



Eucryphia

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Robertson Environment Protection Society – to promote the protection and enhancement of the Robertson Environment
PO Box 45, Robertson NSW 2577

www.reps.org.au

REPS Meeting

Friday 10th August 2007 at 7:30pm
at the Robertson Community Centre

Butterflies

A talk by Dr Stephen Brown, B.Sc., MDS

Dr Brown developed an interest in science and biology from the age of nine. He has collected butterflies in most parts of Australia and overseas and has an extensive reference collection which has been used in recent publications on the butterflies of Australia. He has published a number of papers on Australian butterflies and is part of a group that has recently described a new species from Torres Strait. Stephen and his wife Tristy have lived in Bowral for the past 16 years.



**All welcome - bring family and friends.
Lively discussion, light refreshments.
Entry with a gold coin.**

Upcoming Events

Fri 10th August – REPS Public Meeting including talk ‘*Butterflies*’ by Dr Stephen Brown, 7:30pm, Robertson Community Centre.

Tuesday 7th August – NPA Talk, *Bargo State Conservation Area* 7:30 pm, CWA Hall, Elizabeth St, MV.

Saturday 18th August – 75th Anniversary Event - Robertson Heritage Railway. Steam train and gallery exhibition, 10 am – 4 pm.

NPA Bushwalks – August 25, 25-27, 29, Sept 9, 16, 22, 23, Oct 7, Nov 3.

KANGALOON WATER UPDATE

By Leon Hall (President)

Malcolm Turnbull, the Federal Minister for Environment and Water Resources, recently made some statements in regard to the Kangaloon aquifer pumping proposal. He said that significant impacts on the listed ecological community, Temperate Highland Peat Swamps on Sandstone, could not be ruled out at this stage.

"My decision under the EPBC Act will ensure that the likely impacts of the project on the very defined matters protected under federal law will be understood and fully assessed before pumping from a permanent borefield can occur. Any other environment issues must be addressed by the NSW Government" he said.

It is good news that the Federal Government needs to be convinced that the Temperate Highland Peat Swamps on Sandstone in the area will not be significantly impacted by this proposal but this has not stopped the state planning process.

The Sydney Catchment Authority may submit their Environmental Assessment in the next three to five weeks. The public later has the opportunity to comment. There is usually a 30 day period for comment. Please make the effort to have a say during this forthcoming public exhibition period as this will most probably be the last chance.

The Save Water Alliance has put in a huge effort with this aquifer issue including commissioning an independent hydrogeologist report on the connection between Butlers Swamp and the aquifer.

Following is REPS recent submission to the Director, Approvals and Wildlife Division, Department of the Environment and Water Resources, Canberra in relation to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act).

REPS also supplied part of a literature review on these upland swamps which showed a connection between the upland swamps and the aquifer.

"When a bore is pumped it is known that water levels in all sandstone zones decline."
(UNGCRG Minutes, 29 January 2007, page 2 of 14)

Referral Submission – Extra Information re: Butlers Swamp etc

21 June 2007

Reference Number 2006/3209 Sydney Catchment Authority Water Management and use Kangaloon/NSW/Upper Nepean (Kangaloon) Groundwater Borefield

Dear Director,

1. Introduction

This submission should be read in conjunction with our previous submissions dated 8 January and 12 February 2007. The points raised in these submissions are still valid.

Although the focus of this debate appears to be concentrated on Butlers Swamp, REPS believes that the terrestrial and riparian environments are just as much under threat as the wetlands, if not more so.

Many plants and animals under your protection are at significant risk. Some of these animals are mentioned in this submission for your confirmation of their status.

A recent statement from the SCA, discussed at the last Upper Nepean Groundwater Community Reference Group meeting on 26 March 2007, is of concern. The following statement is in regard to the depth of groundwater being extracted and has implications for Butlers Swamp and the whole protected catchment area where the borefield is proposed.

"It was restated that groundwater extraction was from the entire sequence of Hawkesbury Sandstone strata - fracture zones occur throughout the whole of the sandstone and the zones are not consistent

from bore to bore. When a bore is pumped it is known that water levels in all sandstone zones decline." (UNGCRG Minutes, 29 January 2007, page 2 of 14)

2. Butlers Swamp

This above statement, coupled with the knowledge that no shale was encountered when drilling at Butlers Swamp (Temperate Highland Peat Swamp on Sandstone) indicates a hydraulic connection between Butlers Swamp and bore pumping in the vicinity.

If shale was encountered then this may have isolated the swamp from drawdown.

Only sandstone rock has been encountered here (also some clay), seen from drilling in the swamp and beneath it, so "When a bore is pumped it is known that water levels in all sandstone zones decline." implies that there will be interference to this protected wetland from drawdown.

Even if there is an aquitard of some sort then this is defined as "A low permeability unit that can store groundwater and also transmit it slowly from one aquifer to another" which also indicates a connection between pumping drawdown and Butlers Swamp over time.

3. The Terrestrial Environment

Immediately above the water table is the capillary zone (tension saturated zone). This saturated zone of water is in direct contact with the water table held in the soil pores against gravity by capillary tension. This zone is frequently accessed by plant roots. (SMEC 2006 Glossary)

With pumping and the water level declining in all sandstone layers there will be a general drying out of the landscape. Canopy trees could be put under stress losing this capillary zone to drawdown over many years. The risk of fire will be increased (also with the introduction of power to the area (3 phase power)). These problems are exacerbated by the fact that the SCA wants to pump under drought conditions (emergency drought supply) when this water will be needed the most by the creeks (base flows) and vegetation.

This water catchment area is home to a number of

federally protected species and any changes to the environment here could affect the whole forest ecosystem, with habitat and species loss.

Some animals of the area protected under the EPBC Act;

The Spotted-tailed Quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus*)
Endangered

Southern Brown Bandicoot (*Isooden obesulus obesulus*) *Endangered*

Long-nosed Potoroo (*Potorous tridactylus*)
Vulnerable

These three mammals need dense undergrowth and a healthy ecosystem for survival.

Macquarie Perch (*Macquaria australasica*)
Endangered

Giant Burrowing Frog (*Heleioporus australiacus*)
Vulnerable

Stuttering Frog (*Mixophyes balbus*) *Vulnerable*
Altered hydrology and a drying landscape could also affect these species.

4. Conclusion

Is it not the Commonwealth Government's responsibility to protect these Federally listed species under the EPBC Act? In a recent Federal Court decision involving the EPBC Act (19/12/2006 Senator Bob Brown v Forestry Tasmania) the judgement stated that '... "to protect" is seen as a duty not just to maintain population levels of threatened species but to restore the species'. (ECOS 2007)

The Temperate Highland Peat Swamps on Sandstone and endangered plants and animals in this area appear to be under significant threat from this proposal. A "Controlled Action" is needed to maintain or restore these species and communities where a full EIS can be carried out over time (e.g. 5 years) and before any further pumping can be contemplated.

To manage an area properly, one first of all needs to know the population levels of protected species in the area and research into their needs so that appropriate action can be taken "to protect" these species.

It also gives time to consider whether or not this proposal at Kangaloon should be pursued. (The

aquifer already feeds the Nepean Dam with water, especially in times of drought and supports the surrounding undisturbed ecosystems).

The Robertson Environment Protection Society also requests the opportunity to provide comments on any further information that is provided to the Minister under s76 of the Act.

If any further information is needed please contact us.

Yours sincerely,
Leon Hall
President - REPS

References

ECOS (2007) issue 135 p.4 Feb-March "Historic biodiversity case outcome" CSIRO.

SMEC Australia (2006) Baseline Groundwater Dependent Ecosystem Evaluation Study- Upper Nepean Groundwater Pilot Studies - Final Report. September 2006.

Biobanking

By Jonathan Persse

The speaker at the REPS Meeting on 8 June 2007 was Jaime Hilbert, Biodiversity Conservation Officer with the Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC). Her talk, a PowerPoint presentation, on Biodiversity Banking, or Biobanking, was informative and challenging.

The NCC, attached to the State Department of Environment and Climate Change, (DECC), is the umbrella body for about 130 groups, ranging from scientific organizations, to interest groups like REPS, to Land care.

Biobanking is "a scheme designed to be a market-based approach to conservation of threatened species on private land". Jaime Hilbert gave a good overview of the scheme, and raised a number of areas of concern. In broad terms, the scheme operates like this: credits for conservation work to be done on a piece of land can be sold to a developer elsewhere whose work will reduce the biodiversity of the area to be developed. Money from the

developer is paid into a fund, available then as conservation work is done by the landowner who sold the credits.

The legislation setting up this scheme was passed by the State Government in November last year, but the regulations setting out the way the scheme will operate are still being established. To date, the NCC has been very largely unsuccessful in having its voice heard by the DECC, in suggesting amendments to the legislation and in formulating the regulations.

One of the many areas of concern is the control over threatened species, of plant, bird, or animal, seen by the NCC to be inadequate under the legislation. Another area of concern is the way by which the biodiversity value of an area is assessed, especially an area to be developed, when (as at present) the assessing surveyor or consultant may be appointed by the developer; local councils are little involved in this.

A third, major, concern relates to the practice of developers being able to make a general environment contribution so that they can avoid having to buy biodiversity credits. A fourth concern is that immediate loss of biodiversity in an area being developed is not properly balanced by the long-term conservation work to be undertaken where credits were sold.

Many other problems relating to the scheme have been identified by the NCC, discussed by Jaime Hilbert, and set out in the printed material available to members at the meeting. Updated material is available from Jaime at:

Nature Conservation Council of NSW
301 Kent Street, Sydney 2000.
Phone: (02) 9279 095

Comments or question relating to the Biobanking scheme itself should be sent to:

Louisa P Mamouney
Department of Environment and Climate Change (NSW)
59-61 Goulburn Street, Sydney NSW 1232

Email: biobanking@environment.nsw.gov.au
Phone: (02) 9995 5577

Poetry Corner

Edited by Jonathan Persse

In this issue, three poems by Australians on birds.

Please send a favourite poem on the environment, or one that you have written, to Jonathan Persse, Sallyhill, Burrawang NSW 2577.



NATIVE COMPANIONS DANCING

On the blue plains on wintry days
These stately birds move in the dance.
Keen eyes have they, and quaint old ways
On the blue plains in wintry days.
The Wind, their unseen Piper, plays,
They strut, salute, retreat, advance;
On the blue plains, in wintry days,
These stately birds move in the dance.

J. Shaw Neilson (1872-1942)

BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE

Carved out of strength, the furious kite
shoulders off the wind's hate.
The black mark that bars his white
is the pride and hunger of Cain.
Perfect, precise, the angry calm
of his closed body, that snow-storm –
of his eye that threatens harm.
Hunger and force his beauty made
and turned a bird to a knife-blade.

Judith Wright (1915-2000)



THE SILVER GULL

(Stanza 1)

With strong slow stroke
Oaring her way against the breeze
Above the blustering waves that shoulder and smoke
The silver gull moves with strenuous ease;
Then sidelong shoots high
With sudden cry
Of rapture in the wind's imperious will
And that sweet whirling dream
Of blending purpose;
Poised a moment, still,
She glides, a fancied shape of air, down that invisible
stream.

J. Le Gay Brereton (1871-1933)

Climate Change

I am seeking REPS support for the following matter to be placed before the Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC), of which REPS is a member, at their next Annual Conference.

This issue will be raised briefly at the REPS Meeting on 10 August 2007. If you would like to discuss the matter with me prior to the meeting please call 4885 1394.

Yours sincerely,

David Tranter

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW calls upon the Australian Government to implement the following climate action measures within the next Parliamentary term:

1. **Introduce** a non-partisan executive process to deal with climate change as a national emergency,
2. **Ratify** the existing Kyoto Protocol and co-operate internationally to develop new emission targets,
3. **Select** a national cap that would help limit global temperature rise to 2°C beyond that of 1990,
4. **Regulate** emissions by such measures as carbon taxation, equitable carbon trading and rationing,
5. **Maintain** carbon sinks by reforestation and nationwide biodiversity corridors,
6. **Develop** renewable energy and make the technology available to nearby countries at low cost,
7. **Mandate** energy and water-efficiency practices by governments, businesses and households,
8. **Reduce** dependence on cars, trucks and planes by subsidizing public transport and freight rail,
9. **Introduce** natural gas as a transitional fuel to phase out coal-fired power stations and coal mines,
10. **Assist** those individuals most affected by the transition to a low-emission economy,
11. **Encourage** the transition to low-emission food production and distribution systems,
12. **Treat** nuclear power as a technology of last resort, not as an immediate panacea.

Great Australian Bushwalk

Sunday 9 September

Moreton National Park, Bundanoon

Len Hainke will lead a walk an easy to medium walk from Gamble's Rest, Bundanoon as part of the Southern Highlands contribution to this NPA State-wide promotion. The Southern Highland Branch would like to attract new members to join NPA to increase the effectiveness of the Association at a time when the environment and Parks need protection more than ever. Invite your friends along and join Len for a special day.

Phone Len on 02 48691040 if you would like to participate.

NPA Talk

Bargo River State Conservation Area: Our new reserve

7:30 pm Tuesday 7 August 2007
CWA Hall, Elizabeth Street, Moss Vale

Bargo River State Conservation Area is a worthy addition to the reserves in the Southern Highlands. Come and hear one of the rangers from the Picton NPWS office describe its importance, values and potential for bushwalking and recreation.

Gold coin donation

Supper provided

NPA Bushwalks

Sunday 19 Aug

Historic Passes: Down Hansens Pass, up Osbornes Pass Morton NP

Exploratory, assume 10 km, off-track, steep, wet, bushy. Jim Foran 4885 1081 or Jim.Foran@ThaiLang.com.au.

Saturday 25 August

Upper Brogers Creek

Hard, minimum 10 km, steep, off track. Jim Foran 4885 1081 or Jim.Foran@ThaiLang.com.au. Walk may involve a car shuffle.

Explore upper Brogers Creek from its headwaters at Jamberoo Mountain Road down as far as we can last. Creek crossings, steep, thick bush. Map: Kangaroo Valley.

Saturday – Monday 25-27 Aug

Shoalhaven River, Deua NP

Medium grade, 3 day walk, 23km, 260m asc
David Carmichael 4822 2466,
dtccarglbn@optusnet.com.au

A 3 day walk along the very upper reaches of the fabulous Shoalhaven River from the lower slopes of Mt Dampier. A traverse along the Minuma Range is also included which should provide excellent views to the east. Saturday morning drive to Wyanbene Caves (finishing point) and then car shuffle required before walking from late morning. Limit: 8. Maps: 1:25000 Snowball & Krawaree.

Wednesday 29 August

Budderoo N.P. Discovery Tour

Easy, medium plateau walk, mostly on track, 5 km min. Denis Wilson 48852725, mob 0413056431

See interesting plants and birds guided by local naturalist and photographer, Denis Wilson. Visit Osterhaus self sufficient property with hand built house surrounded by Budderoo N.P. with great cliff top scenery. Not to be missed. Bookings essential. Access restrictions apply. 10: 00 am assembly. Map: Kangaroo Valley.

Sunday 16 September

Historic Passes: Down Faulks Pass, up Barrengarry Pass Morton NP

Exploratory, assume 10 km, off-track, steep, wet, bushy. Jim Foran 4885 1081 or Jim.Foran@ThaiLang.com.au. CMA Map: Kangaroo Valley 1:25,000.

Saturday 22 September

Tahmoor Canyon Walk

Medium short day walk, 9 km. Liz Thompson 48691483. If interested, please phone before Thursday 20th Sept.

Mermaids Pool, Matilda Track, Sugarloaf Pass and Tahmoor Canyon. A surprising walk and so close to Sydney. There is a steep descent into the canyon.

Sunday 23 September

Historic Passes: Down Hindmarsh Pass, up Keenans Pass Morton NP

Exploratory, assume 10 km, off-track, steep, wet, bushy. Jim Foran 4885 1081 or Jim.Foran@ThaiLang.com.au. CMA Map: Kangaroo Valley 1:25,000.

Sunday 7 October

Starlights Track Circuit.

16 km medium. 510 m descent/ascent. Joan Lowe 48612996. If interested, please phone before Thursday 4 October.

We will walk out on Nattai Ridge Road from the locked gate and descend to the Nattai down a disused fire trail. There is an interesting old 'portable' slow combustion stove remaining from previous inhabitants at the bottom of the decent. A short walk along the Nattai will bring us to McArthurs Flat. Following a welcome break we will ascend Starlights Track which joins the Nattai Ridge Road to return to the cars. Map: Hill Top

Sunday 7 October

Historic Passes: Down Parishs Pass, up Denners Pass Morton NP

Exploratory, assume 10 km, off-track, steep, wet, bushy. Jim Foran 4885 1081 or Jim.Foran@ThaiLang.com.au. CMA Map: Kangaroo Valley 1:25,000.

Saturday 3 November

Lake Alexander to Forty Foot Falls and return

10 km easy. Joan Lowe 48612996. If interested, please phone before Thursday 1 November.

We will follow the Lake Alexander circuit track from the lake to pass under the freeway and cross Gibbergunya Creek where it joins the Nattai. At this point we will ignore the right track and continue along the Nattai until we reach Nattai Creek on the left. We will follow the creek upstream to the 40ft falls. Map: Mittagong



Caalang Creek Working Bees

Last Saturday of each month 9:00 am

Caalang Creek Working Bees are held on the last Saturday of each month from 9:00 am onwards subject to the weather. Please come and join us for as long as you are able.

Meet at the Community Centre. If in doubt due to inclement weather or for more details please contact Sandy Morse on telephone 4885 1905. Please bring along a hat, gloves, shovels, watering cans etc.

Help Care for Our Nature Reserve

**1st Wednesday of each month
10:00am to noon**

All welcome. Please bring garden gloves. For further information, phone Helen: 4885-1394

REPS Meetings for 2007

The remaining REPS Public Meetings for this year are listed below.

Each meeting will include a talk that will be publicised in the Eucryphia prior to the meeting.

Friday 10th August

Friday 12th October

Friday 9th November (Annual General Meeting)

Thank you

REPS would like to thank Joanne Croucher for producing the August newsletter (Eucryphia 90) while Lynn was away. It was much appreciated by everyone as is the voluntary work done by Lynn and the previous editors of our newsletter.

Eucryphia via email

Would any members prefer to receive the newsletter 'Eucryphia' via email rather than by post?

Photographs are in colour, production costs are reduced and you can forward the newsletter to any interested people.

If so, then please contact the Eucryphia editor with your details. Email Lynn Stevenson:
ponto2@optusnet.com.au

Or mail to:
The Editor, Eucryphia
PO Box 45
Robertson 2577

Contact REPS

All those who are interested in supporting our aim - are welcome to join REPS. Our aim is to promote the preservation and enhancement of the Robertson environment. We welcome contact with individuals and other community groups. For further information and subscriptions please contact:

The Secretary – Jill Keft
PO Box 45,
Robertson NSW 2577

or President – Leon Hall on 4888 2222

We are always looking for new contributions to Eucryphia. If you have an essay, article, poem or photograph that you would like to share with other REPS members please contact Lynn Stevenson at email: ponto2@optusnet.com.au

All contributions will be most welcome.

Visit the REPS website
www.reps.org.au