

STEP Inc. Newsletter

Community Based Environmental Conservation Since 1978. No.71 April 1995

AUTUMN BUSHWALK

Sunday 23/04/1995

For the STEP autumn bushwalk we will follow the path shown as Walk 11 in the Field Guide through the Blackbutt Reserve in Gordon.

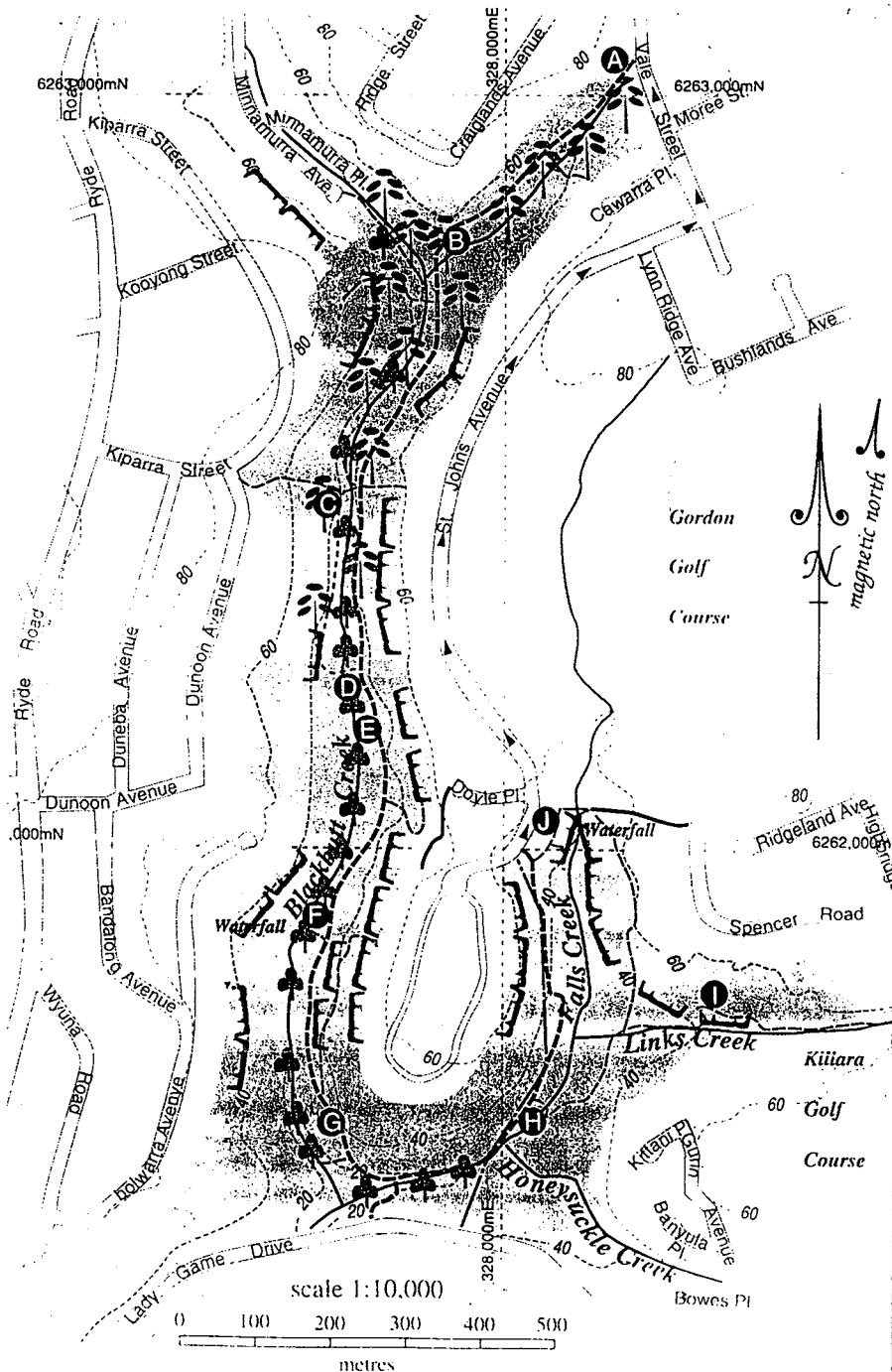
We will meet at the Vale St. entry at 2.00 pm. and will follow John Martyn, who has kindly agreed to lead the way with his usual font of information.

This reserve is aptly named, since it contains some of the tallest Blackbutt forest remaining in the district. It also has some of the most attractive Angophora and Peppermint woodland, and some plant species, which are rare elsewhere in the Lane Cove Valley. The waterfall at the edge of Gordon Golf Course is impressive, especially after heavy rain.

The walk is about 3 km long and will take about 2 hours. Tracks are good throughout, but some creek crossings may be slippery.

The return is via St. John's Ave.

There will be tea and biscuits afterwards.



NSW STATE ELECTION Now that the election is over, a series of short articles in our newsletters, regarding the environmental promises made during the election, will help you to remind the Government.

CANOON RD. NEWS

As mentioned in the President's report to the AGM, STEP has been participating with local residents groups, KPPA and the Ku-ring-gai Netball Association in a working party to find sensible solutions to the problems experienced during the netball season.

The fact that the KNA has been very receptive to the local residents' concerns has made constructive dialogue and progress possible.

Substantial common ground has been found by the parties, and has been communicated to Council, which has in turn responded cooperatively.

The initiatives, which have been set in place for the current season are:

- * Staggering of starting times to even out traffic
- * Reduced noise from the P.A. system
- * Rearrangement of the entry road to free up traffic flow in court area, with minimal impact on adjacent bushland. (Council to implement)
- * KNA hotline for residents' complaints
- * Improved bus timetable
- * Traffic marshal to control traffic and mitigate impact on local streets.

More importantly, there are other initiatives still under consideration, which promise to provide long term solutions:

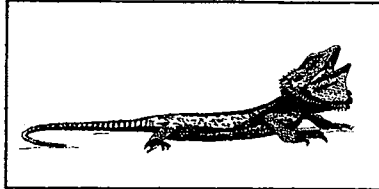
- * Partial relocation (ie. split venues) of the netball games, which would reduce the number of participants at Canoon Rd., and therefore the problems, and would also enable some of the area to be rehabilitated as bushland.
- * Total relocation, which is KNA's preferred solution, and which would be applauded by STEP, especially by those who fought so valiantly all those years ago, when this situation was created.
- * A right hand turn arrow into the

Comenarra Parkway, which would also be very desirable for Kissing Point residents in weekday traffic.

- * The construction of flood-lit courts at Ku-ring-gai High School.

It should be emphasised here that, although STEP advocates total relocation as the best longterm solution, we are aware that a relocation implies an impact somewhere else. For that reason any relocation proposal must be subjected to the most comprehensive scrutiny to ensure that its effects on the built and natural environment in the selected location are not harmful, or can be mitigated successfully.

A relocation may also involve a cooperative approach between several Councils.



ELECTION PROMISES

The Newsletter has kept track of the promises made by the ALP and the Coalition, affecting the environment, in the lead-up to the recent State election. The information is based on extracts from the press, and to date we have not attempted to verify them with the respective parties, nevertheless they could be regarded as a valid starting point.

The promises made by the winning party, the ALP, relate to forests, land use planning, pollution and waste disposal, roads and transport and wilderness, parks and land protection.

In this issue of the Newsletter we will deal with roads and transport and land use planning.

Roads and Transport

- * The RTA to be stripped of its planning powers. (This is of major importance in the development of Sydney's transport)

- * Restructure the State Rail Authority to link its CityRail Division with the State Transit Authority into a single entity responsible for bus, ferry and rail services, ie. common ticketing to simplify travel, in line with successfully implemented systems overseas. (This would encourage use of public transport.)

- * Refocus on cross-regional rail links, eg. Hurstville-Bankstown, Hornsby-Parramatta, Parramatta-North Shore etc., (to make it easier to commute to workplaces other than the CBD.)

- * Review the contract with the Hills Motorway Consortium on the M2 motorway. (This is extremely important, since the continuation of the M2 will have detrimental effects on our environment for decades, and will distort the shape of the metropolitan transport system, and will enshrine high energy use and high pollution).

- * Unfortunately they also made some promises, which are likely to have a nett negative effect on the environment, such as the promise to abolish all tolls on the M4 and M5. (This would likely encourage the use of these roads as well as cost a lot of money, which would be more profitably spent buying the State out of the M2 contract.)

They also promised to review the plans for an Eastern Distributor motorway from the harbour tunnel to Moore Park. (They would do better to call the scheme off altogether and improve the public transport links to workplace destinations in the Eastern suburbs, Botany and airport areas.)

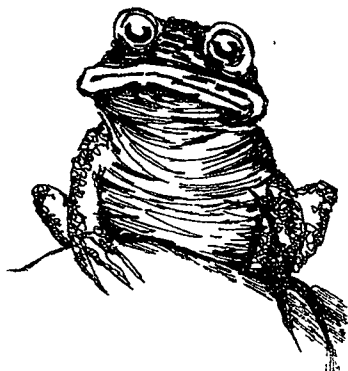
Land Use Planning

- * Repeal all environmental planning policies on allotment size, etc.. (If it is used to get rid of the blanket dual occupancy policy, and replaced with a policy more sensitive to the environment, built and natural, it would be a very positive result.

However, revised policies may also contain aspects, which are not sensitive to the special qualities of the north metropolitan amenity. This needs to be closely watched.)

* Halt the development of the Pyrmont Heliport.

* A major review of the coastal development scene, affecting a multiplicity of subdivisions, housing projects, coastal roads, sewage outfalls and canal estates, at Tweed Heads, Byron Bay, Evans Head, Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie, Newcastle, Batemans Bay, Bega, Merimbula and Barlings Beach, which all have the potential to destroy the coastal ecology. New planning regulations were promised to control these sorts of developments more effectively. *(Although these promises do not affect our area directly, the overall end effect does concern us and future generations.)*



UTS ACCESS ROAD

The story of the UTS Access Road deserves to be told as a success story.

The University of Technology, Sydney, proposed to develop its Ku-ring-gai Campus and to provide additional access, while it was under fire from local residents because of the volume of traffic, which the campus was causing, together with the resulting parking problem in the adjacent residential streets. There were also some concerns about the potential evacuation problems, which could be caused by bushfire. There was plenty of potential for disagreement between local

residents, the University and environmentalists, and disagreement there was aplenty.

A consultative committee was formed consisting of representatives from the UTS, residents' groups, the Council and John Burke from STEP.

The first proposal was for a road along the western side of the campus down to Lady Game Drive, through the best of the bushland on the site.

To cut a long story short, long and painstaking negotiations elicited alternative solutions and eventually led to the agreed route of the access road on the south eastern side of the campus, with advantages to UTS, and preserving the best of the bushland, while sacrificing only a small portion of lesser value.

It also led to preservation of the best of the bushland on the site through a Conservation Agreement to be entered into by the UTS with the National Parks and Wildlife Service. The concept of a Conservation Agreement in itself is a major advance in the practice of conservation, and it has potential for application in other instances. The final result can be truly labelled a win-win-win outcome, since it meets the UTS's needs, satisfies the residents' demands and ensures the conservation and management of the remaining bushland for future generations.

Ku-ring-gai Council has recently approved the scheme in principle, subject to conditions and certain matters to be completed to its satisfaction.

The consultative committee is to continue to be involved during the implementation of the project, and STEP will continue to make its contribution.

To a large extent this outcome is due to the patient and persistent efforts of John Burke, and his determination to achieve the best result within the prevailing restraints.

AIRCRAFT NOISE AND THE LANE COVE VALLEY

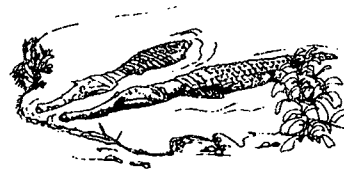
To date STEP has not taken an interest in, nor commented about aircraft noise, simply because it was seen as a problem remote from our area, and there are enough problems to be dealt with locally. However, there has been an increasing volume of comment from residents of Pymble, Turramurra, Gordon, Killara and Lindfield about the effect of the operation of the third runway on noise in these areas.

And there is some justification for complaint, as the following information indicates.

It has been reported that the number of aircraft movements converging over the Pymble navigational beacon is set to increase from 55-60 per hour to 65 per hour, and to increase further to 80 per hour when radar and associated computer facilities are fully operational.

Your editor is well aware of the impact of aircraft noise, having been prevented from hearing the 6.00 am newscast for years by the first arriving aircraft, but did not realise that it will become worse. Flying at 3000 feet at the 10 nautical mile point over West Pymble, a 747 Jumbo still causes a noise level of 76 decibels at ground level, and the frequency of that disruption is to increase by up to 60%.

We note also that Ku-ring-gai Council, and the parliamentary members for Gordon and Bradfield have initiated representations on behalf of residents. At this stage it is not clear what can be done to alleviate the situation, but that should not deter us from drawing attention to the problem.



SUBDIVISION AND VEGETATION

Greening Australia, in conjunction with the Australian Local Government Association, the Municipal Conservation Association and the Federal Department of the Environment Sport and Territories, has published a guide for vegetation and biodiversity management entitled "Local Greening Plans".

It recommends that all Local Governments should prepare greening plans to control future subdivisions, since 70% of the Australian continent is subject to Council jurisdiction.

Among other things it recommends that subdivisions should respond to natural features, maintain nature links with adjoining properties, retain plant life where road widths vary and shape blocks to the natural features. In general it suggests smaller individual blocks combined with larger common areas to preserve vegetation in corridors and clumps, with density appropriate to the particular area.

Further information is available from Greening Australia Ltd., GPO Box 9868, Canberra, ACT, 2601.

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Financial to July 95

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TAIL ENDERS

Some food(waste) for thought: The average John Citizen of Sydney produces 1.2 tonnes of land fill waste. This is to be reduced to 0.5 tonne by the year 2000, but 73% of domestic waste is green or putrescible. Basic arithmetic tells us that therefore green waste must also be recycled or retained on the property. Think compost. There is only 7 years' land fill capacity left, and the need to address this problem is increasing rapidly. Did you know that households with 240 litre bins recycle only 11% of waste, those with 55 litre bins 45%. Although we in the Northern suburbs probably feel fairly righteous, there must be room for improvement.

Car emissions give rise to 750 000 tonnes of pollutants (that's a heap of rubbish floating in the air we breathe) a year in the Sydney region, and car numbers are increasing at a greater rate than the population, apparently because new residents in the outer development regions require proportionately more cars (lack of public transport). And yet we build more roads, like the M2, and there are still those foolish enough to call for even more roads, like the Lane Cove Valley motorway (whatever name it masquerades under).

Sydney Water seems to have taken some successful steps in the right direction with sewage sludge. About 80% is now recycled as compost, or lime-enriched soil conditioner, and is used in pine plantations and on farms as far away as Parkes, and saving costs in comparison with land fill disposal.