

SCUTH TURRAMURRA ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION

THIRD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1980-1981.

MANAGEMENT PLAN.

In June last year after the successful launching of our Plan of Management, S.T.E.P. set to work selling and promoting the booklet.

We were able to obtain three sales outlets in the city; the National Trust, the Total Environment Centre, and the Environment Centre in Pitt Street. Locally, Kissing Point Newsagency sold many copies on our behalf.

Sales are now in the region of 600, a figure which has far exceeded our original expectations. Copies have been requested by National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Forestry Commission, the Water Board (M.W.S. & D. B.), the National Herbarium, the Field Studies Centre in Royal National Park, Councils, Universities, Schools and Libraries.

S.T.E.P. has received many compliments on the quality and contents of the Plan, and Associate Professor Thorvaldson at the recent Symposium on the Management of Urban Bushland, showed the Plan to the 200 people present calling it a beautiful booklet which helped to build up an appreciation of our heritage.

Discussions on Council's adoption of the Plan have been taking place over many months and are continuing through the newly formed Bushland Management Working Party.

SELECTIVE HAND CLEARING OF FIREBREAKS.

Because of the harmful effects of control burning on bushland, S.T.E.P. sought and obtained Council approval to use this alternative method of protection against wildfire for residents of South Turramurra, between Robin Avenue and Cove Street.

This work has continued during the second half of 1980, and will proceed until completed in September this year.

Council has fully investigated S.T.E.P.'s work and in a recently released report concluded that "If community participation can be maintained SELECTIVE HAND CLEARING CAN PROVIDE A LEVEL OF PROTECTION AGAINST WILDFIRE, COMPARABLE TO CONTROL BURNING" and went on to say, "ENVIRONMENTALLY, S.T.E.P.'S METHOD IS MORE SELECTIVE THAN CONTROL BURNING AND WILL ASSIST IN WEED CONTROL IN THE URBAN SITUATION." Evelyn Hickey, Bush Regeneration Officer for the National Trust, recently inspected the hand cleared areas with me and has written to Ku-ring-gai Council expressing her complete satisfaction with the work carried out. Accompanying us were ecologist Robin Buchanan, Alderman Roslyn Baxter from Lane Cove Council, and five members of environmental groups in the Willoughby municipality. All remarked on the beauty of our bushland and said they will try to persuade Willoughby Council to use S.T.E.P.'s method of fire protection for its residents.

West Pymble members of S.T.E.P. have also begun to hand clear firebreaks in their area.

S.T.E.P. owes a debt of gratitude to Janet and Alan Catford. They organised hand clearing schedules, notified residents by letter-boxing, and have worked tirelessly over the past year for the benefit of our local bushland. They have been assisted by residents, S.T.E.P. members and APEX.

MEETINGS.

In August S.T.E.P. was invited by the members of the local branch of the Liberal Party to meet the new member for Ku-ring-gai, Nick Greiner. Margaret Booth and I attended on S.T.E.P.'s behalf. Mr. Greiner showed interest in matters concerning the local environment, and of special concern to him were the problems of trail bikes in bushland reserves and the dumping of rubbish in bushland.

We agreed to differ on the possible benefits of an expressway through our Valley, however he assured us that his enquiries showed that building of the Expressway would not begin for many years.

TALKS ON MANAGEMENT PLAN.

Over the past year I have given talks on our Plan of Management to Ku-ring-gai Bushland and Environmental Society, Ryde School of Horticulture, Castlecrag Progress Assn., St. Ives Garden Club and on four occasions to students of the National Trust's Bush Regeneration School. In addition several talks to Guides and Venturers have been given by Margaret Booth and myself.

SYMPOSIUM ON THE MANAGEMENT OF URBAN BUSHLAND.

In July a committee was formed by Ku-ring-gai Council to organise a Symposium on the Management of Urban Bushland. It consisted of several Aldermen and Council staff together with Janet Fairlie-Cunninghame of K.B. & E.S. and myself.

The Symposium took place on 11th October, at Ku-ring-gai High School and was attended by approximately 200 residents of Ku-ring-gai and visitors from other municipalities.

Speakers who took part came from the National Trust, Lane Cove Council, National Herbarium, Macquarie Uni., Uni. of N.S.W. and National Parks and Wildlife Service. It was a most interesting day and many important issues on bushland management were discussed.

S.T.E.P. conducted a bookstall at the Symposium on behalf of the Total Environment Centre and sold approximately \$400 worth of books and S.T.E.P. Plans of Management.

A transcript of the Symposium is available from Council at the Cashier's desk. It costs \$3-00 or \$3-80 posted and makes very good reading.

S.T.E.P. would like to see another Symposium held in the future, concentrating on the problems of weed control and fire protection in urban bushland.

WATER BOARD DAMAGE TO BUSHLAND IN WEST PYMBLE.

In January I arranged to meet representatives of the Water Board (M.W.S. & D.B.) on site to discuss the damage caused by the laying of pipes through a large area of West Pymble bushland.

They agreed that some restoration work should take place in the form of seeding the area. S.T.E.P. felt that this alone was not sufficient and managed to get the Board to agree to seeding with indigenous species, mulching with straw, spraying the straw with CCLBIND, and planting many established plants. They were most reluctant to leave out the Rye grass they had intended using in their seed mix. After we had lengthy discussions on its potential as a major weed problem the Board agreed to exclude it.

BOOK STALLS.

In July and September S.T.E.P. held two successful bookstalls in conjunction with Kissing Point Progress Association. A total of £388-00 was raised which was divided equally between the two groups.

N.C.C. ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

This was held in October and S.T.E.P. was ably represented by Alan Catford, who recorded S.T.E.P.'s vote on the 50 motions which were put to the meeting.

VOLUNTEER BUSH REGENERATION TEAM.

A tool board was purchased and many successful weeding afternoons have taken place. Nine S.T.E.P. members are taking part in this most important aspect of bushland management.

S.R.A. TRUST'S DRAFT PLAN OF MANAGEMENT FOR THE LANE COVE VALLEY.

On 1st November Margaret Booth and I attended a workshop at Lane Cove River Park. 462/558

S.T.E.P. had been invited to discuss with the S.R.A. Trust's representatives their Draft Plan of Management for the Lane Cove Valley. All environmental groups in the Valley were represented and a very constructive meeting took place.

S.T.E.P.'s Plan of Management was well to the fore with one of the Trust's consultants showing it to the meeting and remarking that groups such as S.T.E.P. should be represented on a sub-committee of the Trust to assist in the management of their local bushland. We have notified them of our willingness to serve on such a committee and represent our part of the Valley.

Following the workshop S.T.E.P. prepared a detailed submission on the Draft Plan suggesting many additions and alterations. Our submission was well received and considerable benefits have resulted, including the Trust's agreement on classifying three local areas as "Protection Areas," because of their rarity in the Valley. These are the diatreme in Browns Field, the Banksia ericifolia closed-heath area near Ashburton Avenue, and all remaining pockets of ridge-top vegetation in the Upper Valley.

The Draft Plan will soon go to the Minister for Planning and Environment for his approval. If it is implemented it will mean that the Lane Cove Valley will be managed as a whole and the area North of De Burgh's Bridge will be maintained and restored to its natural state and will be reserved for educational use and passive recreation.

This would be in line with S.T.E.P.'s recommendation in our Plan of Management; however since there is opposition to the proposal by local Councils, it remains to be seen if the Plan can be implemented.

BUSH WALK.

In November 30 people from K.B. & E.S. and Beecroft Cheltenham Civic Trust were taken on a guided bush walk led by Alan Catford. They were particularly interested in seeing the work done by S.T.E.P. in hand clearing of firebreaks.

S.T.E.P. EMBLEM.

In February we chose a S.T.E.P. emblem for use on our letter-head. Our treasurer, Yvonne Langshaw, designed many attractive emblems featuring local flora and although the choice was by no means easy, we finally decided on the Eucalypt.

TURRAMURRA HIGH SCHCOOL MAGAZINE 1980.

Ross Anderson, a High School Student wrote an excellent article on S.T.E.P. and bushland management for last year's School Magazine. It is especially encouraging to see young people like Ross taking such an interest in their environment.

GENERAL MEETINGS.

Four general meetings were held over the past year. The first in August was a "Meet the Candidates" meeting with all four Council Candidates present to give their views on environmental issues.

In November John Booth and Alan Catford gave very informative talks on the topic "Bushfires and you." They detailed the causes and behaviour patterns of bushfires and gave advice on the many precautions we can take to safeguard our homes both before and during a bushfire emergency.

Our March general meeting centred around an award-winning film on the Franklin and Gordon Rivers. Roger Lyle of the South West Tasmania Committee gave a most interesting account of the efforts being made to save this beautiful and unique area of Australia from further damming.

In May at a very well attended meeting, Densy Clyne showed S.T.E.P. Members and visitors three excellent films on insects and spiders. The photography and clarity of the films were exceptional and a most enlightening question time followed.

KISSING POINT SPORTS CLUB and ST. PHILIPS.

S.T.E.P. has been fortunate to have had the use of the Auluba Road Clubhouse for our Committee meetings over the past year. Mr. Hewetson of St. Philips has also been most generous in making St. Philips hall available to us for our general meetings.

KU-RING-GAI COUNCIL'S BUSHLAND MANAGEMENT WORKING PARTY.

The first meeting was held on 13th May. This committee was formed by Council to formulate policies for the better management of Ku-ring-gai's many bushland areas. Committee members are Aldermen Thomson, Kilkenny, Bullen and Kartzoff; presidents of S.T.E.P. and Ku-ring-gai Bushland and Environmental Society, Dr. Harley Wright; Mr. Don Blaxell from the National Herbarium; Pymble geologist Mr. Lloyd Hamilton; Mr. John Burke from Wahroonga and three senior Council staff members. The six members of the public were chosen by the Director of Parks for their interest and expertise in some aspect of bushland management.

It appears to be a very good committee and we will press for a vast improvement in the future management of Ku-ring-gai's bushland. If \$500,000 can be spent on netball courts, it doesn't seem unreasonable to me to spend the same sum on our long-neglected bushland reserves.

Meetings will be held monthly and reports and recommendations will be directed through the Finance and General Purposes Committee

which reports direct to Council.

The policies set out in S.T.E.P.'s Plan of Management are under review by the new committee and will be extremely helpful in formulating a Ku-ring-gai wide bushland Management Plan.

It was gratifying for S.T.E.P. to hear Andrew Guest the Director of Parks, and both Comenarra Ward Aldermen acknowledge at the Committee's first meeting, that S.T.E.P. was largely responsible for increasing the interest in urban bushland over the past 3 years which led to the formation of the new Committee.

It remains for me to thank the outgoing committee. They have given me total support and we have worked together in a most satisfying and harmonious way for the past year. My grateful thanks go to them all. Our treasurer deserves special mention as she has had an unusually heavy workload to carry this year.

HELEN PETERSEN.
President.