

Wolli Creek Update

FROM THE WOLLI CREEK PRESERVATION SOCIETY INC.

SEPTEMBER 2003

Society lobbies your MPs on key Wolli issues

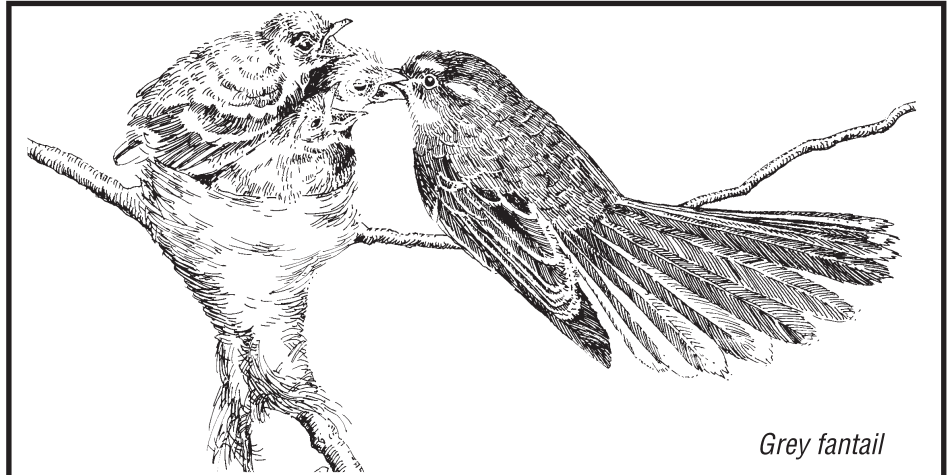
SINCE our last newsletter representatives of the Society have met with State MPs Linda Burney (Canterbury) and Frank Sartor (Rockdale).

We raised the key issue of the proposed creekbank cycleway route with both representatives and argued strongly that such a route would have a heavy impact in a sensitive riparian environment. Environmental best practice (and government policy) argues against such a route. We also pointed out that there is a better alternative route, which the RTA must in any case develop because their preferred route is flood-prone. There are no problems with the alternative route that could not be fixed, if the \$6m set aside for the creek-side route were applied to it.

Our delegation discussed with Linda Birney the need for more public feedback to the public on the progress of Wolli Creek Regional Park. She agreed to make representations to environment minister Bob Debus.

With Frank Sartor, our deputation also raised the issue of a triangular, 0.77 hectare, parcel of public land on the banks of the creek behind the factories on Henderson Street, near Turrella Station. The land, zoned 4(b) industrial (light) was formerly set aside for one version of the now defunct surface route of the M5 East, but has since been transferred by the RTA to the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, which intends to sell it.

We argued that very little of the land is available for construction. The high-pressure ethane gas pipeline runs under one side of the site and if the 30m non-building zone along the foreshore is honoured (*something that can't be relied on with Rockdale Council in charge!*) only a small, 0.25 ha wedge of land can be built on. Far better, we argued, for all this public land to be added to Wolli Creek Regional Park.



Grey fantail

Altitude migrants visit the valley

WINTER is a fascinating season for birdwatching in the Wolli Valley. During this season many "altitude migrants" visit our area. These are birds that migrate from the mountains to the coast during winter. Prominent examples include grey and rufus fantails and golden whistlers. For some reason we seem to get only immature female golden whistlers. They lack the vibrant black, white and yellow livery of the mature male bird, but

still have a wonderfully melodious song.

Other interesting recent sightings include a grey goshawk and a scarlet honeyeater, a striking little bird which, according to the late Neil Rankin's records, wasn't spotted in the valley for decades after 1969. The species is now turning up again. Birds like this use the Wolli Valley as a migration route through the environmentally unfriendly suburbs of Sydney.

Frank Sartor has since written to the Society saying that he has made representations on our behalf to the Minister for Planning.

Judy Finlason and Merrick Plater went to see Linda Burney and Gavin Gatenby, Judy Finlason and Jenny Marshall to see Frank Sartor.

Meet TV naturalist John Dengate

POPULAR media naturalist John Dengate will be our speaker at the Society's annual fund-raising dinner on Friday October 24 (7.00 pm). Over the years John has appeared regularly on 2BL with Margaret Throsby and now with Angela Catterns and on Bourke's Backyard. He's also a spokesman for the EPA.

This year the dinner will be held at the Marrickville Golf Club, overlooking Cooks River.

TO BOOK phone Judy on 9559 2821 or Peter on 9554 3176.



2003 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – WEDNESDAY 22 OCTOBER – DETAILS OVER

Volunteers tackle Wolli weeds

IN MARCH this year, a Wolli volunteer bush regeneration group was launched, with a great turnout of members keen to do their bit to restore the valley's natural vegetation.

The group has been working one Sunday morning each month, in an area identified as a high priority in the Wolli Creek Regional Park Management Plan.

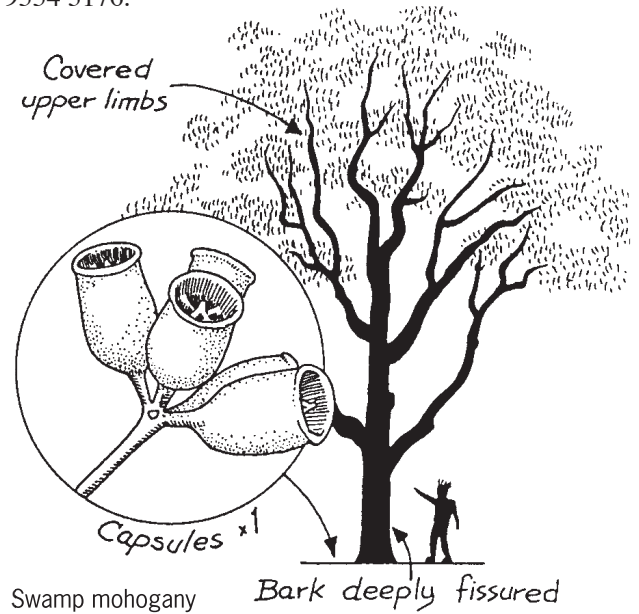
The area to the west of Hartill-Law Avenue and consists of a small remnant of freshwater wetland, swamp mahogany (*Eucalyptus robusta*) woodland, and adjacent sandstone heath.

So far the group has focussed on removing vines such as balloon vine and honeysuckle from the trunks and canopies of the splendid swamp mahogany trees that still dominate the landscape. Small patches of lantana have also been tackled, revealing a few wattles, and a number of native sedges (moisture loving, grass-like plants).

Over the past few months, the initial, and more heavy-duty work of cutting and removing the bulk of the vines from the trees has been followed up by more detailed hand weeding to remove runners and roots of these climbers and other weeds.

Many small native birds have been noticed in the area. Watching them flitting about in the eucalypts and lower vegetation has been a rewarding part of the activity.

Special thanks to Marisa and Victoria for their work in the picking up and dropping off tools and other equipment. And also to Georgina and Lyn for their roles in training and supervising the group. To contact or join the group, phone Peter or Debra on 9554 3176.



NPWS retains control of Wolli Creek Regional Park

EARLIER this year there was a proposal to hand control of a number of regional parks to the Department of Sport and Recreation.

After strong representations to the Carr Government by The Nature Conservation Council, the Total Environment Centre and The Greens, the plan was shelved, so Wolli Creek Regional Park will remain under the control of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, which has been consolidating the various parcels of land under different tenures which will make up the park.

The NPWS has done a good job of rebuilding basic park infrastructure, such as the picnic facilities at Girrahween Park, and installing and improving de-nitrification on the minor drainage lines running into Wolli Creek.

Good attendance at Wolli walks

IN APRIL, during Heritage Week, around 50 people attended a Wolli walk, most walking from Tempe to Girrahween Park. The walks were led by Jenny Druce, Judy Finlason and Gavin Gatenby. The walkers stopped for morning tea at Jackson Place where Judy Finlason spoke about the history of this fascinating group of stone cottages. The walk finished at Girrahween Park with a picnic lunch in the newly-constructed picnic shelters.

In March, over 20 people attended a walk for the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens.

Membership growing

OVER the past year, thanks to the work of our membership officer, Peter Stevens, the Society has rebuilt its membership base through a most successful series of talks held at the Bardwell Park RSL Club.

The Committee feels that now that we have achieved the preservation of the Wolli Valley bushland we must concentrate on promoting the valley as a passive recreation destination and conducting bush regeneration, environmental education and wildlife monitoring for the whole community, and, of course, there are still some worrying threats to the valley's integrity!

2003 Annual General Meeting

PLEASE attend the Society's AGM on Wednesday 22 October, 7.30 pm at the Earlwood-Bardwell Park RSL. We're always looking for people interested in being on our committee. Vital tasks for the future include redeveloping and maintaining our web site, bush regeneration, community education, and wildlife monitoring. The committee meets once a month. Contact Peter on 9554 3176 if you feel you can help.

Regular Wolli Creek Committee meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month at the Community Development Organisation offices, 11-13 Hartill-Law Avenue, Bardwell Park at 7.30 pm. All members are welcome to attend.