



STEP Inc. Newsletter

Community Based Environmental Conservation Since 1978 No. 63 Sept 1993

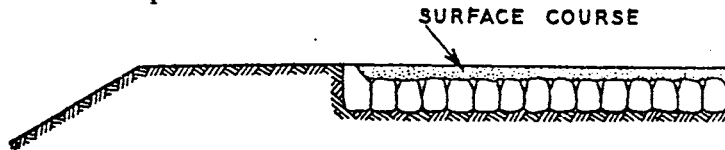
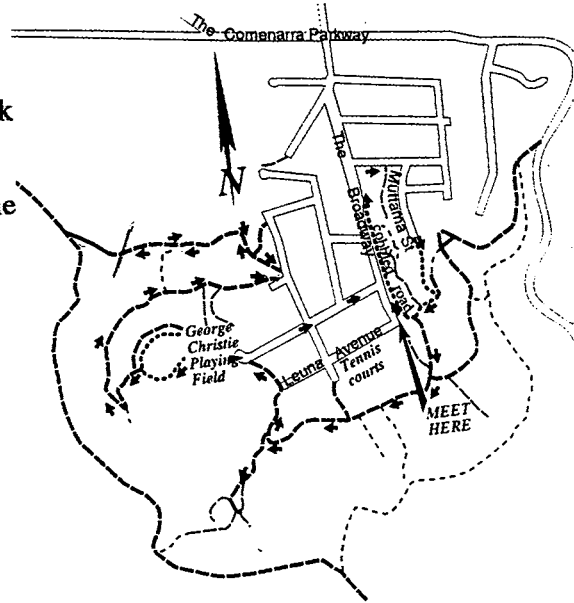
HERITAGE ROAD SPRING BUSHWALK

On **Sunday 26th September at 2pm** STEP's spring bushwalk will be held. Meet on the corner of The Broadway and Leuna Avenue at Wahroonga.

The walk will include an inspection of the Broadway Historic Park project and the old Telford road on Muttama St and The Broadway. This is fascinating for those who have not seen it before and the restoration and regeneration work being done by the local community is a great example of what a determined group

There is interesting ridgetop vegetation including the rare Scaly bark (*Eucalyptus squamosa*) and Whipstick mallee ash (*Eucalyptus multicaulis*) both of which have very restricted distribution as they are confined to areas around Sydney.

The walk should take about two hours and afternoon tea will be served on completion.



Typical Telford Road Construction

THE PROBLEM WITH BULLDOZERS

One problem with the construction industry is that, by its very nature, it is dealing with one off situations. When conditions are imposed on Building Applications the immediate problem is to communicate the demands of these conditions to those planning and doing the work. We have all grown up in the culture of removing all the undergrowth from any construction site and retaining the trees. This is called "cleaning up the rubbish" and is so entrenched that earthmoving equipment operators often simply cannot believe it when they are told to leave a section of natural understory untouched - to them it's a bit like not mowing the lawn.

Thus we have site after site where BA conditions are violated by perfectly well meaning people who either have not been told, or who have made a mistake, or who cannot believe their instructions. The latest example of this was at the Bush School in Burns Rd where a new hall is being constructed. Contractors there, according to the Advocate of July 21, "wiped out more than 1,000 hours of bush rehabilitation effort" through an error.

STEP attended a meeting with Councillors, Ku-ring-gai staff and interested residents to discuss this problem. A solution probably lies with a combination of better communication with builders through the DA -BA process, better communication through the building inspectors on sites and stricter enforcement of penalties.

USE OF THE LANE COVE RIVER

The Maritime Services Board recently advertised for submissions on the usage of the Lane Cove River. This evidently arose out of complaints that powerboats, often pulling skiers, were interfering with the quiet enjoyment of the river and nearby bushland as well as damaging the banks. STEP made a submission asking for limits on noise and speed and banning of any activity which damages the banks.

ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY TALK

See inside for details of **Lynne McLoughlin's talk to STEP on the Environmental history of the Lane Cove Valley**

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting will be held at St Andrews Church Hall on the corner of Vernon and Chisholm Streets, Turrumurra on Thursday 14 October 1993 at 7.30 pm.

There are changes proposed to the constitution of which notice is now given. Their intent is to clarify the voting rights of family memberships so that each such membership is entitled to two votes. The changes proposed are;

Section 3 Membership

Part (a) Insert "families" after "individuals" so that the first sentence reads "Membership is open to all individuals, families and organisations".

Part (b) Insert "families" after "individuals", so that this sentence reads "Individuals, families and organisations".

Section 7 General Meetings

Insert a new subsection numbered (h) after the current subsection (g), which will read : "For voting purposes each family may nominate at most two family members to represent it. Each nominated person carries a single vote."

Renumber the current subsections (h) and (i) to (i) and (j) respectively.

If any member would like a copy of the constitution before the meeting then please contact one of the committee members listed in this newsletter.

STEP TRACK BROCHURE

Enclosed with this newsletter is Council's brochure on the STEP Track. We can recommend it as a walk to anyone who has not yet had the opportunity.

STEP COMMITTEE

STEP has always had a very strong and balanced committee which has been renewed as members resigned after some years service. The Annual General Meeting in October will provide an opportunity for new appointments. If you would like to be more active please ring one of the committee listed on the back page to discuss joining the committee. Committee members usually assist with the work of STEP according to their skills and interests and no onerous demands are placed upon new recruits until they volunteer.

Almost any skills can be put to use. Examples are abilities with public speaking, finance, research, media, law, function organisation, graphic design and writing. We have recently even made use of our treasurer's carpentry skills.

You can operate in an anonymous manner or acquire a more public profile. Certainly you will not be coerced into lying in front of bulldozers or storming the local member's office. Think about it and give us a ring!

UTS LINDFIELD ACCESS ROAD

We last reported progress in this matter to you in the February this year. At that time we mentioned that a solution which offered a good result for all the interested parties had been found. Although there are still obstacles to be overcome which could frustrate the settlement, this solution is now closer to realisation with Ku-ring-gai Council having approved the access road from Lady Game Drive, the University having agreed to enter into a Deed to permanently preserve some 10 acres of bushland and to implement a plan of management for all bushland on its site. The University has also agreed to limit traffic through the Eton Road access to 40% of the current maximum daily flow.

STEP has put a lot of work into helping to achieve this solution but has drawn criticism from some conservationists. Such criticism has as its basis the fact that the access road will be built through bushland therefore should be opposed in all circumstances. Further opposition derives from the philosophy that land administered by National Parks should never be alienated. While respecting these points of view your Committee has taken the view that the best future for the bushland ecosystem generally bounded by Grosvenor Rd, Lady Game Drive and Millwood Ave will be secured by locking up as much of the bushland as possible now.

Blind opposition to the access road now would secure more bushland in the very short term but leave an unstable situation as the residents continued to lobby for relief from traffic and the University continues to fight for the road and the opportunity for expansion. A combination of an unsympathetic Council and State Government in the future would, we believe, mean that eventually the whole UTS bushland would be lost to development over the next 50 or 100 years. The tiny strip owned by National Parks would then have been isolated and degraded by the effects of development.

We shall keep you informed but would very much like to hear from any members who have concerns about any aspect of the issue or who would like more information than we are able to present here.

ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORIAN TO TALK TO STEP

Lynne McLoughlin will talk to STEP on Thursday 14 October on The Environmental History of the Lane Cove River. Lynne has published two books on the environmental history of the Lane Cove Valley. The first, published in 1985, is entitled *The Middle Lane Cove River, A History and a Future*. The second, in conjunction with historian Margaret Wyatt and published only this year, is *The Upper Lane Cove River: History, Heritage, Bibliography*.

The river has a fascinating history with settlement predating 1800. One of the interesting facts to come from her books is that what we assume to be the river's "natural" state is not necessarily the case. For instance many areas which are now thickly covered with mangroves were originally far more sparsely vegetated. Lynne has an excellent slide set to back up her talk.

THURSDAY 14 OCTOBER AT 8.00 pm at St Andrews Hall, Corner of Chisholm St and Vernon St Turramurra. MAKE A NOTE OF THE TIME ON YOUR CALENDAR NOW!

GREEN ECONOMICS

The problems the Federal Government is having in passing its budget and the role of the Greens and Democrats in this raises the question of whether there is any such thing as a workable green economic policy or whether, given their heads, the greens would have us all in economic stagnation and poverty. There haven't been a lot of policy statements coming from the Greens but a hint can be obtained from the SMH of 4 Sept 93, Senator Margetts said "It's all very well to have environment policies on reduction of greenhouse gasses, but often they have energy policies or economic policies which go entirely in the other direction."

The Senator is dead right. Lip service is paid to conserving finite resources but yet we are facing unlimited economic growth. Urban sprawl is universally condemned yet we are projecting unlimited population growth. We have programmes to rescue our rivers from poisonous algae and other pollution while we continue to clear native vegetation for farming and housing which we know full well will exacerbate the situation.

We may well ask why is this so? Why is a rational society rushing off in two directions at once? It may well be that there is more than one component to the answer. In the first place there is a conventional wisdom which is

very powerful which pushes us towards growth, wealth accumulation and taming the wilderness. This is the work ethic, the fight for financial security and our need to dominate our environment. In the second a large part of our industrial manufacturing base is dependent on growth.

The food industry has demand which is proportional to the population but the construction and building supplies industries, for example, obtain most of their sales from population growth. They constitute a very strong lobby and of course their sudden demise would be at the cost of hundreds of thousands of jobs. A society which wants to determine its own future, however, would find a solution. If the current rate of population growth were scaled down to zero over the next 30 years then there would be plenty of time for acclimatisation.

So green economics is perhaps about reconciling our need for economic security and wealth creation while meeting our targets for sustainable use of land and other resources, pollution control, clean waters and so on.

You may well ask why we are canvassing these issues in a local newsletter and the answer is of course that Ku-ring-gai will cease to exist in the form that we now know it as the built and unbuilt environment continues to degrade from overcrowding and overuse.

TOTAL CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT

We have previously reported on the progress of the Lane Cove River Total Catchment Management Committee. The Middle Harbour Committee is also now in operation under the chairmanship of Dr Harley Wright and hence the two primary catchments in our area are covered.

The Committees have no power other than that of persuasion and this can lead to frustration. There has been considerable success, however, in gaining the cooperation of the councils and government bodies.

The Lane Cove committee has set out to raise the awareness of the catchment and of the effect which we have upon it. For instance councils have agreed to cooperate in stencilling a sign on street stormwater inlets which point out that the inlet drains to the Lane Cove River. Doubtless this will come as a surprise to many people and may make them think twice before sweeping grass cuttings or hosing detergents down the drain.

MOVING THE BOTTLENECK

You may have seen press reports that the Government is concerned about the bottleneck in the Pacific Highway at the Pymble rail overbridge. There is a proposal to do something about it. We feel a new bridge coming on!

If only they could realise that widening this section will do nothing except move the bottleneck to the next logical spot. The Los Angeles experience of the best urban road system leading to

the worst traffic jams means nothing to our planners!

Another example of brilliant traffic engineering is the 27% (SMH 16/7/93) increase in traffic in South Sydney in recent years. The tunnel and other developments have provided relief to some while causing chaos for others.

So the evidence continues to mount that no amount of roadworks will satisfy the appetite of the car. When will our planners start some real planning?

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The engine driving environmental degradation is population growth. It took to about the start of this century for the world's population to reach 2 billion but this has now increased to over 5 billion. Sydney will have over 7 million people in 70 years at our existing rate of growth but, despite this, we continue to regard population

growth as good. Surely if we really cared about our and our grandchildren's environment we would change our attitude.

CANOE TOURING

Enclosed is a brochure for the new book Canoe Touring in Australia by Leigh Hemmings. Canoeing is obviously a healthy and environmentally sound way of seeing a lot of Australia.

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DIARY REMINDER

Don't forget to write these dates into your diary

Sunday 26 September 2pm. Historic Road bushwalk. See the old Telford pavement on Muttama St and The Broadway and enjoy some excellent ridgetop bushland.

Thursday 14 October at 8pm. Talk by Lynne McLoughlin on the environmental history of the Lane Cove River preceded by STEP's Annual General Meeting at 7.30 pm. St Andrews Church Hall, corner of Vernon and Chisholm Streets, Turrumurra.