

# HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"



## Blue Mountains World Heritage Forever!



The proposed 27 million tonne sand quarry at Newnes Junction will test whether World Heritage listing has strengthened environment protection in the Blue Mountains.

A previous proposal for a sand and clay quarry on the site was refused in 1996 because of 'its degrading effect and possible damage to the National Park and the water quality of the Wollangambe River'. The national park is now World Heritage listed and the scale of the environmental impacts arising from the development is no less than before, as evidenced by the developer's offer to buy up the entire Newnes Junction village that adjoins the site. If approved, the Wollangambe River could become known locally as 'red creek,' with sediment pollution issuing from the quarry.

Surely, the very last place to establish a huge sand mine is next to the World Heritage listed Blue Mountains National Park. The 50 metre buffer proposed to separate the quarry from the National

Park is too small. If approved the quarry would be a visually intrusive, polluting, noisy, dusty blight on the wild Wollangambe River Valley.

The site is not just any bit of bushland; it has two high conservation value Newnes Plateau Shrub Swamps. These plant communities have been nominated for listing as either an endangered or vulnerable plant community under the Federal Government's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1999. In 2000, the environment consultant for the sand quarry recognised the high conservation value of these kinds of swamps and proposed protection zones for all the swamps located within the nearby Clarence Colliery lease extension proposal.

P & J Smith Ecological Consultants, in an independent botanical investigation, have confirmed the presence of these swamps on the quarry site, and found 123 plant species on the site—87 species more than listed in the environmental impact statement. Haydn Washington and other researchers from the Colo Committee have discovered the rare plant *Acacia asparagoides* on site, as well as a new species of Greenhood orchid (*Pterostylis sp. nova*).

Approval of this proposal would undermine the protection purpose of World Heritage listing. There is currently no law against proposing a major intrusive development in high conservation value bushland next to the World Heritage area. To remedy this situation, the World Heritage Area needs a buffer zone that provides adequate protection from inappropriate development.

Write a letter to Premier Carr (Parliament House, Sydney); come to the public meeting; lend a hand to stop this quarry. With your help Colong Foundation and the Conservation Society can ensure that the World Heritage area is properly protected. *Keith Muir, Colong Foundation for Wilderness.*

## Coal, Australia's worst environmental pollutant, and alternatives

The guest speaker at our general meeting on **Friday 31 October** will be Dr Mark Diesendorf, Director of Sustainability Centre Pty Ltd, a Sydney-based company that does applied research, consulting, training and business facilitation on various aspects of ecologically sustainable and socially just development.

Mark is also Adjunct Professor of Sustainability Policy at Murdoch University; co-editor and principal author of the book "Human Ecology, Human Economy: Ideas for an Ecologically Sustainable Future"; and vice-president of the Australia New Zealand Society for Ecological Economics. He was formerly co-founder and president of the Australasian Wind Energy Association; and co-founder and vice-president of the Sustainable Energy Industries Council of Australia.

Mark will first discuss the environmental and health impacts of coal, Australia's principal fuel for generating electricity. He will then offer a critique of the notion that coal can be transformed from a dirty into a clean fuel by burying its greenhouse gas emissions underground. Finally he will discuss prospects for a genuinely sustainable energy future.

The general meeting will be held at the Conservation Hut starting at 7.30 pm. Visitors are very welcome.

**If World Heritage is to mean anything, this quarry proposal must be stopped!**

**COME TO THE PUBLIC MEETING**

**Thursday, 23 October, 7-9 pm**

**Uniting Church Hall**

**Main Street, Katoomba**

### Speakers:

Ian Cohen (Greens MLC); Andrew Cox (National Parks Assn); Haydn Washington (Colo Committee); Penny Figgis (ACF); and a member of Newnes Junction Action Group

### Supported by:

The Colong Foundation for Wilderness; Total Environment Centre; Blue Mountains Conservation Society; Colo Committee; National Parks Assn of NSW; Nature Conservation Council of NSW; The Wilderness Society

### Organised by:

The Colong Foundation for Wilderness, 2/362 Kent Street, Sydney, 2000. Tel: 9299 7341; Fax: 92995713; email: foundation@colongwilderness.org.au

## BMCS NATIVE PLANT SALE

**Saturday, 18 October**

**9 am to 1 pm**

Outside the Conservation Hut  
Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls

Tubestock (50x50x120mm) \$3 each  
or 4 for \$10

Supertubes (70x70x160mm) \$5 each

Tree Ferns in larger pots  
\$15 each (limited number)

Tell your friends and bring them along!

If you can't get there on the day remember that we are open for retail sales at our Blackheath Nursery every Tuesday, 9am to 12 noon, in the workshop compound of NPWS, behind the Heritage Centre on Govetts Leap Rd.

David Coleby, Nursery Manager  
Phone/fax 4784 1395

"Hut News", the newsletter of

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## World Heritage Funding

Our newsletter editor has received an email from Kerry Bartlett MP asking us to correct a statement in September Hut News, that 'The Federal Government has declined to directly fund World Heritage'.

The Federal Government has granted \$1 million for a World Heritage interpretive centre, \$½ million for a World Heritage information annex to the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre, and \$34k for half the annual salary of a Blue Mountains World Heritage executive officer.

In putting forward the World Heritage nomination the Federal Government promised to retain the area in pristine condition for all time and to restore any degraded parts. Construction of the interpretive and information

## Sydney's Water - How Does it Work?

Sydney Water Corporation draws water from 16 dams, reservoirs and pondages including Warragamba Dam on the Wollondilly River, Nepean, Avon, Cordeaux and Cataract Dams on the Upper Nepean River, Woronora Dam on the Woronara River, Tallowa Dam on the Shoalhaven River (via Bendeela Pondage, Fitzroy Falls Reservoir and Wingecarribee Reservoir), Medlow, Greaves Creek and Cascades Dams on the Upper Grose River, Fish River near Oberon.

The dams are not owned and run by Sydney Water Corporation but mostly by the Sydney Catchment Authority, a separate authority established after the 1998 water quality crisis. The Fish River system is owned and run by Oberon Council.

Water from Warragamba supplies 80% of Sydney's Water. Water from the dams is transported through pipelines, canals, tunnels and natural river beds, mostly by gravity but sometimes by pumping, to a series of Water Treatment Plants (WTP). The largest WTP is at Prospect Reservoir and is capable of treating three billion litres (three gegalitres) per day, although it usually treats about one gegalitre per day. Prospect Reservoir is no longer used as part of the water supply system, although it may be used in an emergency.

Water Treatment consists of: screening to remove large solids (like fish and leaves); chemical dosing with Potassium Permanganate, Ferric Chloride and Liquid Polymers to settle and coagulate solids; filtration through sand beds to remove solids; chemical dosing with Fluoride (for dental health), Chlorine and Ammonia (for disinfection) and Carbon Dioxide (for pH balance)

Water from the WTP's is then transported by pipeline to dozens of reservoirs around Sydney, including

those big concrete tanks in each of the Blue Mountains towns.

Water supply in the Blue Mountains is small-scale compared to Sydney, but complex. The lower Mountains towns from Lapstone up to Faulconbridge are supplied with Warragamba water via the Orchard Hills WTP near Penrith. The mid Mountains towns from Katoomba down to Linden are supplied with water from Cascades Dams (three of them) at Katoomba, and the Cascades WTP. As the Cascades Dams have a very small catchment they are topped up with water pumped from the Fish River Dam at Oberon and from Lake Greaves at Medlow Bath when it is full. The upper Mountains towns of Blackheath, Medlow Bath and Mt Victoria are supplied with water from Lakes Medlow and Greaves at Medlow Bath via the Greaves Creek WTP.

In the medium term future Sydney Water Corporation intends to run a pipeline from Cascades WTP to Medlow Bath, Blackheath and Mt Victoria, and decommission Greaves Creek WTP. When this happens all towns from Linden to Mt Victoria will share the Cascades WTP, drawing water from Cascades Dams, Lakes Greaves and Medlow, and the Fish River.

Sydney Water Corporation is also able to draw water from Lake Woodford (near Bull's Camp Reserve), via a pumping station at Linden, to Linden Reservoir for supply to the lower Mountains. In practice this no longer happens as Lake Woodford is too polluted and there are moves afoot to remove Lake Woodford from the Sydney Catchment Authority land holdings, and maybe even demolish the dam! *Ross Coster.*

(Next month: Sydney's Water – What is Wrong with the Water System?)

centres to be partly funded by the Federal Government will promote World Heritage values to visitors and local community but will not protect the World Heritage area. We would have expected additional funding to be made available for environmental protection and restoration—not just visitor facilities! The NSW Government currently spends \$232 million on the NPWS and the Federal Government does not pull its weight on conservation issues.

Two years ago we identified two areas where Commonwealth funding was needed: \$12 million for acquisition of Inholdings and \$400,000 per year for pest species management within the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. This funding has been declined.

Private inholdings pose a threat because they are not managed for nature conservation. The State Government has provided \$400,000 for acquisition in 2003/04 but more funds are needed.

The introduced species management budget for the World Heritage Area is under-funded, and the State Government's pest species control budget of the region has been drastically reduced and World Heritage values will be further damaged by pest species this year.

Management and protection of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area is under-funded. Funds for restoration of degraded areas are non-existent. The Federal Government has given \$34,000 for half the annual salary of one NPWS World Heritage Project Officer – 3.4 cents per hectare.

We again ask the Federal Government to honour its commitment to World Heritage by providing funds for acquisition of inholdings and pest species management.

### Membership Enquiries

Contact Elizabeth van Reyswoud

Phone 4757.2694

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Post: PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782



## Bernard O'Reilly Centenary

"My father passed the story of Bernard to me as a boy (and with it a copy of Green Mountains/Cullenbenbong). I have brought my wife and young family to pass the story on." (John Robb, Gymea Bay)

The day dawned fine and warm—a perfect spring day—and 100 people made the pilgrimage to the Kanimbla Valley to celebrate the centenary of Bernard O'Reilly's birth.

Jim Smith met us beside the church hall, built by Ben Esgate. Jim told us about Bernard O'Reilly and the O'Reilly family and read a passage where Bernard describes his daughter Rhelma who had travelled down from Queensland with other members of the family to take part in the celebration.

From there we drove to the former O'Reilly property by Long Swamp Creek and gathered around the little slab house which was Bernard's birthplace. We waited to go into the house in small groups and Denis Kevans read one of Bernard's poems, then we walked along the hillside behind the house, across Long Swamp Creek, and on a fire trail above the little creek which had been a place of adventure for the O'Reilly children as they daily walked along "The Magic Road" to school.

"It was a magic journey, that daily walk to school, and its freshness and wonder never dimmed for us. There were place names at every few yards, every big boulder, every creek crossing, every old twisted water gum had its name and history.

The track could never grow monotonous. All varieties of weather, light and shade; the march of the seasons; the colourful passing show of brilliant birds and their music; the clouds to which a child's spirit soars as he gazes aloft to a twelve foot eagle riding the breeze; the gay little clouds of spring rolling on a merry wind, tumbling and somersaulting across the azure sky; or perhaps snow on the Divide with small clouds running on the bitter wind like black hounds against a leaden ceiling – all these were features of that magic road." (Bernard O'Reilly, 'Cullenbenbong')



It is dry in the Kanimbla Valley, the grass kept short by grazing cattle. Long Swamp is a gentle little creek, largely cleared of native vegetation, but birds were plentiful in patches of trees. A Wedge-Tailed Eagle soared near Table Rock.

Eventually we passed some cattle gathered around a little dam, and stopped at a gate – and there beside Long Swamp creek was a tiny red-earth building under a gigantic pine tree – the school house.

"Teresa Carlon was our teacher. She was really one of the family; her mother was Dad's gentle sister, Mary, who had married Burragarang's Grand Old Man, Bernard Carlon. During the week Teresa stayed with us, but on Friday afternoons she'd swing up into the side saddle on her old grey, 'Pale Face', and ride across Megalong to Green Gully, returning on Monday morning.

Only two families – the Cullens and ourselves – attended the school, but both were large families and the numbers were about even. We must have been a fairly agreeable lot of kiddies even though we were a bunch of bushrangers, for the harmony in that playground was such that I have never seen at any school since." (Bernard O'Reilly, 'Cullenbenbong')

"This was the perfect place for another reading and lunch alongside the creek where the children would have boiled the billy. One could visualise a transportation back in time when life was so simple and rewarding through the eyes of a child." (Ron Hyslop)

"No one could not be touched by being at these historic sites accompanied by poignant readings about those places from O'Reilly's works. It brought home to me, yet again, the importance of conserving our heritage, whether it be the built or natural environment." (Kevin Bell)

On our return journey we strolled across the hilltops, with magnificent views of the Kanimbla Valley, the Blue Mountain ranges and the Great Divide. It was a "magic" day. Thank you Jim Smith for taking us to the places and reading the passages which so vividly described them. *Christine Davies.*

(Photos by Margaret Beal: Beside the slab cottage; Jim Smith reading on the way to school.)

## Letter Writing

Our National Parks Officer Jenny Rich needs a volunteer to write letters and assist with writing submissions. If you are able to help please phone Jenny and leave a message on 4787.6243 (email: hutnews@bluemountains.org.au)

## New Members

Welcome to new members:  
Christine Woodrow, Blaxland  
Beth Edwards, Katoomba  
Beverley Eaton, Valley Heights  
Nina Mirabilo, Abbotsford  
Annemarie Hekman, Bullaburra  
Sylvia Partridge, Wentworth Falls

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**General Meeting:** Friday 31 October 7.30 pm, at the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls. Dr Mark Diesendorf: 'Coal, Australia's worst environmental pollutant, and alternatives' (see page 1).

**Management Meeting:** Saturday 25 October, 9 am, Mid Mountains Community Centre, Lawson. Members are welcome to attend as observers.

**Public Meeting:** Thursday 23 October 7 pm, Uniting Church Hall, Main Street, Katoomba. Stop the Newnes Junction sand quarry proposal (see page 1).

**BMCS Native Plant Sale:** Saturday, 18 October, 9 am to 1 pm, outside the Conservation Hut (see page 1).

**John Buki Gardens:** Working Bees on 11 and 18 October (see page 3).

**Bushcare:** Saturday 11 October. Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group meets at 9am on the 2nd Saturday of every month. Tools are provided. Bring morning tea, gloves and drinking water. Contact Karen 4757.1929.

**Blue Mountains Conservation Society Bushwalking Group** organises a variety of activities for all ages. See page 4.

## John Buki Garden

### Working Bees: 11, 18 October

The John Buki Garden is the garden area within the circular driveway in front of the Conservation Hut.

There will be a working bee on Saturday 11 October at 9am to weed and prepare the garden for planting whatever is necessary during the plant sale on Saturday 18 October.

Volunteers are needed to help on both days and also to maintain the garden on a regular basis. Bring your own tools and gloves.

If you can assist in any way please turn up on the day or contact Kevin Bell 47876436 (email khbell@pnc.com.au).

## Wright Street, Glenbrook, Blue Mountains NSW, Bush Massacre, 15 August 2003

With starting tears you winced, and turned from me,  
They ran like waves criss-crossing in a Spit,  
Leapt quick on curving lashes, swinging free,  
You savoured one and then you swallowed it.

"Why didn't you do something?" in shock,  
you hissed –  
Our wind-scoured-sculptured finely scansioned stone,  
Mothered by ancient eyes and drifting mist,  
By owls' wings shadowed, and, by red-bark strown,

By moonlight spotlight such a stage for quolls,  
Was crunched and crushed to dust, with wild despair  
The birds looked for their vanished, nesting holes,  
Their numb hearts seeking plundered tracks in air.

"How could they do this?" was your one refrain,  
As birds struck up their requiem again.

Denis Kevans

## Ecological Diversity of New England

There were thirteen participants in the BMCS tour of the New England region in the last week of September 2003. The tourist park near Glen Innes township from which we operated, although overrun with rabbits, was tastefully integrated with an outcrop of imposing granite boulders and several species of frogs were audible.

Three World Heritage National Parks were proudly signposted and it was good to see 'Quoll' warning signs on the Gwydir Highway. It was unseasonably warm in Washpool and Gibraltar Range but long walks through Warm Temperate Rainforest with overhanging canopies were bearable. The examples of broad scale Coachwood forest, tallowwood, red cedar, strangler figs were outstanding. Although logging had become marginal in some of these areas by the mid 1970s, that does not lessen the achievement of the 70s and 80s protestors who helped ensure these forests were permanently preserved by the Wran Labor government. This expedited listing of the 'Central Eastern Rainforests of Australia' World Heritage area.

Open forest verging on heath could also be found on shallow soils beside the granite-strewn streams of Gibraltar Range. Many shrub species were similar but not identical to those of the open forests of the Upper Blue Mountains. The perched swamps and Xanthorrhoea stands were among the healthiest I have seen.

Our last stop in the World Heritage area was at Point Lookout—1500 metres altitude. Hundreds of Eucalypt and rainforest crowned hills rolled away from our feet to the hazy sweep of the Pacific Ocean. The Snow Gums and ancient Banksias at the summit were tangled with lichens and wisps of 'old man's beard'. A few metres down the slope we lay on our backs and looked upward at sunlight filtered by the red and green leaves of ancient Antarctic Beech trees.

Kings' Plains Creek in the northwest of New England trickles from one picturesque pool to another over gentle shelves of rock. The Western Slopes Eucalypts spread their branches majestically and tiny fish dart through the shadows. It is easy to sight birds—Little Lorikeets, Rufous Whistlers, Tufted Honeyeaters, coots, swallows and so on.

Nor can we forget the varied basalt country gorges—Ebor, with the falls pouring down between gleaming hexagonal rock columns—Wollomombi Creek's wispy 480 metre descent into a green plunge pool below towering grey, brown and crimson crags.

The countryside burnt last summer was showing excellent regeneration. Our resident vet David was more than equal to one bush tick bite and a brush with a rainforest Giant Stinging Tree sustained by the party. Thanks to all. Full details of the next multi-day excursion in November Hut News. *Don Morison.*

## BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY BUSHWALKING GROUP

Our Bushwalking Group provides a range of activities. Membership of the bushwalking group is available to members of the Society. For further information contact the Activity Leader/Coordinator (listed) or Bushwalks Conveyor Bob van Reyswoud 4757.2694 (phone/fax), email [ereyswoud@hermes.net.au](mailto:ereyswoud@hermes.net.au). Membership details are on page 2. **Cost of insurance and affiliation fees for bushwalkers is \$12.50 per member.**

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

*Short, easy walks, approx 1 hour, 1st Wednesday of every month, starting at 10.30am. Bring a snack and a drink. Contact Megan 4759.2734 or Kathy 4759.3669 for more information or if the weather is doubtful.*

**Nov 05 Fairfax Heritage Track, Blackheath.** Meet at car park at National Parks Heritage Centre, Govett's Leap Road.

**Dec 03 CATERACT FALLS, LAWSON.** This is a nice little swimming hole so bring bathers if it is hot. Meet at car park/picnic area about 1 km down Honour Ave.

**Quoll Club:** *A monthly newsletter and activities for 14 and under. For more information ☎ David King 4758.8932 (email [dking@lisp.com.au](mailto:dking@lisp.com.au)).*

**Oct 19 (Sun) Horseshoe Falls.** Meet at the Reserve, opposite Camp Fletcher, Alexander Avenue, Hazelbrook for a walk to Horseshoe Falls. After the walk we will observe and participate in the Water Testing and Bug Identification with the Living Streams Group. Bring something to drink and some lunch. Please contact David King if you are attending: 9342 7633 (M-F 8am to 4.30pm) or 4758 8932 after 7.30 pm.

**Monday Leisure Walks:** *Usually 'Short Day' walks of 3-5 hours suitable for walkers of average fitness. Graded Medium, i.e. can include some short rock scrambles or some short sections off-track. Bring morning tea and lunch, plus carry at least 1 litre of WATER, 2 litres on warmer days.*

**Oct 13 Blackheath in Spring.** Local gardens and glassblowing demonstration.

Bill 4759 1692. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.15. BBQ after.

**Oct 20 Paradise Pool Woodford.** Secluded mountain pool. ☎ Jock 4758 6346. Meet Cnr Woodford Ave & GWH 9 am.

**Oct 27 Glastonbell, Dargan.** Wildflowers, bring plant identification book.

Donation for entry (\$5). ☎ Allan 4739 2767 Meet 9.30am Mt Vic station.

**Nov 03 Wollangambe Track, Bell.** Wilderness Walk. ☎ Jock 4758 6356 Meet 9.15 Mt. Victoria Rly Station

**Thursday Pleasure Walks:** *These easy to medium grade walks are conducted to suit the walkers on the day. Times given are approximate. Slower walkers are catered for and on longer walks there is an option of a slower group to complete a section of the walk. Phone the contact for any enquiries about the program, starting times and transport issues. Please phone to book with contact prior to the walk.*

**Oct 09 The Grange Mt Victoria.** Walk around historic school camp site with Allan and Marie. Meet Mt Vic Station 10am. ☎ Marie 4787 1257.

**Oct 16 Castle Head, Narrowneck, Katoomba.** Walk along ridge to lookout at Castle Head via Narrowneck fire trail and bush track. 5kms return. Meet Gearins Hotel Katoomba 10am. Tel Marie 4787 1257. Bring a picnic lunch.

**Oct 23 Mt Wilson walks.** Collection of short easy walks around Mt Wilson. Opportunity to also enjoy local gardens in spring. Meet Mt Vic Station 10am. ☎ Bill 4759 1692.

**Oct 30 Point Pilcher Lookouts, Medlow Bath.** Easy/medium tracks to lookouts and picnic area. Meet outside Hydro opposite Medlow Bath Station 10am. ☎ Simone 4757 3416.

**Nov 6 Den Fenella, Wentworth Falls.** Start at Conservation Hut, take Overcliff track to Den Fenella. Climb up to Wentworth Falls picnic area and return to Conservation Hut via Shortcut track. Car shuffle if required. Meet junction of Falls Road and GWHighway, Wentworth Falls 10am. ☎ Marie 4787 1257

**Thursday Interpretive Bushwalks:** *Participants have an opportunity to learn more about the Blue Mountains natural environment. The Spring series of walks will commence on 16 October. Numbers are limited. Enquiries to Christine Davies 4787.7246 (email [hutnews@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:hutnews@bluemountains.org.au))*

**Weekend Bushwalks:** *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 Bob van Reyswoud 4757.2694.*

**Oct 11 (Sat) Mt Airlie Historic Walk.** Easy/medium. 1½ hrs drive, 4 hrs walk. Meet Mt Victoria Station 9.30 for car pool. ☎ Meredith 4782.4823. Finish 5 pm.

**Oct 18 (Sat) Bruce's Walk, Wentworth Falls to Bullaburra.** Hard. Meet Wentworth Falls Station 8.30 am. ☎ Ron 4757.1526. Finish 3.30 pm. Bring extra water.

**Oct 25 (Sat) Mt Wilson to Wollangambe River.** Meet Mt Victoria Station 9.50 am. Medium. ☎ June 4787.7312.

**Nov 01 (Sat) Six Foot Track, Megalong Road to Swing Bridge.** Medium, approx 14km. Meet Blackheath Station 9.30 am. ☎ Bob 4757.2694. Finish 4pm.

**NOTE: All bushwalkers need to carry water, 1 litre minimum, a snack for morning tea and lunch for all day walks.**