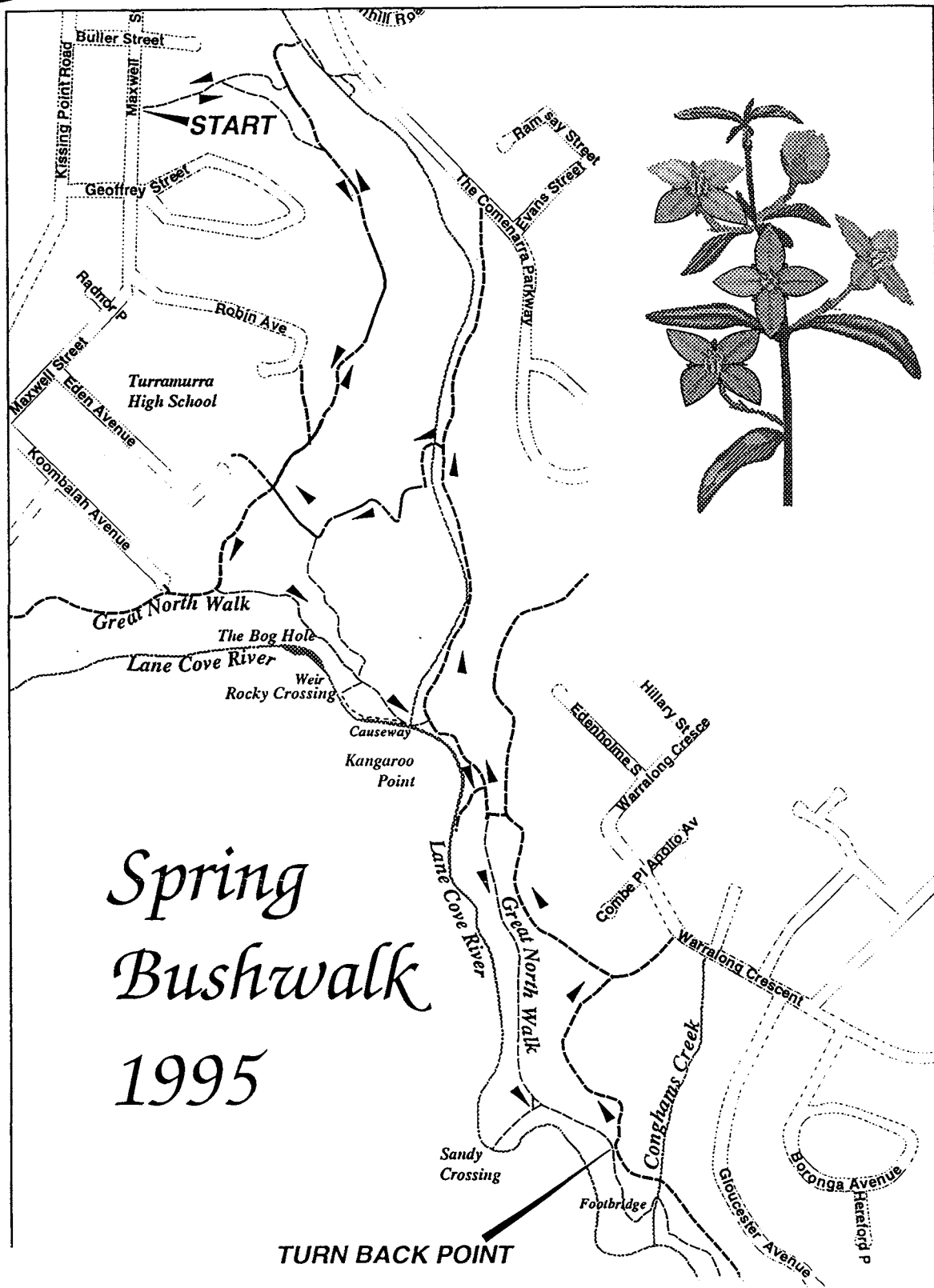


STEP Inc. Newsletter

Community Based Environmental Conservation Since 1978.No.73 August 1995



Spring Bushwalk 1995

SPRING BUSH WALK, SUNDAY 20TH AUGUST,
at 1.30 pm, South Turrannurra and West Pymble. *DETAILS, P 2.*

BUSHWALK DETAILS

This is a combination of Walks 12 and 13 in the Field Guide. We will meet at the corner of Maxwell and Buller Street and follow the Great North Walk to Congham Creek and then take the fire trail back (see map). There are a few short, steep sections which are likely to be slippery after heavy rain, so be prepared. The walk passes through a variety of vegetation types and we can compare burnt and unburnt areas. The flannel flowers should be making a wonderful display and there will be orchids to look for along the way. Refreshments will be provided on our return; bring your own cup if possible.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Committee is planning the AGM for October 19th. Formal notice will be given in a later Newsletter. We are planning an exhibition of paintings by Yvonne Langshaw, with some brief explanatory comments from Yvonne, and a short talk by John Martyn about a wideranging topic. We promise an entertaining evening to counterbalance the dull business part.

STEP COMMITTEE

There is always work to do on the Committee! And being a member of the Committee gives you a chance to be heard at every meeting. The positions of Treasurer and Secretary are up for grabs at the moment, since Judy Meecham has recently resigned from the Secretaryship. The Committee can fill vacancies between AGMs, but has not yet found anyone willing to take on either of these two positions. It has found Hugh Roberts and invited him to join the Committee, after he had expressed interest in the production of the Newsletter. We hope to harness his enthusiasm appropriately.



STATE ELECTION PROMISES

In the April Newsletter we published election promises made by the ALP on roads and transport and land use planning. Here are some more, on waste disposal, as we understand them. The promises --

* Reduce the amount of rubbish dumped in landfill by 60% over 5 years.

* Inform residents of toxic chemicals stored or dumped in the neighbourhood.

* Require industrial firms to pay environmental bonds of up to \$1 million (depending on the firm's size) to support waste-reduction targets.

* Impose charges on domestic rubbish.

Keep an eye on them!

GOVERNMENT ACTION

In government, Environment Minister Pam Allen has announced an \$8 per tonne increase in waste disposal charges at all Sydney landfill sites, the proceeds to be used to fund waste reduction programs. The Government Pricing Tribunal has been given the task of reviewing waste disposal charges and the impact of landfill site depletion, taking into account former underpricing. The Chairman was reported as saying the options included payment based on the amount of rubbish put out (as in New Zealand). The Tribunal's report is awaited with interest.

TOXIC CHEMICALS

We have not read of any developments about the promise to inform residents of toxic materials in their neighbourhood. In May, however, Education Minister Aquilina was reported to have established a departmental committee to examine the problem of exposure of school children to a range of potentially hazardous chemicals, which one expert thought might possibly explain growth in asthma in 10 years from 10% to 40% of school population.

More about this complex subject of waste disposal in a later issue of the Newsletter.

AIR POLLUTION

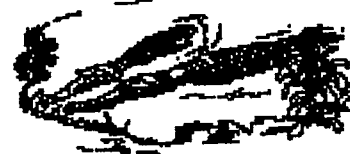
The State Government has issued policy proposals on air pollution, after receiving a report on Metropolitan Air Quality from the Environment Protection Authority. The EPA predicted Sydney's air would degenerate drastically without new emission controls. Apparent pollution decreases from 1982 to 1992 had been due as much to weather as to controls. Motor vehicles contributed 90% of carbon monoxide, 45% of hydrocarbons, 80% of oxides of nitrogen and 90% of lead, and their use had increased by 30% between 1982 and 1992. The gains made from unleaded petrol and emission controls would be eroded by increasing population and car use.

The Roads and Traffic Authority predicted that in 5 to 10 years, increases in vehicle numbers would outweigh gains from vehicle technology.

The signs are obvious; the Government's promises sounded good at election time, the question is whether they will actually deliver better landuse and transport planning. *Stay tuned.*

AIRCRAFT NOISE

Aircraft noise continues as a problem for the Lane Cove Valley. A report commissioned by Councils of North Shore areas said that Lane Cove, Chatswood, Turramurra, West Killara and West Lindfield were experiencing aircraft noise akin to the inner west, and that restricted flight corridors and steeper ascents had not led to major reduction of noise. Noise levels of up to 90 dB(A), had apparently been recorded, 40 dB above the relevant standard.



ROAD RESERVE REZONING

The Department of Urban Affairs and Planning invited residents' comments on a proposal to rezone the redundant road reserve fronted by Kissing Point Rd, Buller St and Maxwell St. The rezoning would allow town houses to be built on the site, though more than half of it would be kept as Open Space. The Department stated its objectives to include preservation of habitat and an increase in housing choice for residents of the area.

STEP weighed in with some serious misgivings about the proposal. We doubt that these objectives will indeed be met by the proposal, since the more likely outcome would be increased housing density, rather than choice, increased population, increased traffic, increased surface run-off and all the consequences to the adjacent bushland. STEP members will be able to judge for themselves, since our spring walk actually takes us into the bushland at the very spot under discussion. We also thought the Department was being a bit "cute", claiming that half the area was being maintained as open space; the part they were leaving is actually landlocked between the existing reserve and the rear of residences in Geoffrey, Buller and Maxwell Streets, and should not be considered as part of any residential development. We believe that the proposal had more to do with maximising the profit from its disposal, than with good planning sensitive to its surroundings, and we pointed out that this was not in keeping with the Carr Government's stated objectives.

We await the Department's next step.

LANE COVE VALLEY FAUNA

In parallel to STEP's efforts to establish what fauna the valley may have contained in the past, Jennifer Schwarz, our Committee member pursuing that research, is also

engaged in studying the mammals of the Lane Cove valley for a MSc thesis at Macquarie University. Jennifer would be interested in hearing from anyone, who lives near the bushland of the valley, and who has observed ringtail possums (*Pseudocheirus peregrinus*) or sugar gliders (*Petaurus breviceps*) recently. Jennifer can be contacted in the evenings or at the weekend on 44 2106.



VEGETATION COVER

The State Government's recent moves to control landclearing is timely for the State and it reminds us of the situation in the Sydney area. In a recent Newsletter the Total Environment Centre calls for a new strategy to conserve urban bushland, pointing out quite correctly that tree preservation orders have not halted the destruction of Sydney's bush. It uses some of the information, which has been so well presented in *Taken for Granted* by Benson and Howell (1990).

It is interesting to note what is left of original vegetation in the Sydney region:

- * 1% of blue gum forest (and the RTA is just busy knocking down some more of it in the Devlin's Creek area for the M2)
 - * 1% of Turpentine/Ironbark forest (RTA at it again)
 - * 3% of riverflat forest and eastern suburbs banksia scrub
 - * 6% of Cumberland Plain forest (RTA again, would you believe?)
- And so it goes on. You could be

excused for thinking that we don't seem capable of learning.

The bushland is acknowledged to be the basis for Sydney's beauty, and for its property values, at least in the North Shore areas, and so it is not unreasonable to fight for its protection with all possible means.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

We have included with this Newsletter a reminder to those who have not yet paid their membership subscription for 95/96, since it is very easy to overlook such things at this time of year.

Our membership secretary likes to keep the database up to date, and of course we value your membership.

With your membership, as the other side of the coin, pardon the pun, goes your right to contribute your opinion and make comment about the direction STEP is taking. Your comment will be welcomed by the Committee, and if requested or otherwise appropriate your contribution will be published in the Newsletter.

INTERGENERATIONAL EQUITY

Long word, but simple concept.

It refers to the concept that the present generation should ensure that health, diversity and productivity of the environment is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations.

Each generation is both a trustee or custodian of the 'planet' for future generations and a beneficiary of previous generations' stewardship. This circumstance imposes certain obligations upon us to care for our legacy just as it gives us certain rights to use the legacy.

This is obviously not the only consideration to be applied, since it is also modified by the need for intragenerational equity.

However, for some people the drive for profit-now seems more important than the future of their children.

BOOK REVIEW

"SAVING A CONTINENT", by David Smith, (1994, UNSW)

David Smith researched the acclaimed "Nature of Australia" TV documentary series, and in this book he updates his previous work, "Continent in Crisis".

Both present the big picture of Australian natural history from Gondwanaland to the 'clever country'. The second book adds detail on new findings and the growth of popular support for landcare and green issues. Unlike some others, Smith is genuinely optimistic about recent changes.

The story of our old land is in a sense quite new. Smith outlines the role of continental drift, El Nino and of the Aboriginal people in shaping Australia's ecosystem. Thirty years ago these ideas were unknown or at least unproven, whereas today they are accepted components of our understanding of our Continent, and science would be at a loss without them.

Smith's work illustrates how important scientific understanding is for the full appreciation of nature and for the discipline required in our relationship with nature. It also underlines the importance of an institution like the CSIRO, for which we are indebted to people of insight and foresight in past generations.

The book comes with a good selection of colour plates and maps.

SENDER

STEP Inc.
P.O.Box 697,
Turrumurra, 2074.



Financial to July 0

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PHIL HELMORE & HELEN WORTH
19 VERNON ST
TURRAMURRA 2074

DIARY NOTES

STEP Spring bushwalk
Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden Walks

National Parks Association
Total Environment Centre

STEP Forum for Council Candidates

KWG Festival of Flowers
St. Andrews Church Spring Breakfast
St. Andrews Spring Bushwalk
Council Elections

Ku-ring-gai Community Fair

Sunday, 20th August, 1995.

Tuesday 22nd August and Tuesday 29th August, 1995.,
Enquiries Pat 477 3023, Margaret 489 2960, Val 484 2106
"Taken for Granted" Sydney's Bushland, 14th August, 1995.
Dinner with Bob Carr as speaker on Environment Protection
Enquiries TEC.

Hear the candidates for Comenarra Ward explain their policy
stance and take your chance to check their conservation
credentials. We will coordinate with organisers in other Wards
to provide as complete a picture as possible for our members
Saturday 2nd September and Sunday 3rd September, 1995.

Saturday 2nd September, 1995.

Saturday 9th September, 1995.

Saturday 9th September, 1995. Ensure you cast your vote for
the candidates sympathetic to conservation issues.

Sunday 17th September