

HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow's People"



Spring Plant Sale

Saturday 6 October, 9am to 1pm
Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls

Now is the time to plant natives. Volunteers from the Society's nursery will have a wide selection of native plants available, in tubes \$2 each, in 125mm pots \$4 each. Enquiries David Coleby, Nursery Manager 4784.1395.

Wombeyan Caves

At our general meeting on Friday 28 September, John Wylie of the Sydney Speleological Society will talk about speleology and the research which is being undertaken to identify and document the flora and fauna of the Wombeyan Karst.

The Sydney Speleological Society (SSS) was formed in 1954 to enable cavers to pursue their interest for "Wild Caving". In doing so they found fuller and richer experiences in the many scientific questions that arose from, not only underground activities, but above-ground trogging.

SSS has published, promoted and supported many Occasional Papers, Abstracts, Regional Bibliographies and Monthly Journals.

"Wombeyan Caves, New South Wales", published in 1982, gives a comprehensive description of the research undertaken of the flora and fauna of the Wombeyan Karst. Since this research was carried out there has been other unidentified flora and surface fauna noted. At present information is being compiled for an extension of this paper, to be published in conjunction with the Sydney Speleological Society's

September is Earth Alive! Biodiversity Month

Build a cat enclosure

and celebrate biodiversity month!

I was recently intrigued to see a friend's cat snoozing on a log in an enclosed wire netting pen adjoining her house. The cat had one eye open and a bird's eye view of the bush.

My friend has a bush backyard continuous with bushland in Springwood. Wallabies come in to graze on some grass and birds abound around a little track leading down a rock cliff face to a creek with flowing water. So as to protect the wildlife Chris made a choice to keep her cats contained at all times.

The cats have a splendid wire enclosure under one level of the house and sun deck. They have views of bushland and birds, fresh air, dirt to dig and poo in and space to walk around. They even have a tree log to climb and sharpen their claws. The log also gives the cats access to the house through a cat door in the floor of the deck and up into the interior of the house. What a good life for the cats - and wildlife can live close by as well. Brilliant!

The time has come for us all to keep our cats contained. Mary White, scientist and author, at a recent Society meeting told us that she has kept her cat indoors for many years now.

The Humane Society for animal welfare is now recommending that cats be kept contained indoors and/or in a fenced enclosure and have issued two leaflets giving advice on how to keep cats happy indoors. If you would like this information please contact our office.

50th Anniversary in 2004.

SSS holds regular field trips to the Wombeyan Karst, and is seeking expertise and knowledge from people who would like to go along and help with the identification of flora and fauna

at the Wombeyan Karst. If you are interested contact John and Glenda Wylie, Phone/fax 4787.7464.

The meeting on Friday 28 September, at the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls, starts at 7.30 pm. Visitors are very welcome.

Biodiversity Forum

"Keeping Warm and Conserving Habitat",
Friday 21 September,
7.30 pm, at the
Conservation Hut,
Wentworth Falls.

Making connections between keeping warm in winter and conserving the biodiversity of bushland and the western woodlands will be the theme of a forum hosted by the Conservation Society. Discovering ways of making a difference will help us to truly celebrate our

Australian landscape and biodiversity!
Didgeridoo music by Lester Ives and slides will open the Forum.

Andrew Cox will talk about Firewood Collection in Central and Western NSW and how it is affecting the biodiversity of ecosystems. He will also discuss the current move to regulate the firewood industry and timber alternatives for consumers. Andrew is well known as Executive Officer of National Parks Association.

Max Mosher will talk about the benefits of energy-efficient housing, concentrating on solar design to create comfort in winter and summer. "Reducing our reliance on fossil and other polluting fuels will also reduce our running costs," says Max. Max is also well known to many in the mountains and has over 20 years experience in the energy industry. He was formerly the Senior Information Officer and Manager of the NSW Energy Information Centre, and was the Supervising Officer of the Five Star Design Rating Scheme for Energy Efficient House Design in NSW.

An open discussion will follow after supper so do come along, bring a friend and participate in a lively and energizing discussion!



GUESS WHO'S TURNING 40?

Yes folks, the Conservation Society has passed its giddy youth and now reached that midlife crisis age! 40 years on and with a membership of 884 financial adult members at the last count, it's time to get serious — **about having a wonderful birthday bash to celebrate!** and where better to have it than the place where it all started!

Come along and meet some of those great pioneers who started it all in the old Hut and hear about how it came to grow to where it is today. There will be entertainment by Denis Kevans, and perhaps some didgeridoo music.

Here's your invitation. Space is limited to 80 people, so please get in early with your booking.

**The Blue Mountains Conservation Society
requests the pleasure of your company at its
40th Birthday Dinner Party at
The Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls
Saturday 13 October, 6 pm to 9 pm
Cost \$20 (byog)
RSVP Robin 4757.1354.**

CAN YOU HELP? We need somebody with experience in organising functions who would like to help with ideas or leg work to make the birthday celebrations a success. **OR** Do you have photographs of members and activities of the Society and can loan them for a display at our Birthday Party? **PLEASE contact Robin 4757.1354.**

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Sustainable Living

Educational Site Visit

The Society is planning to organise for interested members a visit of Pigface Point (East Hills), an educational alternative lifestyle site set up and maintained by Ted Trainer (senior lecturer at the University of NSW) and his students. The visit is planned for 13 October; transport will be provided if sufficient numbers of people are interested.

Some of the things that can be observed at Pigface Point are mills driven by river tides, a bee hive, mud bricks and earth built animal houses, pelton wheel, 4.5 metre water wheel, teaspoon turbine, home-made windmill on 17 metre tower, an \$8,000 house, home-made garden pots and columns, pedal-powered grinder, a 5 ha wetland, landscaped leisure-rich areas, models and displays showing the way ordinary neighbourhoods could be revised and greened to make them highly self-sufficient.

Anyone interested in visiting the site, please contact Paul Mannings (4754.4451) to book by 30 September.

Early History of the Society

The Start of The Hut Project

The Society got off the ground at the meeting on 30/11/61 when a committee was appointed and draft constitution adopted.

Then at the Committee Meeting on 13/4/62 John Buki raised the question of using the old disused kiosk at the Valley of the Waters as a centre for the Society's

Our Home & the Environment Toxicity

Probably the issue that has caused us the most 'headaches' is finding alternatives to toxic building products. For Greg this is close to home, having seen the effects on his father's health from working in an industry brimming with toxic fumes (he was an industrial chemist with a major paint factory). Toxicity of building products is an issue that is starting to bare the fruits of protest. Paint companies are trying to produce less toxic paints. Greenpeace ensured the Homebush Bay development avoided PVC, the most toxic plastic, as much as possible.

The toxicity of products relates to the off-gassing and leaching of chemicals into people and the environment. This may occur during the production, the use or disposal of the products. We wanted to avoid materials, which were toxic at any of these stages.

The main sources of potential toxicity which we were concerned about were paints and preservatives for timber, plastics, and formaldehyde.

Paints and preservatives: Synthetic paints and preservatives are made from petrochemicals (petroleum), so contain some very toxic chemicals, which pollute at the point of production and give off toxic gases during application and afterwards for some time. The toxic chemicals generally make up the solvent in the paint and fungicides. There are alternative products made from plant oils, which are less harmful, and are made from a sustainable source. They also apparently take less energy to manufacture and are biodegradable in landfill. We have used these alternatives (floor oils and paints from Livos) very successfully on the inside of our old house. Our biggest headache in the whole project has been finding an external weatherboard treatment that will handle the harsh Australian climate. We still haven't resolved this issue and are looking into the external options. The non-toxic options which we are aware of are Biopaints and Livos products, both made in Germany, and Organoil made in Byron Bay.

Plastics: The manufacture of all plastics is polluting as they are made from petrochemicals. PVC (Polyvinyl chloride) is the most polluting plastic at all stages of its life and the main one to avoid. During production it releases dioxins. These are persistent chemicals, which do not break down in the

activities. Objections were raised as to the amount of labour involved, and the Society's lack of finances, but John Buki persisted and "it was resolved that the Society apply to BMCC asking permission to start activities (labelling existing native plants, shrubs, trees, planting new native species) and to improve facilities at the Valley of Waters, Wentworth Falls, that the Society offer one shilling per annum nominal rent for the former tea-room building which could be used as a Natural History Museum and general information for the public".

The surroundings of the kiosk were neglected and untidy and overgrown. There were two old dingy E.C. toilets, and there were no steps on any of the close by paths.

The kiosk itself had been seriously vandalised and there had been much termite infestation. Most of the walls were unlined and any lining remaining

environment.

Throughout life PVC emits other toxic chemicals, which have been added to the plastic. It also cannot be recycled or disposed of easily.

PVC is used in pipes, electrical wires, flooring, curtain lining and furniture.

Greenpeace have more detailed information on plastics and the alternative products to PVC on their website, www.greenpeace.org/~toxics/pvcdatabase/index.html or in a booklet available from 9261 4666.

Where we have had to use plastics we have chosen polyethylene or polypropylene, which are simpler plastics than PVC, less toxic and can be recycled. Our water pipes, rainwater tanks and electrical wire casings will probably be made of these plastics.

Formaldehyde is found in glues, plywood, particleboard, synthetic paints, synthetic carpet, wallpaper and vinyl furniture. It is released from these products as a gas and can irritate lungs and the nervous system. It is particularly strong in new houses and offices, and is thought to be one of the causes of "Sick-building Syndrome", where people become sensitive to chemicals and feel sick indoors.

We are not using products with urea-formaldehyde, which gives off the most gases. Unfortunately we have had to use some containing phenol-formaldehyde. It seems impossible to build a house with no glues at all. We have some plywood bracing on our house and some beams in the roof above our two largest rooms, which contain glue. We could have chosen masonite for the bracing. It contains no glues, but it is made from native timber, which we want to avoid. Our kitchen will be made from second hand wood and our own milled wood, with no chipboard. We are still finding out if it is possible to lay natural lino (no plastics) without glue. If not we will stick to floorboards in the kitchen.

The next few issues will deal with energy use.

Cheers -Greg Wellham and Jessica Yuille.



was dilapidated. There was no ceiling, no storeroom, an old fuel stove filled the fireplace. The roof was leaking and much of roof iron corroded and loose.

It was a daunting situation, but there proved to be many hands and if "many hands" did not make "light work" they were to show certainly "Unity is strength". (extract from article by Fred Astle, Newsletter No 44, June 1981)

Hut News

Is there a member who is on email and would like to help with Hut News — writing the odd story, proof reading, etc. Contact Christine hutnews@pnc.com.au

Membership Enquiries
 Contact Elizabeth van Reyswoud
 Phone/Fax: 4759.2508 (a.h.)
 Email: ereyswoud@hermes.net.au
 Post: PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

Seasonal Calendar

Jim Smith's talk at our October general meeting will be on the seasonal changes during the year in the upper Blue Mountains (Wentworth Falls and further west).

The aim will be to find out how many seasons there are and what are the key natural events, climatic, appearance of flowers, bird movements, mammal breeding, insect activity etc, that define the seasons. The changing soundscape of the mountains will be covered with frog, bird calls and insect sounds that mark some months. Indicators can also be scents, changes in texture such as on tree bark or variations in light. The rhythms of human activity and feral species are also important.

If you have some special defining events of the year that you would like to share and have included in the Upper Blue Mountains nature calendar, please post them to Jim at 65 Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls 2782.

PEA FLOWERS

In the stillness of spring air
that is fresh as yogurt
after days of wild blending
of air tree face grit leaf
all surfaces shorn by a clean gale knife,
the pea flowers put their yellow and red
open throats to the sun

pit their small brightness
against the shine of gompholobium
-another pea-
resist in 70 different ways
the taxonomist with his glittering array of names.

They are common as dirt
stuck to this unpromising sandstone
and pouring themselves into the world,
we unstick ourselves from our lives
go walking amongst the rusty velvet native hop
white/pink/mauve orchids wedding bush,
peer into them with mickey mouse eyes
try to learn their names,
flower into happy wanderers.

Diana Levy, August 2001

Wild Spaces Film Festival

The Wild Spaces Film Festival program is now been distributed around the Blue Mountains, listing dozens of environmental and social justice films that will be screened at the Gearin Hotel in Katoomba on the weekend of 21-23 September.

The program includes local film maker Gary Caganoff's new documentary, *The Second Step*, on environmentalist and adventurer, Warren Macdonald; who, as an above-knee double leg amputee, spent 28 days journeying to and climbing the awesome Federation Peak in the heart of Tasmania's South West World Heritage wilderness. The film captures Warren's courage and sheer determination not to be put in a box. The images of the SW wilderness are stunning. The film is due to be screened on the ABC in early 2002 but you can catch the world premier screening of it right here in Katoomba.

In it's sixth year Wild Spaces, Australia's only environmental and social justice film festival, is screening in 21 venues across the nation with issues this year ranging from reconciliation to globalisation, the Otway's forest clearing to the Yangtze Dam, Inuit observations of climate change to uranium mining in Kakadu, and a community garden's project in the US to the horrific effects of DDT. Many entertaining shorts and animations will also be screened.

Presented by Friends of the Earth Australia, and hosted in the

The Amphitheatre

Swirling, enveloping mist,
cocooned in an all
encompassing shroud
birds -

swooping, darting, singing.
Where is the amphitheatre?

It matters not.

Moistened scribbly barks
and banksias

shadowy figures
moving through the heathland.

For a few moments
there is silence.

Would that it always
be like this!

Time to leave -
why!

Dozens of white naped honeyeaters
swoop low

as if pleading with us
to stay and join them.

Swirling, enveloping,
magic mist

who needs the
amphitheatre.

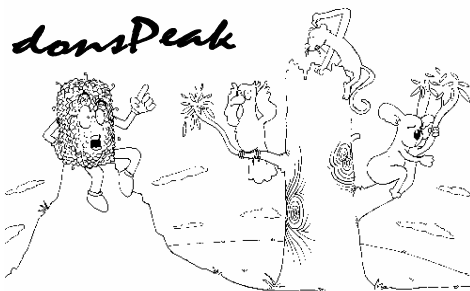
Ron Hyslop, August 2001.

Blue Mountains by The BM Greens, the Wild Spaces Film Festival fills an important gap in the dissemination of environmental and social justice oriented information to the wider community.

Last year this unique Australian event was attended by over 10,000 people nationwide. The festival has been described by Australian Greens Senator Bob Brown as "a film festival with purpose, direction and passion to boot. Wild Spaces reaches far and wide with the inspiration and courage to motivate many Australians"

For a program or more information please call 4782 6883. Session details can be found on the website: www.wildspaces.wild.net.au

downPeak



Uncrossing "WIRES"

It is the NSW Head Office of WIRES (Wildlife Rescue) that recently experienced financial pressures, not the Blue Mountains branch as implied in some media stories. The WIRES Head Office in an old school portable at Forestville performs invaluable work co-ordinating the activities of volunteer rescuers around the state. In spite of its worthwhile input to licensing, training, education, administration and publicity for those who cope with our sick and injured wildlife, it only covers ten percent of its recurrent funding

requirements from State and Federal contributions. If you would like to contribute to the work of WIRES Head Office, send a donation to WIRES, PO Box 260, Forestville 2087.

See Ya Later, 'Dministrator'

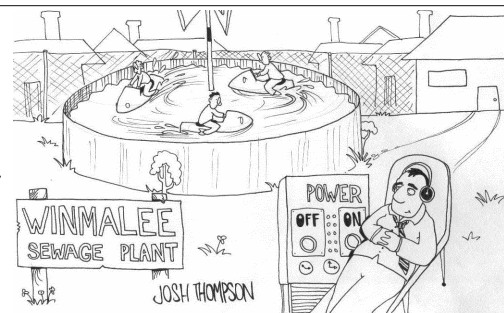
Whenever the sprawl of development into the bush is slowed down by Council (or even looks remotely like being slowed down), somebody mutters that Council could soon be replaced by a State Government-appointed Administrator.

Recently, some of the Major Party councillors on Blue Mountains City Council have been involved in the head-shaking and tut-tutting about 'This kind of behaviour could land us with an administrator!'

Be encouraged when you hear shrieks of 'Administrator! Administrator!' It's a sure sign that pro-conservation councillors are scrutinising development effectively.

At Last ... A Use For Jet Skiers!

Three cheers for Premier Bob Carr.



He has banned the less than melodic personal water craft (Jet Ski) from Sydney Harbour as of October 1. Some fears have been expressed that the craft might now proliferate on other waterways (including the Nepean River). Fortunately, a new role can be found for incurable jet-skiers. This new role will save electric power at an installation that serves nearly every home in the Central and Upper Blue Mountains!

Don Morison.

Milk Cartons Still Needed

Thank you to everyone who has donated one litre milk cartons for the Capertee Valley Regent Honeyeater Recovery Project. These are still needed for growing the all-important trees and shrubs to be planted in the valley.

Empty one litre cartons can be delivered to me at 21 Wells Street, Katoomba.

I have placed a bin near the front door for the cartons to be dropped into. Please don't leave them on the doorstep.

Cartons with the bottom cut off are unfortunately no good to us, but you can open them at the top, and please wash them (sometimes they sit in my shed for a while before being packed into a car and taken to the nurseryman at Rylstone, and I'm sure you can imagine the result when they haven't been washed!). It is also preferred that they are not folded, however we understand that some people need to fold them for storage reasons.

Carol Proberts.

Welcome to New Members

Marie Challinor, Hazelbrook
Judith West, Hazelbrook
Kay Price, Wentworth Falls
Michelle Kennedy, Leura
Puri Tonge, Woodford
Lisa Haskew, Katoomba
Helen Pitcher, Springwood
Warren Palmer, Leonay
Russell & Suzanne Bridges, Springwood
Rita Sosic & Malcolm Stuart, Clarence
Penny Rossiter, Hazelbrook
Margaret and Lowan Turton, Went. Falls
Peter McNiece, Warrimoo
Nancy Brown, Katoomba
June Drake, Linden
The Kennedy Family, Faulconbridge
Peggy Goldsmith, Woodford
James Tulip, Woodford
Frances Carter, Lithgow
Bede & Jillian Harrington, Springwood
Jan Carnes, Woodford
Robin Ramsay, Leura
William Marrow, Woodford
Robert Stingwell, Katoomba
Liz Smith, Lawson
Terry & Kris Clarke, Epping
Wal Egan, Katoomba
Maria Bakas-Booker, Warrimoo
Mary Cater, Medlow Bath
John Sheehy, Lawson
Jeanine Redfern, Lawson
J LaFrance, Winmalee
Mary Hoare, Winmalee

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. Suited to people of better than average fitness, but discuss with the contact if in doubt. **Hard:** We occasionally arrange a walk considered most suited to experienced and very fit walkers but it is conducted at a moderate pace. Always discuss with the contact if the walk you would like to do is Medium/hard or Hard, before attending. **If this is your first walk,** or you are in any doubt, discuss with the contact or Bushwalks Convener Bill Graham 4759.1692.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- Sept 1-30** Earth Alive! Biodiversity Month
Sept 21 (Fri) Biodiversity Forum, "Keeping Warm and Conserving Habitat", 7.30 pm at the Conservation Hut. (See Page 1.)
Sept 22 (Sat) Management Meeting, 9 am, Mid Mountains Community Centre, Lawson.
Sept 28 (Fri) General Meeting, at the Conservation Hut, 7.30 pm. (See page 1).
Oct 6 (Sat) Spring Plant Sale. 9 am to 1 pm, outside the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls. (See page 1.)
Oct 13 (Sat) 40th Birthday Dinner Party, at The Hut. (See Page 1)
QUOLL CLUB (Activities for 12 and under - contact Jessica 4788.1200))
BUSHCARE (Tools provided — bring morning tea and gloves.)
Sept 9 (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.
Sept 14 (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.
Monday Leisure Walks: Usually half day walks, easy/medium, leisurely pace. **Sept 10** Bus Trip to Wodi Wodi Track at Stanwell Park. Contact Anna Marie 4759.2353. Leaves Springwood Depot to east 8.30. Easy day trip. BBQ. Bookings essential. Call Bill 4759.1692 for pickup arrangements.
Sept 17 Gooch's Crater. Contact Allan 4739.2767. Meet Mount Victoria Station 9am. Medium. BBQ after.
Sept 24 Florabella Pass, Warrimoo to Blaxland. Contact Kees 4759.1958. Meet Warrimoo Station 9 am. Medium. BBQ after.
Oct 01 Asgard Swamp and Old Mine. Contact Allan 4739.2767. Meet Mt Vic Station 9 am. Easy. BBQ after.
Oct 08 Nellies Glen and Bonnie Doon. Contact Terry. Meet Katoomba Station (highway side) 9 am. Medium. BBQ.
Oct 15 Hornes Point and Cox's Cave. Contact Jock 4758.6346. Meet Mt Vic Station 9 am. Medium. BBQ.
"Getting to Know the Blue Mountains Walks" on Wednesdays is a continuation of the Wednesday Pleasure Walks, with a total of 22 leisure walks in all the towns of the mountains. (Half day walks, easy to medium.)
Sept 12 Valley of the Waters and Nature Trail. Contact Bill 4759.1692. Meet Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls 9.30. Easy/medium, half day. Coffee or lunch at The Hut.
Sept 19 South Lawson Waterfalls. Contact Jock 4758.6346. Meet War Memorial, Honour Avenue, Lawson, 9.30 am. Easy. BBQ after.
Sept 26 Mount Piddington tracks. Contact Bill 4759.1692. Meet Mt Vic Station 9.30 am. Easy. BBQ after.
Oct 03 Water board track from QVH. Contact Jock 4758.6346. Meet Wentworth Falls Station 9.30 am. Easy. BBQ after.
Oct 10 Braeside Track to Govett's Leap. Contact Jock 4758.6346. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.30 am. Easy. BBQ.
Weekend Bushwalks: Bushwalkers are requested to phone the contact before 8 pm the day before the walk. The walk may be cancelled if fewer than 4 walkers register, or if other circumstances make conditions unsafe. These walks are of various grades, full or half day.
Sept 08 Mount Twiss. Meet Linden Station carpark, south side, 9.30. Contact Liz 4754.4966. Medium, day, bring lunch.
Sept 15 Prince Henry Walk. Meet at Katoomba Station, Gearins Hotel 9.30 am. Walk to Fork & View, medium, exceptional views. Bring lunch. Contact Mary/Terry 4787.6918.
Sept 22 Blue Gum Forest from Perry's Lookdown, to meet with Don's group. (Sat) Hard, very steep. Contact Mary/Terry 4787.6918.
(This is part of the Songlines Walks project being co-ordinated by the Blue Gum Pathways group, a series of wilderness walks, culminating on this day with the gathering in the Forest. To join in and represent the the Society on other walks in the project, such as the walk from Mittagong, members are asked to contact Bronwen Gower on 4782.9209.)
Sept 30 Knapsack Bridge. Meet Glenbrook Station 9.30 am. Medium, day, bring lunch. Contact Elizabeth 4754.4966 or Judy 4787.1191. Not suitable for first time walkers.
Oct 06 Gooch's Crater. Meet Mt Vic Station 9.30 am. Medium. Object is to give a view of proposed sand mine locality. Day, bring lunch. Contact Bill 4758.8545.
Oct 13 Long Swamp, Lawson. Contact Elizabeth 4754.4966. Meet Lawson Bowling Club carpark 9.30. Easy. Bring lunch.
Thursday Bushwalks: The next series of Thursday morning Interpretive Bushwalks will commence on 18 October. Contact Christine 4787.7246 for more information.