

LOWER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION

SOCIETY NEWSLETTER.

JANUARY 1979

P.O. BOX 119, Springwood, 2777.

President; B. Bramsen Ph. 512787 Secretary; A. Hanley 394079

NEXT MEETING: Friday, 9th February, 1979 at Glenbrook Primary School at 8p.m. Mick Dark would like to propose a motion to change the Constitution in order to limit the length of time a president can serve the society.

It is hoped to have an audiovisual program on the old historical buildings of Penrith, Castlereagh and Mulgoa.

PLEASE NOTE that this is the first meeting of the year, and that the January activity has been changed to a walk to Water Nymph Dell at Wentworth Falls.

NEXT EXCURSION Saturday, 13th January. Bring a picnic lunch to spend a cool day at Water Nymph Dell, an easy walk. Meet at the Wentworth Falls shopping centre at 10 a.m.

FUTURE MEETINGS AND EXCURSION PROGRAM.

February, 11th. Sunday. A visit to a fernery nursery at Mt. Tomah, together with a visit to Diamond Hill at Kurrajong, the site of the controversial mining application. Meet at Glenbrook Community Theatre 9a.m.

February, 18th. Sunday. The N.P.A. (Berrima Branch) walk to Norton's Basin. Meet at the top of the Basin - turn off the Silverdale Road at the top of the first hill after Blaxland Crossing at Wallacia. There is an entrance to an operating quarry on the right. 10.15 a.m. Bring a picnic lunch and swimming togs.

March, 3rd. Saturday night. Spotlighting trip to Murphy's Glen. Come around 6p.m. for an evening barbeque. For those wanting transport down into the Glen itself, meet on the road into the Park.

March, 11th. Sunday. A walk with Peter Thomas, who will be able to enlighten us on the birdlife in an area yet to be arranged.

April, 20th. Friday night. Meeting at Glenbrook School, at 8 p.m. to see Dave Noble's magnificent slides of the Colo Wilderness. This is something really special, not to be missed, and will open a new world of Blue Mountain scenery. Bring along your friends, and make it a worthwhile night.



April, 21st - 22nd. Saturday and Sunday. A camp at Bargo's Wirrambirra Nature Reserve. There is a lot of weeding needed to be done, so one of the days will be a work day, and the other day will be spent walking. Details yet to be finalised.

May, 13th. Sunday. Walk to Bedford Pool, Terrace and Victor Falls. Meet at Hazelbrook Station, 10a.m.

June, 8th. Friday night. Meeting at Glenbrook Primary School at 8 p.m. Phillip Simpfendorfer will again enthral us with his beautiful photography, on his recent trip to India.

June 16th - 18th. Long Weekend camp to Munghorn Gap near Mudgee. Details to be arranged.

August, 10th Friday night, Meeting at Glenbrook Primary School at 8 p.m. to hear a talk given by John Argent, Lecturer in Ecology at the Nepean College of Advanced Education.

The Working Bees at the school Nature Corner will continue throughout the year, on dates to be arranged, and also at the Glenbrook Lagoon, where help is needed in a weeding program.

#### OTHER DATES OF INTEREST.

There are a number of National Parks Association Walks being held in the Mountains which members may like to join.

January 21st. Bob Turner's Track -- Colo River. An 8km walk with time for swimming. Contact Brian James (02) 7474659

February 17th - 18th Colo River, camping by the River. Short walks and lots of swimming. Contact Janet Lynch (02) 486850.

July 13th - 15th. Easy day walks around Kanagara Tops, Boyd River and Boyd Falls. Contact Martin Haley 513037 or Karl Bossard 210712. Hosts are the Springwood Bushwalking Club.

Until January 31st, the Total Environment Centre is holding a display of books, for sale, on the Environment. Third Floor, The Argyle Arts Centre, 18 Argyle Street, Sydney.

February 10th. IVY MARKET at Springwood Civic Centre on Saturday morning from 9a.m. to 12 noon. Come and join the fun or lend a hand on the Society's stall.



## FINANCES.

The second stall held at the Christmas Ivy Market was a great success again, earning more funds from the sale of native plants etc. If you have any saleable items, they would be most welcome, or if you could help on the stall itself, it would be appreciated.

Following a letter of resignation, John Hibbard, (the secretary of the Nature Conservation Council for the past two and a half years,) explained the need for more monetary support for Council, in order to continue its highly respected work. It has been decided that some of our funds from the Ivy Market will be directed to the N.C.C. The Council depends on its member societies and government grants to finance its operation. The society would like to be able to send a reasonable cheque on behalf of its members half way through the year.

On the 16th December, the Australian Government announced a cut in funding to voluntary conservation groups, from a \$2 to \$1 subsidy, down to a dollar for dollar basis. Said the Minister responsible, "Protection of the National Estate is not the responsibility of the government alone". The N.C.C. urges Conservation groups to oppose this move by every means available, pointing out to the Federal Government the vast contributions made by voluntary groups to protect the National Estate.

## GLENBROOK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Towards the end of last year, Glenbrook school held a "bush-a-thon", whereby groups of children were taken on a walk down through Glenbrook Gorge, then along to the Jellybean Pool. At intervals along the track, people were stationed to talk about the geology, plant succession, plant and animal life of the bushland. After completing a series of questions, the children finished the day with a swim and a bar-be-que lunch. The day was such a success, that similar excursions are planned for this year, and the headmaster, Mr. Frank Ley is encouraging other schools in the district to partake in a like program.

At the speech night at the Glenbrook Primary School, Jill Dark made a presentation, on behalf of the society, of two books on camping and bushcraft, to Christopher English, to further encourage his enthusiasm for the outdoors and the natural environment.

Congratulations are extended to Chris.

GREAT WESTERN HIGHWAY, BLAXLAND. The D.M.R. have answered a query by the society concerning the poor landscaping of the highway in Blaxland following road widening there. The department have further widening to complete, following which, native plants will be used almost exclusively to landscape the sections affected. The society has been asked for suggestions on appropriate species to be planted.



## PENRITH LAKES SCHEME.

For some number of years now, a feasibility study has been underway, in co-operation with Penrith City Council, by the Planning Environment Commission, Gutteridge, Haskins and Davey, (consulting engineers), and The Quarrymasters Association representing a group of five firms now engaged in extracting sand and gravel in the Castlereagh area, with the view to reclaiming the crater-marked farmland by the implementation of a recreational Lakes Scheme. This scheme involves the combination of these quarry pits to create eight mile of Lake immediately adjacent the Nepean River extending northwards from Bird's Eye Corner on the River. Much of the rich farming and horsestud country along the banks of the Nepean, steeped in history featuring many valuable and Classified early homesteads, has been purchased by the gravel companies in anticipation of further massive extractive operations.

The Town Clerk has stated that the Penrith City Council only commit itself to the scheme subject to the following conditions; environmental standards, public exhibition and consideration of public views, water supply of acceptable quantity and quality and supporting legislation to ensure continuity of supply to acceptable limits and arrangements satisfactory to Council for the management and administration of the scheme.

Mr. Mulock has shown great concern over the whole proposal for the Lakes Scheme, and particularly the prospect of widespread damage due to flooding of the Nepean River, when the water level can rise some 20 to 30 feet, also affecting the market gardens in the Nepean Valley. "Special regard should be paid to ensure there would be no possibility of substantial damage to the surrounding areas", he said.

Some time ago, Mr. Mulock was in favour of an exhaustive top level inquiry, wherein technical advice should be obtained to make sure the Lakes Scheme was the best and only scheme which could be used to reclaim the area. "Such systems had been used in the U.S.A. and the Continent, but were also other methods of reclamation". There is a great need for specialised knowledge of extractive industries in the Planning Environment Commission, who, through lack of such expertise, "are willing to accept what has been suggested by gravel companies", said Mr. Mulock.

Now, as Minister for Mineral Resources and Development, Mr. Mulock has continued to voice his concern for a balanced approach towards Mining and the Environment. He stated that: "The government's role, in deciding mining and environmental issues, must be to ensure on the one hand, that an industry vital to the economy of the State is not irresponsibly damaged by unreasonable pressures exerted by environmental interests, and on the other hand to ensure that the natural beauty of our State is not despoiled by mining operators enjoying 'open slather'".



Mr. Mulock's record in opposing coal mining in the Blue Mountains, and in opposing the spread of residential development on the eastern escarpment is to be highly commended, as is his concern over the development of this Lakes Scheme.

The proposal that was exhibited for public comment at Penrith Council two years ago, involved a total area covered by the scheme of 1821 ha., of which 728 ha. will be recreational water, including a large Yatching Lake, and smaller Power Craft, Small Craft and Wild Life Lakes, along with a Rowing Course and a Lakes Village housing 12,000 people. This is perhaps one of the greatest schemes to come before a local government body, and needs very careful consideration.

Of great concern is the problem of finding a suitable water supply for the maintenance of the Lakes. Five million litres of water will be lost daily through evaporation alone. Already the horrifying suggestion of damming either Glenbrook Creek or Erskine's Creek has been tabled in a report to be considered by Government Ministers of the appropriate departments. The Total Environment Centre is very concerned that this has even been suggested, and has objected strongly to the proposals, as did the society in a letter to Mr. Peter Anderson, M.L.A. early in December.

It is extremely important that any objections to these proposals be heard now, before any decisions are made, and which become very difficult to reverse in the future when the event is about to take place. A DAM on either Glenbrook Creek or Erskines Creek would destroy the very essence of the Glenbrook section of the National Park.

If you are concerned about the impact of these proposals, it is suggested that you write now to Mr. Mulock, Mr. Peter Anderson and especially Mr. Paul Landa under whose ministry comes the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Is this Lakes Scheme the best course of action for the beautiful Nepean Valley?

#### WEEDS

With the ever increasing sightings of privot, broom, honeysuckle, white and goldern lucerne in our bushland, the society has decided to write to the Local Government Association and the National Herbarium to suggest that an Ecologist be appointed to the Herbarium, to advise local Councils on the problems of management and ways best to deal with weed eradication.

#### THE KOEL

Another migratory bird whose distinctive "Coo-ee" call has been ringing in the bushland since September, is the Koel. Also known as the Rainbird and Black Cuckoo, its habitat is in the brushes and forest country of Timor, New Guinea and the Molu. Islands down to north eastern Australia, flying south for the breeding season, to head northwards again in March. The male bird is not unlike the Satin Bowerbird in



colouring, although it features a distinctive red eye and a long set of tail feathers. Also like the female Satin Bowerbird, the female Koel is brown speckled with an iridescent blue on her head and wings. The two species can be easily mistaken. However, the Koel is a larger bird with a longer tail, often being pursued by other birds, especially the Friarbirds, who act as foster parents for the Cuckoo.

#### BLUE MOUNTAINS PLANNING SCHEME.

The determined Blue Mountains Planning Scheme is now on display at the Council offices at Springwood and Katoomba. It will be some months before the plan is finally gazetted, and people with an interest in the scheme are invited to view the determined zonings. There have been some significant changes made in zoning designations and requirements.

There is no longer a Non-urban Zoning; it is replaced by a Rural Zoning divided into a number of categories. About 70% of the previous Non-Urban Zoning has been designated as Rural "A (1)", on which a dwelling may be erected on any existing allotment, irrespective of size, providing arrangements suitable to Council are made for the provision of services. Water tanks are allowed in such areas where there is no town water available, but an unreasonable size requirement of 90,000 litre tanks would create a drastic visual impact, and moves are being made by Council to have this minimum volume reduced.

A Rural "A (2)" zoning in the Megalong Valley requires a minimum of 120 ha. per lot, virtually precluding further subdivision of the Valley.

Along the cliff faces in parts of Wentworth Falls, Leura and Katoomba, a Rural "A (3)" zoning prohibits the erection of new dwellings, except on the first 120 feet of existing lots. Also, parts of Wentworth Falls, Leura, Katoomba, Blackheath and Meadow Bath have been included in the National Estate and any dwellings to be constructed in these areas must comply with the same conditions that apply to the Eastern Escarpment.

Along the Bells Line of Road, around Mt. Victoria and Mt. Tomah, the Rural "B" zoning will prohibit subdivision of land, with a road frontage, into small acreages. Whilst the previous minimum was 5 acres, it is now 100 acres (40 ha). However, dwellings are still permitted on existing lots.

Of interest in the local area is the changing of the zoning of Mt. Zion park at Glenbrook from Residential to Open Space, and the unfortunate retention of the Residential zoning of the Crown Land between Lapstone and Glenbrook. With recent increased surveying activity in that area, it appears that renewed efforts are needed to put forward the case for the land being kept as a reserve and a school field study centre. Springwood's Birdwood Gully has been changed to Open Space also.

Don't forget the next meeting at Glenbrook Primary School on 9th February at 8 pm, and the next walk is this coming Saturday, 13th January. The meeting for January has been cancelled.