



# Lower Blue Mountains Conservation Society

## NEWSLETTER.

FEBRUARY, 1981.

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### NEXT MEETING.

The next meeting will be held at the Teacher's Centre, at the Glenbrook Infants School, at Ross Street, at 8.00 pm FRIDAY, 13th FEBRUARY. Guest Speaker will be Wieslaw Lehash, who will be looking at the question of Mining in National Parks. (see further article in this newsletter) This is one of the most threatening proposals for National Parks in N.S.W. and you are urged to come and hear more and lend your support in action that needs to be taken.

The meeting for March will be the 13th, Friday night, at 8.00 pm. at the Teacher's Resource Centre, Glenbrook.

### IVY MARKET.

Saturday, 14th February. If you have anything that could be sold at our stall, please contact Aleen Hanley, 394079.

The money raised from this market enables the society to contribute to groups fighting conservation battles throughout Australia. Without this income, the society would be unable to fulfill this most important role. As always, our thanks to Aleen and Jill Dark and all the other volunteers who work so hard for each Ivy Market.

### WALKS AND TALKS.

At the last meeting, a few suggestions were put forward for guest speakers and walks for the coming year. However, we need more!! Have you any ideas???? Please share them with us. You might know of a favourite bushwalk that no else has thought of mentioning. Do you know someone at work, or in your neighbourhood, who could give a short talk of interest to the group on meeting nights? Bring along your ideas to the next meeting, or ring Wendy or Besse.

### NEWSLETTER.

Can anyone help with the photocopying of this newsletter? This easy to read, clean format of our newsletter will have to be replaced with duplications, as in the past, as Xerox machines are making the production of the newsletter an expensive exercise. If you can assist, please ring the "editor".

### EXCURSION

SUNDAY, March 15th. A walk is planned to Wall's Cave near Blackheath. This is a fascinating area, and well worth the short walk down to this mighty cave. It is not too steep an ascent. Then it is planned to continue on to Evan's Lookout to see the planting undertaken by members of S.G.A.P. and this society. Meet at the corner of Evan's Lookout Road and the Great Western Highway, just before the township of Blackheath, at 10.30 a.m.



## FLORABELLA PASS WALK.

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On Saturday, 22nd November, 1980, a walk through Pippa Pass and Florabella Pass was a very pleasant outing, and not a difficult walk. The youngest Conservationist on that walk, not quite 3 years, did very well indeed. The more verdant area of bush was Pippa Pass, where softer vegetation such as boronias, prostantheras, callicoma, and ferns, provided the undergrowth. Some Boroni frazeri was discovered. On Florabella Pass, the more open hillside showed a profusion of flannel flowers. Like everything else in the bush, these were obviously suffering from the prolonged drought, but although flowers were small, they made a great show. Many plants of Boronia floribunda were seen in the sandy soil; but all were small and had not flowered this spring. There were notable flowerings of Goodenia, Stylidium (Trigger Plants), and some rather massive yellow blossoms in shadier corners of a soft yellow shrub of unknown name. On these later walks, we have sadly missed our botanist-ornithologist member Jill. There is so much we hear or see, and cannot name. (We hope Jill's leg will soon be up to bushwalking again.)

On the rise out of the Pass at Warrimoo, the odd Christmas bush showed. Many plants of Christmas Bells are still there, but no buds were showing in this dry year.

Birds were very quiet on that still hot day. One lyre bird was heard in the distance and an occasional Whip-bird, and little grey fantails took a look at us from their bush hides.

Apart from the many little skinks so often seen the only animal was a lost domestic dog - old, hungry, and travel worn. It was so weak and emaciated that one member fed it most of his lunch and several others gave it tit-bits. Dick Phillipps carried the poor animal from the first creek (where we sat down for morning tea) right through the Pass. It was handed over to the R.S.P.C.A. at Warrimoo, and an owner eventually found.

by Besse Bramsen.

## WASHPOOL RAINFOREST

Washpool is the most important area of rainforest in Australia.

Washpool is the last area of unlogged rainforest of Coachwood in Australia, and therefore the World.

Washpool is the last rainforest wilderness in New South Wales.

Washpool is the last area of rainforest in N.S.W. considered by scientists large enough to be viable in the long term.

The Total Environment Centre and the Australian Conservation Foundation, with money from a bequest, are now carrying out a fifteen month study of rainforest fauna, and when completed, will comprise the best information on Rainforest Fauna in the Washpool Area. To date, there has been no adequate biological or zoological study completed.

An Environmental Impact Study on the logging proposal was published just before Christmas, and submissions will be received until March. These submissions will be received, but from previous statements from Mr. Day, (Minister for Decentralization and Development), and the Forestry Commission to the effect that logging will take place following the E.I.S. procedures, it seems that little notice will be taken of what the submissions have to say. Furthermore, the Forestry Commission expects to be allowed to adjudicate those submissions on its own proposal to log the rainforest.

The Total Environment Centre and other groups are insisting on a full independent public inquiry instituted under the Dept. of Planning and Environment. Concurrent with such an inquiry, the Government should also state that it has not already made up its mind about Washpool, giving some hope of a more bone fide inquiry. At the same time, demand must be made for the National Park option for Washpool be considered.

It is also hoped that a Commission will be set up to consider the total question of rainforest logging, with a view to employment in industry even though rainforest logging ceases immediately, and that there will be a restructuring of the Forestry Commission with a new Forestry Act. It is hoped that then the Forestry Commission will become the guardians of our natural forests.



rather than their liquidators. Being asked, too, is that all rainforests be immediately placed under control of the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

We are being asked to write to our local M.P.'s and to Cabinet Ministers giving the strongest possible support to the retention of the Washpool rainforest.

Washpool is the last decent rainforest we have in N.S.W.

#### MINING AND NATIONAL PARKS - "A Resolution of Conflicts"?????

A well presented booklet, called "Resolution of Conflicts between Underground Extraction of Coal Resources and Deication and Management of Areas as National Parks and Nature Reserves. Statement of Policy" has been published by the Department of Environment and Planning. Complete with full page black and white photos of beautiful mountain scenery, this document has been prepared by the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Department of Mineral Resources as a response to an agreement reached between the Ministers upon the dedication of the Wollemi National Park in April, 1979. Public comment on this report is invited.

Public outcry and indignation would be more appropriate. The book, which tends to lull the unwary into a false sense of security about the protection of our National Parks, is some 60 pages long, and may be examined by anyone interested in more details than presented here.

Under this mining statement, mining could be permitted in existing Parks and Nature Reserves, including the Blue Mountains, Royal, Ku-ring-gai National Parks and proposed reserves in the Sydney Basin. Also, new national parks could be established within the Sydney Basin without necessarily excluding underground coalmines.

The statement allows for a system of zoning over the area covered by the National Park, and may be divided into four categories.

1. Special Protection Areas where no surface disturbances would be allowed. Measures would be taken to prevent subsidence. Some areas would be without depth restrictions so as to exclude mining.
2. Restricted areas where existing tracks could be kept for exploration. Ventilation shafts allowed under strict control. No new tracks allowed and helicopters would be used for access.
3. Protection Areas which would be buffer zones to "2" above. Temporary surface works for exploration and some permanent surface facilities allowed.
4. Mine Service Zones of relatively small areas (?) providing for headworks and transport facilities. Surface facilities permitted here could be small dams, pipelines, power lines, major access roads and transport routes, and head works with associated structures. It is envisaged that such areas would be about 1 kilometre square.

Indeed, envisage a cleared area of one square kilometre with the attendant structures, in a National Park!

Adoption and implementation of this policy would mean fundamental changes in the approach to National Park Management, (one wonders why bother calling them National Parks anymore?). It will also mean changes in the National Parks and Wildlife Act, the Mining Act and the Coal Mining Act.

A massive campaign is underway to persuade the Government that these proposals are not acceptable. The society has already telegraphed the appropriate Ministers, and we are asking you to write to your local M.P. and to Mr. Eric Bedford, and Mr. Ron Mulock at Parliament House, Sydney, expressing your views on the proposal.



- There is no need to consider mining in Parks when there are extensive deposits existing outside the National Parks in the Sydney Basin. Other large coal deposits are being explored, e.g. the Gunnedah Basin.
- This proposal illustrates that there is a need to curb the power of the mining companies through reform of mining legislation.
- Only 3% of N.S.W. is National Park or Nature Reserve.
- If coal was conserved and not squandered, there would be plenty of coal for N.S.W. for the next 100 years.

MINING IN NATIONAL PARKS SHOULD NOT EVEN BE CONSIDERED!!!

In allowing this concept to proceed, the Government would be abandoning the internationally accepted definition of a national park. If this proposal goes ahead, it will be the worst blow to National Parks in N.S.W.

CROWN LANDS SUBDIVISION - Dark's Common and Mitchell's Pass.

Approval has been given to subdivide Crown Land on Explorers Road, Lapstone, commonly referred to by the society as Dark's Common, into 52 lots. The society has worked for a long time to have this area remain in a natural state to allow for the establishment of a Field Study Centre attached to the Lapstone School. There is no such Field Study Centre in the Western Area, so this could become a very important centre for teaching children from a very wide area, the nature of the bushland. The society is making further attempts in this regard.

The other area of land affected is along Mitchell's Pass, very close to Lennox Bridge, where 88 lots will be created. This will be an intrusion on a beautiful valley that has to date managed to survive scarring by modern development, adding greatly to its value as a historic precinct. There is a special atmosphere that pervades this Pass, and unless a buffer zone of natural bushland is left, between the subdivision and the roadway, a very beautiful and historically important valley will be marred.

DEANII FOREST SPRINGWOOD

Recently, a group of concerned citizens, including members of our society, applied to the Blue Mountains City Council, seeking to form a 530A Committee to manage the Deanii Forest on Hawkesbury Road, Springwood. The application was refused, but a letter from Council sought our further advice on management of the forest. This is very frustrating when assistance was being offered in the form of a 530a Committee. The society is now going to contact some expert ecologists for advice and again approach Council. Also, our President, Besse Bramsen is taking a course on weeding the bush by the Joan Bradley method, and plans to use her new found knowledge in weeding the Deanii Forest.

PENRITH LAKES SCHEME.

The Penrith Lakes Scheme Corporation have published a newsletter, which, in future editions, will carry information on the progress of the Environmental Impact Studies. The Corporation "is committed to the greatest possible involvement by the community in the study and many opportunities for public input will be provided."

The first E.I.S. is planned for completion in Feb./March/April 1981, and will cover the next sequential extraction following the expiration of current consents, and will integrate the areas already worked in the last 25 years.

The second E.I.S. covering the over-all scheme and its first 7 years of operation will be released in Sept./Oct. 1981.

A number of consultants have been engaged to help prepare the E.I.S.. in the fields of Flora and Fauna, Climate and Micro-climate, Air Pollution and Noise, Archaeology, Transportation, Energy, and Recreation and Tourism.

Members could keep an eye on local papers for exhibition dates at Penrith City Council.