. Chris and Alex will present a different view on how sustainable communities could develop based on a new way of accessing land.

The meeting will be held at the Conservation Hut, end of Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls, on Friday 25 May, starting at 7.30 pm. Visitors are very welcome.

World Heritage Dedication

A dedication ceremony and community celebration to mark the listing of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area will be held at Govett's Leap, Blackheath, on Saturday 12 May.

The official Dedication Ceremony will commence at sunset, 5.05 pm, with the lighting of ceremonial camp fires and a welcome by Elders of the Gundungurra and Dharug Peoples.

Entertainment by local musicians and a sausage sizzle will commence at 4pm.

Parking will not be available on site. Shuttle buses will be running from 3 pm from Blackheath Railway Station and Blackheath Memorial Park.

Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Management Trust Dissolved

On Friday 6 April senior officers of the NSW Department of Land and Water Conservation called a meeting of the staff attached to the Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Management Trust to announce that the Trust was to be dissolved and its operations taken over by the Department. A press release from Minister Amery was released and later withdrawn in lieu of a different release. It was claimed that the budget allocation of ~\$3.5 million would be better spent on additional ground works.

It is significant that only four days

Fighting for Our Wetlands

Swamp Dance a Huge Success

The Swamp Dance was a resounding success! An enthusiastic crowd of over 125 people danced the Gang Gangs into the ground, ripping a string from Steve's guitar with the final Troika.

The atmosphere of our beautiful wetlands was everywhere, from Sarah Michell's evocative hall design, Jim Wallace's inspiring slides, in Meredith Brownhill's impressive educational display and echoed in the new Swamp Song written for the night by John Hill and Steve Kells.

Many commented on the pleasure of enjoying a positive environmental activity amongst all the usual battles.

Congratulations to members of the Gang Gangs who organised the event. The band was tireless in its provision of wonderful music. People danced all night; everyone smiled; adults and children of all ages had fun together.

The successful evening can be attributed to many people. The crowd was brought in by Christine Davies's enthusiastic fliers and articles, their energy sustained by Jenny Hill's delicious food. Prize donations and financial support were given by Fantail Books, Margaret Baker, D&L Organics, Summit Gear and Diane Edwards (osteopath). Mitchell Brigs (4782 5752) made the yummy gluten free biscuits.

The invaluable helpers who gave their energy on the night will be rewarded by being asked again!

The \$540 raised covers the cost of the Swamp educational display, a vital part of the campaign to get protection for our precious hanging swamps.

Thank you Gang Gangs and everybody who shared and enjoyed the dream!

earlier the Trust had received a Statement of Joint Intent from the Cabinet Office giving details of cooperative works programs planned between the Trust and relative Government Departments.

The Trust met urgently on 9 April to plan a course of action but on the following day it was advised that all appropriate steps for its closure had been set in place and these became effective on 12 April at 2 pm.

The decision of the Minister to disband the Trust will be seen as disastrous by those who have struggled to improve the health of the Hawkesbury-Nepean. With this action he has withdrawn the protection offered by the principles of Total Catchment Management from all of the rapidly developing western regions of Sydney between Camden and Windsor, all of the more rural areas between Goulburn and Gosford and much of the Blue Mountains, Wollemi and several other National Parks. At the same time he has cast doubt on the future of the other 18 Catchment Management Boards in the state.

The Trust was formed in response to community concern about the rapid

decline in the health of the river during the 1980's with the appearance of algae blooms, high impurity and nutrient levels and rapid increase in the scale of extraction and development processes in and along the river. In its short life the Trust has done much to improve many of these matters but its abrupt demise will produce profound misgivings that we could return to the conditions existing 10 years ago.

One of the Trust's major achievements has been ability to involve the community in its programs and decision-making processes. With his action the Minister will have disillusioned a large number of voluntary workers and done the cause of community involvement in government a great disservice.

Keep our Trust!

A postcard is enclosed with this newsletter. Please sign the postcard and send it to the Premier.

Concerns for Community Consultation

The sudden axing of the Hawkesbury-Nepean Management Trust, without warning or consultation, raises concerns for the future of community consultation in New South Wales.

The NSW Government has recently released a white paper to change the whole method of plan making in NSW. A report on community consultation accompanies the white paper, but in the white paper there are no mechanisms named for community consultation; all mechanisms are for top-down planning, rather than from grass roots up.

The trust was one of the most effective bodies that has been successfully utilising community energy and expertise. If it can be just axed without even the Board being consulted, much less the wider community, where does it leave the future of community consultation in NSW?

THE DEADLINE
FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF HUT NEWS IS
FRIDAY 19 MAY 2001

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Our Home & the Environment Passive Solar Design

Last month we discussed orientation and thermal mass as critical features for passive solar design. Now we'll touch on the other three: insulation, glazing and ventilation.

Insulation: Having gone to all that trouble of pointing the house in the right direction and including some form of thermal mass to gather the heat, it is now important to stop the heat escaping. This is where insulation becomes critical. The aim of insulation is to hold the heat in during winter and to keep the heat out during summer. (Insulation ability increases with the increase in 'R-value' of the product.) We will cocoon our house by insulating the roof, walls and floors and sealing them from draughts. Each room can be closed off so that any heat gain is not lost over a large area.

It was not easy choosing a type of insulation batt. We weighed up many factors, such as toxicity, energy used to manufacture and recycle-ability. We'll probably go with polyester batts, because although they are made from petrochemicals they are non-toxic for the installer and inhabitants, and can be recycled in the future. There may even be a product available made from recycled PET bottles. Wool was considered for a while but we couldn't fit the sheep in the wall cavity — actually it seems that the wool may subside in the vertical cavity. Sometimes the decisions on what to use are based on a gut feeling. For instance which has the largest environmental impact, sheep farming or production of synthetic materials?

Having produced tons of wood shavings to produce the wood for the house (another story) we will also use sawdust shavings mixed with borax (deters insects and is a fire retardant) between our ground floor and first floor. Nigel Bell used sawdust sandwiched between the foam from fruit boxes in the walls of his studio.

Glazing: Heat passes straight through standard window glass because of its low insulating capacity. Double-glazing or full-length heavy curtains, which are tightly fitted at the sides and with a box pelmet, will

increase insulation. It is important that the box pelmet is closed in at the top for a complete seal. We are having our windows made by Branches at Lawson who can make double-glazed ones with recycled hardwood frames. Most of this wood will hopefully come from the studs and beams of the part of the house that is being dismantled for the project. Timber frames are good insulators, unlike aluminium frames, which conduct the warmth to the outside.



Ventilation: You do get the odd hot day in the upper mountains so it can be useful to design the house to allow for this odd eventuality. Sorry, lower mountains people probably get many hot days. It is best done by strategically placing doors and windows to allow cross breezes. As most of the cooler breezes come from the south in the mountains and you have the house being heated from the north, windows and doors are best on the north and south sides of rooms. We have a bushy south side with a number of trees, which will help cool the air further. The cool air will then be sucked through the house by the air, being heated on the north side.

Given our own little foibles and needs we have come up with a passive solar design with Nigel Bell, which will in the long run make the house cheaper to run and be more energy efficient. Making a house sustainable doesn't stop there though. We then compared the environmental cost of all the various products and building materials needed to build the house. We considered the embodied energy (energy used in production and transportation) and their toxicity. Next instalment will be about how we selected products while considering their embodied energy. Cheers -

Greg Wellham and Jessica Yuille.

ADI Site - Effective Action

A few weeks ago an amazing public rally was held at Penrith to save the ADI Site. The Site is 1500 hectares of heritage listed Cumberland Plains bushland and open space between St Marys and Penrith, surplus Defence land owned by the Federal Government. It is slated for a massive urban development with 8000 houses.

1200 people attended the rally and unanimously demanded the protection of the whole site as a new Regional Park and Nature Reserve. The rally was also used to launch a new political party formed from the ADI Residents Action Group. The new party name has a very clear message for the ballot box, the **Save the ADI Site Party**.

ADI Residents Action Group, the rally organiser, has decided that this step is crucial to protect the site by using the new party to create pressure on both the Labor Party and the Coalition, all the way to the next Federal election. The **Save the ADI Site Party** will terminate when the fight is won.

Members are needed to register the new party (membership \$10, concession \$5). Contact Colin Anderson 4739.4374.

Envelopes for Hut News

For some years now we have been sending you Hut News in recycled, pre-paid envelopes bought from Australia Post. We have just been informed that Australia Post have discontinued recycled pre-paid envelopes!

The May Hut News will be posted to you in a white paper pre-paid envelope,

for which we apologise. In future we will buy plain recycled envelopes and have them franked.

In this day and age Australia Post should be making ALL of their stationery items from recycled paper.

If you are as disappointed with the Australia Post decision to discontinue recycled stationery as we are, write to them and tell them so! Australia Post can be contacted as follows: Australia Post, PO Box 1018, Strawberry Hills 1420.

Slaying the Giants

In a very effective illustrated article in the "Good Weekend" early this year, entitled as above, Bob Ellis wrote:

The Desolation. Clear felling, they call it, but no words are big enough for this vast and tedious panorama of splintered nothingness, this mile on mile of stricken and shattered mountainside that used to be green, embracing Arthurian forest - how recently? a year? a month? a week? - and was now like Dresden the morning after, carpet-bombed, burnt out, lifeless, no birdsong,

no skirring insects, no animals in the bushland equivalent of what the Biblical prophet called "a valley of dry bones." Oblivion Holocaust. In a region wondrously, tellingly, named the Valley of the Styx.

He quotes his friend, Charles Wooley of Sixty Minutes on the poisoning of what life remains, described by an old forester as "vermin" - not rats and mice, but possums, wombats, wallabies. "This year" Wooley says "they've produced more chips than in any other years. We're up to nearly 6 million tons a year."

Bob Ellis quotes another friend, Bob Brown, on the Orwellian phrasing of Forestry Tasmania. "Wood production zones," which means total destruction. "Tall tree management zones", which means total destruction. "Harvesting," which means total destruction. I do not like "harvesting." It brings up images of maidens flitting through the crop with garlands in their hair. "And they take out trees because they are, quote 'post mature and senescent' - which means they're old and might have only 500 years to live." (from *The Colong Bulletin*, March 2001)

The Passing Parade

At the time of writing, the autumn migration of Yellow-faced Honeyeaters has just begun. During suitable weather conditions between now and late May, flocks can be seen flying restlessly northwards through our area, often following gullies, clifflines or other dominant natural features. As the season progresses, they will be joined by increasing numbers of White-naped Honeyeaters. Watch out also for flocks of Silvereyes, pardalotes, wattlebirds, etc. Sometimes thousands of birds each hour pass a single spot. (*Carol Proberts, Blue Mountains Bird Observers newsletter, March 2001. For membership, contact Chris Todd, 19 Hilton Road, Springwood 2777, phone 4751.3482.*)

Blue Mountains Dwarf Pine Protection Program

The endangered Blue Mountains Dwarf Pine, *Microstrobus fitzgeraldii*, is restricted to the spray zones of southerly waterfalls above 900m on the Upper Blue Mountain sandstone escarpment. It is restricted to sites downstream of the urban centres of Katoomba, Leura and Wentworth Falls.

The Blue Mountains Rare and Endangered Species Group (BRESG) has completed a project to protect the endangered Dwarf Pine, carried out with the assistance of a TSN Community Grant. The project has enhanced and restored key habitat and controlled weeds in particular.

Through traditional bush regeneration techniques above the falls and bush regeneration of the falls themselves using abseiling techniques to gain access, the habitat of *Microstrobus fitzgeraldii* is better protected from weed invasion which severely threatens this species.

About 15 volunteers have worked on the project which required an unusual combination of skills to be applied in

extremely difficult terrain. Those participating in the work on the cliff faces brought together a unique combination of bush regeneration skills and abseiling experience to the project. Few groups can boast of weeding a cliff face whilst hanging on the end of a rope! (*The Web, March 2001, newsletter of the Threatened Species Network NSW, GPO Box 528, Sydney 2001*)

When Beauty is the Beast from Tim Low's book, "Feral Future"

Some of our weeds are strikingly beautiful. Water hyacinth, with its delicate, pastel-blue flowers framed by lush foliage, is an aesthetic delight; morning glory and salvation jane both bloom into glorious celebrations of the colour purple. When such weeds invade our wastelands and wilderness they blanket the land in a quilt of colour. Beauty was their passport to Australia. From distant lands they were brought here to brighten our gardens, parks and ponds, to lend colour to a new land.

Garden plants, in all their glory, now dominate our 'worst weeds' lists, making up a staggering 30% of all our noxious weeds and account for seven of our eighteen worst environmental weeds. Of the new weeds emerging in recent years, two-thirds are garden escapees, and in many national parks they pose the main management problem. Garden plants behave so badly partly because there are so many of them. In Queensland alone some four thousand foreign species are grown, more than all of Australia's food, pasture and timber plants combined. Millions of them grow in gardens close to bushland. They represent one of Australia's most pressing problems, but one of the least acknowledged.

Australia urgently needs a new gardening ethos. We should accept that gardening, within a kilometre or so of bushland, entails an ecological responsibility. Weedy species should not be grown. Lists of problem plants can be

Membership Enquiries
Contact Elizabeth van Reyswoud
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obtained from the local council or from Greening Australia. Waste from gardens should never be dumped near bushland, drains or creeks. Berry-bearing plants should be avoided unless they are local natives. New garden plants should be treated less like exciting new products invented to brighten our lives, and more like wild organisms harbouring the drive to escape. Native plants are one alternative, so long as we realise that some of these, when taken to new regions, can also take off as weeds. Benign azaleas and roses are better than weedy wattles. (*National Parks Journal, April 2001.*)

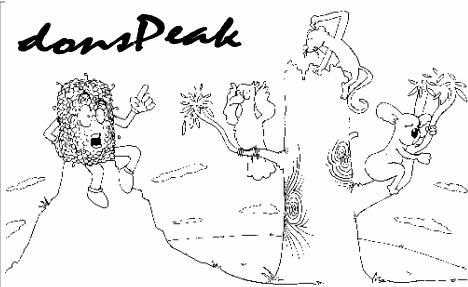
Climate Change

"The greatest environmental challenge of the new century is global warming. If we fail to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, deadly heatwaves and droughts will become more frequent, coastal areas will flood and economies will be disrupted." (*Bill Clinton in last year's State of the Union speech.*)

"Australia will be one of the regions of the world most severely affected by climate change." (*Dr Gerhard Berz, head of geo scientific research at the world's largest reinsurer. Munich re*)

Climate Change in Australia: The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predicts that global warming will initially be positive but that this is likely to alter with further climate change. Much of the region may dry out, but there will be more intensive heavy rains and cyclones resulting in flooding storm and damage.

(*from The Colong Bulletin March 2001. The Colong Bulletin is the newsletter of the Colong Foundation for Wilderness. Level 2, 362 Kent Street, Sydney 2000*)



Sanctuary 'Shock'

'Uncle' Peter Pigott has been one of the pioneers of using electric fenced enclosures to protect Australian marsupials from predators. At his small Mount Wilson sanctuary, he re-established viable numbers of the Parma Wallaby, once thought extinct, after a pair were discovered on an island off the coast of New Zealand. A New Zealand Government Minister said at the time that he was glad that the Parma Wallaby had been found alive and he hoped that it never became extinct again.

Electric-fenced sanctuaries are now proliferating. My phone call to Calga Springs Wildlife Sanctuary (opened last month near Gosford) was answered by

the owner, former Federal Environment Minister Barry Cohen. Mr Cohen and his son are using an 80 acre electric fenced enclosure to protect several established marsupial populations. They hope also to introduce some rare and threatened marsupials. Public admission is currently seven days per week (02-4375.1100).

A 20 kilometre electric fence at Currawinya National Park, near Cunnamulla, Queensland, also came to power in April with emphasis on bilby habitat. Earth Sanctuaries already operates private wildlife sanctuaries in South-West New South Wales and South Australia. A sign they have erected on a property near Newnes indicates plans for an electric fenced sanctuary there.

All sanctuaries mentioned were established entirely by private funding, except

Currawinya which is seeking private sponsorship. We should welcome the growing interest in conservation by both commercial and non-profit private organisations. A new era of partnership is needed, between these organisations and government, which must still co-ordinate and generously fund protection of total eco systems and culling of exotic predators.

Come on Baby, Do the Locomotion!

A well placed source indicates that some hard-heads in the NSW Treasury might seek the dismantling of the Katoomba to Lithgow rail electrification before the next State Election in 2003. The growing band of commuters in Medlow Bath, Blackheath, Mt Victoria and Lithgow would be underwhelmed by alternative motive power, resulting from the beancounters' proposals! *Don Morrison.*



Let's Go the Distance

It's time to think about taking a few days off in September. We'll continue the tradition of multi-Day walks we began in 1999 when the cars dropped us at beautiful Portal Water-hole. Reaching the Nepean River, we scooped up two vials of water to pour on the summit of Mount Victoria, with five days of (gentle) uphill ahead of us.

Newnes is where we'll start the 2001 search for more meetings with unusual wildlife, bush swimming holes, and the perfect camp-site. That bandicoot at Burra Korain Flat last year was so tame. And was that a Yellow Bellied Glider in the trees? This year, we plan fewer meetings with lawyer vines and to phase out minor navigational corrections by our intrepid leaders (which everyone survived in good spirits in previous years).

New suggestions on how best to protect wine and savouries planted at our proposed camp-sites are always welcome. Once again, we expect to see a variety of ecosystems not often experienced by day walkers and to come across some rarely seen reminders of past human activity in the Blue Mountains bush.

You can walk a long way in a few days but I never get tired of my own company or the company of my fellow walkers. *Don Morison.*

Six Day Activity September, 2001

The third annual six day activity will provide a chance for members with limited experience in long distance walking and overnight camping to participate for any number of days up to six. Emphasis will be on building skills and confidence in bushwalking, appreciating the Blue Mountains environment and having time to rest and socialize.

The proposed route is: day 1, walk at Newnes Ruins; to Glow Worm Tunnel; to Deane's Creek; to Deep Pass; to Bungleboori Creek; end at Clarence Zig Zag Railway.

At the moment the above is a tentative route. In the June newsletter we expect to have details of an invitation to participate in a major long distance walk and World Heritage celebration event inspired by prominent environmentalists including Ian Brown and Wyn Jones. Final date and route will depend on discussions with this group.

Warm up/reconnaissance days:

Sat June 16, Tue July 3, Sat July 28, Tue Aug 21.

Limited numbers. Leave your postal address and phone number with Don Morison 02.4759.2128, PO Box 170 Katoomba 2780.

Bushwalkers' Code

"Take nothing but happy memories and photographs - leave nothing but footprints."

A Bushwalkers' Code, produced by

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

May 19 (Sat) Management Meeting, 9 am, Mid Mountains Community Centre, Lawson.

May 25 (Fri) General Meeting, at the Conservation Hut, 7.30 pm. (See page 1).

QUOLL CLUB (Activities for 12 and under)

For more information contact Jessica on 4788.1200. For a copy of the Quoll Club Newsletter, contact the Membership Secretary (details on Page 2.)

BUSHCARE (Tools provided — bring morning tea and gloves.)

May 13 (Sun) Digger Cooper Reserve Bushcare Group. (2nd Sunday of every month) Meet 9 am at the Reserve (GWH, West of Sorenson Bridge). Contact Ross Coster 4759.1247.

May 11 (Fri) Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group. (2nd Friday of every month) Contact Karen on 4757.1929 for the meeting place. (following Friday if wet).

BUSHWALKS: *Carry drinking water (minimum 1 litre), bring morning tea, and lunch for day walks. Wear shoes with a good tread.*

Early Warning: A Walks Leaders Planning meeting will be held on 21st July, Saturday morning, 9.30-11.30 and your participation is requested to finalize following six months program and discuss any walks related topics. Please register with me if you can attend and nominate a discussion topic. Bill Graham 4759.1692

Monday Leisure Walkers: *Usually half day walks, easy/medium, leisurely pace.*

Note: **Bus Trips will be monthly from May. Program/Bookings 4759.1692.**

May 07 King's Cave to Paradise Pool. Meet at Bulls Camp, Woodford, 9 am. Easy, half day, BBQ after.

May 14 Sandy Hollow to Duckhole. Contact Allan Macaulay 4739.2767. Meet at Glenbrook Station carpark 9 am. Medium, half day, bring lunch.

May 21 Deep Pass, Newnes Plateau Bus Trip. Contact Alan Macaulay 4739.2767 to book your seat. Meet at Katoomba 8.30, or arrange pickup with Bill 4759.1692. Easy/medium, day bus trip, bring lunch.

May 28 Walls Ledge. Contact Norah Gaynor 4757.4058. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9 am. Easy, BBQ after at Blackheath park GWH.

June 04 Pine Forest to Two Lakes. Contact Jock McKechnie 4758.6346. Meet Gearains Hotel Katoomba 9 am. Easy, bring lunch.

June 18 Glow Worm Tunnel Bus Trip. Contact Bill Graham 4759.1692.

Bushwalks: Bushwalkers — You are requested to phone the leader before 8 pm the day before the walk to advise that you are walking. The leader may cancel the walk if fewer than 4 walkers register, or if other circumstances make conditions unsafe. These walks are of various grades, full or half day.

May 05 (Sat) Engineer's Track. Contact Judy Dervin 4787.1191. Meet Mt Vic Station 9.30 am. Medium, day, take lunch.

May 12 (Sat) Lawson's Long Alley. Contact Liz Stark 4754.4966. Meet 9.30 am, Mount Victoria Station. Medium, day, bring lunch.

May 20 (Sun) Mystery Walk with Olive Noble (4787.8342). Meet Mt Victoria Station 9 am. Medium, bring lunch.

May 26 (Sat) Leura Forest to Furber Steps. Contact Kees Putting 4759.1958. Meet Leura carpark, cnr GWH, 9.30 am. Medium, day, bring lunch.

June 02 (Sat) Pierce's Pass. Contact Bill Tocher 4758.8545. Meet Mt Victoria Station 9.30 am. Car pool to Bell's Line of Road start. Medium, hard climb out, day, bring lunch.

Welcome to Bill Tocher who is organising the weekend program for us. Please give him your cooperation on 4758.8545.

Walks are generally Easy to Medium Grade, unless otherwise noted. Easy: Mostly good surfaces, but some rough or steep sections. Suited to people of average fitness. **Medium:** Includes rough or steep sections, some of which may require clambering over natural obstacles. Discuss with leader if in doubt. **If this is your first walk,** or you are in any doubt, contact the leader or Bushwalks Convener Bill Graham 4759.1692.

the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs, is enclosed with this newsletter.

It is an excellent leaflet, full of good commonsense hints. If you are not a bushwalker, please pass it on to somebody who is.

Welcome to New Members

Desmond Stalgis, Winmalee
Gregory Holdaway and K Driscoll,
Blackheath

Ronald Eaton, Katoomba
Michael Hensen, Katoomba

Michael K Brown, Leura

Rob Mann, Valley Heights

Diamantia Austin-Smith, Woodford

Rosemary Bilton and Barrie Blears, Leura

Marina McShannon, Katoomba

Col Olson, Blaxland

Society's Web Site

Ross Coster has handed over management of the Society's web site to Marcel Hoevenaars. Marcel has done a complete re-write of the site.

Please have a look (<http://www.pnc.com.au/~bmc>) and send any ideas or constructive criticism to Marcel at email: info@bluegumdata.com.au

If you have access to email and want to be informed of conservation news and issues that come to the Society via email during the month, send your email address to the membership secretary (ereyswoud@hermes.net.au) and we will add you to the list.