

Bushwalking NSW

Newsletter

Edition 19; May, 2015



Above: Somewhere in the Dolomites. Can you pick where? Photo: Catherine Svec

Hi folks,

I've chosen the above photo as a hint of where I'm going to be for the next month or so. Not specifically in the Dolomites, but there will be some alpine hiking, via ferrata, cycling, and whitewater kayaking throughout Slovenia, Italy, and the Czech Republic. As a result, the office will be somewhat quieter until July. However, emails will still be checked by a few volunteers. Please be patient with them, and they will respond to your email at their earliest opportunity.

If the thought of an adventure-packed trip throughout Europe is making you slightly jealous, then it's time to plan your next holiday. And if even that doesn't help, then just imagine 20-odd hours (each way!) on a plane with a toddler! Until July...

Catherine Svec, Administration Officer, Bushwalking NSW, email admin@bushwalkingnsw.org.au

Presidents Report

We had the pleasure of hearing Alice McGlashan speak at our General Meeting on Tuesday of last week, and I can definitely say that everyone that attended learned a lot about koalas. She needs help from bushwalkers, so visit the project website and get involved! <http://scienceforwildlife.org/iconic-koalas>. We'll have another exciting speaker at our AGM in August, so lock in the 18th of August now!

On the insurance front, we now have details from all clubs, so thank you. Bushwalking Australia are in the process of obtaining the insurance premiums for the coming year, and we'll distribute these details and invoices once they are available.

While on the topic of Bushwalking Australia, I am pleased to be able to share that BA have made a donation to the recovery efforts in Nepal. Once the rebuilding efforts have been completed, it will be important to help their local tourism industry recover as well. Whoever needed a great excuse to travel to Nepal for some amazing hiking now has one!

Finally, we're currently looking for an Executive Officer to manage and provide a better strategic focus to the organisation. If you're interested, or know someone who might be, please point them to our website for details: <http://www.bushwalkingnsw.org.au/about/position-vacant>.



Mitchell Isaacs, President, Bushwalking NSW, email contact via admin@bushwalkingnsw.org.au

Conservation Officer's Update

Club Volunteer Conservation

A rewarding and enjoyable form of conservation that bushwalkers can undertake are volunteer programs. These can be organised through clubs, and regular events such as Clean Up Australia Day are easy to take part in and promote on a club trip calendar. Aside from playing an active role in conservation, by partaking in these programs clubs also increase the variety of activities which they offer to their members.

Earlier in the month was National Volunteer Week, and groups such as Illawarra Alpine club and Kosciuszko Huts Association were highlighted for having provided service for 40 years to the NPWS. Bushwalking NSW is comprised of many different clubs; I would like to hear what our clubs are doing in this area and provide recognition to those who are giving back to the environment which we all are privileged to enjoy.

For clubs who are looking for ideas on how to get involved, why not check out the Volunteering Opportunities page on the National Parks website for some inspiration? It currently lists 42 different activities that your club could undertake within NSW, including bush regeneration, animal surveys, and tour guiding: <http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/things-to-do/search?Categories=10>

Blue Mountains Koala Project

At our May General Meeting, we were excited to have Alice McGlashan as our guest speaker who spoke about the Blue Mountains Koala Project she is working on as part of Science for Wildlife, see <http://scienceforwildlife.org/iconic-koalas/>

Alice will be running Koala Spotting Workshops for bushwalkers, and has provided a flyer (see end of newsletter) with information on the workshops for this month. Apparently spotting our iconic koalas in the bush is actually quite challenging, but Alice has assured me that through some training, we can greatly improve our chances of making a sighting whilst out in the bush.

This is a unique opportunity to learn some new skills, whilst to ensure the continued survival of these amazing animals.

Sierra Classen, Conservation Officer, Bushwalking NSW,
email angelina.willow@gmail.com



Tracks and Access

Tracks and Access Issues - We're here to help!

Butterbox (Mt Hay) Canyon – Blue Mountains National Park

Work is currently being undertaken by NPWS to prevent further damage to the swamp near the entrance of Butterbox (Mt Hay) Canyon in the Blue Mountains National Park. A map with information will be erected in the car park at the beginning of the access track, directing users along a route which follows a nearby ridge instead of cutting across the swamp.

The images (below and right), courtesy of Aine Glidden (NPWS), show the map to be installed, current damage to the swamp and a trace of the new access route.





NPWS was able to undertake this project due to community support, along with a grant from the Office of Environment and Heritage. I will provide further information on how this occurred in the next BNSW newsletter.



Mapping Websites for Bushwalkers

A big part of tracks and access for bushwalkers are maps. These days, it is possible to access a variety of maps and imagery online to assist in planning a trip before heading out into the bush. Over the next few newsletters, I will provide information on some of the websites that I make use of, pointing out features that may be of use to you. This month's site is SIX Maps.

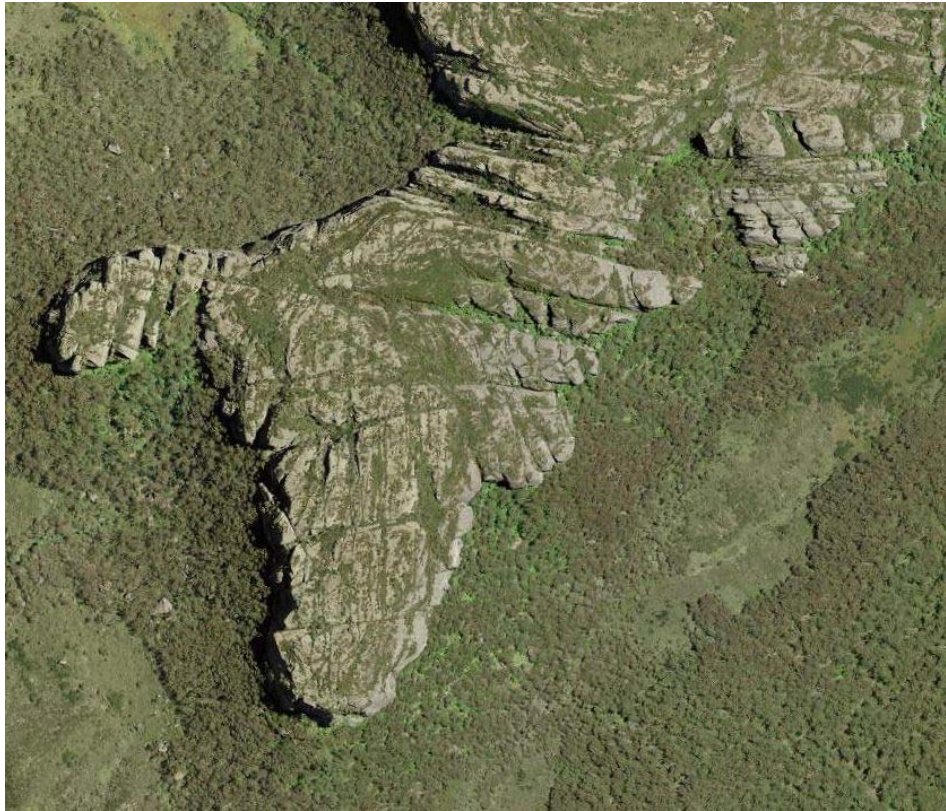
SIX Maps is a way of viewing information through the Spatial Information Exchange run by Land and Property Information NSW. It can be accessed at <http://maps.six.nsw.gov.au/>. This is a government website that provides useful information through basemaps for the whole of the state. The basemaps of interest to bushwalkers are NSW Imagery, NSW Map and Topo Maps (Current).



You can select whether to view the NSW Imagery or NSW Map by clicking on the "Basemaps" button on the top right of the screen, then selecting the basemap you wish to view. By clicking on the little spanner in the basemaps window, you can also select the Topo Maps (Current). Finally, you can easily view two basemaps at the same time by moving the slider on the right of the basemaps window up and down to adjust the visibility of the foreground and background basemaps.

The *NSW Imagery* basemap provides high quality aerial photography of the State which differs to what you will see on other websites such as google maps. It is a good way to spot features such as cliffs, swamps, firetrails, cleared areas, etc, that may not be marked on topographic maps.

For example, compare the two below images of a spot in the Budawangs. I definitely know which basemap I'd be checking if walking in this area!



Above: NSW Imagery basemap. Below: NSW Map basemap



The *NSW Map basemap* provides an easy to view vector topographic map of the state. This means that what you see changes as you zoom in and out and isn't fixed at a certain scale. This is useful when trying to look at large areas which you can't fit onto your screen at the usual 1:25000 scale. Whilst this is meant to be the most up to date topographic data available, it seems that some topographic features such as firetrails have been removed in some locations, possibly to discourage their use. Also, walking tracks do not appear on the NSW Map until you zoom in almost all the way.

The *Topo Maps (Current)* basemap displays what is essentially a scan of the 2013 Topo maps from the 1:100000, 1:50000 and 1:25000 series covering the state of NSW. This means that it should look the same as maps you may have at home, although it is only readable when zoomed in close.

Some tools which may be of use are provided in the centre toolbar. The distance tool can come in handy when planning trips, though keep in mind that as routes can only be plotted in straight lines, this tool will always underestimate the distance compared to what a GPS taken on the route would say.

The co-ordinate tool can be used to find or input grid references after some mucking around. Ensure that the projection "Geographic" is changed to "GDA94 - MGA56". Eastings and Northings are then given in metres, so Easting 246335.432, Northing 6258011.218 becomes GR 463 589. A print tool is also provided although the output resolution is quite poor.

Websites that deal with grid references better, and allow you to print topographic maps in high quality will be discussed in future newsletters.

Finally, some layers can be accessed under the "Map Contents" button on the right-hand side. The "Survey Maps" layer may be of interest to those who like climbing to the top of things on a walk, and the "Lot Boundaries" layer is useful when trying to work out what is private property, and what is not. Layers are activated by clicking their corresponding tick box.

Royal National Park Evening Closures

I have received a report that signs have been posted within the Royal National Park, informing users of partial park closures at night. This is due to an NPWS deer culling program currently being undertaken, located towards the southern end of the park. Unfortunately, this is not advertised on the National Park alerts website (see below) and so walkers may not be aware of restricted access unless they come across a sign.

For those intending to walk in the park during the evening, I suggest that you contact the area office on (02) 9542 0632 to find out if your trip will be impacted by any closures.

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.

As always, please get in touch with myself if you or your fellow bushwalkers have any tracks and access issues you wish for us to look into.

Alex Allchin, Tracks and Access Officer, Bushwalking NSW, email AJAllchin@gmail.com



BUSH NAVIGATION for Bushwalkers

Bushwalkers who cannot navigate with map & compass should ask themselves if they are really bushwalkers or just followers. Basic map & compass navigation is not a difficult skill to master but its value is immeasurable. Class room learning needs to be complemented with field experience.

Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad (BWRS) is running its annual NavShield navigation training event for bushwalkers and emergency services personnel on 4th/5th July.

Checkpoint flags are currently being set. BWRS deliberately sets a range of checkpoints from very easy to hard. Your challenge at NavShield will be to locate as many checkpoints as possible in the limited event time.

Now, that you have decided to be part of this great bush navigation training event "NavShield" you need to know how to enter NavShield. By now you know that NavShield is a great way to practice bush navigation in a friendly atmosphere with a great location. You want to improve your navigation skills as you want to be a better bushwalker and not just a follower of others through the bush.

Remember FOUR things. ONE, team registration is via the website www.bwrs.org.au. Look for the NavShield link. You will find all the information you need about NavShield 2015 at this website from Event Rules to catering menu etc. As in all bushwalks, you must go as a Club group. You will need a team of 2 to 4 bushies for the ONE DAY event OR a team of 4 to 6 bushies for the TWO DAY (overnight) event.

TWO, it takes floods (as in 2005) to defer NavShield from the first full weekend in July each year. Thus, in 2015 NavShield will be held on July 4th/5th.

THREE, late entries incur penalties. NavShield is a large event and demanding of BWRS resources. Don't run the risk of a penalty. Please give BWRS time to process your team entry by planning to register and pay BEFORE the last Friday of June (June 26th).

FOUR, don't ask where NavShield will be held. The location will be revealed one week before NavShield. BWRS (the search and rescue section of Bushwalking NSW) needs time to set the course without conferring any advantage to local teams. NavShield will be held within two to three hours driving from Sydney.

BWRS tries to make NavShield a friendly event with the course set in great bushwalking country. It is a highlight for many emergency services personnel who return year after year to NavShield. Check points are deliberately set so that all levels of bush navigator, from beginner to experienced, will get good navigation practice.

Remember to register your club team for NavShield via www.bwrs.org.au; lock in July 4th/5th as the NavShield date; register & pay on time then look forward to a unique navigation challenge - NavShield. BWRS would love to see you and your club at NavShield 2015.

Keith Maxwell, President, Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad



Above: Sneak peak – Navshield 2015. Photo courtesy of Keith Maxwell.

Navigation

For all but the most simple of bushwalks, navigation is an important skill. Whether finding your way to that elusive lookout, or working out how to get home from a deep, lawyer vine choked gully, you should want to know how to find your way around the bush better. Want to improve? There are number of ways that you can get better. The main one is practice. If you're lacking confidence, shadow an experienced leader, or ask if you can navigate a walk under their supervision.

And why not try a rogaine? Although not as relaxing as a nice bushwalk can be (and they have a tendency to find some of the scrubbiest patches of the state), they are excellent for improving your navigation - and fun as well! Information on rogaing in NSW can be found at <http://nswrogaining.org>. You can also have a go at the Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad's Navshield - an annual event that tests your navigation in more realistic settings than a normal rogaing (complete with all the original mapping errors). Refer to the article by Keith above, or visit the BWRS website: <http://bwrs.org.au>.

Ashley Burke from Sydney Uni Bushwalkers has put together an excellent and comprehensive online course for those looking for and reading up on skills and techniques - and I highly recommend it. Visit his page here: <http://members.ozemail.com.au/~aburke/Navigation/contents.htm>

Mitchell Isaacs, President, Bushwalking NSW

Reminder: We need you!

The Bushwalker magazine relies on your articles and photos of the places that you've been. Please take the time to send these through, the magazine is read by thousands of people, and it would be a shame if there was no content to keep it going!

Please send articles to editor@bushwalkingnsw.org.au...

Favorite Bushwalking Books

Whilst we all may enjoy bushwalking, most of us we can't get out there as much as we'd like to. One way of dealing with this is by reading a bushwalking book! Many books out there can help to satisfy this desire to walk, and they fall into categories such as bushwalking history, history of places where we go bushwalking, guidebooks, books on equipment and stories of adventure.

As a regular addition to this newsletter, we'd like to hear about what your favorite bushwalking book is, and why it appeals to you. Multiple favorite bushwalking books are permitted as it can be hard sometimes to just choose one.

The idea is that from these responses, we will choose different books every month to highlight in this publication. It doesn't matter if the book is recently published, or came out decades ago, we just hope

that these books will help to provide other bushwalkers with a suggestion for new and enjoyable reading material every month.

Please send any submissions to admin@bushwalkingnsw.org.au with the subject title of “Bushwalking book suggestion”.

Facebook and Social Media

Does your club use Facebook or other forms of social media to communicate with others? Besides providing information to club members, social media is a tool which can be used to engage the wider community with the possibility of drawing interest to your club.

Some facebook pages of affiliated clubs are listed below:

- <https://www.facebook.com/CatholicBushwalkingClub>
- <https://www.facebook.com/SpringwoodBushwalkingClub>
- <https://www.facebook.com/SydneyBushWalkers>
- <https://www.facebook.com/BmcsBushwalking>

Generally pages that have new posts more often, and display what a club is doing through photos and trip reports, appear more frequently on people facebook newsfeeds and so receive more view and a greater level of interaction.

We're keen to hear if there are other clubs (and I am sure there are) making use of social media, be it facebook, twitter, youtube, google plus etc, and what benefits they feel it provides. Along with a Twitter account, Bushwalking NSW has its own Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/bushwalkingnsw> and would be happy to share photos and information from our member clubs in order to promote their activities.

Finally, we are happy to provide assistance to those who are looking at setting up a facebook page for their club.

Contact Alex Allchin via AJAllchin@gmail.com for all social media related enquires and comments.

Blue Mountains Koala Project Koala Spotting Workshop



Workshop dates:

Mulgoa: Wed 27th May, 7 - 8:30 pm
Richmond: Sun 31st May, 2 - 3:30 pm
Blackheath: Sat 30th May, 1:30 - 3 pm



We need your assistance!

By reporting sightings of koalas and koala food trees in the Greater Blue Mountain World Heritage Area.

Did you know that koalas are listed as a threatened species in 3 states of Australia including NSW, and that the status of this iconic species in the Blue Mountains is unknown?

Come along to one of our koala spotting workshops and learn all about koalas, their habitats, and how to recognise their scats and signs. With this information you'll know just where to look for them while out on your next wilderness adventure, or perhaps right in your own backyard.

www.scienceforwildlife.org/iconic-koalas For more details phone Alice McGlashan, M 0439 947 623
Science for Wildlife, PO Box 286, Cammeray NSW 2062