



"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"

Take a role in the management of the Society

The Society celebrated its 50th birthday in 2011. It is probably the largest regional environmental group in NSW and enjoys respect from the community and from agencies with which it deals.

At our AGM on Thursday 29th March we will elect a management committee for the year from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013. All positions will fall vacant, and some members of the present committee will not be standing for re-election.

Duties and responsibilities of all management positions are detailed on page 4 of this newsletter.

Please give consideration to nominating for a position. Whilst our constitution allows for nominations to be received on the night of the AGM, we really need to be organised beforehand to ensure that there will be at least one nomination for each position.

Send in the nomination form on page 12 of this newsletter or you can find it on our website www.bluemountains.org.au.

Please contact the president or one of the vice presidents if you wish to discuss any of the positions. Contact details are on page 2.

BMCS NURSERY NATIVE PLANT SALES

Lawson Nursery –Wednesdays and Saturdays, 9am to noon.

The nursery is located in the Lawson Industrial Area on the corner of Park and Cascade Streets, opposite Federation Building Materials – turn south off the Highway onto Honour Avenue or Orient Street, then left into Cascade Street.

Blackheath Community Market,
1st Sunday of the month at Blackheath Public School, 9am to 1pm.

Magpie Market, 3rd Sunday of the month at Lawson Public School, 9am to 2pm.

Tube stock \$2.50 each.

Enquiries Kevin Bell 4787 6436,
email kevinbell@eftel.net.au

Blue Mountains Conservation Society Notice of Annual General Meeting

7.30 pm, THURSDAY 29 March 2012

Conservation Hut (end of Fletcher Street) Wentworth Falls

Business will include receipt of reports, adoption of annual accounts, determination of structure of Management Committee, election of President, Management Committee members and other office holders and appointment of auditor.

The AGM will be FOLLOWED BY

Monthly Meeting at 8.15 pm

**Is the future of the Greater Blue Mountains
World Heritage Area held in the jaws of a dingo?**



Our guest speaker, Brad Purcell, gained a PhD at UWS studying the dingo populations in the remote southern Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. The study included collecting data from 20 dingoes fitted with GPS tracking collars. Read more on Page 5.

Come along and support those taking the responsibility for running the Society. Perhaps you have questions for them, or comments about the progress of our various campaigns.

Then stay to learn about the wild dingo population which is right at our doorstep, just 80 km from the centre of Sydney.

Visitors are very welcome.

Photo: young dingos with their mother.

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

"Hut News", the newsletter of
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MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES

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HUT NEWS EDITORIALS

The deadline for the next
issue of Hut News is

20 March 2012.

hutnews@bluemountains.org.au 47877246

Nursery News

What's with the Weather? We hear many complaints about the weather over this past month and while some of our plants love it (e.g. ferns, *Leptospermum* and *Melaleuca species*) many others (e.g. pea plants, some *Acacia species*, especially *A. terminalis*) are suffering and we have resorted to keeping them indoors and out of the rain. One bonus has been that we have been able to limit irrigation with a big saving in water costs. On the other hand, the wet weather has kept customers away from our Wednesday and Saturday sales but, fortunately, the weather was perfect for our first market of the year.

On Sunday 5th February the sun shone magnificently at the Blackheath Community Markets and enticed customers to come and buy giving us a profit of \$472. If you haven't visited our stall or, indeed, the many others at these markets, we urge you to come along on either the first Sunday of the month (Blackheath) or the third Sunday (Lawson).



Acaena novae-zelandiae: (syn. *A. anserinifolia*)

You may be more familiar with the common name of this plant, Bidgee-widgee or Bidi-bidi or Biddy-biddy, but if you have ever gone bushwalking in summer you will no doubt have cursed the burrs it produces and which stick persistently to socks or anything else it can attach itself. The genus *Acaena* derives from the Greek *akaina* meaning *thorn*. It is creeping herb with attractive bright green leaves and a single plant can cover an area of 4-5 m² quite quickly. It produces white flower heads on stalks 10-20cm long and the globular fruiting heads are about 2-2.5 cm in diameter turning from an attractive red to brown on maturity. Get down amongst the burrs and see how sunlight lights them up. The conspicuous spines are tipped with minute barbs

which has proved to be a very successful method of dispersion.

It is widespread and common in all the eastern states and South Australia as well as New Zealand, while it has been declared a noxious weed in Hawaii and California. Here it is a very useful plant for erosion control as it will grow in a variety of soils, in shade, dappled shade, partial shade or full sun and is frost tolerant. There are reports of its leaves being used as a tea substitute by early settlers. We grow it either from seed or cuttings which strike easily.

Not convinced yet to buy some? We and Wildplant were successful in convincing the RTA of its suitability and versatility as a hardy ground-cover and the over a thousand plants our joint nurseries have prepared will soon find their way into the median strip on the section of the highway being constructed between Tableland Road and Wentworth Falls. We have also produced the same number of *Lomandra longifolia* and the Mallee, *Eucalyptus stricta* for the same purpose as well as thousands of other plants for the verges. Look for them when the highway is completed.

Kevin Bell, Nursery Manager.

Diagram and photo from New South Wales Flora Online,
<http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/>



Cullen Bullen residents unite against open-cut mine

Over 70 Cullen Bullen residents attended an information forum on 3 February 2012.

Speakers were Dr Richard Stiles on health impacts from open-cut mining, BMCS campaigner Justin McKee on 'How mining companies interact with local communities' and Environment Defender Office's Jemiliah Hallinan on 'Landholder rights'.

At the end of the meeting a group of residents resolved to form the 'Cullen Bullen Committee', agreeing the proposal will forever change the future of their community and action must be taken.

Cullen Bullen village is under imminent threat from the Coalpac Consolidation Project which seeks to extend open-cut and highwall mining into 1088 hectares of the Ben Bullen State Forest. If approved, mining activity will be within hundreds of metres of the village, a village that is already being negatively impacted by nearby open-cut mining activity.

Over 200 signatures have been collected for a petition that sees residents formally objecting to:

- Increased threats to their health from fine and other damaging particles due to the proximity of the proposed open-cut mining activity.
- Increased threats to the health of the children attending Cullen Bullen Public School from fine and other damaging particles due to the proximity of the proposed open-cut mining activity.
- Increased threats to their property and public amenity from blasting and other high-impact, mining activity.
- Increased threats to the quality of their lifestyle from any increase in the level of open-cut mining activity within hundreds of metres of their village.
- Open-cut activity blighting the scenic landscape and impacting local tourism.
- The loss of habitat for native plants and animals.

Councillor Howard Fisher's commented at the forum that if the majority of Cullen Bullen residents opposed the Coalpac Consolidation Project, they would have the full support of Lithgow City Council.



Coalpac is following an age old formula

Blue Mountains Conservation Society campaigner Justin McKee has warned Cullen Bullen residents to be wary of Coalpac employing 'age old' mining company tactics to win over the region in a bid to forge ahead with its devastating open cut mining project.

"The process any mining company will follow to divide and then conquer a community is age old and I've witnessed this in the Hunter Region time and time again," Mr McKee said.

"First a company will employ the nicest person they can possibly find to be the community relations officer to forge local relationships.

"The company will then go about understanding exactly what the local issues are, create local community opinion leaders while buying up land and offer the loudest people in the community either jobs or above market rate sums for their property and demand they sign confidentiality agreements. All the while the company will claim the middle ground in all its communications so that others' opinions seem radical.

"Finally, the company will set about marginalising everybody else so that the community is left completely divided.

"We have to keep in mind is that the process in place that approves mining operations gives little consideration to social values or community function. The community is well and truly informed about the outstanding natural values of the Ben Bullen State Forest and appreciate that ripping it up will negatively impact their health and lifestyle. There is a clear understanding that an open-cut mine operating within a few hundred metres of their town will deliver a bleak future.

"It's laughable to see Coalpac Pty Ltd announcing in the media its pithy \$5000 donation to the Cullen Bullen Rural Fire Service. In October 2010, The Australian reported Melbourne's Liberman family is planning a sale of its Cullen Valley and Invincible Colliery operations that could fetch \$420 million.

"Environment groups around the state, the NSW ALP, the Greens, Lithgow City Council and the majority of local residents object to the open-cut proposal and want mining in the area to be kept underground. Coalpac is on its own with its proposal.

"Let's hope the NSW Coalition Government's process results in an outright rejection of the proposal. With the volume of signatures now received from Cullen Bullen residents in their petition that objects to the proposal, is it absolutely clear Coalpac is underestimating the opposition to its outrageous proposal," Mr McKee said.

HEADS UP!

It's nearly submission writing time!

We've been informed that the Coalpac Consolidation Project environmental assessment will be placed on public exhibition over the coming months.

The Director General typically gives a 30day window for people to post comments on the document within a submission they write.

We plan on creating a submission writing guide to help our supporters get submissions in that object to the proposal.

Watch this space for that call for your help to protect a precious natural area!

**BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION — MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE DUTIES
AND RESPONSIBILITIES. APRIL 2012 TO MARCH 2013**

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

POSITIONS: The following office bearers comprise the BMCS Management Committee. These members attend monthly Management Committee meetings, and other meetings as needed. Additional personal time is needed to effectively handle the responsibilities. A guide to the total number of hours per month (hpm) is shown in brackets after each position.

President (35 hpm)

- Provides leadership and direction for BMCS
- Chairperson for BMCS meetings
- Spokesperson for BMCS
- Coordinates the BMCS response to ad hoc matters
- Provides copy for Hut News
- Participates in selected BMCS objectives where practicable

Senior Vice-President

Second Vice-President

(two positions, each 15 hpm)

- Deputises for the President as required
- Takes responsibility for one or more nominated major projects
- Undertakes business arising at meetings, assists sub-committees when required
- Welcomes members and visitors at monthly meetings, assists with name tags and attendance book.

Administration Officer (30 hpm)

- Receives and distributes incoming mail from post and email
- Prepares monthly schedules of correspondence – inwards and outwards
- Manages office, including files, archives, stationery supplies, computer and other office equipment
- Manages Hut foyer displays

Meetings Secretary (15 hpm)

- Prepares meeting agendas and minutes.

Membership Secretary (35 hpm)

- Initiates programs to attract new members to the Society
- Keeps membership records
- Sends welcome letters to new members
- Sends renewal notices, follows up members who become unfinancial
- Removes unfinancial members from membership
- Provides monthly membership report
- Arranges printing and postage for each member mailout
- Deposits membership fees

Treasurer (10 hpm)

- Responsible for BMCS finances
- Responsible for BMCS insurance
- Pays accounts and deposits receipts
- Maintains financial records
- Provides monthly financial report
- Prepares and lodges quarterly GST returns
- Arranges audit for AGM
- Acts as Public Officer

Land Use Officer (20 hpm)

- Convenes land use sub-committee
- Monitors changes to land use/planning legislation
- Monitors developments and impacts
- Prepares submissions
- Initiates campaigns on key issues

Newsletter Editor (30 hpm)

- Liaises with existing and potential Hut News contributors
- Edits/produces 11 newsletters per year

Publicity/ PublicAffairs (35 hpm)

- promotes BMCS issues in the media
- Attends monthly meetings and publishes a review in Hut News
- Takes photographs of key BMCS events, locations, people etc
- Provides website with news and views
- Prepares sundry publications for distribution. Writes a monthly column for BM Gazette with input from others.

Website Officer (30 hpm)

- Maintains BMCS website
- Updates content of website monthly and as required
- Designs and codes new web pages
- Manages web hosting account
- Performs email-outs as required.

Meetings Convenor (10 hpm)

- Arranges speakers for each monthly meeting, after discussion with Management Committee
- Arranges hospitality, welcome, introductions, gift and supper for speakers

Environmental Education Officer (15 hpm)

- Responsible for education program
- Liaises with BMCC to promote community environmental. education
- Convenes env.ed. sub-committee
- Prepares publications, workshops, activities to inform the community about nature and conservation issues

Plant Nursery Manager (50 hpm)

- Responsible for overseeing operations of Blackheath and Lawson nurseries.
- Purchases nursery materials
- Collects and maintains a seed bank of local plants
- Arranges sales and contracts for plants with government and private individuals
- Promotes the use of Australian plants in private and Council gardens
- Manages nursery financial affairs

Climate Change/Sustainability Officer (15 hpm)

- Liaises with local CC/Sustainability groups and BMCC
- Continue with 'Sustainable ideas' each month in Hut News
- Takes an active role in political/ governmental aspects of CC policy, submissions and grants.

- Supports sustainable village models and concepts, with an emphasis on transport and food solution.

National Parks and World Heritage Officer (15 hpm)

- Liaises with NPWS about parks management matters
- Lobbies to advance and enhance conservation in, or impacting on, national parks
- Campaigns for inholdings acquisitions
- Campaigns for parks/WHA additions
- Lobbies for WHA management funding
- Monitors/comments on WHA management
- Identifies/campaigns for WHA additions

Threatened Species/Bushcare Officer (15 hpm)

- Deals with threatened species issues and prepares submissions etc.
- Promotes threatened species conservation
- Represents BMCS on the BM Threatened Species Recovery Team
- Liaises with NPWS, BMCC and other bushcare groups
- Represents BMCS at Bushcare Network meetings
- Advises on Bushcare issues

Project Officer - Gardens of Stone

- Sits on the OBJ3 subcommittee
- Liaises with relevant land managers about GOS2 issues
- Lobbies to advance the reservation of GOS2 area
- Prepares maps and diagrams and supplies photos for the campaign
- Helps write submissions relevant to the campaign
- On the ground monitoring of damaging activities

Lithgow Regional Subcommittee Coordinator

- Represents and reports for Lithgow Regional Subcommittee.

Non Management Positions:

Bushfire Committee Rep. (5 hpm)

- Represents NCC on BM Bushfire Mgt C/tee and Risk Mgt Sub-C/tee.
- Attends appropriate NCC workshops

Walks Convenor (8 hpm)

- Sends welcome packs to new bushwalkers.
- Maintains Bushwalkers' sub-group insurance and attendance records
- Has in depth & up to date knowledge of bw insurance policy & requirements.
- Organises meetings of bushwalking co-ordinators & other interested bushwalkers.

MC Meeting Arrangements

Mid-Mountains Community Centre, Lawson, 9.15 am to 12.15, Saturday prior to last Thursday of the month.

Mountain Christmas Bells

In February 2012 a special flowering event was recorded on the Prince Henry Cliff Walk, near Gordon Falls, Leura. The area was burnt in a fire caused by an arsonist in September 2011.

The Mountain Christmas Bell (*Blandfordia cunninghamii*) is rare and only found in a few locations in the upper Blue Mountains and in an isolated population at Mt Kembla near Wollongong. Under normal conditions only a few plants will flower at a time. But here we had a spectacular display. Why?

The following abstract from CSIRO Publishing (<http://www.publish.csiro.au/paper/BT9940049>) describes post-fire flowering in a related species, the Sydney Christmas Bell (*Blandfordia nobilis*).

Postfire Flowering Patterns in *Blandfordia nobilis*

(Lilaceae) KA Johnson, DA Morrison and G Goldsack
Australian Journal of Botany 42(1) 49 - 60.

Abstract

Blandfordia nobilis Smith (Liliaceae) is a small herbaceous monocotyledon that resprouts from a rhizomatous corm after fire. The complex pattern of flowering shown in the five years following a fire in January 1987 was investigated for five populations near Sydney. This pattern was then related to concurrent changes in soil chemistry.

Most (60%) plants flowered in the first post-fire flowering season (November-January), but this dropped to fewer than 20% of the plants flowering by the third or fourth season. Most plants flowered only once, but almost all plants did flower. Consequently, 35% of the flowering events were by plants that flowered only within the first year. Flowering in the



Photo: Mountain Christmas Bells after fire.

first season produced more flowers per plant in that season, and was also correlated with increased chance that a plant would flower again. Repeat flowering produced fewer flowers per plant in the subsequent seasons, but multiple flowering did increase the total number of flowers produced per plant. This form of pulse flowering and short secondary juvenile period after fire seems to be typical of resprouting monocotyledons in Australia, but is much less common among resprouting dicotyledons.

The pulse of flowering appears to be closely associated with changes in the soil chemistry during the post-fire period. Many of the soil attributes measured show either a characteristic decrease or increase during the 3-4 years following the fire, with a subsequent reversal in the trend. The plants thus flower prolifically during these changing soil conditions, but almost cease flowering when these changes are reversed, thereby taking advantage of soil conditions that are not available throughout most of the inter-fire period.

© CSIRO 1994

Is the future of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area held in the jaws of a dingo?

By Brad Purcell

The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWA) has numerous government and non-government organisations and/or institutes that hold a major stake in its governance. Each has its own policies that become united in strategies, such as the Special Areas Strategic Plan of Management (SASPOM), directed in accordance with various legislative acts, and national and international agreements. Intrinsic ecological roles of some species are protected under these plans and documents, whether or not those roles are described and understood.

The dingo is one species that was not well understood, but was heavily managed because it is a predator and is perceived to threaten the livelihoods of livestock producers and sympatric species (those occupying the same or overlapping geographic areas without interbreeding). Amendments to the *Rural Lands Protection Act 1998 wild dog control order (2000)* identified that dingoes may alternatively have ecological benefits.

A network of reserves to protect dingoes in NSW was then established, partially in conflict with the objectives of the RLP 1998 to control all wild dogs. Consistent with the amendments, research began in the core of GBMWA in 2004 to study the ecological role of dingoes, wild dogs and their hybrids, and to ascertain their genetic purity.

Six years later, after 35 week-long field trips collecting predator scats, genetic samples and data on animal track densities, we believed we had enough data to make an informed analysis of dingo ecology. In addition, more than 50,000 GPS data points from 20 dingoes fitted with GPS tracking collars were collected and showed defined patterns of movement. Research outcomes were however deemed controversial. Dingo 'purity' was identified as a construct of human values and a functional role of the dingoes was identified.

The study generated much interest from public and industry, included a monograph on the dingo for CSIRO Publishing, a Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Travel Fellowship to Botswana, UK, Poland and America, and unveiled a controversial paradigm for dingo management in Australia. Can the dingoes help manage a universally significant protected area? Stories from the last seven years will be shared, and solutions for the worsening 'wild dog problem' will be revealed.

Brad Purcell grew up in Ryde with aspirations of working for the environment. After completing honours on small mammal habitat preference, his PhD on dingoes and a study on feral pig ecology in the Blue Mountains were followed by a study on feral deer movements in Cordeaux Dam catchment area. He wrote a dingo monograph for CSIRO publishing and travelled the world on a Churchill Fellowship to study sustainable carnivore management.

Big Solar Campaign

The 100% Renewable Energy campaign has moved up a notch this year with a national push to force the government into replacing 2,000MW of coal-fired electricity with an equivalent capacity of solar thermal power by 2015.

Community groups across Australia will be conducting the Big Solar poll over the next two months to demonstrate public support for use of the \$10 billion Clean Energy Finance Corporation fund to support "baseload" solar plants like the ones already built in Spain and the U.S. We are aiming to gather at least 10,000 signatures nationwide before the middle of this year and to have at least 300 conversations with local residents to raise awareness of this commercial-ready technology and gather their comments to pass on to our Federal MP.

Katoomba Area Climate Action Now (KACAN) launches its local campaign with a group photo at Echo Point on Saturday 3 March. See <http://100percent.org.au/big solar> for more information about solar thermal plants and how to support the national campaign.

Blue Mtns Community Renewable Energy Project

Did you know that more than half of Germany's power is generated by community-owned power plants? A collaboration of groups including KACAN, Transition Blue Mts, Permaculture Blue Mts and the Blue Mts Alternative Technology Association have joined together at the end of last year to initiate a local community-owned renewable energy project. After an initial workshop with Nicky Ison from the Community Power Agency, working groups were established to explore a range of potential technologies and investigate various community ownership models and funding sources.

If you have any interest or expertise in this area we would love you to get involved. You can register your interest and join the CRE email list at this link: <http://katoombacan.org/reggo-bmcre/>

Want to Join wildlife Protection Group?

Are you concerned about our native wildlife?

Would you like to join a new subcommittee that formed last year, to address some of the effects of urban living upon native wildlife in the Blue Mountains?

The sub-committee has identified the following issues –

- Household chemical threats to wildlife
- Garden accidents to reptiles
- Barb wire fences as a threat to wildlife
- Human cruelty and peoples lack of awareness
- Predation by feral animals, e.g. foxes, cats & Indian Mynas
- Companion animal management
- Impacts of dogs in bushland, especially off leash dogs in prohibited areas
- Road kill in the Blue Mountains

There are many issues to work on and we have started upon a range of actions, so are quite active already. We have attended a B M Council meeting, written a submission and did you see the story *Safety for snakes and lizards in your backyard* in the last Hut News written by us?

Would you like to get involved in this subcommittee?

Caring about our precious native wildlife is enough to join this working group. If you have some writing or IT skills, research skills or committee facilitation skills or just like talking to the community about wildlife then this subcommittee is for you!

If you are interested in wildlife protection at all, please ring Meredith 47824823 or email: mountains@westnet.com.au

Lovely weather for slugs ...

We restarted our Interpretive Bush-walks on Thursday 2nd February – and it was pouring! Undeterred, and fortified with coffee and cake at my place, we walked out the front gate (too wet and slushy to use the back lane or the bush track) to the Fairfax Track.

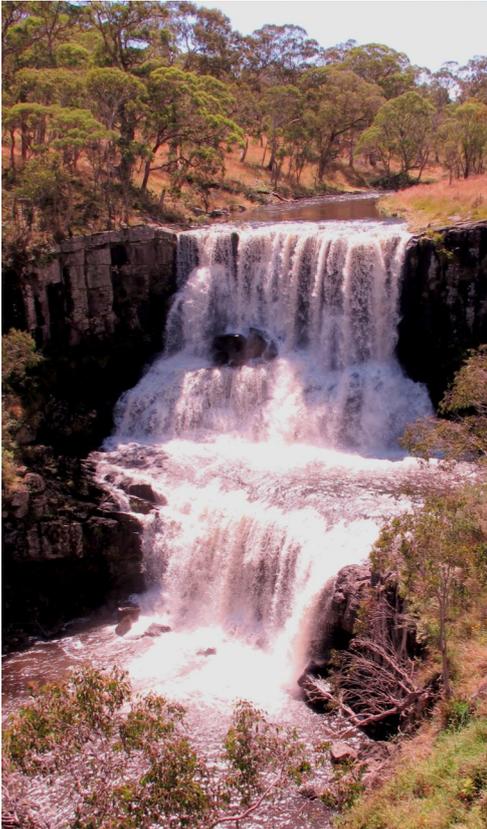
The Fairfax Track is an easy stroll which starts at the NPWS visitors' centre and meanders through the bush to the cliffs of the Grose Valley. It is sealed and accessible for wheelchairs. On this day it went to No 1 on my list of walks for an extremely wet day when most sane people would rather stay indoors.

It was just lovely in the bush with water running down the tree trunks. Some of the trees had foam on them which we couldn't explain. There were some little birds and quite a few wildflowers. There were lots of orchids which Sue identified as Cow Orchids (*Cryptostylis subulata*).

And there were Red Triangle Slugs. These are Australia's largest native land slugs. They are yellow with a red rim and a distinctive red triangle on the back which contains the breathing pore. Sometimes we see one of these when it has been raining, grazing on algae on the surface of smooth-barked trees, and we often see the scalloped tracks on the trees where they had been. But on this day, in the rain, they were everywhere - on smooth-barked trees, crossing the track, even on rough-barked trees where you wouldn't expect to find them.

At the lookout, the Grose Valley was shrouded in cloud. From its depths came a cold updraft and the sound of Govett's Creek rollicking down through the valley. Christine.





Ebor Falls are located in the Guy Fawkes River National Park on the Waterfall Way, 46 km SW of Dorrigo. The upper falls, tumbling 115 metres over columned basalt in two falls, are seen from a viewing platform near the car park. The lower Ebor Falls, 600 metres further on, drop into a steep forested gorge.

In February 2012 the rivers and waterfalls of north-east NSW were flowing at full capacity and had recently flooded. Ebor Falls are very beautiful, especially with so much water.

Along the walk to the second lookout there were lovely views of the lower falls, but I forgot about them for a while with all the activity in an Acacia beside the track.

There were lots of butterflies, very pretty—the palest blue above, cream with black streaks underneath, and bright orange

patches and a “tail” on each hind-wing. They were fluttering a short distance from the tree, coming back and perching with their wings folded, waiting ... watching black pupae which were swarming with ants.

So much movement ... an air of excitement ... an event of Nature.

Back at home, I identified the butterflies as Imperial Hairstreak, or Pale Imperial Blue. These were male butterflies which “cluster around pupae just before the females emerge”. And the ants?

The Imperial Hairstreak is a member of the Lycaenidae family. Many members of this family have an association with ants: they have specialized organs or glands that secrete substances that may attract, appease or reward ants. Each butterfly species is usually associated with a single ant species, and they can only complete their life cycle in association with these ants.

The Imperial Hairstreak’s larval food plants are various Acacia species, but the butterfly will only lay its eggs on plants where there are *Iridomyrmex* ants. The wattle trees selected are usually medium size young trees which are in group within a small area.

The caterpillars secrete a substance which the ants like, possibly honey dew, and in return the ants protect the caterpillars from predators and keep them free of parasites.

The caterpillars pupate together on a web of silk that they build between branches and leaves of the host plant. The ants continue to attend them, though now there is no apparent reward.

Isn’t Nature wonderful. I never cease to be amazed at Nature observations.

Photos: Upper Ebor Falls (top), Male butterflies cluster around pupae just before females emerge



Heavy vehicles using the Great Western Highway between Victoria Pass and Lapstone Hill are currently restricted to being no more than 19 metres in length.

Cartage Australia has applied to the State Government for an exemption to replace its old dog-tipper trucks servicing Hartley Quarry with new 22 metre Volvo trucks.

Blue Mountains Conservation Society does not support encouragement for road transport generally and specifically does not support any trucking system involving an increase in the length or load of trucks passing through the Blue Mountains.

The population time bomb

Fifty years ago there were about three billion people on earth. Now there are seven billion! Over twice as many and every one of them needing space. Space for their homes, space to grow their food (or to get others to grow it for them) space to build schools, roads and airfields. Where could that come from? A little might be taken from land occupied by other people but most of it could only come from the land which, for millions of years, animals and plants had to themselves – the natural world.

The impact of these extra millions of people spreads far beyond the space they physically claim. Industrialisation has changed the chemical constituency of the atmosphere. The oceans that cover most of the planet have been polluted and are increasingly acidified. And the earth is warming. We have now realised that the disasters that continue increasingly to afflict the natural world have one element that connects them all – the unprecedented increase in the number of human beings on the planet.

The fundamental truth that Malthus (1766-1834) proclaimed remains the truth. There cannot be more people on this earth than can be fed.

Sir David Attenborough, Planet and Population, Royal Society of Arts, UK, President’s Lecture, 2011.

For a great return on investment, try trees

Author: Gregory Moore, Doctor of Botany at University of Melbourne

Perhaps it is a pity that so many Australians think of our parks, gardens, streetscapes and urban landscapes only in terms of their aesthetics. While green spaces are beautiful and decorative, these attributes can mask the many functions vegetation serves in cities, to the point where its economic, social and environmental benefits are overlooked. Yes, trees are beautiful; but more than that, they save our cities a lot of money.

Cities are biodiversity hot spots because of the variety of habitats available in public and private open space, including front and back yards. Urban landscapes and trees have been wonderful but silent assets in our cities for decades and even centuries.

They are major urban infrastructure assets. I often hear it said that; "There are better things to use water on than plants and gardens", but I challenge you to name them. What else delivers so many benefits immediately: benefits that last centuries into the future, which prolong healthy lives and make cities both sustainable and livable?

At a time of climate change, it is worrying that both private and public open spaces are threatened by urban renewal and development that puts at risk long-term sustainability. In many of these developments there is insufficient open space – public or private – to plant large trees, and the opportunities for vegetation to ameliorate the heat island* effect, lower wind speed, provide shade and reduce energy use are lost. This affects the economic viability of such developments, as well as its long term environmental sustainability.

The shade provided by trees drops temperatures by up to 8°C: there is real economic value in that. Shade can reduce air conditioner use by 12-15%, which also decreases carbon emissions from our largely brown-coal-generated electricity.

When 11 million trees were planted in the Los Angeles basin, it saved US\$50 million per annum on air conditioning bills. Large trees were removed from school grounds in the name of safety after the Black Saturday fires, without thought of the shade they provided. Consequently, large shade sails had to be provided to protect students from excessive summer sun.

It is more difficult to place a value on reduced wind speeds (up to 10%) due to the presence of vegetation, or on protection that trees provide from hail. However, we do know that under climate change winds will be stronger and that severe storms will be more prevalent. Indeed, Victoria has already suffered the effects of several major wind and hail storm events over the past few years.

Urban vegetation also removes atmospheric pollutants. It was calculated that the vegetation of New York provided US\$10 million of benefit in pollution removal in 1994. Sadly there are few similar studies for Australian cities. However, in the only study of its kind, economists found that each Adelaide street tree provides a minimum annual benefit of \$200 per year and that it was an underestimate of the real value.

Vegetation also holds and absorbs water during more intense rainfall events – unlike concrete and paved surfaces. The economic value of reducing localised flooding could be substantial.

Vegetated landscapes, especially those containing trees, improve human health, extend life spans, reduce violence and vandalism, and lower blood pressure. Vegetation humidifies the air, easing breathing and reducing the need for medication in those with respiratory difficulties. In reducing the urban heat island effect, trees can also substantially reduce the excess deaths that occur, predominantly among the elderly, during heat waves. It is often forgotten that the fires of Black Saturday killed 172 people, but the heat wave surrounding it was responsible for 374 deaths.

There is ample evidence that treed landscapes foster both active and passive recreation. Green and leafy environments will be one of the vital strategic tools in dealing with children lacking exercise and becoming obese, encouraging an ageing population to exercise and curbing ever-increasing health costs. The human health benefits can save society a truck-load on medical and social infrastructure costs.

Melbourne is one of Victoria's biodiversity hot spots. The parks, gardens, streets and front and backyards provide a very diverse range of plant species that generate a myriad of habitats and niches for wildlife. High density urban developments and inner city renewal make it virtually impossible to grow trees in places that were once green and leafy. We rarely ever see the real costs of such developments.

In the past decade tree populations in many Australian cities have declined, particularly with the loss of private open space. While the costs, damage and nuisance values attributed to trees are widely known, the benefits they provide are often subtle and under-appreciated.

Urban vegetation provides economic and ecological services to society. They are assets which warrant the expenditure of resources such as labour, energy and water. Such expenditure is not wasted: trees and urban landscapes provide far more economically and ecologically than they use. In any comprehensive and fair calculation urban trees and landscapes are worth more than they cost.

Source: THE CONVERSATION
(<http://theconversation.edu.au>) 30 January 2012

* The term "heat island" describes built up areas that are hotter than nearby rural areas. The annual mean air temperature of a city with 1 million people or more can be 1.8–5.4°F (1–3°C) warmer than its surroundings. In the evening, the difference can be as high as 22°F (12°C). Heat islands can affect communities by increasing summertime peak energy demand, air conditioning costs, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, heat-related illness and mortality, and water quality.

Loose Feathers, with Carol Proberts

When I first came to live in the mountains in 1983, Sulphur-crested Cockatoos were a rare sight. I remember seeing just one at Bullaburra each time I travelled down the mountains. A couple of years later I wrote in my notebook: "3 Sulphur-crested Cockatoos seen in Catalina Park". It seemed unusual at the time. They were not listed at all in Reta Vellenga's 1968 booklet "Some Birds of the City of the Blue Mountains" (which was probably the most comprehensive account of birds in the local area at that time).

Today, it's impossible to spend time in any of the mountains townships without noticing flocks of them, and these flocks often number over 100 birds.

Why this dramatic increase has occurred is not entirely clear. These big white characters are no doubt extremely adaptable birds and they now have a smorgasbord of food available to them in urban and rural areas. Fields of seeding grasses, fruit trees, spilt grain and feeding tables are all resources which they take full advantage of.

They have increased their range and numbers throughout many coastal areas of NSW. Being not prone to lacking in self-confidence, they are a formidable competitor for large tree hollows, which are a limited resource sought by all cockatoo and large owl species for nesting.

There is evidence for example, that they are taking over nest hollows from Gang-gang Cockatoos and even Powerful Owls. Both these species are listed as threatened in NSW and it's possible the Sulphur-crested are at least partly responsible.

These cockatoos create a great spectacle along the cliff walks at sunset. Large numbers start to appear from over the top of the cliffs and with much screeching and an audible *whoosh*, plunge down into the valley below where they roost in huge old Blue Gums. Gathering as much speed as they can, they tilt this way and that and sometimes almost turn somersaults as they go. In 2003 I counted at least 150 flying down to a roost in the Jamison Valley below Leura. They probably travel some distance each day to and from these group roosting sites.

It wasn't so long ago you could walk down to Blue Gum Swamp at Winmalee (well-known as one of the richest birding places in the Blue Mountains) and listen to a glorious dawn or dusk chorus, the songs of two dozen bird species fitting together like a finely-tuned orchestra. Now, the effect is drowned out by the loud screeching of these cockatoos in their roost trees.

We often think about the loss of visual beauty in our environment, but the soundscape is also an incredibly important part of our experience of nature. Losing a dawn chorus is a profound tragedy. And not only for us. What effect does it have on the small birds who rely on vocal communication at dawn and dusk?

Carol Proberts (origma@westnet.com.au)

(Photo: Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, Carol Proberts)

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

'Like' us on Facebook: Blue Mountains Conservation Society

Follow us on Twitter: [bmcsnsw](https://twitter.com/bmcsnsw)

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 \$30 Concession (Senior/Student)\$20
Household \$35 Concession (Senior/Student)\$25
Corporate (open to negotiation) \$100

Bushwalkers only:
(\$20 per walker per annum)
Donation (tax-deductible)

Send my copy of Hut News by
Please tick box mail internet only

TOTAL AMOUNT INCLUDED \$.....

Note: All fees include GST at the relevant rate.

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
or pay online at www.bluemountains.org.au



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.

Doctors Who ...” and the Dr Eric Dark Memorial Dinner

Dr Eric Dark (1889-1987) was a WW1 hero, medical practitioner, medical writer, early environmentalist and rock-climber, and one of Australia's leading advocates for improving social, economic and environmental conditions to build the “health of the nation”.

His legacy is being celebrated by the Eleanor Dark Foundation with the inaugural Dr Eric Dark Memorial Dinner at the Fairmont Resort on Saturday 10th March. The dinner is part of a wider program of events celebrating “Doctors Who ...” create, innovate, advocate and collaborate. <http://www.doctorswho.com.au/> or contact Lis 02 4782 5761 lis@varuna.com.au

Down the Wallaby Track: a backward glance, with John Low

A PROBLEM WITH GUM TREES

In 1885 the young Yorkshire-born, Cambridge-educated William Blamire Young (1862-1935), later to become a noted watercolour and poster artist, was appointed Mathematics master at Katoomba College (located on the site now occupied by Council HQ). A lover of “light and warmth”, the following year Young experienced a Blue Mountains winter of cloudless, sunny skies and was so delighted to have found a climate that “realised my wildest dreams of what a winter might be” that he felt moved to share his delight with readers of the *Sydney Morning Herald*. There was, though, one stumbling block. “Do what I will”, he wrote, “the gum-tree remains a hard, material, unyielding fact, irresponsive to poetic thought, and whose presence is obstructive to the softer feelings.” Only in the broad vista was the tree’s harshness “softened by number and distance”. Nevertheless, he conceded, if the visitor sought out the “few oases hidden away in quiet valleys”, where the sound of water and “the mystic music of the magpie ... [brings] a sense of repose I have seldom experienced out of England”, then the harsher, gloomy aspects of the bush could be avoided.

Young spent nearly a decade in Katoomba and, culturally and athletically, entered with enthusiasm into the life of the town. He mounted school theatrical productions, was a member of the School of Arts, a founding member of both the Shooting & Excursion Club and volunteer rifle company, played football (soccer) and cricket and tried to inaugurate an annual cross country marathon (suggesting Katoomba to Jenolan Caves). Under the influence of his friend the caricaturist Phil May, a regular visitor to Katoomba, and the college’s art master Godfrey Rivers, soon to become prominent in the Queensland art world, he also began to paint.

There is a lookout above Minnehaha Falls that in earlier years bore the name of Blamire Young, suggesting that this waterfall, embraced by sandstone cliffs and protective vegetation, cascading into its (then) deep pool, might well have been one of those hidden oases he sought out for quiet reflection and repose. It’s a thought I like and it raises another interesting possibility. Could he also be the one who named the falls? He was, he wrote in his job application, qualified to teach literature as well as mathematics and the American poet Longfellow, from whose *Hiawatha* epic the name derived, had gained some considerable popularity in England.

Young left Katoomba in 1893 when economic depression closed the doors of Katoomba College and it became a guesthouse. Though he then returned to England where he pursued his art and married, he returned to Australia several years later and except for a further spell in England during WWI, settled in Melbourne where he died in 1935. While I would like to think that his view of gum trees had softened by then, I doubt his imagination ever fully embraced the Australian landscape despite his later attempts to explore its decorative possibilities in his work.

John Low (johnlow@iprimus.com.au)

“It is that range of biodiversity that we must care for – the whole thing – rather than just one or two stars.” - David Attenborough

The Scribblygum Moth (*Ogmograptis scribula*)

By Graham Alcorn

Ogmograptis scribula
The bush graffiti artist,
Of the order Lepidoptera,
Family Yponomeutidae,
Long ago has found a way
To avoid the strife
Of graffitists' life,
For it lives in the dark
Under the bark
Of various species of gum tree.

It is easy to see where Ogmo went,
Chewing and chomping and scribbling
away,

Long after Ogmo's days are spent,
Off the left for a week or two,
Gulping and gorging as Ogmos do,
Then to the right for a similar time,
Gormandising along the line,
There in the dark
Under the bark
Of various species of gum tree.

Eucalyptus sclerophylla,
Racemosa, *rossii*,
Haemastoma and *signata*,
Pauciflora, *dendromorpha*
and *dalrympleana* -
Here comes the Ogmos, doing fine.
Chewing the left right, right left line,
Delicate calligraphy,
Ogmograptis graffiti,
On all these species of gum tree.

Some chew up and some chew
down,
This the philosophers might explain,
But the thing that causes me to
frown,
The thing I'd dearly love to learn
Is what makes every Ogmo turn?
Off to the left, then to the right,
Another about turn, very tight,
Chomping a track,
Forward and back,
On various species of gum tree.



Ogmograptis scribula is very small (1-2 mm in length) and rarely seen. Photo from Australian National Botanic Gardens, <http://www.anbg.gov.au/>

Very young Ogmos tend to wander,
Skittish, no doubt, as young folks are,
Filled with the spirit of adventure.
Suddenly they get much fatter.
Adventurings no longer matter.
But what I yearn and yearn to learn
Is how they now know just when to turn
There in the dark
Under the bark
Of various species of gum tree?

At last there comes that glorious day
When this gyrating artistic grub
Turns into a moth and flies away.
No more chewing and scribbling and
shoving,
Now is the time for dancing and loving.
Having thus drained life's cup to the dregs,
Before it dies and lays its eggs
Into the dark,
Beneath the bark
Of its chosen species of gum tree.

Although the new Ogmos can't be seen,
Next year when the gum tree sheds its bark
It becomes quite obvious where they've
been.
Off to the left for a week or two,
Gulping and gorging as Ogmos do,
Then to the right for a similar time,
Gormandising along the line,
There in the dark
Under the bark
Of various species of gum trees.

Welcome to New Members

Tony Verwey, Rooty Hill
Megan Wynne-Jones, Katoomba
Shirley Evans, Winmalee
Kenneth Evans, Winmalee
Judie Suttor, Wentworth Falls
Maxine McKinley, Katoomba
Joanne O'Loughlin, West Ryde
Desmond Graff, Bondi

BUSHCARE GROUP

The Valley of the Waters
Bushcare Group meets on the
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.

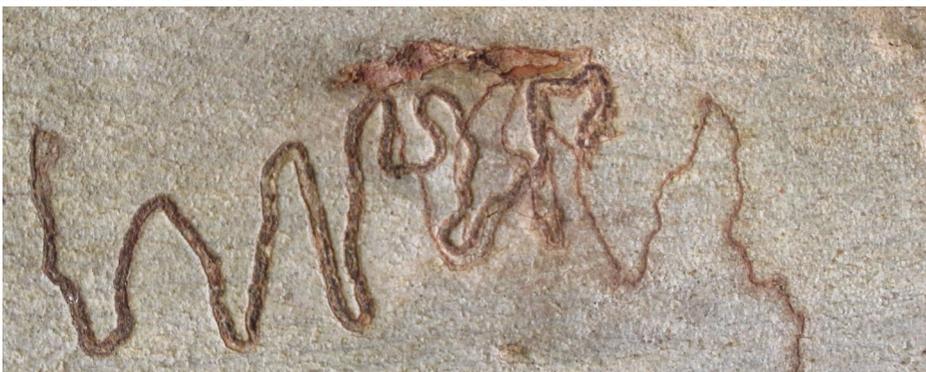
Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group

You are invited to come along
and help at a **PLANTING EVENT**
at Wentworth Falls Reserve
Picnic Area (Southern end of
Falls Road) on Saturday, 10
March. 9am to 2pm
BBQ lunch and morning tea
provided. Bring gloves and
water. Tools provided.

Great Grose Weed Walk

(full details in Feb Hut News)
Activities 14, 21, 25 March
Vanessa Richardson 4787 3112
[Vanessa.richardson@
environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Vanessa.richardson@environment.nsw.gov.au)
24 March, Katoomba Creek,
Lyndal Sullivan 4780 5528
lsullivan@bmcc.nsw.gov.au

JOIN Blue Mountains
Conservation Society, or
renew your membership
online. Go to our website:
www.bluemountains.org.au



(Nature) "Leave it as it is. The ages
have been at work on it and man can
only mar it." – U.S. President
Theodore Roosevelt, 1903

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

- Mar 10 **Glenbrook Creek** – upstream to the Duckhole. Magnificent canyon with friendly pools - Creek crossing and some rock hopping. Leader: Karen 4751 9695. Meet Glenbrook Station carpark, 8.30am. Approx 7 km. Grade 2/3. Penrith map.
- Mar 17 **Faulconbridge Ridge firetrail to Faulconbridge Point lookout.** Great views into the Grose Canyon. Leader: Bob 4757 2694, Meet at Faulconbridge Station CP, north side, 9am. 12 km. Grade 3. Map: Springwood/Kurrajong.
- Mar 24 **Faulconbridge historic sawmill site,** then climb to Linden Ridge and views the 4KOR engraving. Cancelled walk of 25/11/11. Leader: Jim 4758 6009. Meet Faulconbridge Station CP, north side, 8.15 am. 8 km. Grade 3. Map: Springwood/Katoomba.
- Mar 31 **Mount York Explorers Roads,** Lawsons Long Alley to Cox's Road. Leader: Eddie 4764 2691. Meet Mount Victoria Station 8.45 am. 11 km, Grade 2/3. Map: Hartley.
- Apr 7 Easter Saturday. **Grose Road Faulconbridge to Linden Ridge.** Splendid mid mountains scenery. Some scrambling and crossing of Linden Creek. Leader: Jim 4758 6009. Meet End of Glossop Road Linden or Faulconbridge Station CP north side, 8.15 am. Mostly track and firetrail. Grade 3. Map: Springwood/Katoomba.
- Apr 14 **Transit of Venus Track.** Mabel, Edith and Hazel Waterfalls and Paradise Pool. Leader: Bob 4757 2694. Meet Woodford Station CP south side, 8.50 am. 6 km. Grade 2. Map: Katoomba.
Check the BMCS website (www.bluemountains.org.au) for updates.

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 Maurice Kerkham, 4739 4942, mauricekerkham@hotmail.com

- Mar 12 **Terrace Falls, Hazelbrook.** Pool, falls, creeks. Meet Hazelbrook Station 9am. Contact Christine 4757 2864. Grade 2.
- Mar 19 **North Parramatta Lake walk.** Lake views and bush tracks. Meet Parramatta Station 10.05 + bus. Contact Jill 4751 6926. Grade 2.
- Mar 26 **Glenbrook—cave, waterhole, creek and historic murder!** Meet Glenbrook Station 8.45 am. Contact Kate 4759 1943. Grade 2.
- Apr 2 **Florabella and Pippa's Pass.** Wildflower walk, Warimoo to Blaxland. Meet Warrimoo Station 8.45 am. Contact Ros 4733 3880. Grade 2.

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 Beverley Thompson, 4757 2076, roybev12@bigpond.net.au

- Mar 15 **Royal Botanic Gardens to Mrs Macquarie's Chair.** Take lunch. Meet top of escalators, Central Station, 9.30am. Contact Maurice 4739 4942. Grade 1.
- Mar 22 **Katoomba Cascades—cascades, lookouts, fungi and rainforest.** Car pool. Take lunch. Meet Katoomba Station car park 10.30 am. Contact Joan c/o 4757 2076. Grade 2.
- Mar 29 **Martin's Lookout to Glenbrook Creek,** Springwood. Steep climb out. Car pool. Take lunch. Meet behind Springwood Civic Centre 9.30 am. Contact Robyn 4751 6328. Grade 2/3.
- Apr 5 **Paradise Pool, Linden.** Beautiful pool, beach and waterfall. Meet Linden Station north side 10 am. Contact Maurice 4739 4942. Grade 2.

Please send the nomination form to Blue Mountains Conservation Society, PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782 to arrive before 22 March 2012, or go to www.bluemountains.org.au for an electronic version. Please contact the president or one of the vice presidents if you wish to discuss any of the positions. Contact details are on page 2.

Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc. 2011/2012 Management Committee Nomination Form

We.....and
being members of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society hereby nominate

.....for the position of

Signed Date:

I, being a member of the above Society accept the nomination.

SignedDate: