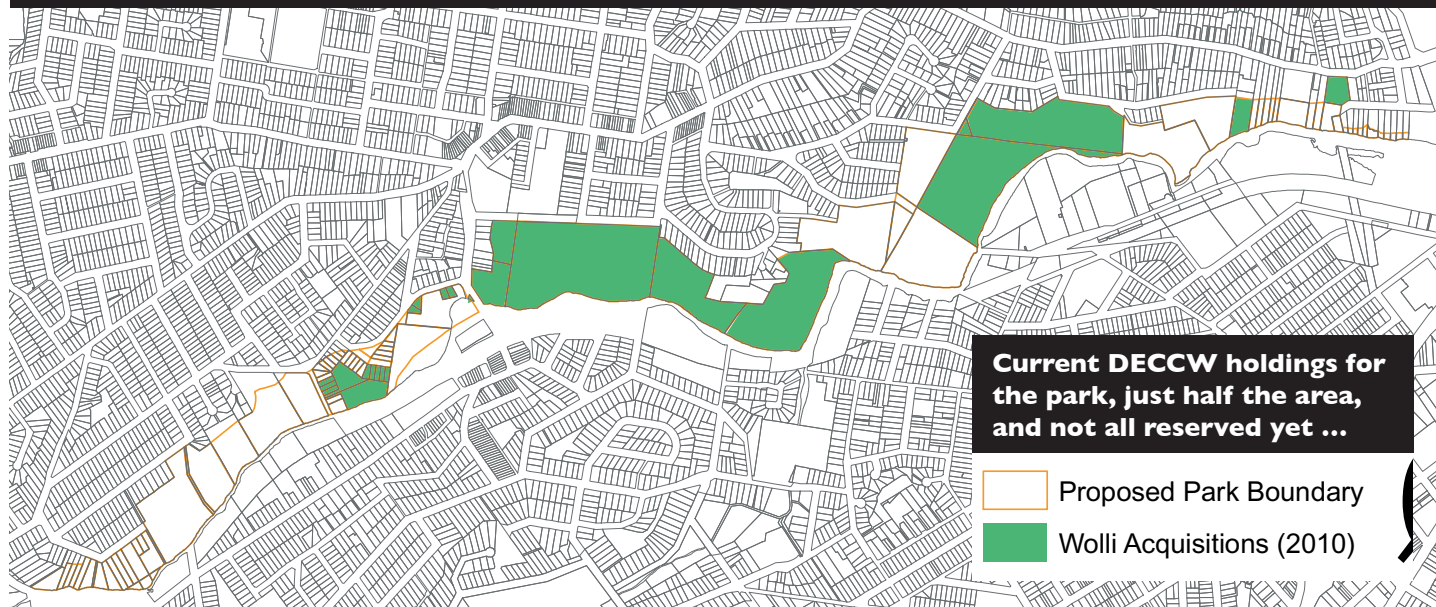




Time for action on Wolli Creek Regional Park!



The formation of Wolli Creek Regional Park was a pre-election commitment in 1998! And now it's time to make it a reality.

The WCPS committee needs your very active support in a big campaign push to get the Wolli Creek Regional Park fully established after 12 years of appallingly slow progress on a 1998 pre-election commitment. We must do this now and strenuously in case there is a change of Government in 2011, in which case all bets may be off. We are concerned that until all the bushland is in the hands of the NPWS (part of DECCW), it remains vulnerable to changes in use - such as for elements of the proposed M5E tunnel duplication.

We are planning delegations to six local State MPs with electorates close by the Wolli Valley. They just happen to include the Premier, Deputy Premier, two other Ministers and the Mayor of Canterbury, all of them Government members. The aim is to convince the Government to complete the necessary land transfers (mainly from RTA, Sydney Water and the City of Canterbury) before the next election. If you'd like to be part of the delegation to your member let us know.

We have prepared a package of items to help you with actions you can take in the

first round - see second list below. This is fairly large in both hard and soft copies, but we will send it to you immediately on request. And that's the first item on the list of **things you can do ...** in increasing order of your time needed.

- Ask for the package (by email to info@wollicreek.org.au or phone 9554 3176 after June 6).
- Distribute it to others you know with a commitment to or familiarity with the Wolli Valley, eg walking groups, friends and neighbours who visit the valley, schools who have used the valley etc.
- Sign the petition in the package.
- Get others to sign the petition.
- Send a standard letter to your MP.
- Prepare your own letter to your MP - it is the fact of a personalised letter as much as its contents that has an impact.
- Write a letter to your local paper or to State papers.
- Volunteer to join our delegation to your MP.
- Volunteer for further actions as the campaign develops.

And above all, be inventive, take initiatives - we won't have thought of everything and the Society moves more slowly than

individuals and smaller groups can. We're happy to receive suggestions of course, but most of all we need more people doing more things. Your active support is vital, so please do read and make use of the package. Take action as soon as possible for maximum effect - the use by date is probably the end of June. The package contains:

- Reminders of matters you might like to raise in a letter or email to your local State MP.
- Short standard letters to MPs for those with too little time to prepare their own.
- Address details for six local MPs and where to get those for others.
- A petition form, both for the even busier - sign and send to WCPS PO Box 270 Earlwood 2206 - or to use to canvass your friends and neighbours for additional signatures.
- The Society's letter to Linda Burney, Member for Canterbury for your information. The Society is also writing to the five other local MPs (Kenneally, Tebbutt, Sartor, Furolo, Burton).
- A short history of the issue as background.
- Two maps of things happening on the ground in the valley in recent years.
- A map of NPWS land holdings in the valley to date.

bushcare roundup



Clean-up Day in March saw the removal of the accumulated rubbish from the Big Bend wetland (opposite the flying-fox camp). Many thanks to Chris Bartlett for organizing the 24 volunteers who put in 72 hours to remove 40 bags of rubbish plus seven tyres and two shopping trolleys, and for making it easy for them by having most of it out of the wetland and ready to be bagged.

Our transformation of the 'Jackson Triangle' bordering Highcliff Road, Earlwood, is nearing completion following a mass mulching and planting in April. Twenty-one people took part and the planting is coming along well. It will soon be handed over to local residents to maintain.

We now have five regular monthly bushcare groups, with a new group having started in April under an Environmental Trust grant for the western part of the Undercliffe Track, adjacent to Jackson Place. We are keen



Volunteers busily planting out the Jackson Triangle in April 2010. (Deb Little)

to add to our volunteer numbers to make the most of the grants we obtain and no prior experience is needed. See calendar for the regular dates. Contact WCPS* to join in.

Grants continue to be gained. We are grateful to the CMA for responding to our request for an additional \$9,000 to complete the removal of noxious aquatic weeds and extend the restored area of the Bray Avenue wetland.

And we are pleased to have our first direct grant from the Commonwealth Government of over \$18,000 for a one-year program in the NW corner of Illoura Reserve. We were very pleased to have the cheque publicly presented on-site in front of almost 30 members by Robert McClelland, Commonwealth Attorney-General, whose Barton electorate was recently shifted to take in almost all of the Wolli Valley. On his short walk through the adjacent Johnston St bushland, he was suitably impressed by work already done and by the evident commitment of the Wolli community.

The Cooks River Urban Water Initiative, again Commonwealth funds, managed by the CMA working closely with local Councils, are supporting a number of projects to control and manage stormwater in the Wolli Valley. They are going ahead in leaps and bounds, with a very large Gross Pollutant Trap (GPT) put into Turrella Reserve in May, following a GPT at Bray and a GPT and a rain-garden along Highcliff Road, plus GPTs and biofilters on Bardwell Creek. A biofilter at Johnson Street and a GPT plus a slow



Vice-President Deb Little receiving the Community Action Grant for Illoura Reserve from Robert McClelland (Laura Zusters).

percolation device at SJ Harrison Reserve are next off the rank. Go to www.cooksriver.info to find out the details from the Catchment management Authority.

Efforts to develop a plan of management for the riparian zone from Bexley North to Tempe unraveled two years ago when a consortium of WCPS, CMA, two Councils, NPWS and RailCorp, failed to gain external funding for the task. A new round of efforts has revealed renewed interest among the partners with possibly enough internal funding for the preparation of an agreed plan. All the partners should then be in a position to seek various funds to begin work on the main vegetation problems of the zone – vines and willows. If you are interested to keep in touch with developments, contact WCPS* and we'll include you in the conversation.

And four more of Gavin Gatenby's excellent nest boxes have been installed around the valley – we're hoping to see all of them in use soon. (Peter Stevens)

Turrella fishway officially launched

Since its construction, the new fishway operating on the Turrella weir has proved to be an important attraction and educational focal point. After a lengthy gestation, the fishway has now been complemented by an attractive fish sculpture, created by Judy Denby from Site Specific. (see picture). The installation of these embedded fish was the occasion for a formal launch of the fishway by Mayor Robert Furolo of Canterbury. The project was the co-operative endeavour of Canterbury and Rockdale Councils, the Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority (CMA), and the Dept of Primary Industry, with the Society cheering them on and supplying many of the plants for the restoration of native vegetation on the adjacent upstream banks. To see the fish in action using the fishway, go to www.youtube.com/profile?user=possm1-p/u/0/d_j5aDaykGk.



Sculpted fish in the swim at the weir (Laura Zusters).

Wolli Youtube docos feature 'best wildlife show in town'

Gavin Gatenby is a local environmental activist who has been part of the Wolli Creek Preservation Society for 25 years and has contributed to everything from writing responses to environmental impact statements to assisting in the production of local newsletters. He has recently discovered an enthusiasm for film photography and the creation of mini-documentaries, and has been out and about filming largely unknown ecosystems of the Wolli Valley.

"It shows people the wildlife that is there in the city and the occasional spectacles you can witness", he said.

Gavin's recent videos show the local population of grey-headed flying-foxes drinking from the creek and hundreds of fish using the newly installed fish ladder.

"It's the best wildlife show in town, and it shows people how a simple environment improvement can make a big improvement in terms of biodiversity."

Gavin's latest video follows the Society's popular 'Creek to Crest' expedition by canoe and on foot. He's planning another that will focus on the bush restoration happening in the valley, and believes the videos could be valuable in the future as a campaigning tool to protect it.

"This may be very important in the future. In the situation of another major threat to the valley, this could be the sort of thing that could rapidly get information out to a massive group of people.

"I think it's something that can motivate people. I hope so, anyway."

At present, Gavin is heavily involved in the campaign by EcoTransit Sydney to extend the light rail system to Dulwich Hill. His videos of the anti-metro rallies can also be found online.

Gavin's videos can be accessed on Youtube at:

www.youtube.com/profile?user=possm1-p/u/0/d_j5aDaykGk

(Ruby Cornish)



Gavin Gatenby's latest Wolli mini-doco follows the 'Creek to Crest' event.

Cooks River Forum hears most funds spent 'on the ground'

The Cooks River Valley Association held its yearly Community Forum at Canterbury Girls High School on May 8. It was very informative as always, with two main speakers followed by a panel of local politicians, stalls by WCPS and other local organisations, and really positive news. The audience was thrilled to hear that almost all the money devoted by government in the last two years has actually been spent 'on the ground'. Cooks River Urban Water Initiative co-ordinator Phillip Birtles outlined a number of projects under way: bio-retention at Highcliff East, a freshwater wetland at Cup & Saucer Creek, the Wolli Creek saltmarsh, and the giant gross pollutant trap in Turrella Reserve. Associate Professor Mark Taylor from the Department of Environmental Sciences at Macquarie University, who presented the key note address Why Rehabilitate an Urban River, announced that a scholarship has been funded for a PhD student to evaluate the remediation work in the Cooks River catchment. Gayle Adams talked about the Streamwatch program and about her vision of being able one day to swim in the river. (Ute Foster)



A big hole for the big GPT at Turrella Reserve

The gross pollutant trap on the big stormwater drain leading into Turrella Creek (and thence into Wolli) has been taking shape over the past few weeks. A surprisingly big project, it's expected to have a big impact on water quality!

Batty volunteers needed for flying-fox count

The Grey-headed Flying-fox (GHFF) camp population has doubled since last reported here, and some flying-foxes have crossed the creek, and are roosting in exotic white poplar and willow trees by the creek (now quite visible along the bush track and even from the train line).

The large numbers here probably reflect a more general shift by many GHFF earlier this year to their southern range following storms and extensive heavy rain up north, affecting the availability of blossom and nectar there.

Note the upcoming talk by expert Peggy Eby – see calendar and flyer.

Regular fly-outs counts on the third Friday of each month are ongoing, and there continues to be enthusiastic support from WCPS and other 'batty volunteers' for this task. Ongoing monitoring of the Wolli camp is also going to be extremely important in light of the approval just given to the Sydney Botanic Gardens in May to drive out 'their' GHFFs.

Contact WCPS* if you would like to join in the counts.

Promoting the Society

The Society has recently had stalls at three events: the Cooks River Forum on May 8th; the Rockdale Council Environmental Expo and Forum on May 4th; and in March we had another successful day at the Addison Rd. markets in Marrickville. This last was our second stall there, and we interacted with quite a few people and recruited a number of new members. But we were less successful in this than the first time in November 2009, due to a shortfall in WCPS volunteers.

We plan to have another stall at Addison Rd this September, so will need volunteers to help us with promotion of the Society. It's quite a fun day. Just a couple of hours of your time will help spread the load. An experienced WCPS member is rostered on to help and guide those new to the Society, or new to 'stall staffing'. By then we will have our new easy-to-erect gazebo, plus new banners. Ideas for how to improve the look and feel of the stalls are also always welcome. Contact WCPS* to volunteer.

Recent talks cover Aboriginal history and M5East road proposal

WCPS is working closely with the Cooks River Valley Association to increase the number of available talks relevant to the catchment community. As a result, some motivating and insightful speakers have already presented.

On May 9, historian and author Heather Goodall gave a talk at Campsie library about her new book, *Rivers and Resilience*, which documents the history of the Aboriginal population along the Georges River, with our local waterways also in the picture. The night was hugely successful, with a full house and scores of the book purchased and signed.

On Wednesday April 14, transport planner Michelle Zeibots spoke at CECAL Hall in Earlwood about issues relevant to the proposed expansion of the M5East (affecting Wolli Creek), and described the induced traffic growth and bottleneck effects that occur when such scheme go ahead. Michelle also covered the history of the roads in the Wolli area and addressed possible alternatives for the future such as the proposed light rail program.



Chris Miles at our bright stall at Addison Road, November 2009 (Deb Little).

Events Calendar

Wednesday June 9 6.30 pm *Flying-foxes in Sydney*; a talk by expert Dr Peggy Eby at Canterbury Earlwood Caring Association (CECAL) hall (opposite Coles car park in Lewins St., Earlwood). See flyer.

Saturday June 26 10 am *Bucket Walk*. The aim is to walk a section of the Wolli Track and remove (with stout gloves and buckets) accumulated glass on and adjacent to the track. Might be nice to contemplate lunch together afterwards.....Contact Peter on 9554 3176 ahead of time and bring a bucket – gloves supplied.

Saturday August 14 – morning. *Wolli from Creek to Crest*. Our very popular kayak trip up Wolli Creek with River Canoe Club kayaks and training and WCPS commentary, and a light lunch thrown in. Cost \$40. Early registration makes sure you get the best chance. To register contact WCPS* soon. See it on Youtube: www.youtube.com/profile?user=possm1-p/u/0/d_j5aDaykGk

Sunday August 29 – 8.45 am start. *Walk the Wolli Track*. A walk with environmental and historical commentary along the Wolli Track from Bexley North to Wolli Bluff above Waterworth Park. A special focus on the large number of bush restoration and stormwater management sites the Track passes and a visit to the fishway. Free to members, but registration is essential as numbers are limited. Allow about 4.5 hours. Contact WCPS* to register.



Admiring the view from Wolli Bluff at the end of a Wolli Track walk . (Deb Little)

Regular events

Bush restoration work every month on 1st Saturday (Paperbark Creek), 2nd Wednesday (Johnston Street bushland and Iloura Reserve), 2nd Sunday (Bray Avenue wetland), 3rd Saturday (Wolli Bluff or Jackson Track) and the Friday before that Saturday (Undercliffe Track). To volunteer contact WCPS*.

Flying-fox count happens every month on the 3rd Friday at about dusk, so to join the count or just to watch contact WCPS* for the meeting time on Turrella Reserve.

Nine teams conduct monthly bird surveys up and down the valley and in Bardwell Valley. Dates are team decisions, but if you'd like to join in, contact WCPS*.

* **Contact WCPS via info@wollicreek.org.au or 9554 3176 (Peter) after June 6.**