



"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow's People"

This Month at The Hut Nature Conservation Council

The NCC Annual Conference is being held on the weekend 26/27 October 1996 in Sydney. The Society is now finalising its delegation - comprising two voting delegates and one observer. If you would be interested in being considered as a representative for the Society, please contact Chris Hannocks on 047-82-3164.

Plant Identification

The society was recently called upon by a local school to assist them to identify native plants growing in their local environment. We were able to respond by calling upon Eric Mahoney at BMCC. The matter highlighted how little we know about the skills of our members. In the longer term, it is our intention to compile a skills inventory, but in the meantime, we would like to hear from those members who are able to identify many of the commonly growing native plants, so we can compile a list to refer to when we get our next request for help. Please contact Joan Williams on 047-57-3040 if you would be prepared to go on our list of "plant identifiers".

Membership

The membership data base has now been organised so that new members may now join at ANY TIME OF THE YEAR and their membership is valid for twelve months from the date of joining.

From the Publicity Officer

We now have a small display based on the theme of "Our Small Neighbours — Why wait until they're endangered?" in our notice board on the outside of the Conservation Hut. I am now developing material for a larger display inside The Hut.

My idea is to present a short history of the Conservation Society's role and achievements in conservation issues over the years and to highlight the current issues which we consider relevant to the future integrity of the regional environment, with the theme "We saved it!" or "We did it!" and "We can do it again!"

I am looking for material (photos, old pamphlets and historical detail) which will

illustrate what we did and show the natural areas preserved.

Historical issues I am working on are:

- The old Hut—especially photos of the interior and people who worked there
- Construction and maintenance of bushwalking tracks (Nature Trail, etc)
- The Clutha coal mining conflict
- Limestone mining in Colong Caves area
- The first AGL gas pipeline proposal
- The Land Preservation Fund, and BMCS acquisition of land in the Kanangra-Boyd area.

Some of the current issues are:

- Impacts of increasing subdivision and development
- Protection of high conservation value native forests in NSW
- Blue Mountains for World Heritage

If you can contribute any material, or add any issues to this list please ring Linda on 047.82.1291.—Linda Thomas.

From the Mailbag Public Meeting

Blue Mountains Greens are holding a public meeting to discuss mountains-related environmental issues at 7.30 pm on 20 September at Lawson Health Centre. The meeting will be attended by Ian Cohen, MLC. Enquiries to 82.1635.

Knotts Swamp

This Kings Tableland swamp suffered partial fire damage during recent hazard reduction activity. It has been suggested that a biodiversity study be carried out to make a comparison between the burnt and unburnt portions. If you are interested in performing this work, please contact Hugh Paterson on 047-51-2303.

Tree Preservation Order

Council has recently decided to review its Tree Preservation Policy "as a matter of urgency". (Council meeting 16/7/96). This would appear to be a positive move as many of us involved in conservation matters have been talking for some time of the need to extend the policy to cover **all vegetation**.

However the resolution that Council passed along with this review does not look too positive for the future of the trees, let alone other vegetation. The other motion was to receive "a report on the ramifications of deferring any pending or future legal action until the policy is reviewed". That sounds like open slather to me!

It is not known just when that report will be discussed by Council. So don't wait, let all your ward councillors (at least) know how you feel about protecting all

native vegetation, including the trees! You can ring or write—just a short note is best.

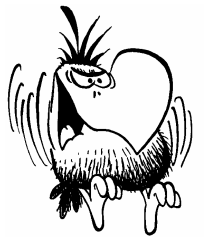
We need a stronger policy, not a weaker one, and a council prepared to enforce it with legal action.—Lyndal Sullivan.

Weed of the Month

Cootamundra Wattle (*Acacia baileyana*)

A native of Cootamundra, this wattle is a popular garden tree. It is fast-growing and farmers have found it to be a useful tree to make windbreaks.

The problem is that it seeds readily and in the Blue Mountains tends to invade adjoining bushland. The Blue Mountains has its own species of wattle which fit into the natural succession of plants. A large non-native wattle takes the place of other native plants. Living in a National Park, we have a responsibility not to grow plants which will invade bushland.



Don't grow it. **Who needs to grow a weed!**

September General Meeting

The guest Speaker on Friday September 27 will be Joyce Moffitt of the Bathurst Conservation Society who will speak about Mount Airlie. The meeting at The Hut starts at 7.30. Visitors are welcome.

NPWS Address

Ian Brown and Sue Morrison from NPWS addressed the August general meeting. Ian spoke about the work that NPWS had carried out on the walking tracks in the area since the Jamison escarpment had been included in the National Park in 1987. Sue spoke about the planning activity that was being carried out, and the Plan of Management for the Blue Mountains National Park that would result. This plan, to go on public exhibition in late 1996, would cover all aspects of Park management — native flora and fauna protection, hazard reduction, feral animal and weed control, visitor safety and education, fire trail and walking track (Continued on page 2)



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Land Use Report

Voluntary Code of Practice for

Residents:

Recent discussions involving BMCS and other bodies have led us closer to developing a Manual booklet that would be available to existing and intending residents. The booklet would explain legal responsibilities and ethically desirable practices that arise for people living near natural bush. It would bring together topics that have been subject to fragmented publicity efforts in the past.

Topics so far nominated for the booklet include:

- Companion animals
- Release of fluids into drains
- Green waste disposal
- Weed control
- Planting natives and avoidance of fertilisers
- Recycling
- Tree preservation
- Impacts on nearby bush of mowing, dumping, etc.
- Keeping motor vehicles and motor cycles out of the bush
- Covering soil piles
- Minimising erosion problems
- Fire prevention.

If you would like to suggest further topics please send them to Don Morison, PO Box 170, Katoomba 2780.

Draft Regional Environment Plan 20

— Affecting major planning decisions in all Hawkesbury-Nepean areas including Blue Mountains, this draft is on display at Council offices plus Sydney and Parramatta Offices of DUA & Planning.

Submission close 27 September 1996. Fax (02)9891-3965 or Reply Paid 34, Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, PO Box 404, Parramatta 2124.

BMCS Planning Sub-committee is preparing a submission.

Sewerage

BMCS is writing to Bob Debus MP about implications of the major push towards sewerage connections he recently announced.

Mt Sion Park, Glenbrook

BMCS is actively opposing the push by some Councillors to sell part of this part for residential subdivision.

— Don Morison.



NPWS Address (Continued from page 1)

maintenance, to name a few.

During the discussion session, there was focus on the walking track plan, particularly the need for regular maintenance of recently rebuilt tracks, and the need for improvement in the condition of longer, less used, tracks in the Jamison and Grose Valleys.

The meeting was a good opportunity for members to learn about the future directions for Park management, and to have informal discussions with the NPWS representatives over supper. The Society places a high importance on a good working relationship with NPWS, and will be working to ensure that the current good relationship continues.

Australia's Environment

Australia's first independent report into the state of our environment was recently launched in Canberra. The project, which took two years to complete and involved 200 scientists and experts in a range of fields, establishes an important tradition: independent reporting TO government not BY government.

There are a number of conclusions in the report that offer us challenges but some also give us a sense of national pride. Australia has a beautiful, diverse and often unique environment. We have made some advances in the last decade in protecting it but, as the report highlights, serious problems continue to exist and a great deal of work still needs to be done.

Seven key areas of Australia's environment were assessed in the State of the Environment Report. Our most pressing environmental problem is loss of biodiversity through habitat destruction and modification. The report states: 'Every ecosystem in and around Australia, with the possible exception of the deep ocean, has been modified in some way, with varying impacts on biodiversity'.

The major impediment to the protection of our biodiversity is our lack of knowledge. For example, Australia is home to one million species, but less than 15 per cent have been described. The report also concludes that our system of protected areas is 'patchy', with many areas of high diversity inadequately protected.

(Jim Downey, *Habitat Australia*, Aug. 1996)

Hinchinbrook

Hinchinbrook Channel is fringed with ribbons of mangrove forests and contains extensive seagrass meadows, endangered turtles, vulnerable dugongs and endangered dolphins. It flows between the mainland and Hinchinbrook Island, the largest island National Park in the world, about half way between Cairns and Townsville, within the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.

Plans for a 1500-2000 bed resort and a 234 berth marina with dredged channel and breakwater at Oyster Point, adjacent to the Hinchinbrook Channel, were quashed by the Federal Labor Government. The new coalition, under pressure from the

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Queensland Government, is likely to reverse this decision.

Construction and maintenance dredging for the marina would destroy seagrasses in the Channel and displace the dugongs, turtles and dolphins. Powered vessels would increase the threat of fatal boat strike to dugongs and turtles. There would be enormous pressure to lift or remove current visitation quotas to the Island.

The Australian Conservation Council and Queensland environmental bodies have launched a legal fund to enable court action to prevent construction of the resort. Grounds for the challenge are based on Australia's obligations under the Commonwealth Endangered Species Act and as a signatory to World Heritage Convention.

We can help! Write to John Howard PM, Parliament House, Canberra 2600. Donations to ACF Hinchinbrook Fighting Fund (post to 340 Gore Street, Fitzroy, Vic 3065) are tax-deductible.

Join the A.C.F.

As our vast and beautiful continent becomes more over-populated, previously untouched areas come under human pressure for development and exploitation.

Quite often there are not the people or resources locally to fight for the preservation of these remote and special places. Quite often community groups need outside help with their campaigns.

The Australian Conservation Foundation, with over 80,000 members and supporters, is a strong political voice for the environment.

ACF's excellent bi-monthly magazine, *Habitat Australia*, is full of interesting articles and raises important environmental issues which are not reported in the media.

Copies of *Habitat Australia* are at BMCS office at The Hut. Obtain your own copies of *Habitat Australia* and help defend the environment. Join the ACF. Send your name, address and phone number to Membership Department, Australian Conservation Foundation, 340 Gore Street, Fitzroy 3065. Individual \$49, Concession \$34, Household \$59, and Junior Membership \$10 (*Bilby Bulletin* 4 times a year).

Welcome to New Members

Millie Rogers, Katoomba; Shirley Rusk, Wentworth Falls; Anne Merton, Wentworth Falls; Wilf Hilder and Gretel Woodward, Allawah; Paul Stevens, Richmond; Ruth McCartney, Lawson; Megan Birmingham, Glenbrook; John Curtain and Naomi Estelle, Katoomba; John and Diedre Phipps, Wentworth Falls; C & K Faulder, Leura.

Membership Enquiries: The Society is keen to have new members who are concerned about the welfare of the Blue Mountains natural environment. Contact the membership secretary, Ross Coster, telephone (047) 59.1247, FAX 59.1095, or write to P.O. Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782.

Fall at Mount Victoria

Fellow nursery workers and other BMCS members wish a speedy recovery to Mary Shaw who was flown to Nepean Hospital after a serious fall whilst bushwalking on Saturday August 24.

Mary was on the track towards Victoria Falls when she slipped and fell approximately 30 metres. It is believed that she has multiple fractures in her hip and a collapsed lung.

Latest news is that after a hip operation Mary hopes to be transferred to Katoomba Hospital. She would be pleased to see visitors.

Living with Wildlife

It's that time of the year again — Magpie breeding season.

Magpies are very territorial. The early-morning carolling duets are a declaration of territory. All through the year family groups defend their territory against other magpies. In the spring, females nest while a dominant male defends them and their territory against intruders and predators. Without his protection they rarely succeed in raising their young.

The occasional magpie will defend his territory with such zeal that he attacks everything that moves!

The good news is that he will only do it until the eggs have hatched and the babies are old enough to leave the nest—about six weeks. But six weeks can be a very long

time when the magpie has decided that you and your family are intruders in *his* garden or in *his* local park. How can you (and the kids) survive those six weeks?

Magpies will always attack from behind, and will rarely make contact—the swoop and the clicking beak is a threat. Wear a hat (Akruba's are good), or try holding a branch or an umbrella above your

head and the bird will fly above it (don't wave it at the Magpie; it will only make him madder). Protect the kids by having them wear bike helmets (or ice-cream buckets with eyes painted on the back).

As a last resort, the police or NPWS may shoot a marauding magpie—a tough way to treat the neighbours. After all, **we do live in a National Park!!**

A SONG OF WIND—by Will Lawson

Hark to the song of the scattering, scurrying,
Blustering, bullying, bellowing, hurrying
Wind!
Over the hills it comes, laughing and rollicking,
Curling and whirling, flying and frolicking,
Spinning the clouds that are scattered and thinned
And shouting a song
As it gallops along —
A song that is nothing but wind.

Waking the willows that hang their leaves listlessly,
Bending the poplars it roars on resistlessly —
Wind!
In the long grass on the slopes, as it passes, it
Billows and waves and scatters and masses it,
Shaking the fences so solidly pinned,
And howling a song
That is noisy and strong —
A song that is nothing but wind.
When the leaves of the autumn are falling and

yellowing,
We hear the wild song of the bullying, bellowing
Wind.
It leaps from its lair at a pace that is passionate,
And rends the soft clouds that have aided to fashion it—
Thrashing them fiercely, as slaves who have sinned,
With its many-lashed thong,
And yelling a song —
A song that is nothing but wind.
This is the song of the galloping, hurrying,
Gusty, and dusty, and whirling, and worrying
Wind.
Over the hills it comes, laughing and rollicking,
Yelling and swooping, and flying, and frolicking,
Shaking the fences so solidly pinned,
And shrieking a song
As it gallops along —
A terrible song that is Wind.

In the Bush

Some external force stirs Bunyip from his water-hole as soon as he settles in from his last prow. This month a visit to the Royal National Park, where rainforest, heath and magnificent coastal views may be experienced in the space of an hour's

walk.

We lunched one day at a friend's home—a 'shack' overlooking South Era beach. No sooner were the lunches unpacked than the Rusa deer appeared for a share. For a short while feeding deer by hand was a novelty but we soon viewed them as pests. They were introduced late last century and are now not at all popular with the National Park as they browse all fresh growth on the moors.

Enough public admirers prevent any complete eradication of these animals. The same goes for the numerous huts on North and South Era beaches. Some love them, some loathe them, and so they remain until some pressure group gains complete

dominance and so has its will.

The Gynea Lily (Doryanthes excelsas) is a distinctive plant we don't see up this way, but clumps of them are quite common in sheltered areas of the park. Their red to pink trumpet shaped flowers surmounting a thick stem were a pleasure to see. On the moors which had been so badly burnt were hundreds of spears of grass-trees (Xanthorrhoea) with enough flower heads to attract the New Holland Honeyeaters. We had melodic as well as visual pleasure from all quarters.

Older members of the Society may be interested to learn we rendezvoused with Grace and Fred Bayley at Minnamurra Rainforest. From the information centre a splendidly made board walk runs by a creek leading up to the Falls. It winds and climbs its gentle way over areas which normally would leave one scratched and torn. Thank heavens for National Parks! The Wollongong area is booming as industry and population continue to expand. The few surviving natural pockets would vanish but for being preserved in National Parks

Closer home. Seven members attended and I think enjoyed the programmed walk

over the western half of Bruce's Walk. There was a biting westerly wind but the warmth in the valleys made the walkers forget the rigours of the ridges. Jim Smith may be gratified to learn this track is still quite discernible and offers no navigational problems. It is a good sunny winter walk and unrestricted sunlight pours across the valleys draining northward to the Grose.

With hindsight the chopping off on this walk of track railings during the war for scrap metal seems like vandalism but common sense goes out the window when war begins.—The Bunyip.

Minnamurra

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Walks have been graded: 1-3 easy, 4-7 medium, 8-10 harder.
If in doubt contact the leader. **Walkers must carry 1 litre of water.**

SEPTEMBER

- 01 (Sun) **Bushwalk—Pope's Glen to Evans Lookout. *Put a Spring in your step!***
Meet at the War Memorial, opposite Blackheath Railway Station, at 9 am. Duration 5 hours. Grade 5.
Contact Chris Woods 82.3419.
- 02 (Mon) **Leisure Walk—Red Gum Forest.** Meet at the end of DeQuincy Road, Bullaburra, at 9.30. Contact Lee Tredinnick 57.4030. (Phone Lee if you need transport from the station.)
- 09 (Mon) **Leisure Walk—Wall's Ledge.** Meet at Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre, Gardner's Crescent, at 9.30. Contact Norah Gaynor 87.6071.
- 16 (Mon) **Leisure Walk—Towards Blue Mountain.** Meet Cnr. GWH and Queens Road, Lawson at 9.30. Contact Christine Davies 87.7246.
- 18 (Wed) **Bushwalk—The Grand Canyon. *Spring into action!*** Meet at the War Memorial, opposite Blackheath Railway Station, at 10 am. Duration about 5 hours. Grade 7. Contact Christine Davies 87.7246.
- 21 (Sat) **Bushwalk—Rocket Point. *Spring along the cliff-tops!*** Meet at the Conservation Hut at 9.45 a.m. Duration 2-3 hours. Grade 4. Contact Les Coyne 57.3327.
- 23 (Mon) **Leisure Walk—Braeside Walk.** Meet at Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre at 9.30. Contact Daphne Rawling 87.8567.
- 24 (Tues) **Committee Meeting** at The Hut at 7 pm.
- 27 (Fri) **General Meeting** at The Hut at 7.30 pm. Guest Speaker Joyce Moffitt of Bathurst Conservation Society will speak about Mount Airley. [Special General Meeting at 7.15, to approve changes to our Constitution. — draft enclosed with this newsletter.]
- 30 (Mon) **Leisure Walk—Board Walk at Leura.** Meet at West Street (off Great Western Highway), Wentworth Falls, at 9.30 to arrange a car swap. Contact Heather Hastie 84.1297.

OCTOBER

- 06 (Sun) **Bushwalk—Ruined Castle.** Meet outside Gearins Hotel, Katoomba, at 9.30. Duration 6 hours. Grade 8. Contact Chris Woods 82.3419. (Steep descent and ascent of Golden Stairs).
- 14 (Mon) **Leisure Walk—The Walls Lookout.** Meet at Mount Victoria Station at 9.30. Contact Norah Gaynor 87.6071.
- 16 (Wed) **Historical Walk—Woodford to Linden.** Meet at Woodford Station (south side) at 10 am. Contact Alan Macauley 39.2767. Grade 4.
- 19 (Sat) **Bushwalk—To be advised.**
- 21 (Mon) **Leisure Walk—The Hanging Garden.** Meet at Wentworth Falls Station Carpark (nearest Highway) at 9.30. Contact Christine Davies 87.7246.
- 20 (Sun) **Garden Inspection and Morning Tea.** Join members of SGAP at the home of Rachel Makinson. Meet 10 am at Sunset Rock carpark, end of Grandview Road, Mount Victoria. Contact Rachel Makinson 87-1302. (Phone Christine Davies 87-7246 if you require transport from Mount Victoria Station).
- 28 (Mon) **Leisure Walk—Echo Point (Lawson).** Meet at Lawson Bowling Club, North Lawson, at 9.30. Contact John Gibbs 82.6509.

Walk Leaders Needed!

The Society has three bushwalks each month — on the first Sunday, the third Wednesday, and the third Saturday. More leaders are needed. If you would like to lead a walk phone Chris Woods on 82-3419 and suggest a date and a walk. Chris will be able to help if you need suggestions for walks.

Did You Know?

Conventional toilets contribute to 25% of an average household's waste water. Even dual flushes use at least 3 litres a flush, while older models use up to 12 litres at a time.

The average person uses about 50 litres of water a day to dispose of 150 grams of faeces and 1.5 litres of urine. (*Byron Bay waste water study*).

DRIP DROP by Margaret Bradford

CHORUS: Drip, drop, drip, drop, wasting water's got to stop
Drop, drip, drop, drip, turn that tap off quick.

Water's precious can't you see, it's a rare commodity.

Creeks and rivers dry up fast. You've got to make that water last and last and...CHORUS.
Mulch that garden, watch it grow when roots stay damp deep down below.

Sun can't dry out soil underneath, you won't have to hose for weeks and weeks and...
CHORUS.

Plant those natives, watch them thrive. In hot dry Aussie they'll survive.

Why water lawns to make 'em grow, then on the weekend you've got to mow and mow
and...CHORUS.

Keep that shower short and sweet, just wet yourself from head to feet.

Don't stand under there all day. You might develop scales and swim away and...CHORUS.
A cup of water's quite enough to clean your teeth with, that the stuff.

Don't let that tap run, use a plug, don't want to hear that water glug and glug and...
CHORUS.

Flushing loos use too much water, don't flush it more than you oughta.

If it's yellow, let it mellow, but if it's brown then flush it down and down and...CHORUS.

(Margaret recent visited the Mountains to sing at Blackheath Folk. This song will soon be recorded on a tape of Kids' Songs which Margaret has written and collected.)

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