



"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"

From the President

It was lovely to enjoy a break over summer and get into the bush. I enjoyed identifying a Bassian Thrush in Sassafras Gully Springwood, a beautiful bird that I had not recognized before. Now I am back into the swing of things as a very busy time of year approaches.

Firstly, the State election has got us thinking about what we can do to help protect and conserve the environment by engaging in the political process. Unfortunately, animals and plants can't vote so it is up to us to advocate for nature! I'd really love to see as many members as possible come to our 'Meet the Candidates' evening to have your say.

Secondly, we are getting ready for our Annual General Meeting and looking around for members to get involved. I have found the role of President to be enormously rewarding and would encourage anyone interested in the role or joining the Management Committee to give me call. We have lost our Education Officer Chris Yates to Sydney, and long serving Vice Presidents John Haydon and Liz Van Reyswoud are also standing down. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for many years of commitment and service.

Replacing people can be hard, but as the saying goes, 'many hands make light work' and we need people to help out. This can take the form of undertaking regular tasks such as setting up the room at Monthly meetings. It would also be great to have a bushwalker come on to the Management Committee to keep us in touch with what the walkers need.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Nursery volunteers who supplied me with such lovely plants late last year. Thanks to the summer rains, they are taking off and looking wonderful.

Speak to you next month,
Tara Cameron 0419 824 974

Monthly Meeting at The Hut

MEET THE CANDIDATES for the NSW ELECTION

Come along to meet the Candidates for the seat of the Blue Mountains in the State Election. The Society has set out its priorities (see below and pages 6-8) and now the candidates have an opportunity to respond.

Find out what the candidates think about commercial development in National Parks, the Gardens of Stone Proposal, funding for invasive species programs and action on climate change. Raise issues of concern to you!

**Blue Mountains Conservation Society Monthly Meeting
Conservation Hut (end of Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls)
7.30 pm, Friday, 25 February 2011**

Visitors are very welcome

Society sets out priorities for State Election

On January 20, the Society held a local launch of 'Natural Advantage – A 2011 State Election Agenda'. It was attended by Mr Phil Koperberg and the State candidates (in alphabetical order) Trish Doyle (ALP), Kerrin O'Grady (Greens) and Janet Mays (Independent). Diane Maris represented the Liberal party at the event.



Photo (left to right): Janet Mays (Ind), Tara Cameron (BMCS) AND Trish Doyle (ALP)

Importantly, many members also came to show their support.

The 'Natural Advantage' election platform was developed by six environment groups to set out what could be achieved in the next few years. Pepe Clark, Executive Officer of the Nature Conservation Council, spoke at the launch and described how we were looking to the political parties and independents for a response to the ideas presented.

Our launch focused mainly on issues specific to the Blue Mountains. Tara Cameron discussed six areas: National Parks, the Gardens of Stone Stage 2 Proposal, Mining and Groundwater, Transport and Climate Change, Planning and Invasive Species.

You will find details of these issues set out on pages 6-8 of this newsletter. The full list plus supporting documentation can be found on our website www.bluemountains.org.au

The next step is the MEET THE CANDIDATES night to be held on Friday, February 25, 7:30pm at the Conservation Hut. This will give the candidates an opportunity to respond to the concerns raised. It is also YOUR CHANCE to ask a question and have a say. Please come!

The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Experience
www.worldheritage.org.au

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HUT NEWS EDITORIALS

The deadline for the next issue of Hut News
is 18 February 2011

MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES

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BUSHCARE GROUP

The Valley of the Waters Bushcare
Group meets second Saturday of each
month, 9am till noon. Tools and gloves are
available. Bring a drink, a snack and a hat.

New members are always welcome.
Phone Karen on 4757 1929.

Nursery News

Kevin Bell, Nursery Manager

We're Back! Our Lawson nursery is open again for sales on Wednesday and Saturday mornings and we look forward to seeing our regular and any new customers. We have good stocks of a big range of plants, some in larger pots, and we have maintained the low prices of last year.

Markets: Since the last *Hut News* there has only been one market, namely, the last Blackheath Community Market for 2010 on the 5th December where we made \$425, doubling our previous best. Come along to the Blackheath Markets on Sunday 6th February and 6th March and/or the Lawson Magpie Markets on the 20th February and look for our stylish stall with the Black Cockatoos.

Our Plants: For those shady spots in your garden, we now offer four species of ferns: *Blechnum cartilagineum* (Gristle fern), *B. nudum* (Fishbone Water-fern), *Doodia aspera* (Rasp fern) and *Adiantum hispidulum* (Rough Maidenhair-fern). We purchase tiny fern "plugs" from Sonters fern nursery in Winmalee and pot them on into 65mm pots, where they remain for several months to grow to saleable size. At just \$3.50 each or three for \$10, they are a bargain and add a calming coolness to any garden. In another month we will add *Polystichum proliferum* (Mother Shield-fern) to the list.

Our state floral emblem is the Waratah (*Telopea speciosissima*) and every patriotic garden should have several of these outstanding plants. We currently have over 250 quite advanced plants in forestry tubes and we expect these will sell quickly at the markets so hurry in before you miss out. We have prepared over 300 Waratahs in 1 litre pots for the RTA works at Wentworth Falls. Waratah seed loses its viability after about 6 months so we will be collecting fresh batches in the coming months.

We have plans to add many new species to our list while deleting those species for which there has been no demand over the last two years. We will keep you informed about any new arrivals and we also welcome suggestions for any new species for our plant list which can be viewed on the Society web-site.

Help! Our reliable and valued lawnmowing volunteer, Norman Harris, who has kept the Lawson site looking neat and tidy, is no longer able to continue and we urgently need a replacement. If you have a petrol mower and can spare 1-2 hours per month, we would very much appreciate hearing from you. Contact the nursery manager, Kevin Bell at 47876436 for details.

Special Bushcare Events

Blue Mountains Conservation Society's bushcare group "Valley of the Waters" meets on the second Saturday of each month. New volunteers are always welcome. You can phone Karen on 4757 1929 for more information.

There are a couple of special events coming up in March and April where members might be able to help.

Saturday, 12 March 2011 - 9.00 am - 12.00 Noon – Valley Of The Waters Planting Event

A morning of planting to assist the Bushcare Group consolidate previous planting efforts to protect a swamp further down the catchment. Includes morning tea. Contact Arthur Henry on 4787 3104 or arthur.henry@environment.nsw.gov.au

Saturday, 9 April 2011 – 9.00 am – 12.00 Noon – Valley Of The Waters Planting Event

Planting around the Wentworth Falls Picnic Area. Morning tea provided. Contact Arthur Henry on 4787 3104 or arthur.henry@environment.nsw.gov.au

The Gardens of Stone Visitors Map

Incorporating Gardens of Stone Stage 2 Proposal and existing National Parks

OUT NOW!

The experience offered by the magnificent Gardens of Stone region are known to relatively few, despite the region being easily accessible from Sydney and the Central West. To promote low impact visitor experiences and its reservation as a state conservation area, the Colong Foundation and the Blue Mountains Conservation Society have developed a Visitors Map with detailed interpretive notes on the reverse side.

The Visitors Map is in full colour, 60 x 85 cm in size, and covers the entire Gardens of Stone region at a 1:100,000 scale, making it ideal for planning your next trip to the area. It includes the locations of key attractions, as well as the new Capertee National Park. The Notes on the reverse side of the map contain twenty panels of information that explain many aspects to help make the Gardens of Stone a unique experience and a 'must visit'.

Visitors can enjoy a range of iconic attractions

involving short bushwalks, scenic lookouts, and cultural and wildlife experiences. They can also go camping and engage in longer bushwalks, canyoning and rock climbing. Touring routes for motor vehicles and bicycles also exist and readily link to other routes in the Greater Blue Mountains and World Heritage Area.

Keenly priced at \$7.50 plus postage and handling, it is a must purchase for all who love the Blue Mountains and want to discover something different on the other side of the Mountains.

Purchase your copy directly from the Blue Mountains Conservation Society so that all proceeds can be directed towards the conservation of this fantastic area.

To order your copy contact Blue Mountains Conservation Society, email sales@bluemountains.org.au or visit our web site www.bluemountains.org.au to order using Pay Pal. For those without email, send a cheque or money order to PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782.

Another twist in the Cox's Case

Our work to improve the water quality in the Coxs River has taken another twist but not for the better. As members know, we initiated legal proceedings against Delta Electricity in mid 2009 after Independent expert Dr Ian Wright found high levels of salinity and metals (such as copper, arsenic and aluminum) in the Tortuous Watercourse and Coxs River below Wallerawang Power Station.

We are attempting to stop the alleged pollution and were successful in gaining a Protective Costs Order to limit costs to \$20,000 in the Land and Environment Court (as opposed to potential costs of \$200,000 upwards). Delta appealed against this decision but luckily this was not successful and the Protective Costs Order stands.

Now Delta Electricity is trying to get the case dismissed before it has even started!

On Thursday 2 December 2010, a summary dismissal hearing was held in the Land and Environment Court of NSW. Delta is attempting to get the case thrown out of court on the following grounds:

1. Delta's legal team argued that there is no use in making orders to remediate the river on the basis that the conduct was in the past and the damage irreversible (you can't unscramble an egg). During this summary dismissal hearing, it could be assumed that Delta is/was polluting the water. However, in the main case, Delta denies polluting the waters in contravention of section 120.

Our legal team argued that we were first attempting to stop the pollution. If remediation was not possible, then we should not seek such orders.

2. Delta's legal team argued that it is not possible to commence civil enforcement proceedings for water pollution under section 120 of the Protection of the Environment and Operations Act, as it creates a criminal offence.

The results of the summary dismissal hearing should be known soon.

In the meantime, we will be engaging Dr Ian Wright to re-test the water and check the water quality. We will also examine Delta's water quality results due to be released in late February.

Calling on everyone to help Save the Kimberley

We, in the Blue Mountains, are able to reap the benefits of, and celebrate, the hard work and commitment of many Australians who helped, and continue to help, protect our beautiful region. Their understanding of the need to join forces to protect nature resulted in the Blue Mountains becoming a National Park with World Heritage listing.

Australia's last great wilderness area, the Kimberley in Western Australia, is now under serious threat. That region currently has NO PROTECTION and without the IMMEDIATE support of Australia, and the rest of the world, it will be handed over to corporations and massive industrialisation. There are very few almost untouched wilderness areas like this left in the world.

Please let Tony Burke know that the world wants this area protected! You can find out easy ways to take action by viewing a video interview with former Federal Court judge Murray Wilcox QC at The Big Fix -

<http://www.thebigfix.com.au>

And visit the Wilderness Society's website

<http://www.wilderness.org.au/kimberley>

Welcome to new members

Sue Morrison, Winmalee
Volker Bochmann, Blackheath
Doris Herrmann, Blackheath
Gaye Wingett, Springwood
Sue Gregg, Forestville
Michael Gregg, Forestville
Adam Geldard, Winmalee
Teresa Portelli, Winmalee
Rosemary Bilton, Leura

Heather Mollenhauer, who died on the 12th of December 2010, had been a very active member of both the Blue Mountains Conservation Society and Blue Mountains Historical Society for some two decades. It is interesting to contemplate how few people are passionate about both our natural and cultural heritage. Heather's interest in both these areas was greatly stimulated by her enthusiastic participation in the Outdoor Guides Advanced Certificate at Katoomba TAFE in 1987-88. During the course she did most of her assignments on some aspect of Lawson's history or natural environment. By the time of her death she was the acknowledged authority on the history of Lawson and one of the area's most knowledgeable naturalists.

Heather (née Ingamells) was born in Hawthorn Victoria in 1929. After school she trained as a nurse and decided to become a missionary to the Aborigines. She joined the staff of the Bomaderry Children's Home in 1955. She later served at Mount Margaret, Cosmo Newberry and Warburton in Western Australia. Heather worked at La Perouse in 1969 and in Melbourne for 3½ years before being transferred to Mission Publications at Lawson in 1973. Here she contributed to many community groups. She was a very active member of the Jacktrackers bushwalking club, passing on much botanical knowledge to fellow walkers. Heather's diaries of her bushwalks during the Outdoor Guides course convey the delight she took in learning about the nature and history of the Blue Mountains. The first instalment of one of them is reproduced below. The accompanying photo of Heather on an Outdoor Guides excursion shows her very characteristic smile. Such was her love of all aspects of life that it was rarely absent from her face.

DEVIL'S HOLE, 7 November 1987. Heather Mollenhauer

Today there are seven students who met at the Katoomba Golf Club car park: Vic, Ross, Brian, Lex, Fiona, Kerry (with little Kelly hugging Ken, her Teddy) and me. Today is the great day for Brian and Rosemary (Wynands) as they get married at Hartfields. One good result of the Outdoors Guide Course! It is also the Rhododendron Festival at Blackheath.

There was a lovely Waratah flowering at the corner of the car park. Along the road a bit we saw another plant with the biggest flower-head we had yet seen, what a magnificent flower it is (*Telopea speciosissima*). As we went along Cliff Drive we noticed a patch of



Moisture clings to flower and leaf of *Billardiera scandens*

Persoonia chamaepitys which grows best up Blackheath way. We came to a *Casuarina distyla* which had mistletoe on it; the amazing thing about *Amyema cambagei* is that it takes on the appearance of the host plant. A beautiful pink pea-flower we haven't seen till now, *Mirbelia rubifolia*, was in abundance. The green

bell-flower creeper *Billardiera scandens* was also prevalent along the roadside. We came to a metal signpost minus the sign! This is the commencement of the Devils Hole Track. An eroded steep track leads down to the enormous ravine. The variety of plants we passed included *Dillwynia retorta*, *D. juniperina*, *Lambertia formosa*, *Hybanthus monopetalus*, *Amperea xiphoclada*, *Lycopodium deuterodensum*, *Gleichenia dicarpa*, *Persoonia juniperina*, *P. levis*, *P. pinifolia*, *Petrophile pulchella*, *Isopogon anemonifolius*, *Pimelea linifolia*, *Lomatia silaifolia*, *Hakea salicifolia*, *H. dactyloides*, which had masses of flowers, and one shrub of *Boronia floribunda* flowering.

We came to a rock shelf from which we could see the rocky remains of the escarpment. Due to weathering, they were like 'pagoda' rock formations high up on the cliff edge. Looking down we could see the narrow gap between two high cliff walls, and jammed between the walls at the top was a big rock. This gorge was the miners' access track from the Glen Shale Mine in Nellies Glen. They did actually climb through a big hole in or under an enormous boulder. This boulder was blown to pieces with dynamite in the 1930s in the vain hope that it could be a way to bring cattle out from the valley. Frank Walford wanted more tourist tracks in Katoomba, so he organized voluntary labour to upgrade this track. From here we could see the fire tower on Narrow Neck Plateau and the rugged rocky line of the escarpment.



Fronds of *Todea barbara* (King Fern)

At the top of the ravine we noticed the tall, slender trunks of the *Ceratopetalum apetalum* which were right against the flat cliff wall – almost welded to it. A Rufous Fantail was flying around; it lives in wet forested regions. It is quite a tricky business going down the rock-littered, boulder-strewn, dimly-lit, narrow gorge. We had to be careful where we put our feet, and what we hung onto. Moss and ferns were growing profusely, including *Davallia pyxidata*, *Doodia aspera*, *Todea barbara*, *Cyathea australis*, *Culcita dubia*, *Blechnum cartilagineum*, *B. nudum*, also *Sticherus lobatus*. *Sprengelia monticola* were on the cliff wall, and there were lots of rainforest trees. There was a trickle of water going down, and water dripping from little alcoves. It was an enjoyable experience being hemmed in by the giant walls, and in the filtered light, seeing light at the bottom. Such an impressive gorge - Jim asks "Why the Devils Hole?". At the bottom of it we sat on a rock looking for an owl that is a permanent resident of this area, but he wasn't at home today! We searched in vain with the binoculars. It was so peaceful sitting here, but we must move along.

.... continued next month.



Photo: Heather Mollenhauer (on bottom right-hand side of picture, with white hair) at the end of a day's bird banding at Jamison Creek 1987. Included in the picture are some other Blue Mountains identities, including two that were later married, and two that later discovered that they were Aborigines. There is also a doctor, still practising in Katoomba, and part of the head of a well known member of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society. Jim Smith is in the back row, second left.

University to ban bottled water sales

Adam Morton, SMH
January 21, 2011

THE University of Canberra will become the first Australian campus to ban the sale of bottled water.

Assuming it is successful in encouraging students to use refillable bottles, the ban - starting on March 22 - could reduce bottled water sales by 140,000 a year.

Bottled water will be replaced in campus cafes and shops by water vending machines that refill a 600-millilitre container with chilled water for \$1 or sparkling water for \$1.50 - cheaper than for sealed bottles.

Refillable plastic and aluminium bottles will be sold on campus. Backed by funding from the ACT government, the university has also installed six new water bubbler and bottle refill stations on the campus.

Jon Dee, founder of activist group Do Something!, which helped organise the ban following a student campaign, said: "This sets a model that other universities can follow - we're talking to several universities that have expressed interest."

A survey two years ago by the Plastics and Chemicals Industries Association estimated that more than half the plastic bottles sold in Australia end up in landfill, rather than being recycled.

Mr Dee said government statistics suggested more than 105 million litres of oil was used to produce the bottled water bought in Australia each year. This translated to an annual 126,000 tonnes in greenhouse gas emissions.

The university ban follows a similar step in 2009 by a small NSW town, Bundanoon.

University of Canberra vice-chancellor Stephen Parker said it was part of a push to make the campus sustainable.

Geoff Parker, chief executive of the Australasian Bottled Water Institute, said it was absurd that a country grappling with an obesity crisis would not provide as many options as possible for students to drink water. He said the "jury was out" on whether refillable bottles were better for the environment, and that banning bottled water could boost sales of soft drinks.

"The University of Canberra needs to be thinking about what this means for the waistlines of its students," Mr Parker said.

November in Blackheath

Blackheath holds onto the cold like a terrier,
shaking tired rhododendrons
with mean squalls from the Grose Valley.

Summer? What summer?
It's 48 fahrenheit on the old wooden thermometer
and that's in the bedroom.

Sleeting rain outside now
and we're watching Japanese samurai movies
on a laptop, both heaters blazing.

"Biggest dump of snow ever was a 22nd November",
says the newsagent, a native.
"We've had snow on Christmas Day",
he adds with a wink.

Brendan Doyle.

Gardens of Stone Stage 2 Proposal

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society asks for the Gardens of Stone Stage 2 Proposal to be implemented.

- ❖ Covers an area of 40 000 hectares of sandstone escarpment and plateau in the western Blue Mountains, incorporating Mt Airly, Mt Genowlan, sections of the Western escarpment, Wolgan, Ben Bullen and Newnes State Forests.
- ❖ Proposed to be a mixture of state conservation area (SCA) and national park tenure. SCA status allows underground coal mining to continue (recent changes to the Mining SEPP facilitate this).
- ❖ Characterised by a unique assemblage of spectacular pagoda formations, coloured clifflines, canyons, forested valleys, windswept plateau heathlands, rainforest gorges and montane woodlands and swamps.
- ❖ Contains significant Aboriginal heritage as well as the State's best preserved and heritage listed oil shale ruins.
- ❖ Newnes Plateau has the highest density of rare plants in the Blue Mountains such as the Wolgan Snowgum. Shrub Swamps are listed as endangered at a Federal and State level.
- ❖ GoS2 would benefit the local economy. Based on comparable statistics and studies from NSW, Queensland and Victoria, the upper estimate for tourism to a GoS2 park with the proposed facilities is 50 000 visitors a year. This level of tourism activity is estimated to produce economic benefits of \$3- 4 million per annum to the region (*Seeing the Gardens Nature-Based Tourism and Recreation in the Gardens of Stone Stage Two Park Proposal*, BMCS and Colong Foundation, 2009).
- ❖ Currently poorly managed and is threatened by illegal trail bike riding cutting tracks through swamps and woodlands. Small amount of native forestry.

National Parks and Reserves

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society asks for an increase of at least 5 million dollars per year (on 2010-2011 levels) to the Parks Service (NPWS) annual budget for conservation works in the Blue Mountains Region for the period 2012-2015.

- ❖ The budget for the Blue Mountains region of the NPWS has been shrinking by approximately 5% per year for the last 3 years. The region is increasingly reliant on Federal Government grants to carry out basic conservation works.
- ❖ There are very few rangers to cover such a large area.
- ❖ Core conservation work such as controlling weeds suffers from the lack of ongoing funding. Work in sensitive and remote areas is reliant upon volunteers and contractors when funds are available. Consequently the Grose River valley is suffering from major weed invasion following the 2007 fires.

❖ Critical conservation work for the protection of endangered species has been threatened such as the control of phytophthora under the Wollemi Pines.

❖ More broadly, the Parks Service has lessened its focus on land management outcomes and given more funding to new branches such as the Tourism and Partnership Branch.

a commitment to rule out commercial development inside National Parks in the Blue Mountains region.

❖ *The National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Visitors and Tourists) Bill 2010* was passed June 2010. Based on legal advice provided by Tim Robertson QC, the Society believes that the changes allow new exclusive commercial operations in national parks that will compete with the restaurants, cafes, guesthouses and other tourist facilities in Blue Mountains townships.

❖ BMCS supports well managed national parks in the Blue Mountains attracting people to enjoy their low-key walking tracks and picnic areas. Food, accommodation and other tourist services are provided by nearby vibrant townships.

Public Lands Rationalisation Stage 1 to be implemented and fully funded.

❖ State Government initiated a process to "identify high conservation public lands that would be more appropriately managed as a dedicated conservation reserve, either as part of Blue Mountains National Park, a Regional Park, a State Park or Community Land"

❖ Stage 1 process was completed in December 2002 with approximately 4,000 ha of high conservation lands proposed for transfer to Blue Mountains National Park. Examples include Hat Hill Creek Reserve in Blackheath.

❖ Lands transfer has never occurred due to a lack of funding for the Parks Service to manage the proposed lands.

Katoomba Airfield to become incorporated into the Blue Mountains National Park and retain its use as an airfield for emergency services.

Invasive Species

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society asks for a cross agency approach to weed control in the Blue Mountains incorporating a regional weed control plan and a budget of at least 1 million dollars per year in the period from 2011-2015.

❖ Cross agency approach currently exists between Blue Mountains City Council and the Parks Service. This needs to be expanded to include other agencies such as Railcorp, and the Roads and Traffic Authority to co-ordinate weed control programs.

❖ According to the Invasive Species Council, "weed invasion imperils almost half of NSW's threatened biodiversity. It is the most common threat to National Parks affecting "91% of park area, and a 'high to severe' threat for 48% of the total area". "It is also the most costly natural resource management problem for farmers" (*Stopping NSW's Creeping Peril*, Aug 2010).

(Continued on page 7)

(continued from page 6)

ongoing weed control be conducted after hazard reduction activities by the Rural Fire Service.

❖ The type of work that can be funded under S 44 declarations should be expanded to cover weed spread stimulated by fire.

recreational hunting be prohibited in State Forests and Crown lands, the Game Council be abolished and saved funds be used for scientifically credible feral animal control programs conducted by DECCW.

❖ Recreational hunting needs to be administered efficiently. NSW Government expected the Game Council to be self-funding from 2007-08 (according to the NSW Auditor-General's audit report of 2005), but its funding for the body has been increasing.

❖ Taxpayers have paid \$287 per feral animal killed, in state forests, and \$323 has been spent by the Game Council for each feral animal killed in the forests. (Dr Carol Booth, Invasive Species Council, *Is Hunting Conservation?* March 2009).

❖ If spent on professional feral animal control programs, the millions of dollars of government funds directed to ineffective recreational hunting could have achieved substantial outcomes for conservation.

❖ Programs need to "be carefully planned and coordinated", based on an understanding of the impacts of the target feral animals, with clear, realistic goals and assessment of all possible solutions, and they need to be monitored. The only way recreational hunting can satisfy these conditions is if it is part of a professional program with defined environmental goals.

Planning

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society asks for a commitment to maintain the standards of environmental protection provided by the Blue Mountains Local Environment Plan (LEP) 2005.

❖ The Blue Mountains LEP 2005 is a local 'place-based' plan which reflects the complexity and sensitivity of the Blue Mountains environment that sits within a World Heritage Area.

❖ The 2005 LEP is required, by the State Government, to be converted to a Statewide Standard LEP format by 2013. Under this format however, it is highly likely that the local provisions that currently protect and prevent the loss of environmentally sensitive areas will be weakened, unless those provisions are maintained in the revised Standard LEP.

❖ As an example, many bushland areas in which dwellings can be built have a subzone called Living Bushland Conservation under the current Blue Mountains LEP 2005. This zone protects areas of environmental significance, while still enabling dwellings to be built in less sensitive parts, but such zones will no longer be permitted in the Standard version of the LEP. Protecting such areas under the Standard LEP format will therefore be a challenge due to such rules. A major concern is that land currently zoned to protect environmentally sensitive areas will be degraded if any zone other than an Environmental Conservation zone

(E2) under the Standard LEP is applied.

❖ The Standard Template will also make it more difficult to protect areas such as scheduled vegetation communities through the use of protected overlays. The current LEP 2005 overlay clauses will be replaced with "model" standardised and simplified clauses that may not adequately protect areas of environmental significance in this city within a World Heritage Area.

the State Government target of 7000 additional dwellings for the Blue Mountains over the next 25 years, as outlined in the Draft North West Subregional Strategy be reconsidered in view of the sensitivity and limits of the World Heritage environment.

❖ 7000 new dwellings is an unrealistic target for the Blue Mountains given its environmental constraints.

❖ It would be irresponsible to further open up areas between towns and build new houses on currently undeveloped, high fire prone ridges to accommodate such growth. The alternative of infill development within existing centres will alleviate sprawl, but is limited by proximity to public transport and other services. The 7000 target therefore should be reconsidered.

removing the Part 3A legislature.

Climate Change & Transport

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society asks for a commitment to oppose the massive expansion of Mt Piper Power Station.

❖ NSW government has given concept approval for the installation and operation of up to 2,000 MW of new generating capacity on the existing Mt Piper Power Station site.

❖ This is likely to be coal powered because there are no gas supply lines nearby.

❖ The Mt Piper extension, if coal fired, will pump more than 10 million tonnes of additional CO₂-e into the atmosphere every year (based on Delta's projections). This will mean that NSW's greenhouse gas emissions increase by more than 6% as a result of just this Mt Piper extension.

❖ Future energy needs can be met through energy efficiency measures and renewable energy. (See Dr Mark Diesendorf, University of New South Wales, *Sustainable Energy Policy for Australia*, 2010, www.energyscience.org.au/FS05%20Sust%20Energy2.pdf)

increased funding and priority given to rail transport.

❖ The peak of oil production has passed or is imminent, hence transport infrastructure planning should prioritise energy efficient rail freight and passenger transport.

❖ Money allocated for the Mt Victoria bypass should be redirected to rail.

❖ B doubles longer than 19m should not be allowed through the Blue Mountains.

a commitment to oppose the Bells Line of Road Expressway development.

(Continued on page 8)

Continued from page 7.

❖ Feasibility studies for the Bells Line of Road (BLoR) rejected all highway route options because it is uneconomic and has many environmental problems e.g. http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/constructionmaintenance/majorconstructionprojectssydney/bells_line_of_road/bells/pdf/blor_corridor_study.pdf

❖ 2009 Central West Transport Needs Study found that the existing road and rail network were adequate to serve the region for at least the next 25 years (http://www.nationbuildingprogram.gov.au/publications/reports/pdf/Central_West_Transport_Needs_Study_Summary%20Report.pdf).

❖ RTA's ongoing program of safety improvements along the BLoR is supported by the Society. This includes passing lanes within the existing road easement, barriers to separate lanes and specific traffic control methods (warning lights, road-surface treatments) to cater for fog, snow and ice; it excludes **any** grade modifications or curvature realignments with the objective of increasing the road's suitability to take heavy trucking traffic such as B-doubles and semi-trailers

❖ BLoR's value and character as a tourist asset within and through the GBMWA must not be compromised.

Mining & Groundwater

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society asks for: Mining and extractive industries

❖ A protection zone of 1km to be placed around Carne Creek, all other Creeks feeding the Wolgan-Colo system, and the headwaters of the Wollangambe Wild River on Newnes Plateau.

❖ Immediate exclusion of proposed mining and/or construction materials projects from Part 3A approval (e.g. Coalpac consolidation proposal).

❖ Imposition of enforced, far more rigorous quality and quantity standards in relation to mine-water and power station discharges to natural stream systems, particularly where those systems are within either the Coxs R or Wolgan R catchments.

❖ A more rigorously weighted evaluation of any project's direct and indirect implications for GGE, climate change and peak oil.

Groundwater

❖ Permanent retention of the embargo on new water bores for domestic and social purposes and for commercial water bottling.

❖ Imposition of an embargo over the 'Mounts' district and throughout the Greater Blue Mountains.

❖ Metering all existing bores as a basis for appropriate water charges.

❖ Re-introduction of level 3 water restrictions.

AGM in March and election of a new management committee

Blue Mountains Conservation Society's Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday 25th March.

Before the next newsletter you will receive a Notice of AGM with details of proposed Constitution changes to be voted on at the AGM. This will be sent separately to you because we are required to give advice of AGM to members within a certain number of days. This newsletter will arrive too early and the March newsletter will be too late.

At the AGM, all management committee positions will fall vacant. Some members of the management committee will stand again.

Our President, Tara Cameron, has served a three year term, which is all she is allowed to do under the constitution. So a new President will be elected.

Vice-Presidents Liz van Reyswoud and John Haydon, after many years on the management committee, will be standing down and will not be standing for re-election.

Our Environmental Education Officer, Chris Yates, has moved to Sydney.

The position of Monthly Meetings Co-ordinator was not filled this year.

So, please think about it. You can be an active part of Blue Mountains Conservation Society. Beside serving on the management committee, there are lots of other ways you can help.

Please contact Tara or any other member of the present management committee to discuss it. Contact details are in the box on page 2 of this newsletter.

No experience is necessary.

There will be full details of management positions and duties attached to them with the Notice of AGM.

BIRD-ATTRACTING PLANT

Melaleuca hypericifolia has been flowering in my garden for months and is still attracting honeyeaters.

As well as the usual bushland neighbours - New Holland Honeyeater, Red Wattle Bird, White-eared Honeyeater, Eastern Spinebill - unusual birds for my garden have been a Scarlet Honeyeater and a pair of Rainbow Lorikeets. *Melaleuca hypericifolia* is a small spreading shrub with distinctive opposite leaves and red flower spikes and very attractive.

Our nursery volunteers will have this plant for sale at the coming markets.

Christine. .



Loose Feathers, with Carol Proberts

During the daily bustle of people and traffic in Katoomba Street, an incredible spectacle might be playing out just above the rooftops, and chances are the shoppers and tourists won't even notice. In a puff of feathers a feral pigeon falls prey to what is probably the fastest flying bird on earth: the Peregrine Falcon. Estimates of the Peregrine's top speed vary enormously but during a "stoop" (the stage of flight when the bird folds its wings and goes into a long aerial dive in pursuit of prey), a speed of 300 km/hour is a common and not unrealistic figure. In sustained flight, swifts gets the honour of being the fastest birds, but they cannot match this short burst of pure velocity achieved by the falcon during a stoop.

I always used to take pleasure in looking up at the Carrington chimney and seeing a Peregrine sitting on the top, but for the last few years I haven't seen it there. Very recently though, I've noticed one hanging around Parke Street, where it regularly perches in a tall eucalypt at the back of the TAFE college behind the Carrington. The bird's solid build, slaty grey back and broad white chest are distinctive and in flight it has the typical pointed wings and flat glide of a bird designed for speed.

Measuring birds' intelligence is an even more difficult and controversial task than measuring their speed, but most agree that ravens are at the top of the class when it comes to bird brains. Here in the Blue Mountains, our only corvid (crow-like bird) is the Australian Raven - that big black bird with white eyes, shaggy throat feathers and a call that can sound remarkably like a human baby. People often call them "crows", however the closest true crows are more than 150km away where the Torresian Crow reaches its southern limit in the Hunter Valley.

On 19th November at Govetts Leap, I noticed a pair of Australian Ravens acting suspiciously. One had in its bill what looked like a small dead nestling which it was pushing into a hollow branch. The other put something into a hole in a stone wall and stuffed leaves and twigs in front of it. When the raven flew off, I pulled out the leaves to see what it had hidden. It was a piece of salami!

In 2006, Fiona Lumsden reported seeing these same ravens hiding pieces of biscuit underneath grass and pine bark. It seems these birds have adopted a clever way of dealing with a temporary surplus of food. You can read more about this interesting behaviour at www.bmbirding.com.au/news1.html#raven.

Carol Proberts origma@westnet.com.au

Membership Application Form

(Use capitals please—even for email address)

Name(s) 1.
2.
3.

Address:
.....PC

Phone(s)

Email

MEMBERSHIP FEES (please circle one item)

Single \$25 Concession (Senior/Student)\$15
Household \$30 Concession (Senior/Student)\$20
Corporate (open to negotiation) \$100

Bushwalkers only.:
(\$20 per walker per annum) \$.....

Donation (tax-deductible) \$.....

TOTAL AMOUNT INCLUDED \$.....

Note: All fees include GST at the relevant rate.

Send my copy of Hut News by

Please tick box mail internet only

Would you like to be involved in any of the following activities or working groups? (Please underline): Land use/development issues; Environmental Education; Threatened species issues; Web or database management; Plant nursery assistance; Bushcare; Publicity/photography; Water quality/sourcing studies; Society administration.

I/We agree to support the aims and objectives of the Society as set out on reverse side of this membership application:

Please sign if named above.

Signature(s) 1.
2.
3.

ENQUIRIES: Phone (02 4757 1872

Email: membership@bluemountains.org.au

Please cut out and forward this form with your cheque or money order to:

Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.
PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls NSW 2782

Sent: Friday, January 21, 2011 9:58 AM

Subject: launch of Natural Advantage and the GOS Visitors Map - A Big Thank You

Dear Consoc

I attended yesterdays launch of Natural Advantage & GOS Visitors map and just wanted to congratulate Consoc on a most important launch. Sitting in the audience I was really impressed at the professional approach that was projected. Tara is just such a natural at this and she did fantastic presentation in what was a short time-frame to get the message across. I felt it was done so well and we couldn't wish for a better communication to have been achieved in presenting to politicians. Many thanks.

I also wanted to express my sincere thanks at the launch being presented in the lower mountains at Springwood. I was just so appreciative that the lower mountains had the spotlight for this launch - lets hope we can have many more conservation activities.

The mountains is just so spread out and it is difficult to maintain a balance. I believe we need a strong presence in conservation in the lower mountains -so thanks again.

Consoc is doing great work that will be remembered for generations to come

Mike Purtell, Consoc member.

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Blue Mountains Conservation Society is a community organisation working to achieve the preservation and regeneration of the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains.

The Society believes that World Heritage status provides an opportunity for local community members to become custodians of the unique biodiversity and scenery of the Blue Mountains.

The Mission of the Society is to help conserve the natural environment of the Blue Mountains.

The Aims and Objectives of the Society are to:

- Disseminate and foster an understanding of the ideals of Conservation.
- Promote the need for ecological sustainability.
- Protect the natural environment—flora, fauna, habitat, water, land and air.
- Actively oppose those human activities which degrade or destroy the natural environment.
- Repair the adverse effects of human activities upon the environment.
- Encourage the love of the natural environment by conducting a regular program of bushwalks.
- Increase the pool of expert knowledge about the natural environment, through meetings, excursions, research and other activities.
- Provide information to the public on matters of Conservation, especially through the Conservation Hut at the Valley of the Waters, Wentworth Falls.
- Maintain close and friendly relations with like-minded groups.



Common Brown butterfly feeding on Calliopsis flower. Photo by Sylvia

Butterfly Christmas

Christine Davies

During the holidays my 10 year old granddaughter Sylvia came to stay. Over Christmas we spent many hours out the back in the bush photographing butterflies and other creatures.

There is a cleared patch which is a power access road and over summer it is a mass of bright yellow calliopsis which the butterflies love.

Then a tall grass tree flower spike suddenly appeared. (Do they come up overnight – you never see them growing!)

Bees, beetles, butterflies, and many other pollinating insects flocked to feed on the sweet nectar of the Xanthorrhoea flowers. One morning we saw it shake as a bird flew away from it. Often there were a dozen or more butterflies fluttering around it, or “parked” on it.

Common Brown (what a boring name for such a beautiful creature!); another paler orange one with black speckles; the occasional Swordgrass butterfly. There were lots of another which I couldn't find in the butterfly book - orange and black with white speckles on the wingtips, very pretty and colourful, and black and white stripes on its legs. It could be a moth. Also lots of the little blue, brown or grey butterflies - they are small and fast and you never get a good look at them.

We were lucky to spot and photograph a Caddisfly and a Dragonfly, both perched. The caddisfly is more slender than the dragonfly and holds its wings at its sides when perching. This dragonfly was yellow, with a matching patch of yellow in one upper panel in each of its transparent upright wings.

On 3rd January a cloud descended over Blackheath (literally). We were in the cloud for a week, and it seemed like a month. Everything was damp, inside and outside. The washing stayed wet and the tiled floors became treacherous. Beneath us in the valley it was sometimes fine, and Sylvia went horse-riding at Centennial Glen Stables in the Kanimbla Valley - beautiful down there, surrounded by cliffs and the horses healthy and happy.

When the cloud lifted and the sun came out, most of the orange butterflies were gone and all the Common Browns and the pretty moths, replaced by an invasion of the introduced Cabbage White Butterflies which seem to be in plague proportions in the upper mountains.



Insects loved the sweet nectar of the Xanthorrhoea. Often a dozen or more butterflies fluttered around it or “parked” on it.

Down the Wallaby Track — a backward glance, with John Low IRISH REVOLUTIONARIES AT GOVETTS LEAP

During the First World War, with the 'mother country' embroiled in violent conflict in Ireland as well as Europe, our own authorities were likewise nervous of those suspected of Irish republican sympathies. Accordingly, in 1918 the homes and offices of members of the small Irish National Association were raided by the police. Seven men were arrested and detained in Darlinghurst Gaol while an inquiry was held into their alleged secret revolutionary activities.

In the end this investigation confirmed little more than their "militant Irish disposition and outlook" and the fact they had raised the princely sum of £20 to send to Ireland. No formal connection with the Irish revolutionary movement was established and by early 1919 all had been released. Had the inquiry been a little more persistent, however, it might have discovered something that, in the heightened atmosphere of the time, could well have generated some community disquiet, especially in the Blue Mountains. In 1916-1917 this group of Irish sympathisers had established a secret military training camp in the Mountains!

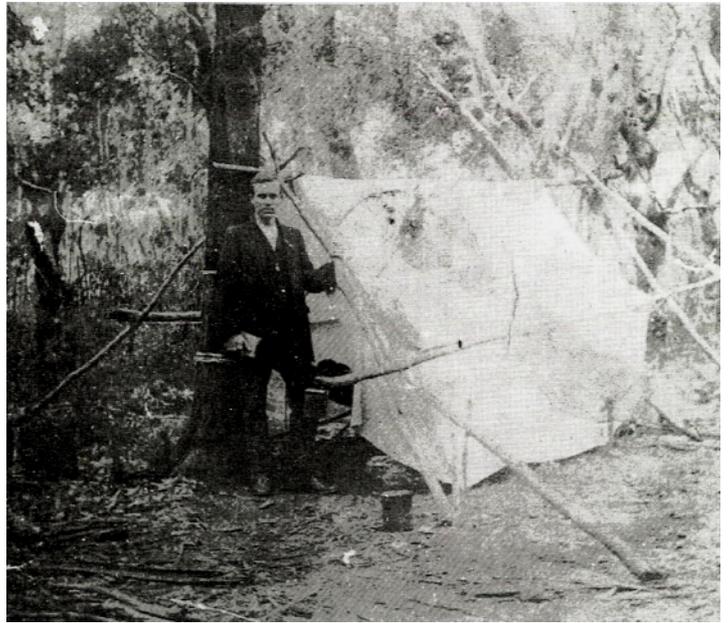
I first came across this interesting episode in the late Professor Patrick O'Farrell's *The Irish in Australia* (first published 1987) in which he included a photograph of the camp, though with no specific location. In reply to a letter I wrote to him in 1993, however, he stated that the camp was at Govetts Leap and he sent me a copy of a rough pencil sketch-map of the site drawn by one of the principal participants, Albert Dryer.

I was astonished to discover that the map located the camp on the bush island around which the road at the lookout loops. It was sited 50 yards in from the road fronting the valley and in the corner opposite the start of the track to the falls. There is, of course, no evidence of it now and one is left wondering why a camp meant to be secret was established so close to a popular tourist spot. Dryer's map shows paths, tea rooms, various picnic sheds and a children's play area.

Perhaps the camp's description as a 'military training camp' overstates its intentions. The 1918 inquiry seemed to question the ability of the accused men to organise anything serious and O'Farrell describes the camp in less than flattering terms as "merely a few tents, and the handful of men who attended had no firearms". Though the very idea of training men to fight against Britain would have proved inflammatory had it become public, the camp at Govetts Leap was probably no more than an exercise in camaraderie, a gathering of like-minded sympathisers reinforcing their Irish nationalist ideals around the campfire.

Visiting Govetts Leap today, you would never suspect this popular lookout and picnic spot to have played a cameo role in the long and bitter story of Irish republican politics. Sometimes you discover things about a place that really surprise you.

John Low <johnlow@iprimus.com.au>



SONNET TO GLOBAL WARMING

The leaders of our world have but one aim
With global warming now become so real
To win the next election is their game
What can WE do to help our planet heal?

Sit photo voltaic cells upon our roofs
And let's abandon burning fossil fuels
Return to days of hearing horses hooves
Upon the roads; or even maybe mules

Dig up your lawns as soon as you are able
Grow cabbages, peas, beans and even rainbow chard
A wondrous bounty placed upon your table
Try it, you'll find it's really not too hard

The answer, then, lies with us common folk
The politicians?- No, they're just a joke.

Alan Thomas

MARY LEE 70TH Surprise Birthday luncheon

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Judith Dyer for organising the surprise lunch at the Heritage Restaurant in Katooma and also to Tera Verwey for organising the birthday cake complete with sparklers (but not 70 of them as the Fire Brigade would have been called) to celebrate Mary's milestone 70th birthday.

Also to thank the Monday Gang for their appearance and generosity. On entering the Restaurant Mary's eyes nearly popped out of her head when she saw all those lovely friendly faces and the chorus of SURPRISE SURPRISE HAPPY BIRTHDAY.

The lunch was arranged months before and as you know I don't talk very much and found it terribly difficult to keep it a secret, but somehow managed it PHEW! Once again thank you Monday Walkers.

Regards, Bob Lee

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY BUSHWALKING ACTIVITIES

Membership of the bushwalking group is open to Society members. The BMCS Bushwalking Guide which explains the numbered grades can be found on the Society's website www.bluemountains.org.au or can be posted on request. For more information call Maurice Kerkham 4739 4942 email mauricekerkham@hotmail.com or write to PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782. **Late changes to the program will be published on the website.**

SATURDAY WALKS: Usually a full day longer walk at a faster pace. Before attending ring the designated contact person or the Group Co-ordinator Jim Percy 4758 6009 or email jp34@tpg.com.au

Date	Details	Contact	Meet at	(km)	Grade	Map
Feb 12	Walls Cave, with an additional walk if required from Neates Glen CP or the Braeside walk.	Liz 4754 4966	Blackheath Station CP 8.30 am	6	2/3	Katoomba
Feb 19	Dalpura Gully - if warm day, waste-deep wade - bring change of clothing. If cool day we will add Jinki Gully instead (gaiters and gloves).	Jim 4758 6009	Mt. Vic Station 8.30 a.m.	6	33	Mt Wilson
Feb 26	Federal Pass to Old Leura sewage works site - great views of Jamison Valley and Mt Solitary	Eddie 4784 2691	Lawson Station CP 8.30 am	6	2/3	Katoomba
Mar 5	Furber Steps to bottom of Golden Stairs, back across the valley floor thru fern forest looking for signs of the aerial cable way constructed and used only briefly in late 1880s.	Jim 4758 6009	Gearins Hotel, Katoomba, CP 8.30 AM	6-7	3	Katoomba
Mar 12	Spit to Manly - chance for a swim at various beaches. Travel in 2nd car, top.	Annemarie 4759 2172	Central - top of escalator, 9.35 am	6	2/3	

MONDAY LEISURE WALKS: Short Day walks of 3-5 hours, suitable for walkers of an average fitness. Bring morning tea and lunch and adequate water. The Group Co-ordinator is Judith Dyer, 4758 6310, judithbushwalker@hotmail.com

Date	Description	Grade	Contact	Meet
Mar 7	South Lawson Falls - Hazelbrook Station. Waterfalls and bush tracks	2	Annamarie 4759 2353	Lawson post office
Mar 14	CITY WALK. South Head, Watsons Bay. Coastal views. Possible paddle and take-away seafood lunch.	1	Heather 4739 1493	Central Station, top of escalator, 9.30am
Mar 21	Long Angle, Sun Valley. Picturesque fire trail, blue gums and water crossings.	3	Robyn 4751 6328	Behind Springwood Civic Centre, 9.15. Car pool.
Mar 28	BUS TRIP. Evan's Crown. Amazing views and rock formations. Option of lunch at Tarana Pub. Book and pay Keith 4736 1010 \$12	2	Heather 4739 1493	BMCC Depot, South Street, North Katoomba, 8.30 am.

THURSDAY PLEASURE WALKS: Walks of 2-3 hours conducted at a leisurely pace to suit walkers on the day. Bring morning tea, adequate water and lunch if noted. Group Co-ordinator is Gail Schwedler 4782 1215 platypusprotected@yahoo.com.au

Mar 10	Leura Cascades to Gordon Falls. Clifftop walk with great views of cliffs and valley.	2	Joan c/o 4782 1215	Cnr. Megalong Street and The Mall, Leura, 9.35 am
Mar 17	BUS TRIP, West Head. Bring lunch and swimming gear. Cost \$10 to be paid to Simone when booking.	2	Simone 47 57 3416	Meet BMCC Depot South Street Nth Katoomba 8.30 a.m. sharp
Mar 24	Fairy Bower, Mt Victoria. Walk down from Mount Piddington. Bring lunch.	2	Barrie 4782 9235	Mt Victoria Station, 9.45am.
Mar 31	Horseshoe Falls. Three waterfalls and rainforest walk.	2	Maurice 4739 4942	Hazelbrook shops car park, 10am. Car pool.

MYRTLE RUST: IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL BUSHWALKERS:

Myrtle Rust is a South American rust fungus which is previously unknown in this country and has the potential to devastate our over 5000 species of plants in the Myrtaceae family. This includes Eucalypts, Angophoras, Tea Trees, Bottlebrush, Paperbarks and Lilypilly amongst some of our most iconic, valuable and well loved bushland plants. The current situation for the control program for this disease is that we need all the help we can get from those who live in and around, work in or enjoy our bushland. To help, please :

- **make yourself familiar with what this rust looks like and contact the Exotic Plant Pest hotline number 1800 084 881 to report it immediately if found**

anywhere.

- **Prevent the spread of the rust by taking precautions.** See http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/362096/preventing-spread-Myrtle-Rust-bushland.pdf While this flyer is aimed at bushcare workers, bushwalkers, especially those walking in remote locations and off track can spread the disease.

For more information there are two web sites you should be aware of – lots of information and plenty to download : <http://www.daff.gov.au/aqis/quarantine/pests-diseases/myrtle-rust/myrtle-rust-qa> and <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/plant/myrtle-rust>