

# HUT NEWS

*"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow's People"*



## Notice of Annual General Meeting

At our Annual General Meeting on Friday 28 March, members will elect a management committee to represent the Society for the next 12 months. All positions will fall vacant. In the February newsletter, members received a list of executive positions with details of what is required of office bearers. Contact one of this year's office bearers if you want to find out more about any of the positions or how to be nominated.

Other business at the meeting will be to receive reports from office bearers, receive the annual accounts, and appoint an auditor.

There has been a suggestion from a member that the Society's slogan "Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow's People" should be changed to "Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow" to acknowledge that more than humans benefit from nature conservation. This will be put to members for a vote at the meeting.

The meeting will be held at the Conservation Hut on Friday 28 March 2003, at 7.30 pm. Immediately following the completion of business we will proceed with our ordinary General Meeting. Members are encouraged to come along to have a say in the running of the Society and enjoy an entertaining and

informative general meeting and talk from our guest speaker Amanda Twomey.

## Threatened Species of the Hawkesbury Area

At our General Meeting on Friday 28 March which immediately follows the Annual General Meeting, guest speaker Amanda Twomey will talk about Threatened animal species in and around the Hawkesbury area.

A veterinary nurse at Wonderland's Australian Wildlife Park, Amanda is also a Wildlife Information Rescue and Education Service (WIRES) volunteer and runs courses for other WIRES volunteers. At present she is preparing an Echidna Handling course for 100 people.

Amanda will talk about mammals, reptiles and birds, why they have become Threatened Species and what status they are at present, e.g. vulnerable, endangered, critical or extinct.

Sometimes these animals come into care in WIRES and their numbers can give some indication of their status. Koalas, for instance, are more often coming into care and are being observed in larger numbers in the Hawkesbury area than they were 10 years ago.

It will be an interesting talk with some good slides and some recorded animal calls we can hear to help us recognise the sounds they make.

The meeting will be held at the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls, on Friday 28 March, immediately following the Annual General Meeting which starts at 7.30 pm. Visitors are very welcome.

## Autumn Plant Sale

The Society's Nursery will hold its autumn native plant sale on Saturday 12 April 2003, 9am to 1 pm, outside the Conservation Hut at the end of Fletcher Street in Wentworth Falls.

All our plants are hardy natives, and will benefit from autumn planting. Tubes are \$3 each (or 4 for \$10); supertubes are \$5 each. Enquiries to David Coleby, Nursery Manager, 4784.1395.

## Draft NVMO

Blue Mountains City Council has placed a revised draft Native Vegetation Management Order (NVMO) on public exhibition until 8 May 2003. It can be viewed at all BMCC libraries and is available from BMCC business offices in Katoomba and Springwood.

You can help the Society prepare its submission. Read the article on page 2, get a copy of the draft, go to a meeting.

The Society is preparing an information brochure. A copy will be enclosed with the April newsletter.

## NSW State Election: Key Environmental Issues for the Blue Mountains

The State Election is on 22 March. Below is a summary of what the Society considers to be the five priority environmental issues in the Blue Mountains relevant to State Government responsibilities. This summary will be sent to all candidates. We urge you to ask the candidates what they intend to do about these matters.

### Environmentally sensitive lands zoned inappropriately for development, including fire prone lands.

Land acquisition funds need to be available to councils, including Blue Mountains City Council, to enable them to zone land according to its biophysical constraints rather than the size of its budget for land acquisition. This is particularly a problem in the Blue Mountains where there is a limited population in an environmentally sensitive area

There needs to be a formula developed for the funding of Local Government to undertake environmental management responsibilities which recognises both the environmental sensitivity of the areas as well as the

capacity of the population to provide resources; this should also recognise the length of bushland/urban interface.

### Failure to enforce Environmental Legislation.

In NSW there is a general lack of enforcement of all NSW environmental legislation and policies. Councils do not always faithfully implement the environmental protections available through their Local Environment Plans.

There is a need to establish an Environmental Protectors Office (or parliamentary audit function) with powers to ensure compliance with planning instruments and state legislation and policies. The courts are not adequate to deal with the systemic problems of councils or government agencies. The court is not accessible to communities.

### Lack of protection for listed threatened species or communities

Effective protection is not occurring because many Recovery Plans are not prescriptive. These need to be rewritten/written to have prescriptive actions which will provide protection. There needs to be a change to the

Threatened Species Conservation Act to remove the virtual veto powers of agencies who just want to continue 'business as usual'.

### Weed control, including bushfire remediation. Continued sale and dispersal of weeds.

There needs to be an expansion of the noxious weeds list and resources to deal with this. Environmental weeds should be given higher priority. Conservation interests should have higher representation on the NSW noxious weeds committee. The committee should be jointly responsible to the Minister for the Environment as well as the Minister for Agriculture. This mechanism should be more effective to stop the sale and dispersal of environmental weeds.

### Blue Mountains National Parks inholdings.

Funding to NPWS to acquire inholdings and adequate resources to undertake immediate management tasks.

"Hut News", the newsletter of  
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## Blue Mountains Public Lands Rationalisation Plan

The Society has drafted a final submission on the Stage 1 Report for Blue Mountains Public Lands Rationalisation Project. Thanks to all members who made comments on the initial draft and these have been taken into account in the final submission.

In summary, the submission contains agreement in principle with the report and supports the additions to the NP and amalgamation of east and west escarpments to the Regional Parks. Recommendations to NPWS include:

- Development of strategic plans for escarpments to identify suitable areas for recreational activities and these to include proper management plans.
- Provide significant recurrent funding for management of additions.
- Develop its own volunteer/bushcare program.

Additional lands be included: Colliery land on Darling Causeway; South Katoomba and Wentworth Falls decommissioned sewerage treatment plants; Medlow Bath airfield.

## Draft Native Vegetation Management Order

It is shaping up to be a big year for conservation planning in the Blue Mountains! Soon after the public exhibition of draft LEP2002, Blue Mountains City Council has just placed a revised draft Native Vegetation Management Order (NVMO) on public exhibition until 8 May 2003. It can be viewed at all BMCC libraries and is available from BMCC business offices in Katoomba and Springwood.

### Why do we need at NVMO?

At the present time, Council regulates vegetation removal through the Development Consent process and through its Tree Preservation Order (TPO).

However the individual Local Environment Plans generally do not provide control over removal of significant vegetation outside the Development Consent process unless the land is zoned Environment Protection. There are many sites that contain sensitive vegetation communities that are not afforded that protection. Whilst legal opinion sees "clearing" of any bushland as an activity that requires development consent, Council does not. There is a legitimate difficulty in that there are no clear definitions about what constitutes clearing when it is only small scale. A Vegetation Management Order is a means of providing that protection.

### What will the NVMO do?

The draft Native Vegetation Management Order sets policies and procedures for managing all native vegetation not covered by environmental protection zones, significant vegetation communities and similar provisions of other planning instruments. Also, it sets out a series of conditions, that if met, mean that no permit is required to alter unprotected native vegetation within certain guidelines.

### What still needs to be addressed?

BMCC has revised an earlier draft VMO and has incorporated many matters raised by BMCS. However, our Land Use Sub-committee has identified a few points that need to be addressed. First, the draft NVMO provides a definition of

"pruning" that is open to too wide an interpretation and therefore potential abuse. "Pruning" can be carried out in unprotected vegetation without a permit.

Second, it proposes that no permit is required to remove understorey in Asset Protection Zones. However, there is no precise definition of an acceptable upper limit to permissible clearing of the understorey in an APZ. It appears possible that clearing to bare earth would be allowed under the wording of the draft NVMO!

Third, the protection of watercourses and riparian vegetation that isn't covered by environmental protection zones and the like in existing planning instruments seems to be very loose in the draft NVMO.

Finally, the area that can be cleared without a permit can be up to 500 m<sup>2</sup> as long as it is within 35 m of the house. These figures need careful consideration because they critically determine the scale of any impacts.

### How can you help?

It is very important that the final NVMO is well-worded, and that landholders have easy access to clear and appropriate information. Creating loopholes through poor wording or leaving landholders without support and guidelines on acceptable practices could result in significant and avoidable damage to native vegetation, soil erosion, and impact on mountain streams. Please help us develop a Society response by sending your thoughts to Peter Wilson (4754 3038, email: [peterbat@tpg.com.au](mailto:peterbat@tpg.com.au)) who is coordinating Land Use Subcommittee's work on this issue. The Society is preparing a brochure for distribution in the community to set out the important issues.

### Public meetings

BMCC has announced two public meetings to be held on 19 March in Katoomba Civic Centre, and 9 April in Blaxland Civic Centre. Please come along have your say.

### WHERE ARE THEY?

Chirping, chirping away  
Fluttering wings—  
Splashes of rufous—buff  
And Gunmetal;  
Darting, swooping and  
Shallow dives —  
Black and white faces,  
Spiky beard and yellow wing.  
No one to hassle  
Or chase them.  
New Holland and Eastern Spinebills  
Sharing and enjoying the nectar—  
Where are the Noisy Miners?  
Yellow Thornbills join in,  
Chirpy, non-aggressive  
And never still—

So beautiful without  
Those Noisy Miners!

**Ron Hyslop**  
Springwood, February 2003

## Great Grose Gorse Walk

Sat 15 March to Sun 30 March, 2003

### We need your help!

Gorse, Broom, blackberry busting activities, for the half day, day, or overnight, beautiful scenery and morning tea guaranteed!

### ALL MOST WELCOME!

No experience necessary. Bring yourselves and/or a group. Please ring 4787 8877 or 4787 3112 for more information and to register.

National Parks and Wildlife Service  
Blackheath

## Some Mythology and Folklore of the Gundungurra Tribe

One hundred years ago the anthropologist Robert Hamilton Mathews wrote a booklet collecting together Aboriginal legends he had obtained from the Gundungurra people of the Burratorang Valley. It was never published, but the manuscript has been rediscovered. Den Fenella Press is now producing the booklet as Mathews originally intended, with a new introduction and explanatory notes by Jim Smith.

The legends contain much of interest on the behaviour and natural history of the birds and animals of Gundungurra territory. Birds discussed in the legends include the Raven, Azure Kingfisher, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Glossy Black Cockatoo, White-winged Chough, Peewee, Black Duck, Bronze-wing Pidgeon, Brown Honeyeater, Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo, Magpie, Rufous Songlark, Sulphur-crested White Cockatoo, Owllet Nightjar. The origin of the Devil's Coach House at Jenolan Caves and other geographical features is explained. Many of these stories explain the origin of the laws and customs of the Gundungurra. Most dreamtime stories translated and retold by white people have been heavily edited and censored to remove descriptions of graphic violence and sexual material. However some of the stories presented by Mathews are definitely not suitable for children. The collection also includes the only published Gundungurra song and many Gundungurra words not previously recorded. Only about 150 copies of this first limited edition will be printed.

To order a copy send \$15 (includes GST and delivery) by the end of March 2003 to Jim Smith, 65 Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls 2782. Make cheques and money orders payable to Jim Smith. Books will be delivered in April 2003.

## How Safe is Your Roadside Vegetation?

Recently I was asked to attend a street meeting one Saturday morning. It appeared that Council had some money and decided to tar our small local road. We were shown plans but these are very hard to imagine. So it was with great shock that the following week we saw pink tags hanging on plants SIX metres from the present road.

Katey came from Wildplant Rescue and pointed out that some of the old man Banksias are about 100 years old. The embankment they wanted to cut into was hard, densely vegetated, held water and was not eroding. Why then did they want to cut so far back?

There is some story about making it a road for tourist coaches - Why?

There are many issues about: lack of resident consultation about their knowledge and experience of driving the road everyday; lack of understanding that we use our road for walking, talking, cycling, playing and that cars are not given first importance; lack of respect

## Attracting Native Birds to our Gardens

At our January general meeting Carol Proberts spoke about the effects of drought on our birds and mentioned what we can do in our gardens to help birds through these tough times. Looking out the window today at the steady gentle rain and the bush shrouded in a soft white cloud we may not be overly optimistic in thinking that the worst of the long dry period is over. But it is always rewarding to have the native birds visiting our gardens. It is easy to attract the larger or more aggressive birds by offering food, but these birds will drive away the small birds.

Carol said that rather than feed native birds it is "far better to create a rich habitat and natural food supply in the garden. The best way to do this is to grow a wide variety of plants (preferably plants native to the local area) and provide **structural diversity** — a variety of plant-types including trees, dense shrubs, ground covers, native grasses, areas of leaf litter, water and perhaps even rocks. By doing this we are helping the species which are most in need of help, such as small birds and insectivores, rather than just the large or aggressive species which are already becoming overly abundant to the detriment of ecological balance and diversity."

Go and have a look at a patch of natural bushland. The bush garden has all the things that Carol mentions scattered around—mature trees, young trees, shrubs of all different heights and density, ground covers, rocks, logs, leaf

litter. There will be ants and spiders and all sorts of leaf-eating and predatory insects. The bush garden is alive and dynamic. There is food and shelter for a great variety of small birds and other native animals.

Carol talked about providing water for native birds to help them during drought and after bushfire. This is another way to attract birds to the garden. "Birds always appreciate fresh water in the garden. Try and provide birdbaths of various depths to cater for small as well as large birds. Since I added a very shallow (1-2cm) birdbath to my garden I have found many more small birds visit regularly to drink and bathe, including thornbills, shrewwrens, finches and spinebills. Because it's so shallow I need to constantly refill it, but a couple of minutes work each day is nothing compared to the rewards and value to wildlife. Many honeyeaters prefer water a bit deeper as they like to dive in and out in one agile maneuver from a nearby branch—great entertainment!", Carol said

"Branches or rocks gently sloping into the water give easier access (I find that adding rocks to any birdbath automatically seems to increase its popularity) and birds generally prefer a raised birdbath for the increased protection from predators. A dead branch near the water gives birds an easy approach route and somewhere to preen after bathing. And make sure you keep the water clean."

for the roadside vegetation in prime condition; lack of integrated planning with the rest of the road and with the RTA; lack of design sympathetic to a small, local residents' road with no tourist or other values.

I took up a petition saying we needed a redesign and better consultation with all users. Nearly every resident signed it.

Last Saturday morning we had a short meeting' again. The engineers had been back to the drawing board. We will save about half our road character and species. However, we can expect, with a very smooth surface and a wider road, that we will have more traffic, faster cars, and great loss of landscape and leisure amenity.

Recently Council has been working on several roads, e.g. beside the GWH from Wentworth Falls to Bullaburra. Fast and clear resident action can save a great loss of valuable species, landscape quality, and provide safer roads. However, most desirable would be a workshop before design to see what residents know and want in roads and what engineers can do. *Rowe Morrow, 2.02.03*

## ADI Site Campaign

The ADI Site at St Marys is the largest, most diverse and best remaining area of Western Sydney woodland, protected behind security fences for the last 60 years. It has no less than four rare woodland communities, including the nationally endangered Cumberland Plain

Woodland.

The 1535 hectare former munitions site has been targeted for development for decades, and in 1994 the Federal Government entered into a joint venture agreement with Lend Lease, Australia's larger developer.

The community wants to save the site as a new Regional Park and Nature Reserve. The ADI Residents campaigners are standing in the seats of Londonderry, Mulgoa, Penrith and Mt Druit in the coming State Election.

If you want to find out more about the ADI site and its history, visit [www.savetheadiseite.bmt.com.au](http://www.savetheadiseite.bmt.com.au). If you want to help call Noel Plumb 8800 8303 or Barbie Bates 4739 6840, or email [nplumb@idx.com.au](mailto:nplumb@idx.com.au)

## Peace, War and the Conservation Society

BMCS Management Committee has discussed the issue of war on Iraq at considerable length. Like many community organisations, we are concerned. While some members may be taking action at a personal level, the management committee decided that it was outside our realm to embark on any action on behalf of the Society as a whole and to do so would be to deflect our focus from all the local environmental issues that we must deal with.

## The Wedgetailed Eagle

Master of the thermals rising,  
Effort and display despising,  
Prince of crags, by rock face gliding,  
Lord of all the bushland places  
Ruler of less noble races,  
Eyes that see, and brain that traces,  
All who enter his domain.

Master of the ridge and valleys  
Wings the air as forth he sallies,  
Prince and keeper of life's tallies,  
Hard of eye, proud, uncaring,  
Sharp of talon, lordly bearing,  
Life and death are his for sharing,  
With all who enter his domain.

Ken Dean, "Broken Waratahs".

## The Burning Issue:

### Sydney would choke of smoke throughout winter, warn experts

(James Woodford, Sydney Morning Herald)

Sydney risks being shrouded in smoke throughout winter if intensive hazard reduction burning is undertaken in the ring of forest surrounding the city, experts have warned.

The Premier, Bob Carr, was confronted at Queanbeyan at the weekend by National Party MP Peter Webb, demanding more hazard reduction burning.

But if hazard reduction burns were stepped up it would result in public health and environmental problems, according to the Environment Protection Authority and ecologists. Also, the level of burning demanded by those opposed to national parks would require an army of firefighters and would mean that every clear, cold day—the worst times for pollution—would lead to a dense smoke haze descending on the city.

No matter how much controlled burning is undertaken, a firestorm will not be stopped by the removal of leaf litter on a forest floor. The only way to stop such a conflagration would be to strip the landscape bare of trees.

Ecologists such as John Benson, from the Royal Botanic Gardens, warn that, while the Australian environment has adapted to burning, fire is disastrous if it hits some plant and animal communities too often. Areas such as the Blue Mountains and the alpine regions would have their plant and animal biodiversity drastically reduced if huge areas were burnt every couple of years.

Logistically, however, such extensive hazard reduction burning would be almost impossible to organise, NSW fire authorities say.

"What happened in Canberra was a freak occurrence," says Mr Benson. "A lot of areas that are burning haven't been burnt since 1939, when two million hectares went up in the Victorian and NSW alpine and sub-alpine areas."

**Membership Enquiries**  
Contact Elizabeth van Reyswoud  
Phone 4757.2694  
Email: ereyswoud@hermes.net.au  
Post: PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Mch 22 (Sat) Management Meeting**, 9am, Mid Mtns Community Centre, Lawson.

**Mch 28 (Fri) Annual General Meeting at the Conservation Hut**, 7.30 pm, guest speaker Amanda Twomey, "Threatened Species of the Hawkesbury Area". (See page 1)

**Mch 15 to 30 Great Grose Gorse Walk**. See Page 2 for details.

**Apl 12 (Sat) Native Plant Sale at the Conservation Hut**. (See page 1)

**QUOLL CLUB** (Activities for 12 and under) ☎ Jessica 4757.3686 for more info.

**Mch 23 (Sun) Bush Treasure Hunt in Central Park, Wentworth Falls**. Meet at 10am near the corner of Backhouse and Falls Road, Wentworth Falls. Bring morning tea and water and a small bag to collect treasure items.

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

**Mch 08 (Sat) Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group**. (9 am, 2nd Saturday of every month) Tools provided. Bring morning tea, gloves and drinking water. Contact Karen on 4757.1929 for the meeting place.

### BUSHWALKS:

**Pre-School Walks, for parent/grandparent/carer with children under 6 years.**

Short, easy walks, under 1 hour, 1st Wednesday of every month, starting at 10.30am. Bring a snack and a drink. Contact Megan 4782.5898 or Cathy 4759.3669 for more information or if the weather is doubtful.

**Mch 05 Part of Darwin's Walk**. Meet at the play equipment in Wilson Park (cnr Falls Road), Wentworth Falls.

**Apl 02 Red Gum Park**. Meet end of De Quency Road (off Noble St) Bullaburra.

**May 07 Mabel Falls**. Meet end of Woodbury Street, Woodford.

**Monday Leisure Walks:** Usually half day walk unless noted, leisurely pace.

Walks are all graded Medium and suit walkers of average fitness. Bring lunch.

**Mch 10 Paradise Pool**. Meet 9am Hazelbrook shopping centre lower carpark.

☎ Jock 4758.6346. Carpool to start of walk in Weroona Ave.

**Mch 17 Murphy's Glen to Bedford Creek**. Meet 9am at Bull's Camp for drive to Murphy's Glen. ☎ Allan 4739.2767. BBQ lunch.

**Mch 24 Terrace Falls**. Meet 9am Hazelbrook commuter carpark.

☎ Kees 4759.1958.

**Mch 31 Magdala Gully to Perch Ponds**. Meet 9am at town carpark behind Royal Hotel, Springwood. ☎ Allan 4739.2767.

**Apl 06 Braeside Walk**. Meet 9am Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre.

☎ Bill 4759.1692. BBQ lunch at Duck Pond.

### Easy Walks on Thursdays:

These walks are conducted at a slow pace to suit the walkers on the day and are usually 2-3 hours. Lunch follows for those so inclined. Contact Marie 4787.1257 for any enquiries about the program, starting times and transport issues.

**Mar 13 Pope's Glen**. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 10.00am. Car shuffle to start at Govett's Leap end. Gradual incline back up to Blackheath Park.

**Mar 20 Radiata Plateau**. Meet at Katoomba Station (Gearins Hotel) 10.00am. Easy grade walk on firetrail.

**Mar 27 Darwin's Walk**. Meet Wentworth Falls Station carpark 10.00am. Car shuffle to start at Falls Road end. Gradual incline back up to Wilson Park. Walk can be done in part to suit ability.

**Apr 3 Point Pilcher Lookouts**. Meet Medlow Bath Station on east side 10.00am. Drive to start of tracks at end of Point Pilcher Road.

**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. 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 Tocher 4758.8545.**

**Mch 08 (Sat) Pope's Glen and Pulpit Rock**. Meet Blackheath commuter carpark 8.20am. ☎ Ron 4757.1526. Medium. Bring lunch and water. Finish 3.30—4.30 pm. Alternative available if closed.

**Mch 15 (Sat) Bull's Camp Tracks**. Meet Woodford Railway Station (southern side) 9.01 am. Medium. Bring lunch and water. ☎ Jim 4758.6009.

**Mch 22 (Sat) Golden Stairs to Ruined Castle**. Meet Katoomba Rail Station car park at Gearins Hotel 8.30 am. ☎ Ron 4757.1526. Medium/hard, climb out in shade. Bring lunch and extra water. Finish 3.30 to 4 pm.

**Mch 30 (Sun) Otford, north of Stanwell Park**. 6.07am train from Mt Victoria to Central then 8.44 am train to Otford. Meet Charles at Otford Station. Walk to beach for lunch then medium grade uphill to station and home. ☎ Charles 9558.3746. Meet in second carriage. Bring lunch and water.

**Apl 05 (Sat) Hassan's Walls, Lithgow**. Meet Lithgow Rail Station 8.45 am. ☎ Bill 4758.8545. Uphill walk. Bring lunch and water. Medium/hard.