

Bushwalking NSW

Newsletter

Edition 17; March, 2015



The junction of the Colo and Wollangambe Rivers.

PLEASE TAKE TIME TO PASS THIS NEWSLETTER ON TO YOUR MEMBERS!

Greetings, everyone.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new Administration Officer for Bushwalking NSW. My name is Catherine Svec, and I work part time (Monday to Wednesday), please feel free to call me or email me if you have any questions. In my spare time, I love showing my 15 month old son the beautiful bush around our home in the Blue Mountains. I look forward to meeting some of you at the next General Meeting on the 19th of May. I will also take this opportunity to thank Cheryl for putting in many hours of work documenting the procedures here and helping BNSW have a more modern office. We do prefer the trees are left to growing, rather than using them for paper!

Well, it seems like Christmas was not that long ago, yet here we are already counting down the days until Easter! I trust everyone is looking forward to enjoying the holiday with family, friends, and (of course), lots of chocolate. Hopefully you have a chance to get out for a walk somewhere beautiful. If you do, please send me through a photo and I'll aim to get a photo collage out in the next edition. It's always nice to see the lovely places that club members visit!

Further, on behalf of Bushwalking NSW, please let me know of any bushwalking related issues or submissions that you would like Bushwalking NSW to look into. I can be reached via email at admin@bushwalkingnsw.org.au or by telephone on 02 9565 4005.

Catherine Svec, Administration Officer, Bushwalking NSW

Conservation Officer's Update

Hello everyone, this is your friendly conservation officer calling on you.

The month of March has been a busy month for Conservation in Bushwalking NSW because of the fact that it was the beginning of the University semester for your Conservation Officer. This meant that it was prime time to engage with students. Your Tracks and Access Officer and I organised two meetings of people interested in the Gardens of Stone. One was the Gardens of Stone Launch and the second was a meeting to brainstorm a special Student Walkers' project in the Gardens of Stone.

This year, the University affiliated outdoors clubs will plan and test routes through the region of the Gardens of Stone. Their goal is to find the best multiday tourist walking route starting from Lithgow. The idea is that a spectacular Great Walk (Cradle Mountain/Six Foot Track style) will give the natural beauty of the region tangible economic value in the form of tourist attention. This competition is a truly Australian endeavour in the style of the National Capital Design Competition, if you remember that from your history classes. That was a competition to plan a national capital. This is a competition to design a spectacular walking route. Seeking your comments.

A tip for all of you young whipper snappers (like me, I like to think) would be to check out the Green Army. This is a government program that might pay you a little bit to head out to your favourite conservation focus areas in the bush and get paid for it. Youth between the ages of 17-24 can be employed to do conservation work in a variety of locations for a small payment. The small payment is better than nothing, which is what you usually get when you go bushwalking. I encourage you to follow this link to their website: <http://www.environment.gov.au/land/green-army>. If you do choose to join the program, please share your stories.

Those who have an interest in the Royal National Park should check out the Spring Gully campaign. It is a very important campaign to make an old scout property part of the National Park instead of being developed by an ecotourism agent. This campaign is important not only as a stand-alone issue, but also because it might be used to set a precedent for future reservation versus development cases. Please see this article for further details: <http://www.springgully.org/state-election-2015-campaign>.

Sierra Classen, Conservation Officer, Bushwalking NSW, contact via admin@bushwalkingnsw.org.au

Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) Bushfire Conference

Fire and Restoration: working with fire for healthy lands is the theme of the 10th bushfire conference to be held on 26th & 27th May 2015 in Sydney. The program will feature: Integrated fire and weed management, Grassland restoration, Aboriginal cultural burning, and Ecological burns for endangered flora and fauna.

Keynote speakers include Bruce Pascoe (author of *Dark Emu*) Prof Lesley Hughes (Climate Council of Australia), Tein McDonald (Australian Association Bush Regenerators) and Jeremy Russell-Smith (Darwin Centre for Bushfire Research, Charles Darwin University).

To mark the 20th year anniversary of the bushfire conferences, displays and audio-visuals of past conference highlights will feature at this year's conference. Members interested in the previous conference programs and speakers, or in details of the 2015 conference, *Fire and Restoration: working with fire for healthy lands*, can visit the NCC bushfire program page: <http://www.nature.org.au/healthy-ecosystems/bushfire-program/conferences/>

Walking with Blind and/or Visually Impaired Bushwalkers

In response to a query from one of our clubs in relation to a new member, we are currently collaborating with the Association of Blind Citizens NSW to develop an information guide for bushwalking with blind or visually impaired persons. The information guide is currently under development, and should be distributed by the end of April.

The Association of Blind Citizens NSW has also offered to host a training day for Bushwalking NSW clubs on how to guide, from advising the walking surface (gravel, dirt, etc.), to other sensual delights (such as the smell of the eucalypts, the sounds of the birds, etc.), to make the walk a fulfilling experience for them. The training would be held in the Vision Australia building at Enfield for 2 hours, with the date yet to be confirmed in late April/ early May. Please let me know via email if you are interested in attending the training and I will keep you updated in relation to dates.

You should have all received your Insurance Questionnaires on the 9th of March. A big

THANK YOU

to the **21** clubs that have already returned their completed Insurance Questionnaire.

For those who have not yet done so - please remember that the deadline is

12 APRIL

You risk being uninsured next year if you do not return the document on time.

Exploring with Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad (BWRS)

Bushwalking is best done with a good dose of curiosity - what is over the next hill; what is down the creek; what mysteries are still in Gardens of Stone National Park; what challenges will the next NavShield throw up??

NavShield 2015 is already being planned. This year NavShield is again a great way for your Club to brush up on map & compass navigation skills. NavShield has either a one day or overnight event with a range of easy to challenging checkpoints. The NavShield site this year should be an area new to most bushwalkers but with good broad ridges. Registration will open soon at the BWRS website:

www.bwrs.org.au

Good navigation skills can potentially make your Bushwalking Club trips much safer. How do you otherwise ensure the safety of your trip??? Some mouse exploration at the BWRS website when you are stuck at home will help you understand the advantages and limits of GPS, distress beacons (what does PLB; ELB; EPIRB stand for), mobile phones / sat phones.

While at the website you can refresh your memory on safe bushwalking with our simple list of DO & DON'T plus check dates for future First Aid courses.

Good trip planning plus following the DO & DON'T list is only part of safe bushwalking. Injuries are always possible so some First Aid skills are invaluable while you wait (if required) for emergency services.

You could gain some introductory skills in First Aid on 17 May in a St John Ambulance 'Provide First Aid' course. Follow the website link to see registration details.

'Provide First Aid' training will give you greater confidence in First Aid situations. Why not train as a club group?? Our Instructor will suggest a sensible minimum set of items as a First Aid Kit that you each can carry. Thus, no one bushwalker carries a big, heavy First Aid kit but when you do need a First Aid Kit a little bit from everyone makes a really good First Aid Kit!!!



Our BWRS First Aid Training is also lightweight on the pocket. Our Instructor is a volunteer so costs are at a minimum to get a First Aid book and recognised, practical instruction in First Aid in just one day. It's a great combination; First Aid skills & book, a list of items for your own lightweight First Aid kit at a lightweight price.

Set aside 17 May as the date for your St John Ambulance 'Provide First Aid' training. Places are limited so don't delay registration at www.bwrs.org.au

Keith Maxwell, President, Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad

Tracks and Access

Please get in touch with myself if you, or your fellow bushwalkers, have any tracks and access issues you wish for Bushwalking NSW to look into. I can be reached via email at AJAllchin@gmail.com or phone on 02 9540 9410.

National Park and walking track closure updates

For all updates National Park and walking track closures, check the website: <http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/alert/state-alerts> when planning a walk and also before you head out, as closures can occur with short notice. Scroll down to relevant national park, and click on 'details' in the right hand column. I will only be publishing relevant new or major track closures, as the National Parks website does a good job at covering all the areas in NSW and is also more up to date than anything that I write by the time it gets to you.

It is also important to remember that on days of total fire bans (TOBANs), many parks close or do not allow walking on any of their tracks. Some parks close even if a TOBAN hasn't been declared by the RFS. This is in the interest of our safety so ensure that you check the National Parks website on hot days to see if you need to postpone your walk due to a park closure. Do note that if a club undertakes a walk when a park is closed, it is quite likely that they will not be covered by insurance if an accident does occur!

Narrow Neck Road closed 9-27 March for road works and asbestos removal

As per my last report, work has been undertaken on "Narrow Neck Road" (Glenraphael Drive) over the last two weeks. I have been informed that good progress has been made, and the road should once again be trafficable between Cliff Drive and the locked gate by Sunday, 28th March.

Hopefully this work will keep the firetrail, which receives considerable use, in good repair for some time to come.

On a Narrow Neck related matter, I received correspondence from a bushwalker who suggested that the firetrail should be naturalised and closed to all traffic between the locked gate and Clear Hill. This has been suggested in the past, and access would then be in the form of a walking track following the same route as the track that existed all those years ago in 1914. Obviously this presents some issues, such as access to the fire tower located on Bushwalkers Hill, but I would be interested in the opinion of bushwalkers. If you have the time, I would appreciate hearing your thoughts on the matter!

Three Sisters walking track closure

A fair bit of work is currently underway around the Three Sisters with the NPWS upgrading the walking tracks. Currently, both the Giant Stairs and access to Three Sisters are closed and may remain closed for the next three months. Please visit <http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/alert/state-alerts> for further details if you intend to walk in the area. Also, see the map below.



Clarence Road access issue update

The following is an update on the Clarence Road access issue which I discussed at the February EGM.

Earlier in the year, signs were spotted on the main road from Clarence towards Newnes State Forest stating that it was privately owned land and that access would be stopped from 1st March 2015. This was of concern to bushwalkers and canyoneers who visit Newnes SF and the surrounding areas as closure of the road would make access more difficult.

On 9th February at their first meeting of the year, Lithgow City Council made the following commentary in item 28:

Zig Zag Railway Co-op Limited have erected signs stating that access will be stopped on the 1 March 2015 to a formed road known as Clarence Road or Old Bells Line of Road. This will deprive many people and agencies of an access to Northern Clarence and the Newnes Plateau. Part of this formed

road is on Lithgow Council land that is not a designated road, also Zig Zag rail have considerable infrastructure on this Council Land.

It was then resolved that council:

1. Dedicate Lot 1 DP 917875 as a Council Road.
2. Request Zig Zag Rail remove all infrastructure from Lot 1 DP 917875.
3. Enter into discussions with Zig Zag Rail for a land swap to accommodate both Road and Rail in this area.
4. Have discussions with Crown Lands Department to achieve access over Crown Land in this area.

Source - http://archive.lithgow.nsw.gov.au/minutes/15/150209_minutes.pdf

I have since contacted the council, and I was assured that the road will remain open. This is great news, and the issue is no longer a concern of Bushwalking NSW. What is currently undecided is who out of LCC, NPWS and State Forest will take responsibility for the maintenance of the road in the future.

Track Maintenance in the Royal National Park

One thing I am working on as Tracks and Access Officer for BNSW is trying to create a stronger link between the bushwalking community and NPWS. Overgrown tracks have become a real problem in our National Parks due to lack of funding and lack of staff to undertake the work. A solution, in line with my above goal, would be to make use of volunteer bushwalkers to clear tracks and perform general maintenance in areas that we enjoy walking.

On Thursday, 19th March I had the opportunity to meet with the new Area Manager for the Royal National Park, Kane Weeks, on behalf of BNSW. Kane made it clear that he was very supportive of community involvement in National Parks, and we spoke of ways in which BNSW can facilitate this. What I proposed and Kane supported was that we organise days throughout the year where members from bushwalking clubs undertake trackwork on specific walking tracks throughout the park. NPWS is happy to provide tools and equipment where necessary, and they even have a mini bus which we could use for walks that start and end at different locations.

My understanding is that the majority of volunteer work in National Parks is comprised of Landcare, which whilst necessary, it isn't quite bushwalking. This on the other hand is essentially bushwalking but with tools in hand in order to trim back overgrown sections and to create a clear and distinct path forward. It is a great opportunity for those who want to get involved in maintaining the places we love to spend time in.

What I ask of our member clubs is an indication of interest in undertaking track maintenance in the Royal. Please contact me if you have members that are interested, and if our numbers are sufficient, then I will spend time to get this project off the ground. If volunteer track maintenance here is a success, I would then like to expand the idea to other National Parks in NSW in the future.

Anzac Day at Splendour Rock, 25 April 2015



(Photo: Peter Medbury - Dingo Gap Gallery)

There will be a Dawn Service and 11am service held on the 25th of April at the Bushwalkers War Memorial at Splendour Rock. The current service convener, Peter Sedgwick, has written the follow invitation and directions to the 2015 ANZAC Day service:

An invitation to attend the Anzac Day Dawn Service 2015

One of the most important events in the NSW bushwalking calendar is the Anzac Day dawn Service, conducted each year at Splendour Rock, Mount Dingo, in the heart of the Wild Dog Mountains. Bushwalkers gather to commemorate the memory of those bushwalkers who fell in World War 2. A simple bronze plaque, which was affixed to the rock and unveiled by Paddy Pallin at dawn on Anzac Day 1948, in front of 80-90 comrades, assures us that "...their splendour shall never fade."

The Service begins at 6am, in the solemn quiet of a breaking dawn. It is a simple one, that honours the memory of these men and women - both known and unknown - who died in WW2. We begin with a reading of the eulogy, which is faithful to the words spoken by Paddy Pallin at the first Service in 1948. There is a roll call of those fallen whose names are known. We then place a wreath beside the

plaque, and we invite anyone to come forward to also lay a wreath or place a sprig of rosemary. There is the playing of the Last Post, followed by all present turning to the east whilst holding a minutes silence to reflect. At this point, weather permitting, we often witness the rising of the sun. The Ode is recited, followed by the playing of the Reveille. The Service concludes with the singing of the National Anthem.

Over the years we have had the pleasure of seeing a rich diversity of people of all ages come to pay their respects. Scout groups attend, in full uniform. Groups of school students come along, and often lead the singing in the Recessional and the National Anthem. On several occasions we have had the pleasure of bag pipes playing Amazing Grace during the Service, the beauty of which cannot be described, it just has to be heard. And of course regular bushwalkers of all ages who simply want to gather in remembrance, and attempt to understand what those who joined up went through. We cannot change the past, but we can look upon it with new eyes.

This Service is truly unique, and I extend an invitation, to everyone who loves the freedoms that we enjoy today, to come and join us. For many, it is an event which is never missed. If you have never attended, please come.

This year, being the Centenary of the landing at Gallipoli, a second Service will be held at 11am to commemorate that important event, and we invite all to attend.

Directions to Splendour Rock, from Dunphys Campsite

Most people attending the Services will walk in on Friday 24th, camp overnight, and walk out on Saturday after the conclusion of both Services.

Drive out to Blackheath in the Blue Mountains, turn West across the train line at the traffic lights opposite the Ivanhoe Hotel and then down into Megalong Valley. Follow this road to the end of the Megalong Valley, and park in at Dunphys Campground. From here, it is a 14km walk in to Splendour Rock.

Walk out to the Black Dog track (a fire trail) that takes you to Medlow Gap where you can then join the Kennel Flat track and follow it out to Mobbs Swamp. There is very limited space available on Mount Dingo so I strongly recommend people camp at Mobbs Swamp. It requires you to leave camp at around 4.30 am in order to get to the top of Mount Dingo in time for the Service which begins at 6pm sharp. You won't be walking alone, many will be walking this route together! The appropriate CMA map to bring is Jenolan 8930-3N.

Track notes for the above route, along with alternate routes for those who would like to take an off track route (via Blackhorse Ridge), can be found here - <http://bushwalkingnsw.com/walk.php?nid=804>

Peter Sedgwick

Current Convenor of the Anzac Day Dawn Service at Splendour Rock

Transportation to the Service

NPWS has confirmed that they will be able to drive people who are no longer capable of making the whole journey on foot into Medlow Gap in order to shorten the journey. This is exciting as it hasn't happened for at least 11 years. The current plan is to take people out on Friday night and Saturday morning, and bring people back Saturday afternoon.

NPWS need an estimate on attendance, so if someone from each attending club could contact myself to let me know how many people they are expecting to come, that would be great. I will also then update the contact as more information comes to hand. Those that can only make it to the service if they are transported to and from Medlow Gap will need to contact myself as well.

Finally, if anyone knows of a pipe band that would be willing to play at the service, please get in touch. It's happened before, and it would be fitting to see it again this year.

I can be reached via email at AJAllchin@gmail.com or phone on 02 9540 9410. I think it would be great to see 100 people at the ANZAC Day service for the 100th anniversary, so spread the word to all bushwalkers about the service at Splendour Rock!

Outback NSW

Outback NSW, in partnership with the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), have put together a guide to the eight most magnificent bushwalks, in an endeavor to raise awareness of the amazing outback and encourage Australians to explore their backyard.

The walks are as diverse as they are beautiful, offering unique flora and fauna, fascinating indigenous art, a few quirky local characters and heritage homesteads. Whatever your level of fitness, there is an outback walk to suit you! A link to the guide can be found on their website:

<http://visitoutbacknsw.com.au/things-to-do/nature-2/>. You are welcome to contact Laura Prittie via email for further information or with any questions (Laura@horizoncommunication.com.au).



Website Events Calendar – Request for Information

We are looking to collate information on the current structure of the online walks/activities calendars that our clubs are currently using, with the intention to share best practice/s across clubs. It would be much appreciated if each club could provide information on how they currently approach this via email to Catherine an email at admin@bushwalkingnsw.org.au.