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

NEWSLETTER -- NOVEMBER, 1984.

BUSH MEETING. The next S.T.E.P. members' meeting will be conducted in the bush! Not this time the plush (?) comfort of St. Phillips Hall, but instead thoroughness of stick and bark, of sandstone slab and hardwood log. However, we will be more than compensated by the superior air quality, freedom from the noise of cars and radios, and the unsurpassable music of the birds. Brace yourselves for an early start and be in it!

SATURDAY, 8TH DECEMBER.

Assemble at end of Kingsford Avenue,  
South Turramurra at 8.00 a.m. Finish there 10.00 a.m.

We will wander along the S.T.E.P. Track which was planned to include a variety of natural environments. At intervals we will have the benefit of expert guidance on the native vegetation (Helen Petersen and Yvonne Langshaw) and on the birds (Darial Larkins.)

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WORKING PARTY. Ku-ring-gai Municipal Council's Bushland Management Working Party is to survive, with fewer members than previously. Chaired by Alderman Craig Ramsay this sub-committee has been responsible for some significant advances in bushland preservation and management in Ku-ring-gai, due largely to the involvement of dedicated citizens. Certain councillors have been against its continuation and the Council is to be highly commended for making the progressive decision for this vital group to continue its good work. This has included arranging for the production of Council's excellent film THE BUSH BEYOND YOUR GARDEN, an advisory pamphlet for all ratepayers, and preparation of a Management Plan for Ku-ring-gai's bushland, now before Council.

Anyone interested in serving on the Working Party should answer the advertisement for sub-committee members placed by the Council in the North Shore Advocate of 7/11/84 (p. 30). Appointments are for 12 months to 22/11/85.

Management Plan. The most important achievement of the Bushland Management Working Party to date has been the preparation of a bushland management plan for Ku-ring-gai. Our bushland remnants are too precious to be left to chance and the mercy of ad hoc decision-making. Council is expected to pass the Plan soon. We believe it to be the first management plan for local government bushland management.

LANE COVE VALLEY FREEWAY. Construction of the Lane Cove Valley Freeway from Pearce's Corner to Fig Tree Bridge will destroy much of the fragile bushland in the S.T.E.P. area and the valley generally. The adverse effects include loss of bushland area, fragmentation of the remaining bushland, siltation of waterways, intrusion of weeds and loss of visual and recreational amenity because of the massive structural intrusion and increased noise. Excavation as deep as 15 metres (50 ft.) and fill as high as 60 metres (200 ft.) is proposed. The route of the freeway was set down before 1950 when the bush had fewer friends and not many people then disputed that bushland was one of the most disposable resources. S.T.E.P. is producing a position paper on the expressway and welcomes submissions from members.

N.C.C. CONFERENCE. S.T.E.P. was represented as a constituent body of the Nature Conservation Council of N.S.W. at its Annual Conference in October, by the President and Secretary. S.T.E.P. put one motion to the Conference. Originally asking that local government councils be requested to raise their maximum fines for contravention of tree preservation orders to \$20,000 (in line with Ku-ring-gai Council), the motion was amended to read:

THAT N.C.C. notes the retreat of several municipal councils in Sydney from the full implementation of tree preservation orders, and resolves to seek the co-operation of conservation groups in convening a conference to review the situation and to make co-ordinated representations to those councils and to State Government:

This was resolved and S.T.E.P. will offer its assistance in implementation, in line with a newly planned modus operandi of the Council.

S.T.E.P. PLAN OF MANAGEMENT. S.T.E.P.'s Committee has decided to go ahead with a reprint of our management plan for South Turrumurra Bushland, of which nearly 800 copies have been sold, as there is still an evident demand. The new edition will have the benefit of a review of the original by the Committee. Any forward orders? Phone secretary Yvonne on 449-1541 (H).

PAMPHLETS. Two new pamphlets worth mentioning:

- \* KEEPING WEEDS OUT OF BUSHLAND, from Greening Australia.  
Contacts: National Trust 27-5374, Greening Aust. 211-4527.
- \* "THEY'RE AT IT AGAIN" (on burning in street gutters and backyards) Ku-ring-gai Council Health Surveyors.

C.E.P. PROJECT FUNDED. Approval appears to have been granted to S.T.E.P. for over \$80,000 to manage a Community Employment Program project. This is the rehabilitation of a weed-infested gully of rare rainforest in the Warrawee-Fox Valley area, known as The Diatrema, being a pocket of volcanic soil supporting a rich variety of moisture-loving plants. Five unemployed people of the right kind will be trained in bush regeneration and restoration techniques and benefit from 9 months of interesting and pleasant work. This real community asset will be restored and interested citizens will no doubt discover one of the hitherto more hidden treasures of their neighbourhood.

GOOD ON YOU HARRY! The Federal Member for Berowra, Dr. Harry Edwards has advocated the preservation of Crown land on the west of the Pacific Highway, between Asquith and Berowra, and has suggested it be managed by a community trust. He envisages the area as being provided with walking tracks and picnic areas. S.T.E.P. has written to Dr. Edwards, our Federal M.P. (at the time of issue!) expressing our appreciation and asking for more details. (See report in North Shore Advocate, 3/10/84.)

BUSHFIRE MANAGEMENT BY COMPUTER. Twice recently on the North Shore, Roger Good of the N.S.W. National Parks and Wildlife Service, has given talks on PREPLAN, the computerised bushfire prediction system he has developed for the Service. By storing and processing all relevant information (vegetation types, slopes, moisture levels, winds etc.) for a given area, PREPLAN is able to predict the likelihood of fire and what kind of fire with considerably more ease and accuracy than ever before. This will greatly assist the practical management of fire both for protective and ecological reasons.

An immediate benefit, which should help materially to secure the future integrity of the environment has been the revelation that

none of Willoughby Municipality's bushlands, subject of much debate in regard to fire management in recent years, presents a significant fire risk to residential areas. The trouble appears to be that fire control authorities are apt to over-stress the importance of fuel quantity in relation to the other variables which influence fire occurrence and behaviour (moisture, slope, wind, length of bush down wind, paths, etc. and have consequently over-estimated fire risk in many locations.

AVONDALE BUSHLAND SUBDIVISION. Avondale Golf Club plans to persuade the Council to allow the subdivision of part of its huge property in Pymble for 18 residential blocks and a 2.8 ha retirement village. On the grounds that this would mean further reduction of Ku-ring-gai's dwindling bushland enclaves, S.T.E.P. joins local residents in opposing the scheme. S.T.E.P. members could help by adding their own reminders to Council that there are a great many in the municipality who care about such things, and by attending the Public Meeting to be held on Wednesday, 26th November at Pymble Community Hall, Pacific Highway, Pymble, commencing at 7.30 p.m.

Executive S.T.E.P. members have just inspected the area and find it to be high quality natural bushland featuring good vegetation diversity and many tall trees.

Weeds can be found only where soil has been disturbed or deposited, and Avondale could probably afford to allocate a relatively small proportion of its revenue to ensure that the moderate infestations of lantana, privet, pampass grass and what have you are substantially removed and not allowed to spread.

CONSERVATION THEME IN CHURCH SERVICE AT TURRAMURRA. A CHRISTIAN VIEW OF CONSERVATION was the theme of a service on Sunday 23rd September at Turramurra's Trinity Uniting Church, to mark the beginning of Earth Week. Several members of the Christian Conservation Society of Sydney gave short talks, which included scientific facts as well as Scriptural references, showing our responsibility towards the Creation and its creatures. Hymns included "All Things Bright and Beautiful" and Francis of Assisi's Hymn "All Creatures of Our God and King." At the conclusion of the Service about 40 adult and children members joined for a short bushwalk in the South Turramurra area.

REQUEST FOR A BICENTENNIAL GRANT. S.T.E.P. has for some time been aware of the need for a comprehensive map of the Upper Lane Cove Valley for walkers. We have been very fortunate in knowing Graham Aplin of Macquarie University who has helped us compile a draft map of the area from De Burghs Bridge to Pennant Hills, including Rofe Park. It will be the task of volunteer helpers to walk the trails to be plotted before publication. So stand by!

When we presented this great achievement to UBD/Gregory's and others, we were taken aback by the fairly heavy costs of printing 1000 of these best-sellers, so we have put in a submission for a Bicentennial Grant as our project seemed to fit very neatly into one of the suggested categories. We await the good news of March 1985.

PRESS RELEASE. The Minister for Local Government, Mr. Kevin Stewart, has announced that meetings of local government committees will now be open to the public and media, unless there are special reasons for exclusion. Such reasons would include confidential matters such as staff, tenders and possible litigation and matters "prejudicial to the public interest" if they were publicised. The public and press will receive agendas and have access to tabled documents.

THE GREATER DAINTREE AREA---A NORTH QUEENSLAND HERITAGE.

Cut in the wider world beyond Ku-ring-gai, many outstanding natural environments face annihilation or mutilation by misguided development which reflects the continuing immaturity of our society in clinging to the norms of the past. As Robin Gray kept reminding us, the Franklin could still be dammed and there will be no real security until we find a way to obviate the still-perceived need for limitless exploitation. Meanwhile, we can only continue to educate and inspire, while employing a range of protective devices to hold back the tide until Society will permit its values to raise high enough to ensure that the necessary restraint has become part of its fabric, a New Ethic if you like.

Of the outstanding areas in need of enlightened management, the area of the Wet Tropics of Northern Queensland known as the Greater Daintree (a national park proposal) is pre-eminent. Situated between Mossman and Cooktown, north of Cairns, this is the largest remaining block of tropical rainforest--120,000 ha of it. If you can imagine the overpowering beauty and grandeur of a sweep of green rainforest extending from high mountain peaks to white sandy beaches fringed by coral reefs, then you must marvel at the insensitivity of governments, so wedded to power politics that they could allow such an Eden to be desecrated by bulldozers smashing a road through rare lowland rainforest to serve crude commercial interests. If you do, then--

Write to the Prime Minister (with a copy to his Environment Minister, Mr. Barry Cohen, telling him so. Tell him you want the area nominated for the World Heritage List and all further destruction stopped immediately.)

Further information: Alan Catford  
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