



STEP Matters

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Web, Membership, Publications

Helen Wortham

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Diary Dates

2 March	Clean Up Australia Day (see page 2)
8 April	Talk on Pests and Chemicals in the Home
27 April	Bushwalk, Murrumbidgee Track

Bushwalk along the Murrumbidgee Track

Date: Sunday 27 April
Time: 1.45 pm for 2 pm
Place: End of Murrumbidgee Road,
North Turrumbidgee
Grade: Easy
Contact: Bill Jones (9498 6052)

The Murrumbidgee Track provides an opportunity to walk through different vegetation types and end with a view over Bobbin Head. Most of the track is an easy walk along a fire trail. There is just one short, steep climb on the return part of the walk.

Some possible variations include side tracks that lead through some beautiful Sydney sandstone vegetation with rare, endangered and vulnerable plants.

A good selection of birds are often found along the track so bring your binoculars. Also remember to bring water, walking shoes or boots, an appropriate hat, sunscreen and a mug. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be provided at the end of the walk.

Talk on Pests and Chemicals in the Home

Date: Tuesday 8 April
Time: 7.45 pm
Place: St Andrews Church
Hall (Vernon Street,
South Turrumbidgee)
Contact: Helen Wortham
(9144 2703)

Come to our first talk of the year to find out how to reduce the use of chemicals in your home.

Anne-Marie Poirrier will discuss issues faced by home owners when micro-fauna and flora try to recycle our buildings, or cause us ill health through poor indoor air quality. Hardware stores, supermarkets and professional companies proffer chemical 'solutions'. But what are your options? How should you manage the potential problems? Is the solution more hazardous than the problem?

Many DIY solutions will be offered and there will be time for questions.

Anne-Marie is committed to reducing the chemical load both locally and globally through common sense and education. She is on Standards Australia's committees for both timber pest inspection and termite management, has been General Manager for Systems Pest Management for over thirteen years and Healthy Home Doctors for the last six. Recently, in conjunction with the Total Environment Centre, she has been developing a program for schools and childcare centres called Safer Solutions.

STEP Inc

Community-based Environmental Conservation since 1978

PO Box 697, Turrumbidgee, NSW 2074

Clean Up Australia Day Sunday 2 March 2003

Registration Sites

Although STEP is not coordinating a site this year, we are recommending that STEP members register at Canoon Road Netball Courts between 9 and 11 am. Other sites where you can register include Thornleigh Oval and Bicentennial Park (West Pymble). Check out the official web site if these sites don't suit you.

The Clean Up Day organisers urge you to register for occupational health and safety reasons and so that they can maintain statistics on volunteer numbers. You will need to collect, and return, rubbish bags to an official site for disposal.

Target Areas

The Lane Cove River from South Turramurra to Pymble is our priority target this year, with stranded floating plastic debris the worst offenders. There are also heavy metal items and tyres dumped in some localities.

Should the river be in flood we will focus on our local, bushland sports facilities (especially their car parks) and the bushland verges of The Comenarra Parkway as they are a serious source of debris.

We will provide a map showing rubbish locations, or alternatively download one from our web site.

Other Information

Be sure to wear strong shoes and long pants, bring gloves, a mobile phone if you have one, and wear appropriate sun protection.

Contact Details

John Martyn will advise you of priority sites and coordinate progress. He will also have an esky of cool drinks including beer!

9449 7962
0402 284 366
johnmartyn@optushome.com.au

Native Bees

Native bees that don't sting can be purchased from Queensland for \$200. There are no genetic problems getting these bees as this species occurs naturally in Sydney.

The hives are suitable for gardens and bushland, although you will have to put extra insulation on the hive to cope with very hot days such as we have been having lately.

Every two years or so you can split the hive and so you start with one hive and you could end up with lots. The honey is delicious and the bees are great at pollinating natives.

The hives are posted to you and come with about 18 000 bees (very small) in them.

For more information check out <http://www.uq.net.au/~zzrzabel/>.



Plastic bottles and other floating debris beached on the river bank (Rocky Crossing near Macquarie University's sports ground)



Nearly-dry river bed with tyres and other rubbish (Sandy Crossing, West Pymble)



Supermarket trolley dumped in the river (pipe crossing, Kissing Point Road, South Turramurra)

F3–M2 Feasibility Study

STEP has received many phone calls from residents concerned about the progress of the F3–M2 proposed link study. The Minister's office has now indicated that the route options under review will only be revealed to the community in April 2003.

STEP has major concerns about the lack of transparency of the study process and has asked local Member of Parliament, Barry O'Farrell, to write to the consultants, Sinclair Knight Merz, asking for the community to be told about the route options being considered. Originally the community was to have been informed of these options in September 2002.

STEP continues to be active on urban planning and transport issues, working closely with the NSW Nature Conservation Council, because these issues have such a potentially detrimental effect on the preservation of our natural heritage.

After raising environmental and planning concerns that we have about the proposed F3–M2 link with federal members of Parliament, we were urged by many to provide input into the Federal Government's AusLink package. AusLink will form the basis of Australia's new land transport plan, and will govern the way our country deals with its growing transport task into the future.

STEP's submission urged a more sustainable approach to our transport needs and a prioritisation of modes of transport with lower environmental impacts. A copy of our submission can be obtained by e-mail from transport@step.org.au.

Parramatta Rail Link

A recent media release from the Transport Minister has indicated that construction started within the Lane Cove National Park on 29 January 2003, in the area between Lady Game Drive and Delhi Road and just north of Fullers Bridge.

A cut and cover tunnel under the Lane Cove River will be constructed there as part of the major tunnelling works between Chatswood and Epping.

The Member for Ryde, John Watkins, said that the site will be rehabilitated following completion of the tunnel under the river. The rehabilitation will be carried out in consultation with NPWS, the NSW Heritage Office, NSW Fisheries and Ku-ring-gai Council and will be funded from the construction budget, separate from the environment package.

He said the environment package will enable this popular visitors spot and visitors facilities to be significantly upgraded.

Among other things, the package also contains a three-year environmental catchment works program for community based and joint NPWS/Council bush regeneration and stormwater management projects with a total budget of \$230 000.

Construction activities within the Lane Cove National Park will continue for approximately two years until early 2005.

Editor's Note

STEP originally opposed a cut and cover tunnel because of its detrimental effect on marine species during the construction period, so we hope that they get the watercourse reconstruction right.

Browns Waterhole

We were pleased to hear about the permanent transfer of a small patch of bushland at Browns Waterhole into Lane Cove National Park.

Announced on 14 February, the transfer was declared in conjunction with a \$1.8 million environment package that is being funded as part of the Parramatta Rail Link project.

The money has been committed to Lane Cove National Park, in recognition of the impacts of rail link construction activity upon the ecological integrity of the parkland.

In announcing the package Carl Scully, Minister for Transport, said that the transfer of Browns Waterhole 'permanently extinguishes a road reservation through this sensitive urban bushland'.

The site is at the southern end of the old B2–B3 corridor that was under threat of major freeway development through bushland until 1996. It will be a great relief to members that the bushland of Browns Waterhole is now preserved.

\$180 000 has been allocated over a three-year period from the package for the restoration of Browns Waterhole to National Park standard.

Stenocarpus sinuatus

Although the Fire Wheel Tree is not a locally indigenous species a few have been planted as street trees or in private gardens and provide a spectacular show when in flower. One such example may be seen at Turramurra Station at the western pedestrian approach.

It is about five meters tall and shows the typical brilliant orange/red flowers through deep green foliage.

Wrigley and Fagg say that *S. sinuatus* should flower in early summer, but this one seems to be a little late.

Editor's Note

Better late than never, mine hasn't flowered in 30 years!

Hugh Roberts

At STEP's Christmas barbeque we formally acknowledged Hugh Robert's magnificent commitment to STEP for the last six years.

Amongst other things, Hugh has looked after our finances, maintained membership records and distributed publications. His workload is now shared by three people! Thank you for all your hard work Hugh.

Map of Walking Tracks of the Lane Cove Valley

Have you, your family and neighbours got copies of our map, Walking Tracks of the Lane Cove Valley?

If you'd like to order a map, complete the details below and mail the completed slip (together with payment) to the address on the front of this newsletter.

The map shows bush tracks, cycle ways and fire trails with connecting streets and access points. It's an excellent reference for all ages and type of user, from the occasional suburban stroller to the dedicated bushwalker.

At a scale of 1 cm to 100 m (1:10 000) the level of detail is ideal for anyone wanting to explore the bush. Beautiful colour photographs illustrate places of interest.

The map costs \$15 for STEP members and \$20 for non-STEP members.

Australian Plants Society

Over the next few weeks the North Shore Group of the Australian Plants Society is running the following events.

Walks and Talks Program

- 4 March Introduction
- 11 March Parts of Plant — Flowers
- 18 March Parts of Plant — Fruit
- 25 March Banksia
- 1 April Parts of Plant — Leaves

Each talk starts at 10 am and is followed by a walk that finishes at about noon.

Meet at the Visitors Centre, Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden (420 Mona Vale Road, St Ives).

Please bring a hat and water and wear suitable footwear. The cost is \$3 per person.

For more information contact Carol Nolder (9456 4042).

Speakers Program

- 14 March Restoring Fragmented Landscapes (Maurizio Rossetto)
- 11 April Understorey Plants for Sydney Gardens (Bronwyn Rice)



Bruno Krockenberger and Hugh Roberts

Map	Unit cost	Number	Cost (\$)
STEP member	\$15		
Non-member	\$20		
Total cost			

Name

Address.....

.....Postcode.....

Total payment is \$.....

I enclose my cheque/money order/cash in payment (please circle relevant method of payment)