



STEP INC.

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Community Based Environmental Conservation

NEWSLETTER

JUNE, 1989

THE GREENHOUSE EFFECT AND THE OZONE LAYER

We are delighted to announce that Dr David Ellyard has kindly agreed to the STEP Committee's request to address us on this important topic. Those who have seen Dr Ellyard on television will know what an interesting and enthusiastic speaker he is. This meeting will be an opportunity for us to become better informed, and to discuss these matters with an expert. Please note the date, and invite your friends and neighbours to this very special meeting. Supper will be provided. **SAVE THE DATE.**

Date: Monday, August 14

Time: 8 p.m.

Place: Turrumurra Primary School (to be confirmed)

Enquiries: Jenny Simons 449 8945

THE STEP MAP This project has been bubbling along for the best part of five years now, under the leadership of Margaret Booth. We have been immensely helped by the volunteer services of Dr Graeme Aplin, School of Earth Sciences, Macquarie University. We are pleased to say that the map is now ready for production. We are finalising negotiations with the Central Mapping Authority in Bathurst to do the final cartography and printing. The Paddy Pallin Foundation has agreed to make us an interest-free loan to cover our outlay on the map. So, in a matter of only a few months, we will be selling you our wonderful STEP map of the walking tracks of the Upper Lane Cove Valley.

FREEWAY MATTERS The meeting on May 11 organised by our local peak organisation, Coalition Against Lane Cove Valley Freeways, (of which STEP is an active member) was very successful and informative. About 300 people attended. The concept of "Traffic Calming" was presented to the meeting. It's an idea which originated in Germany and has been successfully used there in some towns and in other European towns also. It seems equally applicable to Australian towns and suburbs. In the long run, its implementation can eliminate the need for some freeways and freeway link roads, and thus conserve urban amenity and urban bushland. A booklet published in Brisbane entitled "Traffic Calming" has been purchased for the STEP library, and may be borrowed by members. Ring Yvonne Langshaw, 449 1541.

RELEASE OF LAND ON THE B1 ROUTE Some committee members have busied themselves with a study of the land that is now available for release following the abandonment of the B1 option. The land was identified, ownership discovered, and sites inspected. STEP is now forwarding to Council a proposal which recommends that suitable land be reserved as bushland, and that other land be released for residential purposes.

BRADLEY RESERVE Have you noticed the new signs - large and handsome - designating a part of the Upper Lane Cove Valley bushland as the Bradley Reserve? About 5 years ago STEP formally recommended this to Council, to commemorate the area in which the Bradley method of bush regeneration was first used in the Ku-ring-gai Municipality - by STEP. The Bradley method is named after Joan Bradley who was a pioneer bush regenerator. We are delighted that the signs have arrived.

SPECIAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM - WATER BOARD You may have noticed advertisements for written submissions. In view of the almost irreparable damage to the headwaters of the Lane Cove River caused by the Water Board, STEP will be making a heartfelt submission. We will also attend a Water Board Public Forum in Chatswood on 28th June.

MEMBERSHIP OF OTHER ORGANISATIONS In accordance with our constitution, STEP belongs to several like-minded organisations, from which we derive benefit and assistance. These include -

- The Nature Conservation Council (NCC)
- The Coalition Against Lane Cove Valley Freeways
- The Environmental Defenders Office (EDO)
- The Coalition for Urban Transport Sanity (CUTS)
- The Union of Lane Cove Valley Conservationists.

We also exchange newsletters with nearby local conservation groups.

LOBBYING EFFORTS Members of the STEP Committee share the work of writing lobbying letters to members of Municipal Councils, State and Federal Governments, and to organisations. About 25 lobbying letters have been sent off during May and June on such matters as the Lane Cove Valley Freeway, the Crown Lands Bill, the management of the banks of the Lane Cove River, access to bushland tracks in Ku-ring-gai, the proposed sporting complex at Lindfield, the stance of Mr Causley, Minister for Lands, bushland management, an RTA planning committee, preservation of NSW coastland, and the planting of willow trees in Ku-ring-gai's Bicentennial Park (which is otherwise wholly planted with native species). If you are interested in these sorts of issues, and/or would like to be better informed, please start to think about standing for election to the STEP Committee at the next Annual General Meeting (in September).

CHANGES TO STEP CONSTITUTION We find we need to add two paragraphs to our constitution in order to receive tax exemption (now that we are an incorporated body). The two paragraphs (supplied by the Taxation Office) read as follows :

"The income and property of the Association whencesoever derived shall be solely towards the promotion of the objectives of the Association and no portion thereof shall be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend bonus or otherwise howsoever by way of profit to the members of the Association provided that nothing herein shall prevent the payment in good faith of remuneration to any officer or servant of the Association or to any member of the Association in return for any services actually rendered to the Association or reasonable and proper rent for premises let by any member to the Association"

"The Association shall not be dissolved except at a General Meeting of the Association specially convened for the purpose and by a Resolution carried by a majority of four-fifths of the votes recorded in respect of the same. If upon the winding up or dissolution of the Association there remains after the satisfaction of all its debts and liabilities any property whatsoever the same shall not be paid to or distributed among the members of the Association but shall be given or transferred to some other institution or

institutions having objects similar or in part similar to the objects of the Association and which shall also prohibit the distribution of its or their property among its or their members such an institution or institutions to be determined by the members of the Association at or before the time of dissolution or in default thereof by the Chief Judge of such Court as may have or acquire jurisdiction in the matter."

The STEP Committee recommends to its members that they accept this addition, and hereby give notice to STEP members that a General meeting will be held to vote on a Special Resolution to add the above two paragraphs to the Constitution as clauses 11(f) and (g). The meeting will take place on Thursday July 13 at 7.45 pm at 242 Kissing Point Rd. This will be the sole item of business. The General Meeting will be followed, at 8pm, by the usual monthly meeting of the STEP Committee. As always, members of STEP are welcome to attend Committee Meetings. If you intend to be present, please notify Jenny Simons (449 8945) in advance, for catering purposes, and bring a folding chair.

ANNUAL SPRING BUSHWALK

This event takes place every year as STEP's celebration of the beautiful bushland in the Upper Lane Cove Valley. We hope as many STEP members and friends as possible will join us to view the wildflowers and native plants. The walk will take about 2 hours, the pace will be leisurely, and children are welcome. Refreshments will be served at the end of the afternoon. The walk will not be held if it's raining. **SAVE THE DATE**

Date: Sunday 20th August

Time: 2 p.m.

Place: Meet at the George Christie Playing Field, Yanilla Avenue, off The Broadway, Wahroonga.

Enquiries: Glenn Johnson, 489 2722

BUSHLAND MANAGEMENT WORKING PARTY This is a sub-committee of Ku-ring-gai Council. STEP's representative on the Working Party is Dr Robyn Tuft. We think STEP members will be interested to read a copy of a report which the Working Party sent recently to Council Aldermen. It is included in this Newsletter.

EROSION AT THE CANOON ROAD NETBALL COURTS STEP is amazed and delighted to hear that Council has set aside \$200,00 for erosion control and restoration work in this area. We have made many representations to Council in this matter.

FERAL CATS A STEP member has reminded us of the problems caused by feral cats in bushland, where they prey on native birds and animals. If you know of the whereabouts of a feral cat in bushland near you, and you would like to have it removed, this is what you can do - according to the Cat Protection Society of NSW. Entice the cat into your backyard by setting out food for it, and when the animal is regularly entering your yard, ring the Society on 51 1011 for assistance with trapping and disposing of the animal. Please note that the Society does not enter bushland.

CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERS From time to time, STEP is asked if it is able to assist in conservation issues at a state or national level. A recent example is a request for STEP members to help run letter writing stalls in local shopping centres one Saturday morning to help the campaign to save the southern forests in N.S.W. - Tantawangalo, Coolungoobra and Egan Peaks - from destruction for woodchipping. These were organised by SEFA - the South East Forests Alliance. There was no time to approach members to ask if they would like to assist. The Committee thinks it would be useful to have a list of STEP members who could be asked to help in future conservation efforts such as this one. If you're willing to be approached, please ring Jenny Simons, 449 8945, and leave your name and phone number for future reference.

BUSH REGENERATION Work is continuing at Cooper Crescent, Wahroonga. Come along to lend a hand - see what we're doing - learn the rudiments of bush regeneration. You can use STEP handtools. Just bring gardening gloves.

Dates: Sunday June 25; Sunday July 23

Time: 2 p.m.

Place: Cooper Crescent

Contact: Yvonne Langshaw 449 1541

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL The financial year for STEP ends on June 30, at which date your membership is due for renewal. To assist, we enclose a form which should be returned with your payment to Geoff Suggate, our Treasurer. Your prompt renewal would be appreciated. As a band of volunteers, we don't like having to chase up absent-minded members. If you don't find a renewal notice, it's because you joined within the last 3 months, and are deemed to be financial until June 1990.

This newsletter was compiled by Jenny Simons and Sue Jones.

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REPORT TO ALDERMEN FROM THE BUSHLAND MANAGEMENT WORKING PARTY - MAY 1989

The Working Party is concerned that aldermen have not appreciated the size and severity of the bushland management problems facing Ku-ring-gai. We have, on many occasions, in recommendations and reports spelt out the magnitude of the task which we face - but it seems that no one either listens or cares.

1. The Asset

Almost everyone, when asked to give the main attractions of living in Ku-ring-gai, puts the bushland setting very close to the top of their list and at election time almost every candidate states their commitment to preserving our bushland. It is widely agreed that if the bush were to be lost then the real value of property and quality of life in Ku-ring-gai would diminish. Without the bush Ku-ring-gai would be like the eastern suburbs without the harbour - a place of lesser value and worth.

2. The Problem

Ku-ring-gai is losing its bushland. If current trends continue there will be none left in 50 years or so.

Ku-ring-gai has 1,000 hectares of bushland under its care and control with another 300 hectares or so being privately owned or owned by other arms of government. Over the last 27 years about 400 hectares of bushland has been lost within the Municipality. Of the remaining bushland some 50% is under direct threat from weed infestation in the short and medium term and more from continuing pressures of development such as roads, sporting facilities and sale of surplus government sites.

3. The Opportunity

It isn't too late but it soon may be. We now have an opportunity to halt the degradation and alienation and to preserve the bushland setting for Ku-ring-gai which nearly everyone finds so desirable.

This is especially important in the context of the loss of tree cover and the "garden" landscape qualities of the Municipality as denser residential, and more

obtrusive commercial, development occurs. The degradation can be halted and reversed. Creative solutions can be found for sporting and other needs. It takes only the understanding and the will.

4. The Means

1,000 hectares of open space bushland in an urban setting cannot be managed without cost. If we want the bush we must pay the price.

At present we have a field crew of 4 (out of a Parks field staff of 110 or so) working on bushland management. They are achieving wonderful results but the number is totally inadequate. We are told that there is no money but 10 years or so ago the field staff was nearer to 150 - obviously resources have been diverted elsewhere.

We do not allow our ovals and lawns to remain unmown nor the roses in Council parks to remain unpruned, we don't say that the Bicentennial Park will be maintained only if voluntary labour can be found. And yet we can only find money for 4 field staff to maintain the bushland part of our parkland.

Despite repeated recommendations from the Working Party no money has been allocated to catchment protection drains so that nutrient laden waste continues to pour into and degrade the bush. Despite repeated recommendations from the Working Party the Education and Interpretation officer hasn't been replaced. Without educating the community on its impact on bushland we cannot hope to reduce the rate of degradation and contain future maintenance costs.

Unless the management of our bushland is properly funded we will lose it. The means must be provided.

5. The Consequences.

Unless the management problems now facing us are resolved we shall pass on to future administrations an unenviable choice - that between spending prohibitive sums of money to recover the bushland, converting it to conventional mown parkland with even greater ongoing costs or giving it up to development.

6. The Responsibility

Ten years ago Council could genuinely claim that it didn't know how to deal with the problem. The current Council cannot be consoled by any such excuse - the technology and the trained staff are both available. Council has a responsibility to come to grips with the problem, to understand it and to resolve it.

7. Cost Effectiveness.

It is worth restating that all bushland management techniques have as their goal the reduction of long term maintenance cost by creating conditions under which the degradation of bushland is slowed or halted. In this respect management of bushland is not akin to the management of formal parks and gardens where maintenance costs stay constant over time. What we are faced with is the capital cost of reversing the effects of the abuse the bush has suffered over many years. Thus expenditure of money on bushland management is responsible expenditure in that it reduces the capital cost outlay for the future - a cost which will increase exponentially unless we do

The STEP Heritage Week Walk and B3 protest, April 16, 1989



Above : Walkers listen
to an address by the
president before setting
off.

Right : Along the track.

