

President's Report October 2004

It is with pleasure that I present the President's Report for the year to October 2004. This has been a busy year for STEP. A great deal of the committee's time has been involved with the production and launch of our two new maps 'Walking Tracks of the Middle Harbour Valley and Northern Sydney Harbour Foreshore. Sheets 1 & 2 Bungaroo & Roseville Bridge. Sheets 3 & 4 Northbridge and North Harbour.' We are truly delighted with the maps – they represent four years work by volunteers under the direction of John Martyn, they look beautiful and I'm sure they will be a fantastic asset for the people of Sydney to better enjoy our wonderful bushland. I particularly thank John Martyn for the huge effort he has put into this project, his group of volunteers and Bruno Krockenberger who has managed the final production and launch, as well as Ku-ring-gai Council for \$1000 towards its production. All members are welcome to our launch at the Wildflower Gardens at St Ives on November 14. Two thousand of each sheet have been printed so I urge all members to purchase their own copy at the special rate of \$15 per map and also to spread the word to the general public to ensure sales (\$20 per map for non-members).

Another major issue this year has been the formation of the Blue Gum High Forest Group, led by Neroli Lock and Nancy Pallin. BGHF is listed as a threatened ecological community under the NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act and Ku-ring-gai is fortunate to have the largest remnant (Dalrymple-Hay Nature Reserve plus adjacent land) plus several other smaller remnants. STEP is the lead organization for this group which aims to preserve all BGHF for perpetuity. The BGHF group has been very busy developing an application to have the community listed as critically endangered under the Federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, producing and distributing brochures, lobbying politicians at local and State level, leading 10 walks and several talks on BGHF and making a submission on the Development Application for 100 Rosedale Rd St Ives. STEP also made a separate submission to Ku-ring-gai Council on this Development Application.

The application for re-zoning of the UTS campus at Lindfield has also been a focus area for STEP this year. John Burke was our representative on the Community Forum Group and we made a detailed submission to Ku-ring-gai Council on the preliminary exhibition of the UTS application for rezoning. The UTS campus contains a substantial area of bushland that would be severely affected by the proposed development of 500 dwellings. It is STEP's position that the impacts of the development on the bushland, particularly the loss of more than 50% of the bushland on site (4.6 ha lost) either as a fire Asset Protection Zone or cleared for housing, is unacceptable.

STEP has continued to lobby for more bushland to be protected along the B2 road reservation (Fox Valley and South Turrumurra) on the basis of its value as a community asset and important bushland corridor. Another submission will be made on the draft LEP by 5 November. Other STEP submissions were on the Section 94 Developer's Contribution and Sustainable Cities 2025. We also continued to lobby the NPWS and State Environment Minister (fairly unsuccessfully) for proper accounting of the funding promised to Lane Cove National Park associated with the addition of land to the northern section of the park.

STEP has also been involved with the development of the water-wise garden at Turrumurra that is supported by Ku-ring-gai Council as a display and education resource.

Activities

We have undertaken a range of activities this year including Clean-up Australia Day, 4 talks (on Blue Gum High Forest, Fantastic Fungi, Australian native orchids and our AGM talk on fences, technology & land management in the arid zone) and 11 walks (10 through BGHF and the spring walk on Bobbin Head Track led by Bill Jones). We have continued to support the Intel Young Scientist Environment Award, which was presented at Parliament House by STEP member and judge Syd Smith to Daniel Tracey, Barker College for his project 'Domestic Water Recycling and Waste: An Investigation' and a highly commended certificate to David Llewellyn, Great Lakes College for his project 'Effects of Toxic Riparian Weeds on the Survival of Aquatic Invertebrates'.

Newsletters

We published six newsletters (nos 121-126) thanks to Bruno Krockenberger and Helen Wortham.

Representation

STEP is represented by Neroli Lock on Ku-ring-gai Council's Natural Areas Advisory Committee. This year the Union of Lane Cove Valley Conservationists was dissolved with member groups sharing the remaining funds.

Committee

The committee has worked effectively throughout the year, meeting monthly and communicating regularly by email. I would particularly like to thank Helen Wortham for her tireless efforts on membership, sales, newsletter compilation, web page and countless other tasks – she does a fantastic job and deserves special recognition. Thanks also to Bruno Krockenberger for map management, editing the newsletter and chairing meetings when I can't be there, and to Neroli Lock for her work on the BGHF group, as Minutes Secretary and for the thankless task of chasing insurance issues. Thanks to all other committee members and helpers for your contribution through the year.

The Coming Year

Next year will be busy with the launch, publicity and sales of the new Middle Harbour maps. Hopefully additional sales of the Lane Cove map and Field Guide will be promoted by the publicity for the Middle Harbour maps. Once the map costs have been covered we will be able to put the sales proceeds towards conservation issues. Continuing projects for STEP are likely to be the UTS re-zoning, the release of the F3-Sydney Orbital link road EIS, the B2/B3 rezoning and preservation of Blue Gum High Forest. It has been a pleasure to serve as President and I am sure that the incoming committee will have an enjoyable and productive year representing STEP's members and working for Ku-ring-gai's environment.