

UPSTREAM DOWNSTREAM

In this edition, our main stories are swamp news. Also our journos have been checking out some festivals and the movies. Warrimoo and Leura schools have embraced the "Save our Swamps" project which Blue Mountains and Lithgow City Councils have launched with funding from the NSW Urban Sustainability Trust. The aim is to rehabilitate degraded temperate peat swamp systems in the Lithgow and Blue Mountains areas. Lithgow Mayor Neville Castle said "it makes sense we are both neighbours bordering adjoining sections of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area with similar environment problems".



The money will be used to control weeds and restore clean water to degraded swamps. Michael Henson from the Blue Mts. Council said "In addition the project will run a community awareness raising campaign about these significant vegetation communities, including a school education program". We urge your school to get involved in the run up to World Wetlands Day 2009, the theme for which is "Upstream-Downstream - Wetlands connect us".

Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority has sponsored an art prize to celebrate world wet lands day with a specific focus on urban wet lands. Wetlands Care Australia invites you to submit art works on paper exploring the above theme and also have a photography section. Closing date is the 5th December. Entry forms are available at www.wetlandcare.com.au Marc

Talking of swamps, did you know Lawson was originally known as 24 Mile Hollow, followed by 'Christmas Swamp'. When the Blue Mountains Inn (sadly being demolished as we write) was opened in 1848 the town took the name 'Blue Mountain'. This name was changed to Lawson, after the explorer William Lawson, in 1879. Chris

COUNCILS ON TAP

Talking of saving groundwater, Sweden's second city Gothenburg, obviously inspired by our "drink tap water" campaign will only provide



employees including teachers tap water in their workplace. Since October 1 this year the city has saved taxpayers money since tap water is much cheaper. We have sent them details of our campaign and a few labels. We'll print the reply when it arrives. In an earlier edition of Strobos we reported that the NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change no longer provides bottled water to its 120 offices and encourages staff to not buy their own. So what has happened since? Jon Dee, an environmental campaigner is writing to every council in Australia encouraging them to do the same. The aim of the campaign is to reduce 25% of the country's bottled water usage. Only 25%? Queen

We urge our Council to do the same and install bubblers around the mountains. This month we hope to have Hazelbrook and Warrimoo schools on board with our "Drink Tap Water" campaign followed by Springwood High. Thankyou to Springwood High for hosting the Term 4 Schools Environment network meeting. If your school hasn't received its labels, contact us at Strobos.

BROAD HEADS DECLINE

Our featured endangered species this month is the broad headed snake. You will find it occupying sandstone habitats around the mountains. The broad-headed snake's range is confined to a 200 kilometres, radius from Sydney's CBD, and it lives only in specific climates in the area. During cooler months, the snake lives on rocks facing either north or west, while hiding in sunny crevices to keep warm.



local-legends.net
In the warmer summer the adult males and non-breeding females migrate to the woodlands that have about 780 meters in elevation and then live in hollow trees. The younger snakes and breeding females stay in the rocky areas and try to find rocks that are cooler. There are many campaigns for the protection of the snake including: Breeding programs, donations both online and in person, snake drives and many other wonderful campaigns. There are predictions that the causes of the snakes endangerment is due to: Humans destroying their habitat for construction, Bushfires, Amateur snake collectors and people killing them for leisure. All we can do for now is stay away from these snakes and let the conservationist breed them back to health. Isobel

FOOTBEAT

On the last weekend of October, I went to the Footbeat Festival at Wentworth Falls Lake. The week long event was a showcase of artists who get their inspiration from the Blue Mountains landscape and to educate people about their environment through music and art. I saw



some great Aboriginal dance and a performance by the Bakery, a funk / ska / reggae band. Their website describes them as "hedonistic cretins who wrangle like Bavarian game hunters". So that's why they were dressed like pirates. Doesn't sound environmentally friendly to me -

www.thebakery.com.au but they are really. I forgot to take my camera so sorry guys, a file photo from their website will have to do. Mount Victoria school created 1000 paper dragonflies, inspired both by a similar campaign in Hiroshima using origami birds and the problems faced by the endangered giant dragonfly here in the mountains which needs swamps. Alastair

MONKEY PUZZLE

This month Year 9 students from Katoomba High (and Duke of Edinburgh's Award participants from Blue Mountains Grammar) went to the Edge cinema to see Monkey Puzzle (a movie filmed in the Blue Mountains). In this film five friends set off from Sydney to find the location

of the Wollemi Pine, (referred in the movie as Monkey Puzzle). They become lost in the wilderness without a map, and one night they forget to put their only food away



and find it all gone. All they have now is a small packet of chocolate Easter eggs. The Wollemi Pine is one of the world's oldest and rarest plants dating back to the time of the dinosaurs with less than 100 adult trees in the wild. Laken & Annie

I spoke to Chris Yates who organised the KHS trip. He thought "Mark Forstmann, the director and Stephen Davis screenwriter collaborated well on an obviously low budget", and that "some of the dialogue seemed clumsy". The edgy feel at times is probably due to Justine Kerrigan's cinematography and Amanda Brown's music. We thought that the film conveyed a good sense of the unique environment with their dramatic cliffs and deep canyons. The Wollemi Pine was a side issue to the plot,

without much about the discovery of this ancient plant. You can now grow your own Wollemi Pine. If your school hasn't got one contact our nursery or your local one. The Blackheath community welcomed a film crew which respected our environment, unlike others in the recent past. Check it out on DVD in a few months if you missed it. Fiona

DUNNS SWAMP

Located in the Wollemi National Park, Dunns swamp is a unique area where in which amazing pagoda formations created by erosion from the wind rain and water, meet a large lake/river formed when the stream was dammed to supply water to Rylstone and Kandos. It is now part of a diverse and spectacular eco system. (A nearby area of pagoda formations outside Wollemi is now the Gardens of Stone National Park. The Conservation Society is now campaigning for an extension to the park).

Check the website for details and we hope to have a story in a future edition. The area is traditionally owned by the Wiradjuri people and



this month was home to the "living country culture camp" I attended the camp, designed to bring indigenous people and others closer together. It started with a traditional Aboriginal smoke ceremony and continued through the weekend with canoeing and walks. The camp was very successful. It was great sitting around the camp fire listening to the elders from all around Australia (including Tasmania) tell stories of creation and teaching people to have respect for the land. Jackson

ENVIRONMENT AWARDS

The Blue Mountains School Environment Awards for 2008 will be held at Lapstone Public School on 14th November.

Again the Conservation Society has sponsored one of the major awards. If your school hasn't received its invitation contact Robbie Beale at Council for more information



For more information or to join the Society go to www.bluemountains.org.au Next edition will have stories about recycling to mark National Recycle week in Movember (Mr Yates should have a "mo' by then).