



July/August/September 1993

Lower Mountains Eco-News

NEWSLETTER OF THE LOWER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC.

RETURN ADDRESS
LBMCS
P O BOX 119
SPRINGWOOD 2777

.....MONTHLY MEETINGS.....

8.00 pm Springwood Neighbourhood Centre
Every fourth Friday of the month.

Friday	23 July
Friday	27 August
Friday	24 September
Friday	22 October (AGM, see p.6)

Rowan Huxtable has resigned as Secretary of the LBMCS. He and his family have moved north. The Society extends them our best wishes and thanks Rowan for the splendid work he did as Secretary.

We now need a new Secretary and invite anyone interested in this position to phone Aleen Hanley on 39 4079.

We also need an Illustrator to help with leaflets, etc. CAN YOU HELP!

AIMS

To inform the public on environmental and conservation issues; research into population and distribution of fauna in the Blue Mountains and neighbouring region.

MEMBERSHIPS

Australian Conservation Foundation
Nature Conservation Council of NSW

OTHER GROUP INVOLVEMENT

Society for Growing Australian Plants
(Blue Mountains Branch)
The Total Environment Centre
National Parks Association (NSW)
Upper Blue Mtns Conservation Society
WIRES
The Wilderness Society
CHANGE

Glenbrook Lagoon Society
Eastern Escarpment 530A Committee
Darks Common Trust
Nepean River Committee
The Colong Foundation (Inc.)

SOCIETY CONTACTS

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V.Pres: Margaret Baker (54 1196)
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NOTEBOOK

• **PRIVET ERADICATION**

Through the efforts of Cr. Robyn Wiles, Penrith Council has agreed to ask the State Government to declare privet a noxious plant through its city council area. Cr. Wyles lobbied on the grounds of the ill-health (including asthma) and land-degradation it causes. Good news if appropriate action can be taken to remove it.

Can the same be expected within Blue Mountains City Council? Privet is constantly being cited as a major contributor to the destruction of at-risk bushland such as areas open to urban runoff like Glenbrook Lagoon and the Deanii Forest at Springwood. Money is being put into re-generation of these areas, while at the same time privet sits in private properties and public lands. It is particularly successful at reproduction because of the sheer volume of seed berries it produces and the easy way these seeds are distributed through bird droppings, urban runoff, wind, rain, etc. Council has an obligation to remove it from its own lands and require other landowners to do likewise.

EASTERN ESCARPMENT NATIONAL PARK PROPOSAL •

Through the Eastern Escarpment Committee, two initiatives are being undertaken:

- a. *An application for National Estate listing of the heritage lands on the escarpment. Associated with this is for BMCC to examine and approve the draft management plan for Lapstone Tunnel. We expect this to go before Council shortly.*
- b. *A proposal for adding certain Crown lands and reserves along the escarpment to Blue Mountains National Park between The Bluff and Hawkesbury Lookout. We propose that some of the lands and reserves remain as urban parkland with care, control and management by either BMCC or an Urban Parks Authority. Other lands, particularly north of Fitzgerald's Creek, around Yellow Rock and to Hawkesbury Lookout should be in the National Park. All areas are to the west of the electricity easement.*

*A couple of State Parliamentarians have already expressed interest in the proposal which dates back to the earliest days of this Society. We will bring this to a successful conclusion.
(George Threlfo)*

FREEWAY PLANTINGS

This has been a long standing issue with us and the RTA. While some of the 1990 seeding has now been successful, we are expecting the RTA to devote at least \$100,000 to further programs of plantings, particularly around the western interchanges. This has nothing to do with the new work on the escarpment for which plantings will begin in Spring.

(George Threlfo)

AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE INDUSTRIES

As members of CHANGE we should be concerned with the proposed future of this major greenbelt site near St. Marys. CHANGE and other groups have expressed a clear wish for the area to be retained as much needed open space for western Sydney people with say an emphasis on its wildlife values (promoted for tourism).

Information has come to us that the site is generally contaminated with an effective cleanup program very uncertain because of the scale of the problem. CHANGE members have organised a meeting within three weeks of the Penrith/Blacktown Council Committee examining the proposals and have ex-workers providing all relevant information.

(George Threlfo)

NUCLEAR WASTE

Radioactive bullets made from American nuclear waste and used during the Gulf War are the suspected link in the rise in childhood cancers, leukaemia and other illnesses in Iraqi children. The bullets, known as depleted uranium (DU) penetrators, were developed in the US in the 1970's. The core of the bullet is made from radioactive nuclear waste, a by-product of the making of atomic bombs and nuclear fuel rods. This waste is supplied to weapons manufacturers free of charge. International medical experts are also concerned about the likelihood of serious soil and water contamination. A report of the UK Atomic Energy Authority estimates that at least 40 tons of depleted uranium were dispersed throughout Iraq during the course of the Gulf War.

(Eric Hoskins, MD, reported in New Statesman, June 93.)

NEW VISIONS

The Australian Conservation Foundation has joined major national womens, Aboriginal, welfare, union, conservation, consumer, ethnic and overseas aid groups calling for a new debate on the values that underpin Australian society. A joint statement by the groups calls on governments and other sectors of the community to accept a common responsibility to foster democracy, social participation and justice. The organisations have committed themselves to Australia becoming a society "where employment opportunities exist for all Australians, and of consistently improving life opportunities and quality of life for all Australians based on economic and ecological sustainability, democratic values and social justice." The organisations shared vision includes working for a society which celebrates our cultural, ethnic and racial diversity and which recognises the dispossession faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

(ACF Press release July 93.)

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

The Australian Council for Civil Liberties is backing an appeal against convictions recorded against logging protesters in early July. Environmentalists say the convictions for the criminal charge of "intimidation" have serious implications for rights of free speech and public demonstration. Protestors have up to now been charged with trespass, but the police legal dept has advised the use of the "intimidation" charge as the trespass charge has had little success. The fine of \$4000 accompanied with the conviction does not bode well for the future and has prompted the appeal led by the Wilderness Society.

(SMH 10/7/93)

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL

The LBMCS supports a recent request from the UBMCS to the BMCC to ensure the supervision of land care and more responsibility on the part of owners towards prevention of lasting land degradation through laxness of land care. The UBMCS is particularly concerned about the absence of environmental control on land between conveyancing and development application.

THREATENED SPECIES LEGISLATION

NSW has the worst record of mammal extinctions in Australia. Australia has the worst modern mammal extinction record in the world.

The State Govt has tabled a new bill which fails to guarantee the survival of increasingly large numbers of threatened species and communities and their critical habitats. It sets the conservation clock backwards.

The alternative - the **THREATENED SPECIES CONSERVATION BILL** being introduced by the Independent for Manly, Dr Peter Macdonald in the next parliamentary session. This Bill has evolved over several years with wide consultation with scientists and conservationists. It represents a comprehensive conservation program that will work and offers a real opportunity to rescue our state's diminishing biodiversity.

STATE GOVT BILL

- Will remove the licensing processes established under the Endangered Fauna (Interim Protection) Act.
- Uses outdated, unsatisfactory and restrictive guidelines for listing threatened species which have been rejected by ANZECC and the Commonwealth Govt. The Scientific Committee responsible for the listing of species is not obligated to make recommendations for listing in response to requests from the public.
- No time limits on recovery plans for endangered species. Recovery Plans are crucial in bringing species back from the brink of extinction.
- Designation of critical habitats in the hands of the Minister for Planning.
- Scientific Committee stacked with Govt Ministers.

THREATENED SPECIES CONSERVATION BILL

- Retains licensing system. This compels developers to carry out Fauna Impact Statements before a licence decision.
- Uses an up-to-date scientifically based listing system and the Scientific Committee must respond to listing nominations from the public.
- Will establish comprehensive and effective recovery plans for all endangered, vulnerable and rare species and communities within 3 years of listing.
- Designation of critical habitats in the hands of the Director of the NPWS and the Scientific Committee, with involvement from community and landowners.
- Scientists are appointed after being nominated by specified relevant scientific bodies. This process instills public confidence.

ACTION NEEDED

It's easy to support Dr Macdonald's bill. Just write to express your support to:

- **Bob Carr, Leader of the Opposition**
- **Hon John Fahey, Premier**
- **Fred Nile, MLC**

all care of Parliament House, Sydney 2000.

YOUR LETTERS COUNT !!



WASHING UP - AND DIRTY WATER

A SMH article of 17 May 1993 on a Murray-Darling Commission report, included a list of washing products according to their concentration of phosphorus. Phosphorus is considered to be the major cause of blue-green algae outbreaks. After garden fertilisers, household detergents are the domestic product with the highest concentration of phosphorus. A UK report recently suggested the following breakdown of phosphorus discharge into waterways: Detergents 17%, Human sewage 30%, Animal excreta 25%, Fertilizer runoff 20%, Industry 8%.

The Murray Darling Basin Commission technical advisory group, made up of detergent manufacturers, scientists, water authorities and environment protection agencies, has called for "truth in advertising" for household detergents but has failed to agree on whether Australia should join other industrialised countries and limit or ban phosphorus in detergents. Thinking is split on ways to deal with the problem. While logic might say that the problem should be cut at the source and phosphorus should be banned from any products that will find their way into the water supply, Minister for Natural Resources, Mr Causley, has called for phosphorus levels to be limited to 5 percent. Detergent manufacturers have convinced the Federal Government to fund more sewage treatment plants in the Murray-Darling basin to combat blue-green algae. They claim that phosphates give the best cleaning performance, are non-toxic when ingested or contacted by the skin and can be recycled as soil fertilisers after removal from sewage treatment plants. The fact remains that even when justified as a recycling option, the concentration of phosphates into the environment will remain excessive as fertiliser will inevitably find its way back into the eco-system. Public money will be spent to upgrade sewage treatment plants to clean up unacceptable discharge into the water system from products sold by private companies. Why must the public purse be open to pay private bills?

Meanwhile in the rest of the world Switzerland imposed a ban on phosphorus in 1986, in Germany there is a 5 percent limit and a drop in phosphorus levels of 64 percent since 1979. In the US, almost half of the populated areas have phosphate bans.

Concentration of Phosphorus in

percentages

LAUNDRY LIQUIDS

Down to Earth,	
Greenforce	-0.01
Care	1.8
Surf	3.2
Drive	3.8
Dynamo, Omo	3.9
Cold Power	4.7

DISHWASHING LIQUID

Palmolive	6.0
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DISHWASHING POWDER

Kwit	1.1
Finish	4.1
Castle	4.2
Compare	7.2
Morning Fresh	10.0

LAUNDRY POWDERS

Velvet	-0.01
Nursil, Aware	0.8
Sard, Castle	1.8
Herbon	2.6
Triumph	2.8
Cold Top Watch	2.9
Surf	3.0
Bio-Joy	3.4
Spree, Rinso	4.1
Omo	6.3
Cold Power	6.5
Fab 3	6.6
Drive	7.4
Omega, Trend	7.8
Amway, Radiant	11.0

SOFTENERS

Fluffy, Care, Huggy	-0.01
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ALTERNATIVES:

Dishwashing by hand: Use pure soap or soap flakes. Dissolve soap by rubbing between gloved hands or use a wire basket shaker.

Washing Clothes: Pure soap or soap flakes do just as good a job as harsh powders and liquid cleaners.

For ecologically sound cleaning hints check out the following:

'A Consumers Guide to Cleaning and Greening' (Toxic Chemicals Cmte, TEC, \$2)

'The Green Cleaner: How to clean nearly everything' (Barbara Lord, ACF Publ.)

BUSH WATCH AND REGENERATION

Some years ago a public meeting was held at Katoomba Council Chambers. A large attendance of enthusiastic people resolved to form an association "Friends of the Blue Mountains". This proved eventually to be only an embryo attempt to have Bush Regeneration carried out on the mountains. It was doomed to failure because of the enormity of the problem - but it was a beginning. Out of it has come various small bands of dedicated volunteer workers who are making a good impression on some specific areas.

On Saturday 17 July, the Upper Blue Mtns Conservation Society held a forum to co-ordinate such bands and hopefully to encourage the formation of more.

Speakers at the forum were:

Councillor Michael Neall, for the Total Catchment Management Committee

Virginia Bear, Bush Care Officer in Council

Andrew Gibson, Catchment Management of the Water Board

Neville Pavan, from Land Care, who gave advice on applications for grants for projects.

Judith Rawling and Robyn Corringham gave some good advice on projects and works.

Then two speakers told of their program of observing fauna on the upper mountains. Members of Minni HaHa Falls project, Katoomba Falls Valley and Fairy Dell gave an outline of their efforts in bush regeneration. A committee was formed to arrange further meetings and keep a co-ordination between working groups. This should lead to more general support for such groups and keep all in touch with sources of help in their work.

Much credit is due to Robyn Corringham and the Upper Mountains Conservation Society for their hard work in the excellent arrangement of the forum. (Besse Bramsen, July 93)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Springwood Neighbourhood Centre
7.30 pm, Friday 22 October.

THE MAGNIFICENT FLORA OF TAIWAN

Speaker: Ian Anderson. (commences
approx. 8 pm)

Ian has recently returned from a trip to Taiwan where he was captivated by the splendour of Taiwan's flora. His observations on the native flora of the country and the changing lifestyle of the people will be illustrated by a slide presentation.

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!!!!!!

TEC WALK ... SUNDAY 29 AUGUST

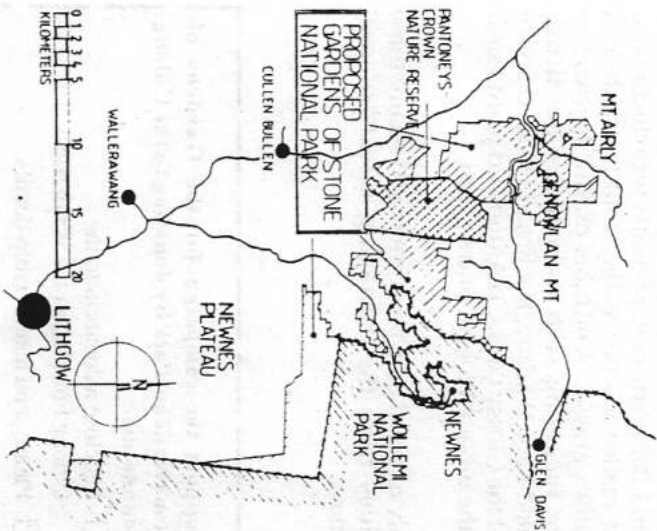
GRIFFIN HERITAGE AND BUSH REGENERATION WALK

Morning walk through the Castlecrag area to observe houses built by Walter Burley Griffin, leading to an outdoor amphitheatre co-designed by his wife..

After lunch take a bushland walk and hear a talk by a spokesperson from the Willoughby Environment Protection Assn on bush regeneration done in the area..

Cost: \$25 includes lunch. BYODrink.
Phone Sue Kennedy at TEC - 247 4714
to confirm booking.

The Gardens of Stone National Park



Legislation is proposed by Ms. Clover Moore M.P. to protect the key parts of the Gardens of Stone. The amendment to national park legislation will protect some 18,030 hectares of World Heritage quality scenery from mine subsidence damage.

YOU CAN SAVE THE GARDENS OF STONE

Amendment of the National Parks (New Areas and Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill to make a Gardens of Stone National Park will require the support of the Government, the Labor Opposition and the independents, especially the Hon. Rev. Fred and Elaine Nile.

You can help by writing to:

- The Premier, the Hon. John Fahey*;
- The Minister for the Environment, the Hon. Chris Hartcher*;
- The Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. Bob Carr*

Requesting they support legislation to make a Gardens of Stone National Park.

Also write to:

- The Minister for Mines, the Hon. Ian Causley*;
- Shadow Minister for Mines, Mr. Pat Rogan*

Requesting they act to stop the cliff and pagoda damage in the Western Coalfield. Environmental protection measures for coal mining must be enforced and strengthened.

* Parliament House, Macquarie St, SYDNEY, 2000 (please send us a copy of your correspondence).

HELP SAVE THE GARDENS OF STONE



The appeal of the Wolgan and Capertee Valleys, the most scenic on the western rim of the Blue Mountains, could be lost if these valuable landscapes are not protected from coal mining.

Coal Mining Ruining Blue Mountains Heritage

The Western Blue Mountains are being ruined by mine subsidence. Cliff collapses and related surface fissuring caused by coal mining will deny future generations any enjoyment of these blighted lands.

The Department of Mineral Resources has monitored 179 cliff collapses in the Western Coalfield but have taken no measures to prevent further damage. Such damage is intolerable in this area of outstanding scenic beauty.

Park Proposal Secures Scenery and Jobs

Dedication of the Gardens of Stone as part of the Blue Mountains World Heritage National Park system will help ensure the local tourist industry continues to grow. The protection of the Wolgan and Capertee Valleys is essential to any tourism strategy.

The proposed park does not include operating coal mines. The park area on Newnes Plateau is located where coal seams are too thin to be economically mined. The 1,300 jobs in local mines are not threatened. Only the proposed Mt. Airly mine is embraced by the park proposal. The Airly coal resource is very limited in comparison to the extensive deposits of the Sydney Basin.

The Commission of Inquiry into the Airly coal mine is flawed and should be rejected. The environmental protection measures for the proposed mine will not preserve Airly's spectacular landscapes. Most of the mountain will be subject to total coal extraction which will destroy the cliffs and unique pagoda rock formations. The Department of Mineral Resources has no record of protecting the landscape and can't be trusted with the World Heritage qualities of Mount Airly.

The Gardens of Stone was first proposed as national park in 1932 by the National Parks and Primitive Areas Council, and since then by the National Trust, the Colo Committee, the Federation of Bushwalking Clubs, as well as the Colong Foundation. The proposal is supported by the National Parks Association, the Australian Conservation Foundation, The Wilderness Society, conservation groups of the Blue Mountains and the Capertee Valley Protection Society.

Pagoda Gardens

Perched on top of buttressed ramparts of the Wolgan and Capertee valleys are village-like clusters of sandstone pagodas - sculptured rocks with walled courtyards ... endless stepped and terraced roofs and balconies ... towers and arches ... bridges, parapets and windows ... staircases and chimneys ... overhangs and caves ... canyons and gorges ... well holes and secret waterfalls.

In successive seasons, these rock formations bloom with colour and perfume to complement the rock structures with gardens of delight ... roof gardens ... walled gardens ... pocket gardens ... rockeries ... open woodlands and parklands.

Such gardens of stone are found nowhere else in the world. It has a great richness of habitats, from 1,000 metre high plateaux with heathland and mallee to open valley country with arid spinifex grasses. A number of rare species live here including such animals as the Brush Tailed Rock Wallaby, the Broad Headed Snake and the Glossy Black Cockatoo and plants such as the unique Wolgan Snow Gum.

Only national park protection will secure these values from the damaging effects of coal mining.

Support the campaign for the Gardens of Stone National Park by donating to the Colong Foundation.

☐ I enclose a donation to the Colong Foundation for Wilderness.

☐ Please send membership details.

Send to:

The Colong Foundation for Wilderness,
18 Argyle St, SYDNEY, 2000.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

POST CODE _____ PHONE _____

To book a talk phone (02) 247 4714.