



SOUTH TURRAMURRA
ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION
(S.T.E.P.)

NEWSLETTER --- JUNE --- 1983

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING -- FILMS.

Because we have a very interesting couple of films to show you, the A.G.M. will commence at 7.30 p.m. - sharp please! We hope to show the films at or soon after 8.30.

St. Phillips Church
Hall, Parkinson Ave.
Turrumurra.

AGENDA.

- Chairman: Welcome and apologies.
- Chairman's annual report.
- Treasurer's annual report.
- Election of officers for 1983-4.
- General business.

Thursday,
30th June, 1983!

FILMS.

(Because S.T.E.P. has to pay for the hire of the films and of the projector/projectionist, we are making a \$2 charge per adult person and \$1 for children under 16. Normally no charge is made for either entertainment or supper.)

* THE BUSH BEYOND YOUR GARDEN Ku-ring-gai Council.

Familiarity does not necessarily breed contempt. The bush which stretches away from our back fences becomes, to those who care about it, more precious, more interesting, perhaps even more necessary, with the passing of the years. To be deprived for long of its beauty, freshness, its variety, its freedom and its healing qualities, is a kind of starvation. Small wonder that bushlovers are offended by the actions of some who apparently have not yet "got the message." This film is about these people and about we who do care, and is a positive step towards the meeting of the twain.

* A VOICE FOR THE WILDERNESS Chris Wilcox.

"Because the wilderness should be seen and heard by everyone" says the subtitle to this splendid and lively film which explores the great rainforest controversy in N.S.W. This reached its climax last year with the N.S.W. Government's decision to reserve the most important of the larger areas as national parks. The film is about the magnificent rainforest of the Hastings Valley near Wauchops and Port Macquarie. "It is here that a new voice is heard. The voice which speaks out against the old and predominant attitude to the land."

STATE OF THE BUSH. In spite of the remarkable adaptation of Hawkesbury sandstone woodland and heathland to moisture stress, the record drought took its toll in the death and weakening of plants. As a whole, however, the bush looks good and is already showing the benefit of the several good rains which broke the drought, in new strong and healthy growth.

THE URBAN OASIS. At least the weeds were drought-stressed too! But they remain a menace to the purity of the bush along creek banks and in soil-disturbed areas, particularly near dwellings. Have you ever noticed what an "oasis" of green surrounds our bushland fringe dwellings--green which contrasts with the grey-green of the bush? This is because each householder creates around the house a cell of moistened and enriched soil. This is particularly so where there has been septic sewerage outflow or seepage. Once well-established, with a bank of seed in the soil, weeds are hard to eradicate, and succeeding generations of them enrich the normal sandy bush soil to a heavy black loam, even more favourable to their continuation.

Of course such infestations should never have been allowed to get out of hand. But let's face it: many, perhaps most, people are not weed-conscious, and many are totally absorbed in the making of new gardens and perhaps finishing off their homes. Nevertheless, S.T.E.P. appeals to new residents to spend the odd ½ hour removing those weeds which will be father to major infestations lasting many years, degrading the neighbouring bushland. Areas of disturbed soil and rock-fill which are common between properties and bushland are frequent offenders. Mulching with bush litter will help keep weeds from establishing and may include some bush seeds.

It is really incumbent upon those who are privileged to live next to bushland to accept some degree of custodianship, at least to the extent of preventing weed infestation from their own properties and by not yielding to the temptation to dispose of unwanted hardware, garden refuse etc the easy way. It is a moral obligation, but perhaps it should also be a legal one.

FUEL REDUCTION. On 1st March, S.T.E.P. managed to stave off, with the aid of sympathetic aldermen, an attempt by Ku-ring-gai Council to reinstate control burning in the bushland fringe around the foot of Kissing Point road, between Cove Street on the western side and Robin Avenue on the east, the "S.T.E.P. AREA." 1983 is the third year of our work to maintain the strip of land up to 100 feet into the bush beyond properties in a condition which adequately protects houses from bushfire with minimum impact on bushland quality--without the use of fire. The method, which has come to be known as the S.T.E.P. method, consists simply of fuel reduction by using hand tools, raking out excessive quantities of dead material into heaps which are then burned. The material is removed to within a couple of inches of the soil, which is thus left with a protective mulch which considerably lessens the chance of weed infestation or severe erosion, and provides material for breakdown and subsequent absorption of nutrients back into the ecosystem. In the drier areas, control burning usually burns the whole of the litter layer.

The no-fire method avoids the unsightly scorching and weakening of tree trunks and the premature death of many shrubs. It removes the risk of local extinctions of species which occur when a control burn follows or is followed by another fire, either controlled or "wild," at an interval shorter than the seed maturation time of those species.

The Council gave S.T.E.P. until June 1st to complete its fuel reduction program to the standard demanded by Council. In a few places, the work had not been completed. The prolonged rains delayed the operation somewhat, but the work is now virtually complete.

BUSH REGENERATION. The Fuel reduced areas require some follow-up weeding and the Bush Regeneration Team will be meeting on Sunday, 3rd July, 2.00 p.m. at the pathway in Ashburton Avenue, South Turramurra. Anyone who would be interested in helping or learning

more about the "Bradley Method" is welcome to join. Please contact Yvonne Langshaw 449-1541 for further details or advice.

COUNCIL BUSHLAND WORKING PARTY. Earlier preoccupied with the film "The Bush Beyond Your Garden," the pamphlet which conveyed a similar message to Ku-ring-gai citizens, and with getting the bushland survey under way (conducted by Robyn Buchanan, this will be complete in July), the Working Party has now been able to concentrate on policy matters, its principal role. The vital subject of bushfire has been given priority attention. In relation to the perennially controversial aspect of control burning for the protection of life and property, the group has recognised that Council will have to burn in some areas at some time, while looking into the capability of some citizen groups to carry out hand work as has been done in South Turramurra and West Pymble.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION OF THE YCUNG. S.T.E.P. has extended its field of endeavour this year to include child education. Turramurra primary School has introduced a well-known personal development program known as D.U.S.O. (Development of Understanding of Self and Others.) This involves the interaction of a small group of children with an adult (not a teacher) every Thursday afternoon. S.T.E.P., under the kindly guidance of Mrs. Robin Ruys as convener, has established an Environmental Science Group, which will not only proclaim a small but special area of the grounds still containing a good specimen of heathtop flora as a heritage area to be left alone for posterity, but will plant and maintain native plants in other parts of the grounds, while also exploring other environmental aspects of the grounds using content from S.T.E.M. Science and the Gould League publications. S.T.E.P. thanks Robin and her team of helpers, and would be very happy to hear from any interested community members, who will appreciate the vital importance of the task we have undertaken.

STOP THAT DAM! As part of its charter to co-operate with other conservation groups, S.T.E.P. was involved to a limited extent in the phenomenal effort made across the nation to preserve the South-West Tasmania wilderness from further developmental incursions. S.T.E.P. members helped run a Tasmanian Wilderness Society public meeting in Hornsby, Manned and Womanned a stall at Kissing Point shops, and put on a barbecue lunch at the home of Yvonne and Fred Langshaw--and our grateful thanks are due to that couple. Some of our members helped at polling booths on Election Day. Our efforts were rewarded with a win for the Party that promised to save the South-West. The big question at the time of writing is--will it? A promise, even an election promise, is a promise, and those who voted Labour to have the dam stopped expect that promise to be kept. It would be too bad if part of the telegram S.T.E.P. sent to Mr. Fraser before the election could have been sent with equal reason to Mr. Hawke: "Failure to act means any Australian World or National Heritage listing meaningless and Government insincere."

S.T.E.P. BUSHWALK. The bushwalk planned for Heritage Week on 17th April was cancelled due to the atrocious weather. The president stayed (in his car!) at the rendezvous for a half hour in case some enthusiast turned up. None did, to his relief.

BUSH MANAGEMENT SEMINAR. A seminar on various aspects of bushland management, organised by Willoughby Council (all credit to that body), was held in Willoughby Town Hall, Chatswood, on March 26th. Interesting and thoughtful lectures were given and fire was a recurrent

subject for both lecture and discussion. Helen Petersen delivered an excellent paper on hand fuel reduction. The proceedings are available from Willoughby Council for \$5 posted.

VALE: Early in March, S.T.E.P. lost a valued member. George Tout's death was unexpected, and was announced with expressions of regret at the March general meeting. As a Committee member, George had been a consistent attender at committee meetings, and had lent physical support to our fuel reduction program on many occasions. Such members are not easily replaced. Our grateful thanks, George, for the help you gave us during your lifetime.

ALAN CATFORD
President.
449-1658.

MARGARET BOOTH
Secretary.
449-3746.

MEMBERSHIP FEES for 1983-84 are now due and may be paid at the A.G.M. or The Treasurer, c/- 26 Chisholm Street, Turrumurra, 2074.

NAME.....	Single	\$2-00
ADDRESS.....	Family	\$3-00
.....		
PHCNE.....		