

# HUT NEWS

*"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"*



## What has Bottled Springwater got to do with Dragonflies?

This Hut News contains a leaflet urging you to use tap or tank water rather than bottled water or borewater.

### Spring Water and Swamps

Most bottled water claims to be 'springwater'. When the slow movement of water through the ground is interrupted by an impermeable rock layer, water emerges on the surface as a 'spring'. In the Blue Mountains, springs often occur on valley sides and provide a constant supply of water to swamps located below them.

Blue Mountains Swamps - both hanging swamps and valley floor swamps support a wide range of unique plants and animals such as the Giant Dragonfly and the Leura Skink. They also ensure that the water feeding creeks and waterfalls is filtered and clean. There are only 2250 ha of these swamps anywhere in the world.

In May 2005 Blue Mountains Swamps were listed under federal legislation as an "endangered ecological community forming part of the group of swamp types called *Temperate Highland Peat Swamps on Sandstone*". The Scientific Committee identified groundwater extraction as a major threat to swamps; that is, the pumping of springwater or borewater for use by people.

In NSW the bottled water industry is licensed to take 1,800 million litres of groundwater every year, even though there is no scientific data about the minimum amount of water needed for the environment. In the Blue Mountains, commercial water bottlers are licensed to extract 39 million litres of our

groundwater this year and there are current applications to increase this. There are no records of how much water is being extracted from domestic bores.

Do we really need to take water from the ground when the annual average rainfall is 1398mm (Katoomba, 2004)? If we collect some of this rainwater in dams and tanks, we can leave the springwater/groundwater in the ground for the swamps.

### Plastic Bottles - waste and energy

According to the Australian Beverage Council, Australians consumed 550 million litres of bottled water in 2004-05. This is rising at a rate of 10% per year and most purchases are in addition to soft drink purchases, not instead of them. Despite numerous recycling schemes, 65% of plastic drink bottles in Australia end up in landfill.

Most of these bottles are made from PET (polyethylene terephthalate) which comes from crude oil. Then transportation consumes more fuel. The author Emily Arnold said that "In contrast to tap water, which is distributed through an energy-efficient infrastructure, transporting bottled water long distances involves burning massive quantities of fossil fuels".

So please help by filling your own water bottles from taps. A filter is recommended for rainwater from tanks and may also be used for tap water.

If you'd like more information, pick up a Groundwater booklet at one of our monthly meetings or contact Sue Ernst (0429 692 870, smernst@bigpond.net.au).

Lyndal Sullivan

## Help Save the Macquarie Marshes

**At our next monthly meeting, guest speaker Bev Smiles will bring us up to date on what's happening in the Macquarie Marshes.** On World Wetlands Day in February 2006, the National Parks Association of NSW launched a new Macquarie Marshes project. Bev is the NPA's Western Networker and is co-ordinating the campaign, having worked on issues affecting this icon wetland since 1992.

The Macquarie Marshes, covering 220,000 hectares in north-west NSW, are the most significant semi-permanent wetlands in Australia. They are also listed as wetlands of international significance under Ramsar and the Japanese and Chinese Migratory Bird Agreements with the Australian Government.

The Marshes have recorded the greatest species diversity and nest densities of colonial nesting waterbirds in Australia. Significant species which have been recorded breeding in the area include the threatened Brolga and Magpie Goose.

However, the Marshes have been suffering major stress and degradation due to over-allocation of water to the cotton industry upstream and other extractions. Even the Blue Mountains community and Mt Piper power station are responsible for the extraction of 14,000 million litres from the Macquarie River system each year.

Approximately 2,000ha of River Redgum forest is dying, whilst reedbeds, water couch and lignum areas are disappearing. No birds have bred successfully in the Marshes for six years and it is feared that a nationwide crash in their populations may be occurring. More water must be allocated to the environment from the Macquarie catchment to save this important ecosystem.

**To find out what we can do to help save this national icon, come along to our next meeting at 7.30 pm on Friday 29 September at the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls. Visitors most welcome!**

*On Sunday 10 September, the NPA is holding the Great Australian Bushwalk in various regions of NSW and other states.*

*One of the walks is with Senator Bob Brown in the Macquarie Marshes.*

*For more information or to register for the walk go to [www.greataustralianbushwalk.org.au](http://www.greataustralianbushwalk.org.au).*



Many colonial nesting waterbirds, like this egret, rely on the redgums, reeds and other wetland plants of the Macquarie Marshes for food and nesting sites.

(Photo: Bill Johnson, NPWS)

## HUT NEWS

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## Letter of the Month—September 2006

### No Expansion of NSW Coal Mining

The topic of this month's letter is the climate change implications of the proposed Anvil Hill coal mine, discussed in the article on page 3.

**Please read the article, then send your short message to Blue Mountains Member of Parliament and Minister for Environment, Bob Debus, making some or all of the following points:**

- Why hasn't the contribution to climate change, of the proposed new coal loader for Newcastle and new coal mine at Anvil Hill, been taken into account in the approvals process? The mine will produce up to 10.5 million tonnes of coal a year, which will produce greenhouse emissions greater than those produced by all cars on NSW's roads. The new coal loader has a capacity of 66 million tonnes of coal, which will produce more greenhouse gases than NSW produces in a year.
- How can NSW ethically increase its export of coal and the resulting increase in carbon emissions world-wide when clean coal technology is still in the experimental stage? Even if successfully developed, there is no compulsion for any country to use it.
- Are you aware of the warning of Dr John Merson of the BM World Heritage Institute, that hotter, drier conditions brought about by climate change could lead to more intense and frequent bushfire seasons in the Blue Mountains? The loss of Blue Mountains eucalypts, with their limited ability to recover from such fires, would reduce water flows to aquifers providing water to Sydney's water supply.
- Please act on behalf of the Blue Mountains by rejecting the proposed Anvil Hill coal mine and the new coal loader at Newcastle, and declare a moratorium on new coal mines in NSW.

#### Contact Details:

Post to Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney 2000, or email:

**The Hon Bob Debus:** [bluemountains@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bluemountains@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

**The Hon Morris Iemma:** [thepremier@www.nsw.gov.au](mailto:thepremier@www.nsw.gov.au)

For information on how you can reduce your personal contribution to greenhouse emissions, visit the ACF Greenhome Guide at [www.acfonline.org.au/greenhome](http://www.acfonline.org.au/greenhome) (or take a look at the recently released BMCS publication 'Sustainability: Concepts and Action' at <http://members.optusnet.com.au/~bmsustain>. Ed.)

**Rosemary Lathouris and Robin Mosman**

## Membership Secretary

Following the resignation of Liz Van Reyswoud, we welcome Rod Quirk as our new Membership Secretary.

We would like to thank Liz for her years of dedicated service to the Society, both as Membership Secretary and Second Vice President, and for her invaluable assistance with handling bushwalking insurance matters. Her professional, conscientious and generous contribution is greatly appreciated by all members and especially the bushwalking fraternity.

## Noble Silence

*Half-lights and silhouettes meet us  
as we enter a sweeping chill  
of canyon space.*

*A cool clutch on my throat warms to the canyon's lofty quiet.*

*Soft steps slip us through ancient rock,*

*I skip and dance amidst the grace*

*of golden saplings.....*

*.....as we exit..*

*A fragrant- earth scramble lifts us up  
to sun-warmed rocks.*

*My voice soars out over the Wolgan Valley  
as two wedge-tails  
sharpen the sky.*

*Bernadette Hodgson, 8/6/2006*

## Threatened Species Day Commemoration

Blue Mountains City Council is commemorating Threatened Species Day with the reintroduction of a small number of seedlings of the highly endangered *Eucalyptus copulans* into the Jamison Creek Reserve. The planting ceremony will be attended by the local member and Minister for the Environment, the Hon Bob Debus, and will be followed by a free Discovery Walk along the Charles Darwin Track which will highlight some of the key threatened species of the Upper Blue Mountains area.

*Eucalyptus copulans* is one of the rarest and most endangered eucalypts in Australia. Only one plant is known to still exist in the wild despite extensive surveys in the Wentworth Falls area where it used to occur. Due to the foresight of the NPWS and the Royal Botanical Gardens, seed and seedling collections have been maintained at the Mt Annan and Mt Tomah Botanical Gardens.

The planting of the *E. copulans* seedlings represents the first reintroduction of *E. copulans* into its natural range and forms part of the ongoing efforts to maintain the amazing World Heritage-recognised diversity of Eucalyptus species present in the Blue Mountains (93 Eucalyptus species-13% of the global total).

The Discovery Walk and Planting Ceremony will commence at 12.15pm on Saturday the 9th September at Wilson's Park, Wentworth Falls. Please ring the Discovery Coordinator to book a place on the Discovery Threatened Species Day Walk on 4784 7301. Hurry as places are limited.

**Michael Hensen, BMCC Threatened Species Officer**

Visit our website at: [www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au)

## Proposed Anvil Hill Coal Mine

In November 2005, Premier Morris Iemma stated: "The greatest threat to our environment and way of life comes from global climate change". Scientists and policymakers tell us that we have about 10 years to start achieving large reductions in greenhouse gas emissions or face catastrophe.

The impacts of climate change on the Blue Mountains are projected to be severe. The head of the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute, Dr John Merson, warns that hotter and drier conditions could lead to more frequent and intense bushfire seasons, threatening not only people and property, but the ability of eucalypt species to recover. Under a worst-case scenario, the Blue Mountains – home to 30% of Australia's bird life and unique biodiversity from the Gondwanan period - could turn into a vast heathland within 40 years ('Fiery threat to mountains and water supply', Wendy Frew, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 September 2005).

The loss of eucalypts could increase erosion and the silting of rivers and dams, reducing the supply of water to Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong.

Whilst the impacts of climate change are beginning to enter the public consciousness, what is not so well known is the extent to which NSW actually contributes to the problem. The Hunter Valley is one of the great coal-producing regions on our planet. Newcastle is the largest coal export port in the world, accounting for about 11% of all world trade in coal. The greenhouse gas emissions from burning the 80 million tonnes of coal leaving Newcastle each year exceed the total from all other sources in NSW.

The next few years may see a massive expansion of the Hunter Valley coal industry, and the spread of the industry to as yet untouched areas around Gunnedah. A new export coal loader for Newcastle has just been proposed, with a capacity of 66 million tonnes a year. Driving these infrastructure upgrades are huge coal mines like that proposed for Anvil Hill near Muswellbrook, which would produce up to 10.5 million tonnes of coal a year.

What is extraordinary, however, is that at no point in the approvals process for Anvil Hill or the new coal loader, or any new mine, will their contribution to climate change be considered. While they have to assess the greenhouse emissions from their operations – such as vehicles and electricity use on site – they can ignore the emissions resulting when the coal is burnt. The Environmental Assessment for the new coal loader actually said that to consider this greenhouse pollution would be "inappropriate". Surely what is inappropriate, and unacceptable, is for new coal mines and coal infrastructure to be approved by the NSW Government without assessing their contribution to climate change. Instead, the profits of mostly foreign-owned coal companies are placed ahead of the long-term health of the people and environment of NSW.

Given the projected impacts of climate change, the expansion of the Hunter coal industry is a critical issue for communities in the Blue Mountains and throughout NSW. In an effort to stop this looming climate catastrophe, a group of individuals and organisations has set up the Anvil Hill Alliance ([www.anvilhill.org.au](http://www.anvilhill.org.au)). The Alliance aims to save Anvil Hill as a first step towards a moratorium on new coal mines and coal infrastructure in NSW. It does not seek to close existing mines, but believes we cannot allow the planned expansion of the Hunter Valley coal industry to take place. This expansion would see NSW fuelling its greatest future threat. Stopping this is essential, and Anvil Hill is the first step.

**Ben Pearson, Climate Change Co-ordinator, Greenpeace**

## Gardens of Stone Stage 2 PUBLIC MEETING

Uniting Church Hall  
223 Katoomba St, Katoomba  
Friday 29 September, 7-9pm  
Refreshments will be served  
Free Entry, All Welcome

The Gardens of Stone Stage 2 proposal was launched last November by the Colong Foundation and the BMCS. The aim is to expand the Gardens of Stone and Blue Mountains



National Parks and establish a new State Conservation Area in recognition of the region's natural, cultural and historical value.

The meeting will include a slide show of stunning images from the proposal area, an overview of the threats from mining, forestry and recreational activities, and a chance for people to express their views. Site visits and bushwalks to parts of the proposal area are also being organised over the coming months.

So come along and discover the natural wonders that lie to our west - the success of the campaign depends on local support.

(A 2nd meeting will be held in Lithgow in October, contact David Brazil [david@dbrazil.com](mailto:david@dbrazil.com), or Karen McLaughlin [karen.mclaughlin@ozemail.com.au](mailto:karen.mclaughlin@ozemail.com.au)).



**Above:** Cape Horn locality, 4km SE of Baal Bone Gap, Wolgan State Forest. **Top:** Pagoda Daisies - a rare species found in the proposal area.

## Nursery News Kevin Bell

This month we continue our survey of pea plants in the Blue Mountains with the genus *Daviesia*, named after Hugh Davies, an 18th-19th century Welsh botanist.

*Daviesia* is an endemic genus of about 75 species, most from south-west Western Australia, but with eight species in the Sydney region. Their most distinctive feature is their triangular seed-pods which turn brown on maturity and expel the seeds with audible vigour in hot weather.

Our nursery is propagating four local species: all produce yellow-and-red pea-

flowers in Spring, but otherwise they are very different plants.

*Daviesia ulicifolia* (Gorse Bitter-pea) is a prickly shrub to 1m with spines at the end of branchlets and pungent tips on the leaves, making it an ideal refuge for small birds. *D. latifolia* (Broad-leaf Bitter-pea), found mainly in the Upper Mountains and Hartley Valley, has broad, strongly-veined leaves and dense foliage, making it an excellent, fast-growing screen plant of 1-2m. *D. corymbosa*, common in the Wentworth Falls-Lawson area, is a medium-sized shrub to about 1m, with striking flower clusters from August to November. The most unusual of the four,

*D. alata*, is a low straggling shrub with flat branches and no leaves, making it an interesting rockery specimen.

Our Blackheath nursery is open Tuesday mornings, the Lawson nursery on Wednesday mornings, and we'll be at the Lawson Magpie Markets on Sunday 17 September. Our SPRING SALE will be held on Saturday 14 October at the Conservation Hut - further details in the next issue but start saving now!

We will be having an informal OPENING of our NEW FACILITIES at Blackheath on Tuesday 26 September at 1pm. All members and past nursery volunteers are invited - see you there!

## BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY BUSHWALKING GROUP

Membership of the bushwalking group is open to Society members. **Cost of insurance and affiliation fees is \$15 per member.**

For further information, contact the Walks Convenor, David Bowskill (4757 3416, [davidbow@tpg.com.au](mailto:davidbow@tpg.com.au)).

**BEFORE ATTENDING, PLEASE DISCUSS THE WALK WITH THE LEADER (listed below)**

**- THIS IS ESSENTIAL IF THIS IS YOUR FIRST WALK OR YOU ARE UNSURE OF THE CLASSIFICATION.**

### MONDAY LEISURE WALKS

Usually 'Short Day' walks of 3-5 hours, suitable for walkers of average fitness. Graded MEDIUM, these walks may include some short rock scrambles or sections off track. Bring morning tea and lunch. Carry at least 1 litre of WATER, 2 litres on warm days.

<b>Sep-18</b>	<b>Euroka, Glenbrook</b>	<b>Heather 4739 1493</b>	<b>Glenbrook Station carpark</b>	<b>9.00am</b>
	<i>Walk to Nepean River, BBQ lunch among local wildlife.</i>			
<b>Sep-25</b>	<b>Bus trip to Evan's Crown, Tarana</b>	<b>Birgitta 4784 3191</b>	<b>BMCC Depot, South St, N.Katoomba</b>	<b>8.30am</b>
	<i>Huge granite boulders, views over Liverpool Plains. Fare \$10, pay when booking.</i>			
<b>Oct-2</b>	<b>Mark Foy's Track, Medlow Bath</b>	<b>Mary 4787 6918</b>	<b>Outside Hydro Maj, Medlow Bath</b>	<b>9.30am</b>
	<i>A new walk for our group.</i>			
<b>Oct-9</b>	<b>Glastonbel, Dargan</b>	<b>Phil 4787 5560</b>	<b>Mt Victoria Station</b>	<b>9.00am</b>
	<i>Wildflowers, caves and canyons. Private property, \$5 donation.</i>			
<b>Oct-16</b>	<b>Bellbird Hill, Megalong Valley</b>	<b>Ron 4757 1526</b>	<b>Blackheath Station carpark</b>	<b>9.00am</b>
	<i>The name says it all!</i>			

### THURSDAY PLEASURE WALKS

EASY to MEDIUM grade walks conducted to suit walkers on the day. Slower walkers are catered for; on longer walks there may be an option for a slower group to complete only a section of the walk. Carry at least 1 litre of WATER, 2 litres on warm days.

<b>Sep-14</b>	<b>Mt Piddington to Pulpit Rock, Mt Vic</b>	<b>Phil 4787 5560</b>	<b>Mt Victoria Station</b>	<b>10.00am</b>
	<i>Mt Piddington to Witches Glen on bush tracks, views from Pulpit Rock.</i>			
<b>Sep-21</b>	<b>Cascades to Echo Point</b>	<b>Joan 4782 2218</b>	<b>Cnr. Leura Mall and Megalong St.</b>	<b>10.00am</b>
	<i>Cliff top walk with varied views.</i>			
<b>Sep-28</b>	<b>Spring at Mt Wilson</b>	<b>Marie 4787 1257</b>	<b>Mt Victoria Station (for car pool)</b>	<b>10.00am</b>
	<i>Easy walk on Boronia Ridge to lookout over Wollangambe Wilderness. Bring picnic lunch.</i>			
<b>Oct-5</b>	<b>Rigby Hill near Bell MEDIUM</b>	<b>Heather 4739 1493</b>	<b>Mt Victoria Station</b>	<b>10.00am</b>
	<i>Short track, off Pierces Pass walk, up to lookout with spectacular views and (possible) spring flowers.</i>			
<b>Oct-12</b>	<b>The Gully, Katoomba, with Jean Murphy* Simone</b>	<b>4757 3416</b>	<b>Outside Katoomba Aquatic Centre</b>	<b>10.00am</b>
	<i>A description of life in The Gully by Traditional Owner and Elder of the Gundungurra People, Jean Murphy.</i>			
<b>Oct-26</b>	<b>Advance notice of bus trip to Mt Annan Botanic Gardens</b>			Contact Simone on 4757 3416.

\* Part of the THURSDAY INFORMATIVE WALKS SERIES - a full program can be found on our website.

### WEEKEND WALKS

Before attending, please discuss the walk with the leader or the Weekend Walks organiser, Jim Percy (4758 6009). Carry at least 1 litre of WATER, 2 litres on warm days.

<b>Sep-16</b>	<b>Faulconbridge to Linden MEDIUM/HARD</b>	<b>Jim 4758 6009</b>	<b>Faulconbridge Stn carpark (N side)</b>	<b>8:30 am</b>
	<i>Following the route of Joyce's Sawmill Tramway, explore the remains of a steam-driven sawmill. Total distance 8km: 3km on firetrail, 1km on rough track, 4km off track through thick scrub, gaiters and gloves highly recommended.</i>			
<b>Sep-23</b>	<b>T3 Track, Tootie Creek MEDIUM</b>	<b>Bob 4757 2694</b>	<b>Mt Victoria Station carpark</b>	<b>8.30am</b>
	<i>Enjoy great views of the Colo Gorge and try to imagine a railway snaking up it - in the 1800s this was considered! 6km</i>			
<b>Sep-30</b>	<b>Part of the historic 6 Foot Track MEDIUM</b>	<b>Bill 4758 8545</b>	<b>Blackheath Stn carpark (S side)</b>	<b>8.30am</b>
	<i>Megalong Road to the swing bridge (and maybe a bit beyond). The 6 Foot Track was completed in 1887 to take horse traffic from Katoomba to Jenolan Caves. After many years of decline, it was reopened for walkers in 1984. 12km</i>			
<b>Oct-7</b>	<b>Historic town of Airly EASY/MEDIUM</b>	<b>Meredith 4782 4823</b>	<b>Mt Victoria Station carpark</b>	<b>8.30am</b>
	<i>Airly was established in 1898 by the 200 miners working the shale coal deposits. Lunch on a cliff-top overlooking the Capertee Plains, beneath the brooding brow of Black Mountain. 8km</i>			
<b>Oct-14</b>	<b>Linden to Lawson MEDIUM/HARD</b>	<b>Jim 4758 6009</b>	<b>Lawson Stn carpark (N side)</b>	<b>8.30am</b>
	<i>Great views across Woodford Creek to Lawson Ridge. Total 10km: 3km on firetrail, 7km off track, creek crossings.</i>			

## 13 Moons: a year's journey through the Blue Mountains bush

A photographic exhibition by Chris Ireland

BMCS member and Medlow Bath resident Chris Ireland spent many years working as a research scientist with her day ordered by innumerable time points, alarms and tiny test tubes. When she began to stay in the Mountains more regularly, Chris found herself wandering through the bush with her camera, in a state of 'time-off'.

This exhibition of photographic works charts her observations over a year - thirteen lunar months - and looks at the concept of time in nature, of full and new moons, of solstices and equinoxes. The works are not circumscribed by

the conventions of botanical illustration, nor of traditional landscape photography. Instead they are personal glimpses of the forms, light and textures of the unique Blue Mountains bush.

Chris has been exhibiting for many years in Sydney, interstate and overseas. Although you may have seen some of her photos in the lightbox and seasonal panel installations at the Conservation Hut or on the Giant Dragonfly banners in the Winter Magic parade, this is the first time Chris has exhibited in the Blue Mountains.

**The exhibition is at the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute, Govetts Leap Rd, Blackheath.**

**It opens with drinks from 1-3pm on Sunday 1 October and continues until 5 November.**

**The Centre is open every day from 9am-4.30pm.**

### BMCS Bushcare

The Valley of the Waters Bushcare group works in the Blue Mountains National Park at Wentworth Falls on the 2nd Saturday of each month.

Tools are provided but bring morning tea, gloves and drinking water. New members are always welcome. Contact Karen on 4757 1929 for more information.

### MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES

Rod Quirk

Phone 4784 1711

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