



# GECKO Winter 2007

## The Newsletter of the Blue Mountains City Council Bushcare Program



Welcome to our mid-winter Gecko. We are facing one of the coldest winters in recent history, yet the energy and warmth of our Bushcare Volunteer program continues unabated!

We recently completed reporting on the past financial year, and I'm pleased to announce that the combined efforts of Blue Mountains volunteers totaled 8,209 hours working in their reserves. Additional to this was 1,500 hours of Bushcare Staff time to help facilitate the work. This is our biggest output of hours ever, and you all deserve whole hearted congratulations. The combined impact is having real benefits on maintaining our Biodiversity across the Blue Mountains from Lapstone to Mt Wilson.

Additional to our regular volunteer workdays we are now providing Biodiversity Workshop's that help to people learn more about the bushland of their local area. We have held workshops in Popes Glen, Sun Valley and South Lawson through Autumn and they were all well attended. We have just put together a Spring Series which is going to look at a whole set of new sites, so come along, bring a friend and be inspired.

Finally I would like to say "Thank You" for the fine contribution of Bushcare Officer Andrew Forster. Andy has brought a great deal to our team at Council, as well as provided much guidance and friendship to all his volunteers and Council staff. Andy say's his goodbye in this issue as he embarks on a new course in life.



*Chris Dewhurst*  
**Bushcare Team Leader**

### DATES TO NOTE

**Wed 29 August** "Bushcare Network Meeting" Lawson Mid-Mts. 6pm

#### Spring Series Biodiversity Workshops

**Sat 15 September** – "Birdwood Gully Biodiversity Workshop" Springwood. Sessions will include insight into local flora, fauna and bushcare history. 10am to 4pm

**Sat 27 October** – "North Lawson Seed Collection Workshop". Learn how to collect and clean local native seed. 10am to 4pm

**Sat 3 November** – "Birdwatching Breakfast with Lone Pine Bushcare Group". Go birdwatching, have breakfast then work with the group. Morning. 6.30am to 11am.

**Sat 10 November** – "Knapsack History Walk" Afternoon. 3pm. (see article in this issue)

**Sun 25 November** – "Minnehaha Biodiversity Workshop" Katoomba. Sessions will include a focus on swamp ecology, flora, fauna and bush regeneration techniques. 10am to 4pm.

**Sat 8 December** – "Spotlighting Walk". Learn techniques of spotlighting and nocturnal animal observation. Venue TBC. Evening.

**To Book:**  
**Contact : Chris Dewhurst @ [cdewhurst@bmcc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:cdewhurst@bmcc.nsw.gov.au) / 4780 5528**



## WEED ALERT

### HAVE YOU SEEN THIS PLANT?

Long Leaf Willow Primrose (*Ludwigia longifolia*) is a Class 4 noxious weed within the Blue Mountains, these plants should be continuously suppressed and destroyed. So far there haven't been too many infestations reported, but it is a weed that can form dense colonies in slow moving waterways if allowed to spread.

#### Flowers from summer to winter

It is an annual shrub to 3 metres tall, leaves are alternate, up to 15 cm long and 2.5 cm wide reducing in size up the stem. Stems are red, narrow, winged **Fruit 10-35 mm long, 4-8 mm wide** and usually branch towards the apex. Flowers are solitary and found in the junction of upper leaves and stems. Petals are yellow and flowering occurs



from summer to winter. The fruit is oblong and narrow, 10 – 35mm long and 4 – 8 mm wide with numerous minute seeds in each chamber.

Spread of this weed is by movement of seed and stem sections. Seeds are extremely small and can be dispersed by water, wind, or human activity.

Entry of seed and nursery stock into Australia is now prohibited.

#### Plants growing in a swamp at Lawson

**If you have seen this plant please report it to Council's Noxious Weeds Officers on 4780 5346.**

## Goodbye from Andy!

Dear Bushcarers

I will be leaving Bushcare at the end of July, so am taking this opportunity to say goodbye. It hasn't been an easy decision, and I will miss many aspects of the job including the continuity of the sites I have worked on and how they are changing over time. It seems a lot is being achieved in the Blue Mountains, thanks to all your efforts. I will miss all you volunteers that I have worked with, gotten to know, shared plans with, and I'll miss the humour, the tea and the cake. I'll also miss all the baby tales we have shared (since I announced Rurie was on the way – he's now over 6 months and has two teeth, crawls backwards). It has been great for my perspective of the whole thing.

We (Brigid, Rurie and myself) will be off to Scotland in August for 6 weeks. We hope to take other travel opportunities to have a look around Australia and New Zealand as well while Rurie is very little. When we get back I will focus on my gardening and landscaping business. I do hugely enjoy the creativity that some aspects of landscaping and gardening offer. I am seeking greater independence in my working life and it is very im-

portant for me to devote weekend life to the family, to ensure I spend a minimum of time with the wee yin.

I am quite excited about our independence. It has been good to be in service of the public and to work for the good of the bush which I love. I'll still be out enjoying it as much as I can.

Wish you all the best and hopefully see you sometime.

Thanks again and kindest regards

*Andy Forster*





## UPLAND SWAMP RESTORATION



Works continue as part of the Upland Swamp Restoration Projects, funded by the HNCMA Wetlands program and the Environment Trust. Stormwater impacts have been treated with soft engineering at two key areas at Wentworth Falls Lake (right). Weeding has been undertaken at Kitty Hawke swamp in Wentworth Falls, and a contract will soon be issued to treat channelisation through Marmion swamp in north Leura. Info: Anne 4780 5457



Roger Good (above) at community workshop on swamp restoration.

A completed "Soft Engineering" Structure

## STREAMCARE

In response to verbal feedback from volunteers, BMCC is proposing the introduction of "Streamcare" - an event-based, on-ground works program that will link Streamwatch and Bushcare. A questionnaire is being sent to Streamwatch volunteers to obtain feedback on the proposal, and we have already had two suitable sites nominated. Work days are being planned for Popes Glen in Blackheath, where soft engineering will be used to treat an eroded section of the creek; and Terrace Falls Creek in Hazelbrook, where source control works (brush matting and soft engineering) will be undertaken to reduce sedimentation of the creek. Further details on these workdays will be circulated soon. Info: Amy 4780 5553



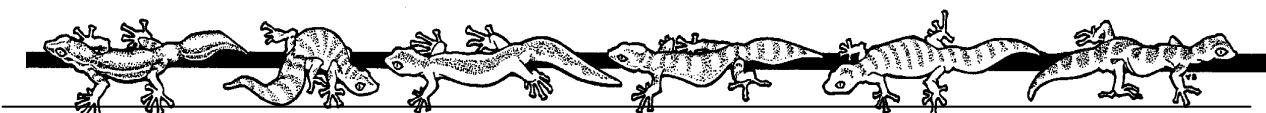
Above: Dori Leadle (Hazelbrook Streamwatch volunteer) and Anne Carey install coir logs to prevent sedimentation of a Bedford Creek tributary

## 2006-2007 SAMPLING COMPLETE



Sampling for Council's aquatic macroinvertebrate and recreational water quality monitoring programs has been completed for 2006-2007. Macroinvertebrates are now being identified in Council's laboratory, ahead of data analysis and reporting. When finalized, reports will be available on the web—notification will be given in the *Gecko*.

For more information contact Amy 4780 5553/ Anne 4780 5457



## BMCC Noxious Weeds Officers - Coming to a sub-catchment near you.....

Initially set up as a trial, Council's Noxious Weeds team have made some strategic changes to their Program. The new focus stemming from this trial is designed to provide a joint approach to weed control undertaken by other teams within Council, Bushcare and Landcare Groups. Last year an area of Blue Mountains Hanging Swamp between View and High Street's Lawson was targeted for *Salix cinerea* (Pussy Willow) as well as other noxious weeds. Extensive consultation was undertaken with Landholders with respect to weed control in swamp areas along with in-depth education in the use of chemical and manual control techniques.

A grant for \$20,000 from Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment Management Authority was sourced by the team to fund this initiative. As this trial has proved successful, the team have now moved into two adjoining sub-catchments using the same approach.

A new criteria of priority has been developed with respect to our systems of Customer Service Requests for Council managed public lands and private lands. These are where noxious weeds are occurring outside these targeted catchments, with high priority given to situations where:

- There is a risk of serious injury,
- They directly impact on threatened species or endangered ecological communities
- Control will eradicate new infestations or contain previously unreported species in the Blue Mountains LGA, or
- Where significant damage to neighbouring property could occur.

This new approach has led to a less reactive methodology where systematic removal from an entire catchment area is achieved rather than an adhoc approach which potentially left large weed infestations unchecked. This is particularly important for weeds that are water dispersed and has streamlined our procedures and protocols for issuing notices on private land. This important part of Councils strategy of managing the urban interface, aims to control the spread of Noxious Weeds into the Blue Mountains World Heritage National Park and maintain biodiversity and habitat occurring in the area.



Council Staff : Dave Whiteman (Team Leader , middle) John Brell, Rachael Swindell (seated)  
David Simmons, BernadetScott

### On-Line Updates

If you would like to stay connected to what is happening across the mountains in terms of Bushcare / Landcare / Biodiversity Events and Swampcare. Then register with our email update service.

Simply send an email to [cdewhurst@bmcc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:cdewhurst@bmcc.nsw.gov.au) with the word "subscribe" in the subject box.

We also regularly update our website with News, Event Reports and Meeting Minutes. Go to:

[www.weedsbluemountains.org.au](http://www.weedsbluemountains.org.au)





## BIODIVERSITY COLLECTION FOR BLUE MOUNTAINS LIBRARY



A new collection donated to the Blue Mountains Library will help Blue Mountains residents find out more about the biodiversity of the Blue Mountains and will complement a series of biodiversity workshops that are being run by Council's Bushcare program this year.

The Biodiversity Collection is available for loan and includes reference books and field guides for those interested in our unique flora and fauna.

The collection, funded through a Sydney Catchment Authority grant, will also be a resource for anyone attending the series of 10 free biodiversity workshops being run by Bushcare throughout the year on many aspects of the Blue Mountains unique biodiversity including our endangered swamps and their associated threatened species.

Library Manager Vicki Edmunds said the collection also adds to the excellent environmental reference collection which the Blue Mountains Conservation Society has been building up over many years.

The biodiversity project, through the library collection and workshops, aims to help Blue Mountains residents gain a greater appreciation of the unique

Pictured above: Mike Dowd (Sydney Catchment Authority), Vicki Edmunds (BMCC Library Manager), Barbara Harley (Bushcare) and Michael Henson (BMCC) inspect the new collection

plants and animals and ecosystems of the Blue Mountains and to showcase the beneficial effects that bushcare activities have on biodiversity, catchment health values and water quality.

The Sydney Catchment Authority has supported the program as it recognizes that an increased awareness about the unique Blue Mountains environment will encourage community participation in bushcare which in turn will help maintain catchment health and hence the quality of drinking water flowing into the Warragamba dam

Bushcare participant Barbara Harley said the biodiversity collection was helping her to identify local flora and fauna.

"The collection is a great tool to help bushcare volunteers and anyone else interested in local biodiversity."

"I hope this, along with the workshops run by Council, will also inspire others to join a local bushcare group and help us to maintain and improve our local environment," Ms Harley said.

### Blue Mountains Bushcare Network

A coalition of Bushcare Groups from across the Mountains to address issues that face the program as a whole. It fosters a positive working relationship with Council and other agencies to improve policy and on-ground outcomes. **Next Meeting Wed 29 August 2007 6.00pm. Lawson Mid- Mountains Community Centre.** Dinner provided. Past meeting minutes can be found on-line [www.weedsbluemountains.org.au](http://www.weedsbluemountains.org.au). Agenda items / RSVP to [cdewhurst@bmcc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:cdewhurst@bmcc.nsw.gov.au)



## Knapsack Historic Walk

In October last year the Knapsack Creek Bushcare Group had presented a historic walk of the Knapsack Bridge and Lapstone Zig Zag despite being an exceptionally hot October day, thirty six people braved the heat to attend the event. The walk commenced from the Lapstone Zig Zag and proceeded to Lucascville Station and then down to the Knapsack Bridge, where the afternoon concluded at the lower Zig Zag points and Skarrat Park. The presenters of the walk included Warwick Tafe (Knapsack Creek Bushcare Group), David Payne (KCBG & Glenbrook Historical Society) and Tim Miers (Glenbrook Historical Society). All of these people have a strong interest in the railway engineering and history of the area. They also volunteer their time with Bushcare to improve the amenity of the area. One of the walks attendees, Warren Page, a previous RAAF employee, also contributed his engineering knowledge and provided some very interesting facts on the defense history of the area.



Some of the highlights included Warwick Tafe sharing his detailed engineering knowledge on the track structures. We were also privileged to have site plans drafted by Warwick of the historic rail route from Emu Heights to Glenbrook David and Tim's knowledge of railways was given the added bonus of historical stories as well as pictures of the landscape and rail engines. Tim's interest in local history extends from growing up in the area in the 1930s. We were also fortunate to have Warren Page share his engineering and defence background with us. The afternoons events were also spiced up with the siting of a brown snake!

The motivation for holding an event like this came from the Knapsack Creek Bushcare Group working around the Knapsack Bridge for a number of years. Some of the members have a great interest in the historic rail and road structures of the Lapstone/Glenbrook area, and it was decided that conducting a historical walk would give more meaning to this Bushcare site, as well as raise the profile to the general public.

We are going to run this walk again on Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> November 2007, commencing at the end of Knapsack St, Lapstone, at 3pm (just above the Lapstone Zig Zag). If you or some friends are interested, you are welcome to attend. For more details, or to book a place, contact Nathan Summers on 4780 5623 or 0414 195 528.

Nathan Summers  
Bushcare Officer, BMCC



**Your Newsletter:** This newsletter is compiled by Chris Dewhurst (assisted by Sharon Huxley) from Blue Mountains City Council with contributions from Council's Environmental Management Staff and members of the Bushcare Network. It is sent to Bushcare volunteers and other interested people. Contributions and suggestions are always welcome, as are requests for alterations to the mailing list. We can be contacted at Blue Mountains City Council, Locked Bag 1005, Katoomba NSW 2780. Phone 4780 5528 or 0414 195 623; e-mail [cdewhurst@bmcc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:cdewhurst@bmcc.nsw.gov.au); Fax 4780 5555.



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