



Lower Blue Mountains

Conservation Society

P.O. BOX 119, SPRINGWOOD. 2777

SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

1982

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ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW DUE!

Use the form in this Newsletter to renew your membership.
Donations are always welcome.

EDITORIAL

UNITED WE STAND - DIVIDED THE TREES FALL

The conservation movement faces a daunting task - we challenge the status quo. New ideas and philosophies are always resisted - in this case quite strongly. The problems faced in South West Tasmania exemplify this. A silent resistance is an ignored resistance. Opposition needs to be noticed for change to eventuate. This requires untiring effort on the part of the conservation movement, which in turn places ever-increasing pressure on the "movements" workers. A concerted effort is required by all interested members. This newsletter outlines several practical ways you can help - don't leave all the work to a few. We can only do so much, and so much needs doing. The development applications and projects are coming thick and fast. Help us to help the environment, or indeed the trees may fall.



NEXT MEETING

FRIDAY 8TH OCTOBER

This will be the Annual General Meeting and election of office bearers. Brian Mills has resigned as Publicity Officer due to other commitments. We are sorry to lose Brian and thank him for his contribution to the Society.

WE NEED MEMBER PARTICIPATION.

There will be slides of Myall Lakes National Park in flower and a few of the Colo River below Boorai Ridge.

NOTICE OF MOTION for Annual General Meeting by Richard Phillipps
Seconded by Wendy Godfrey.

I propose that the name of the Lower Blue Mountains Conservation Society be changed to reflect the wider geographical spread of members and the far less parochial role it is evolving in the community, also the need to cover the adjoining Nepean area. For the purpose of discussion I move that we call the Society,
"The Nepean and Mountains Conservation Society".
The Name would mean more to the bodies and politicians we lobby and give more weight to our actions and opinions.

R. Phillipps.

BACKGROUND

The Society has been active in the following issues; G.B. Reef, S.W. Tasmania, Plant Variety Rights legislation, Proposed Toxic Waste Incinerator at Wetherill Park, Landuse on Newnes Plateau near Bell, B.M.C.C. Statement of Objectives, Hazard Reduction by control burning, Clearing below Elcom Transmission Lines, Development and Pollution in the Blue Mountains, Landuse on the Eastern Escarpment, Preservation of Darks Common, Appointment of Environmental Officer to B.M.C.C., Industrial Development in the Blue Mountains, Year of the Tree, Solar Access, Rainforests, Environmental Legislation, Declaration of Nuclear Free Zone for the Blue Mountains, Landscape Analysis of Housing Commission Site at Mulgoa, Penrith Quarrying(Lakes) Scheme, B.M.C.C. Elections etc, etc, etc, etc. (By no means listed in order of importance)

NOVEMBER 12TH MEETING

B.M.C.C. Alderman, David March, will be our guest speaker.
Topic; Industrial Development and other issues at members'

PAST MEETINGSJULY

A very entertaining evening with slides of Warrumbungles N. Park, Kaputar N. Park, Newnes Plateau, Colo River and Barrington Tops N. Park.

Some business was attended to.

AUGUST

Beverley Fiedler enthralled us all with magnificent slides of spiders, flowers, butterflies and numerous bugs and beetles. We extend our appreciation to Beverley and trust she will return with more at a future date.

Some business was attended to.

DON'T FORGET - OCTOBER 9 - NO DAMS MARCH and RALLY

Organised by the S.W. Tasmania Committee of N.S.W. There will be a contingent from the Society. If you want to join in, phone the Secretary for details.

ASSEMBLE SYDNEY SQUARE 10.30am

MARCH TO HYDE PARK SOUTH

RALLY 12 NOON with speakers and entertainment.

Put some sanity back into Tasmania. Support the fight to save the World's Heritage.

IN THE NEXT FEDERAL ELECTION,

We need an organiser/helpers to man the booths and urge voters to write NO DAMS on their ballot papers. It does not risk your vote. The Franklin Dam is not a state issue! That attitude is out-dated and selfish. The environment does not belong to one person, party or state. The cost of the scheme will be borne by all Australians; it is everyone's money, everyone's issue, everyone's responsibility. Imagine the outcry if plans to dam the Grose or Colo surfaced. We cannot restrict ourselves solely to parochial matters. It is a matter of conscience. Ring the Secretary if you can help or organise a NO DAMS Campaign in the next Federal election.

LOCAL EVENTS - FILM NIGHTS

OCTOBER 15 - Blaxland High School

OTHER SHOWINGS - OCTOBER 9, Merriwa Street School, Katoomba.

OCTOBER 8, Hazlebrook Primary School.

OCTOBER 13, Blackheath Rhododendron Society Garden.

DONATIONS PLEASE!

YEAR of the TREE

PROJECTS

1. Penrith City Council is considering our offer of help to improve the lack of native greenery around the Arms of Australia Inn at Emu Plains.

2. Lennox Bridge landscaping will be our big project with B.M.C.C. Anyone who can assist is most welcome. It will involve cleaning up some rubbish, weeding but mostly planting indigenous species. This is a V.I.P. Project for the Society and member participation is vital. Offers of assistance to the Secretary.

3. Jill Dark represented our group as speaker for the monthly meeting/luncheon of the Penrith View Club recently. Her topic/slides centred on the Year of the Tree.

EXCURSIONS/WALKS

OCTOBER 24 - Day walk to the Colo River via Bob Turner's Track.

Meet 10.00am opposite the Service Station at Colo Heights. This a a very rewarding walk.

NOVEMBER 21 - Excursion to Housing Commission Solar Village at Bonnyrigg.

A rep. from Solarch(University of N.S.W.) will be there to answer any questions etc.

Meet 2.00pm Cnr. Montgomery Road and Elizabeth Drive, Bonnyrigg.

CHANGES TO FORMAT OF MEETINGS

These have proved successful. The Works Committee reports to each monthly meeting and acts on new issues/guidelines from members. Any member wishing to participate in these monthly W.C. meetings is welcome but we have to keep numbers down.

EASTERN ESCARPMENT

The Society has prepared a submission to be presented at the next meeting of the Western Sydney Planning and Development

We have gone to considerable trouble over the past 10 years to stop the ad hoc onslaught of development on the escarpment. Drastic action, not procrastination, by the authorities is needed now.

Clearing below ELCOM Transmission Lines - In recent weeks members may have noticed reports in the Gazette and Penrith Press about clearing and burning operations beneath the Elcom lines on the Eastern Escarpment. A rep. of the Society, along with someone from the Escarpment Pres. Group met with Commission, contractors and B.M.C.C. on site. We succeeded in achieving a more sympathetic approach to controlling the vegetation. Elcom will now selectively lop only the tall species. Shrubs not likely to threaten the lines (eg. *Hakea* spp) were pointed out to Commission reps., who also agreed to disturb the area as little as possible by limiting the use of heavy machinery. They also agreed not to remove the chipped branches etc but to spread the mulch thinly over the easement, returning precious nutrients to the soil and reducing likely erosion. Indigenous species (we have given advice on these) will be planted in several critical areas to reduce the need to return as frequently as before.

The confrontations were a pleasant, agreeable experience and we appreciate the degree of public and environmental accountability that the Commission has accepted in this region. Thanks must also go to B.M.C.C. for defending the Escarpment. Where were Penrith City Council?

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Which is the cheapest?

- 1. Preserving habitat and species in the first place.
 - or 2. Destroying the habitat - establishing breeding facilities for endangered species - re-establishing the habitat - returning species to habitat.
 - or 3. Establishing seed banks (very expensive).
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Australian Endangered Species ; Eucalypts.

Eucalyptus burgessiana - Burgess Mallee.

Distribution - this species is known in mallee stands in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney in the vicinity of Faulconbridge.

Description - Burgess Mallee is usually a multi-stemmed robust mallee with coarse leaves somewhat slatey in appearance. The buds and fruits are somewhat larger than is common in *E. stricta* although the latter species is rather more variable than many species.

Ecology - this eucalypt occurs on stoney ridges in sandstone areas of the Blue Mountains associated with an array of shrubby, sclerophyllous species of typical sandstone genera. The mean maximum temperature of the hottest month is about 27°C and the mean minimum of the coldest month is about 5°C.

Conservation - some loss of stands by suburban expansion has occurred but the main known areas are in the Blue Mountains National Park. The position of this species therefore seems fairly secure.

Special Features - the close relationship to *E. stricta* leads some authorities to feel that it would be better regarded as a subspecies of that species. Nevertheless it is a distinct taxon and merits preservation.

Extract from Australian N.P.W.S.
Special Publication 5.

A MULTINATIONAL COMPANY INVOLVED IN CONSERVATION

This year, the National Trust annual get together for bush regenerators was a picnic on a property of International Business Machines at West Pennant Hills. It is a 65 acre property between Coonara Avenue and the portion of Cumberland State Forest which contains the Forestry Nursery.

In 1801, it was established as a government farm, managed with convict labour. In 1819, it became a grant to James Bellamy who continued to farm the area with convict labour. For three generations it remained in the Bellamy family, though the third owner of that name subdivided and sold the land some time after having found his father dead in the orchard in 1906. Approximately three years ago I.B.M. bought the 65 acres on which they intend to build an extensive computer factory and car park.

According to agreement with Baulkham Hills Council, they have to provide part of the land as open space. It is here that

they are employing a team of regenerators from the National Trust, who have been doing some work for eighteen months, in liaison with a firm of landscape architects.

Problems, other than the extensive and intensive work, do arise. A notable one was difficulty with the Forestry Commission who were insistent that there must be "fire" roads through the timber: with bridges across the creek. The Commission also demolished an attractive stand of *Casuarina* spp.

Otherwise the work goes on; and regeneration is promising. A lot has been done in part of the creek bed. An area which was a large poultry shed and completely bare when the shed was demolished is showing good return of early cover species such as "Blady Grass", Bracken, *Pratea* and a few small seedlings of *Acacia*.

It is most interesting and encouraging to find a large multinational company interested in regenerating a piece of natural land, and that the firm of landscape architects are involved. The prospect is good news for conservationists.

Besse Bramsen.

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The following is an Extract of an Article by Dennis King in "Australian Natural History" Vol.20 No.10 and is reproduced with their kind permission.

HOW TOXIC 1080 SELECTS ITS TARGETS.

The mere mentioning of 1080 poisoning and people sit up and take notice. The perfect example occurred late November, last year, when the Queensland Cabinet decided to abandon maintenance of the 6000 kilometre dingo fence and replace it with a massive programme of 1080 poisoning.

1080 or sodium monofluoroacetate generates this controversy because it happens to be one of the most toxic substances known. Already used across Australia as a method for controlling dingoes, rabbits and foxes, recent studies on its effects on animals have shown that a number of native animals in southwestern Australia have evolved high levels of tolerance to the poison.

Dennis King, a research officer at the Agriculture Protection Board of Western Australia, began studying the tolerance levels of native fauna to 1080 in 1976 and incorporating this work with his studies on myxomatosis and rabbit control.

Sodium monofluoroacetate, commonly known as 1080, is a

poison which is highly toxic to most mammals. It is used

extensively for the control of vertebrate pests, particularly introduced mammals in Australia and New Zealand.

Fluoroacetate is not toxic until it is converted into fluorocitrate in the body of an animal. This compound blocks the citric acid cycle, a fundamental biochemical pathway of energy exchange in plants and animals. Either the central nervous system or the heart is affected in mammals and the damage to either or both systems can lead to the death of the animal.

In Australia, fluoroacetate occurs naturally in a wattle (*Acacia georginae*) which grows in a restricted area of the Northern Territory and Queensland and in over 30 species of the genera *Gastrolobium* and *Oxylobium*. Toxic species of these plants are mainly restricted to the southwest of Western Australia although one species also occurs in parts of the Northern Territory and Queensland. These plants can contain very high levels of fluoroacetate.

High Poison Levels.

One species, known as Heartleaf Poison, *Gastrolobium bilobum*, has been shown to contain up to 2,650ppm of 1080 equivalent in its young leaves. This level of poison content is so high that less than 50grams of the leaves will kill an adult sheep.

A study on the diet of Western Grey Kangaroos in the southwest of Western Australia has shown that although they do feed, to some extent, on species of *Gastrolobium* and *Oxylobium*, they eat less of the highly toxic species than of the less toxic ones.

Studies on a wide range of native species of mammals in southwestern Australia have shown that many of them have much higher levels of tolerance to fluoroacetate than do members of the same species or closely related species from southeastern Australia.

For many years it was believed that some native fauna in the southwestern corner of Western Australia fed on toxic species of *Gastrolobium* and *Oxylobium* without harmful effect, but this was not studied until recently.

The research confirmed what scientists had expected. The southwestern mammals were significantly more tolerant of fluoroacetate than the eastern Australian mammals due to their exposure to poison plants.

High levels of tolerance have also been found in populations of other species of mammals which are outside the range of the toxic species of *Gastrolobium* and *Oxylobium*.

regarding the distribution of native animals is useful when we consider the damage caused by Australia's many introduced mammals.

The use of 1080 poison against vertebrate pest species is common in Australia.

In these poisoning campaigns, attempts are generally made to minimise mortality to the non-target species in the area by making baits relatively unattractive to them or of sufficient size that they cannot ingest a lethal dose of the toxin.

In southwestern Australia target specificity is easier to achieve as the native fauna are tolerant to the poison.

Birds are generally much less susceptible to fluoroacetate than are mammals, and the large reptiles which might be at risk from feeding on baits or on carcasses of poisoned rabbits are highly tolerant of fluoroacetate. Therefore through the fortunate coincidence of a potent toxin being found to occur naturally in the southwest after its introduction as a poison for introduced pest species, control programmes can be carried out with a minimum of risk to the native species.

The information obtained from these research programmes is being used to directly benefit native fauna.

By taking advantage of native fauna's tolerance to fluoroacetate the value of this substance can be increased beyond that of an effective poison against agricultural pests and used to directly benefit the unique flora and fauna of Australia.

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P.S. MEMBERSHIP FORMS ARE
ATTACHED TO THIS NEWSLETTER.
ENCOURAGE A FRIEND TO JOIN.

Membership Renewal

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TO HON. TREASURER
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