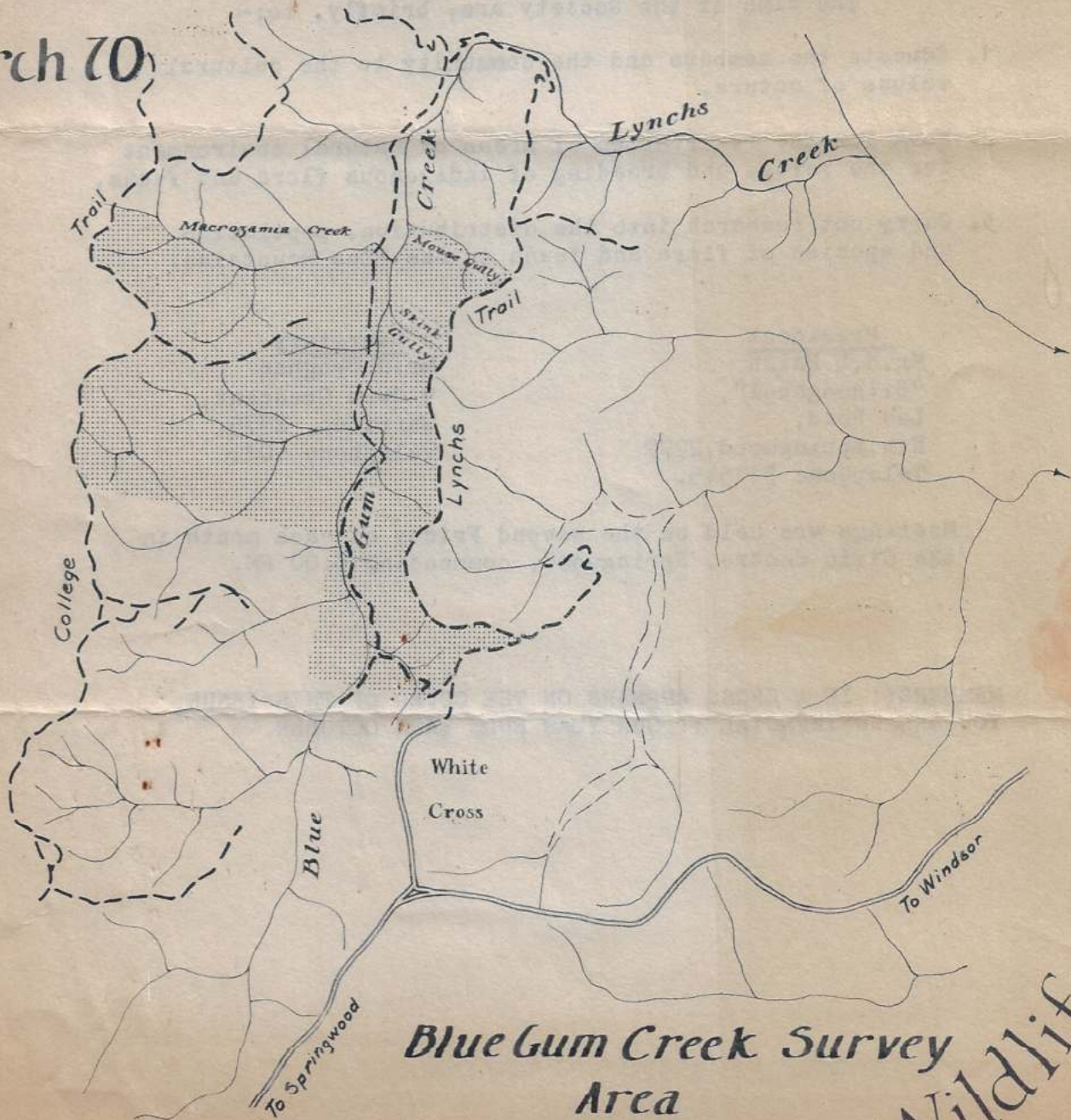


KALORI

March 70



Conservation Society

Blue Gum Creek Survey Area

Lower Blue Mountains

Wildlife

CONSERVE, PRESERVE, INVESTIGATE, EDUCATE.

Kalori is published monthly by and for the members of the Lower Blue Mountains Wildlife Conservation Society.

The aims of the Society are, briefly, to:-

1. Educate the members and the community to the cultural values of nature.
2. Work for the reservation of areas of natural environment for the refuge and breeding of indigenous flora and fauna.
3. Carry out research into the distribution, population and species of flora and fauna in the Blue Mountains.

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Meetings are held on the second Friday of each month in the Civic Centre, Springwood, commencing 8.00 PM.

MEMBERS!! IF A CROSS APPEARS ON THE COVER OF THIS ISSUE,
YOU ARE UNFINANCIAL !! OUR YEAR ENDS EACH OCTOBER.

Bulletin No. 31
March, 1970

We have decided to change the place of our meetings. This month (on the 13th.) and in future, the meetings will be on the second Friday at the Civic Centre, Springwood, in the lower Committee Room.

This month, also, there will be a Federation meeting. It will be held before our regular meeting, and we hope to arrive at, mainly, a common policy re the Tree Preservation Order. Our Society has submitted a policy to the Council, as have no doubt the other Societies, but a united approach will be more likely to achieve acceptance.

In April, we hope to have Mrs. Vellenga, the ornithologist from Leura, to talk to us. She is extremely interesting and I would like to see as many members as possible in attendance. Tentative plans have also been made to get Mr. Ormsby to speak at the May meeting. He was at one of our meetings in 1968, and caused a stir when his specimens (he is a herpetologist, or snake maniac) were more lively than expected.

The Annual Dinner will be held soon. More details later.

Carmen Paish is organising the construction of a Nature Trail in the grounds of Springwood Primary School. She cannot do it all alone, but it proves that it is not necessary to have a big organisation if you want to do something. Just do it.

Mrs. Dark, our Treasurer, is concerned that a few members have not renewed their subscriptions for 1970. Hence the note inside the front cover.

Next meeting - Friday 13th.

G. Croghan
Hon. Sec.

P.S. The cover shows a small scale map of the survey area. Shortly I will have available a map at a much larger scale for anybody who wants a copy. Also I will endeavour to publish a list of species sighted so far in the area.

THE SURVEY

The first attempt at systematically cataloguing plants was made on the outing on Sunday 22nd. February. Area 2 was the area selected. About 50% of this section was covered, and some 82 species were recorded. Of interest was the regeneration, from seed, of *Boronia floribunda*.

An easily accessible Lyrebirds nest was discovered in a magnificent weatherproof setting in a picturesque cave. This nest may provide some interesting observations if used again next spring.

Trapping is expected to start this month. We are planning to make our own traps, as those from the Park Service may be some time in coming.

Of interest to the Society was the visit to Springwood of Mr. Arn McGill on Saturday 21st. Arn is a well-known ornithologist and is one of the revisers of Cayley's "What Bird is That?" His trip to Springwood was to observe the young of the Channel-billed Cuckoo being fed by their foster-parents, a pair of Currawongs. Arn was accompanied by Mr. Alan Rogers of Sydney, Mr. and Mrs. Vellenga and Mr. John Hobbs of Katoomba.

On a trip to our survey area after lunch, Mr. Hobbs made a very interesting discovery of a Brown Tree Snake. After being photographed it was captured and taken to Mr. A.I. Ormsby, local herpetologist, for identification.

The finding of the snake was of particular interest to Mr. Ormsby, as it is the first report of the species from the Mountains. Its known range is from about Cairns, Queensland, to just south of Sydney. A nocturnal, rear-fanged snake its venom is of low toxicity, sufficient only to deal with the small warm-blooded creatures, such as mice and small birds, which constitute its food.

The snake, a 4½ foot specimen, was photographed by Society members and released on Sunday morning at the point of capture.

===== K.King.

WATER

One of our natural resources which is in short supply is also the most wasted, abused and polluted.

To supply a community of about 30,000 population, such as the Blue Mountains, with water takes about 6 million gallons on a peak load day. Something like 1/4 million gallons are used for drinking and cleanliness, 4 1/4 million gallons are cast about gardens and the like while a regular 1 1/4 million gallons are discharged into local creeks, via sewerage systems.

This effluent, loaded with organic wastes, bacteria, germs and an accumulation of detergents, enzymes and other dangerous matter, fouls many streams on the Mountains.

We are told that our sewerage treatment works settles out all the solid organic wastes which are disposed of, the liquid is then aerated and trickled over a filter bed which is supposed to get rid of all the harmful germs. This water is then allowed to flow into our streams.

What they don't tell us is what happens when there is rainy weather. During this time there is a surcharge flowing through the sewerage system due to infiltration of storm water into the mains. Does this surcharge effect the settling rate or do the solids overflow the settling tanks and pass through the filters and discharge as untreated, straight into the streams? Does the great volume of water passing through the filters cause the aeration and filtering to be less effective? Are the existing treatment works handling a greater quantity of sewerage than they were designed to treat thus discharging incompletely treated effluent?

Have you seen the dead water, the brown slimy banks of Laura Creek below the treatment works? The sign "Unfit for Drinking" is superfluous; no one in their right mind would drink that stuff. Have you ever smelt the stench that comes from the creek through Katoomba Falls Reserve? Why is Fitzgerald Creek, below the Springwood treatment works, marked "Unfit for Drinking"; aren't they sure of their claims that the effluent is pure?

In our modern society and crowded living conditions, sewerage is a must and the discharge from these systems must be suspect at least some of the time. The leading biologists in the Departments associated in the testing of effluents for purity admit that they can only test for a small proportion of harmful substances.

We must have sewerage - must we have polluted streams below treatment works? If pollution is inevitable why must we pollute every stream, why not direct the effluent into one or two areas, why not instal treatment systems which will effectively treat - to the limit of economics - a maximum predicted outfall.

Existing treatment works disgorge into Hat Hill, Minni

Fitzgerald

Ha Ha, Leura, Hazelbrook and ... Creeks. At present there are proposals to establish works on Victoria Falls, Wentworth, The Valley, Lapstone and Glenbrook Creeks and the creeks east of Mount Riverview and Warrimoo - a total of five active and seven proposed sites, twelve major creeks to be destroyed. Tunnel Gully is mutilated by the discharge of partially treated effluent from a package unit servicing the R.A.A.F. station.

These existing works and proposals serve only the existing population - the efficiency of these works is suspect - what kind of a mess will be created when the population trebles, as it is predicted to do in the next twenty years.

Do the authorities charged with the design of our sewerage systems wish to pepper our mountains with inefficient putrid sores? Is this the best our advanced technology can achieve? Perhaps a great deal of forethought, a bit of imagination and a lot less lassitude would produce a different outcome.

Enquiries into these matters have discovered that there are different methods of treatment, more efficient than the existing type, which also have the advantage of being easily expanded - one of these systems includes ponding as final treatment. It would be interesting to see an expert analysis of the economics of establishing a sewerage farm and ponding system fed by pumping stations and gravity outfalls, compared with normal systems with individual treatment works.

Such a system could be created based on a ponding system at the junction of Long Angle Gully and Fitzgerald Creek. This locality would serve the major area of the lower mountains. Some difficulties are bound to arise as far as levels are concerned but as was said before a bit of imagination could overcome most problems.

Should such a system be installed only one area need be subject to the possibility of pollution. Similarly, with strict supervision in the laying of mains and the sealing of the system, surcharge due to stormwater would be cut to a minimum. After all, we pay high rates, of which the top expense is set aside for salaries of supervisory staff and we should get value for our money.

Now is the time to make the Authorities know that we do not want to have our streams fouled. We do not want the waters we drink and the waters our children swim in filled with doubtful overflow.

It is time we realised that our responsibility doesn't end at the bathplug. Any waste created by our own personal use is our own responsibility until it has been suitably disposed of.

TREES, BUT FOR HOW LONG?

If a Tree Preservation Order would save a lot of trees that would otherwise be murdered on building blocks, most people (Kalori readers anyway) would say "good". But the tree thus saved would be bound to exclaim: "It's one thing to be reprieved and another thing to be guaranteed life."

What follows is the possible and probable fate of a certain magnificent Scribbly Gum now reposing blissfully among *Mirbelia* and *Eriostemon* and other rubbish somewhere on a Blue Mountain ridge in a future subdivision, and situated near the back fence of a medium sized building block. Since this "Scribbly" has the vital statistics to be spared, its fate will depend on which of the following groups the owner belongs to. Group 1 "Couldn't Care Less". There will be no garden to speak of so that the tree should not have to suffer fertilized soil or overwatering, but it will probably serve for target practice often enough. Its smooth cream bark will be pocked and unsightly and if the borers don't settle it the galls will. Seedlings will spring up but will be trodden down like the *Mirbelia* and *Eriostemon* or etiolated by the portable swimming pool that Santa brought.

Group 2 "The Gardener". The kiss of death will be the new lawn which tidied up the *Mirbelia* and *Eriostemon*. Extra water, extra fertilizer. The tree will be very lucky to tolerate this and the garland of geraniums round the base. With a mammoth effort a seedling may appear through the grass only to be eliminated by the mower, unnoticed, unwanted, unmourned. When the tree dies, as it will sooner or later it will probably be replaced by a liquid amber or another exotic from the local nursery.

Group 3 "Consos". The tree with its scribbles will be admired in its setting of *Mirbelia* and *Eriostemon*. There will be no lawn, just the natural vegetation (perhaps other natives added) maintained as far as possible by eliminating exotic weeds and ensuring regeneration either on the spot or by seed gathering and propagation. When the old tree dies there will be another, grown from its seed, to take its place.

It is worth noting that the eventual result in Group 2's property, (by far the most populous group) will be the ousting of all the original trees, sooner or later, and their replacement by trees from elsewhere. The Tree Preservation Order may then appear to have:

- a/ avoided the sudden denudation of home sites
- b/ failed, in the long run, to preserve natural stands of trees.

I would like to congratulate the Blue Mountains Natural Resources Federation on their work on the Tree Preservation Order, and at the same time, suggest that a simultaneous programme aimed at building up the appreciation of the value and beauty of indigenous plants, would be most appropriate.

Don Perrin.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

... of these ... would ... people ... have ... removed ... follows ... and ... in ... of a ... has ... on which ... to ... or ... with ... and ... will ... and ...

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

To the Treasurer,
Mrs. D. Dark,
"Nimaloolo",
Russell Ave.,
Valley Heights, 2777

Enclosed please find the sum of \$ _____ to cover one years membership*

Name in full.....

Address in full.....

Occupation.....

- * Individuals \$2.00 annually or \$20.00 Life.
- Associates \$1.00 annually - subscription to Kalori.
- Junior 30 cents annually.
- Family \$3.00 annually.

I would like to contribute ... members ... and ... the value ... and ...