



Wolli Creek Preservation Society

Update

June 2012

WARNING

M5 TUNNEL DUPLICATION



This could all be ripped up and destroyed.
Photo: Laura Zusters

THE TOP PRIORITY FOR THE SOCIETY AT PRESENT IS THE THREAT POSED TO THE WOLLI VALLEY BUSHLAND BY THE ROADS AND MARITIME SERVICES (RMS, EX RTA) PROPOSED DUPLICATION OF THE M5 EAST MOTORWAY TUNNEL.

Plans for a cut-and-cover tunnel east of Bexley Road would wipe out a rare stand of remnant rainforest trees, wreck the natural creek line and destroy two hectares of high-priority bushland where restoration work has proved highly successful. Exploratory drilling could happen at any time.

Visitors to the Valley, and indeed many locals, think the whole Valley has been saved and is now safe as a Regional Park. **It is not all saved – yet.**

The Western Gateway bushland of the Wolli Creek Regional Park has high biodiversity values and includes some unique species. There are rainforest trees down by the creek that you only usually see in the Royal National Park and there are beautiful patches of orchids. The six years of bush regeneration work we have done, supported by funding from the NSW Environmental Trust and involving lots of volunteer and professional hours, has produced fantastic results.

The community has fought for three decades to prevent the construction of a surface motorway and to have the bushland of the Wolli Creek Valley declared a Regional Park. It is the last large area of natural bushland in the inner southwest of Sydney and plays an important part in the sustainability and health of Wolli Creek and the Cooks River catchment generally. We need to go on opposing developments in the name of 'progress' that threaten local biodiversity and undermine our community's achievement.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- respond to our quick **online survey** on this issue which went out to email members last week;
- come along to **Hug-a-tree day** on Sunday morning 29 July from 10am onwards at the Western Gateway, Bexley North to see the restored bushland for yourself and how you can get involved – see page 6 for info and location map.

The water lapping the top of the footbridge at high tide, on 8 March at the Henderson Street weir, Turrella.

Photo inset below: The creek under normal conditions illustrates the sheer volume of water that came through the catchment on that day.

In mid June, Canterbury Council closed the footbridge due to structural concerns and are now in the process of upgrading it.

The Big Wet!

THURSDAY 8 MARCH 2012

Soaking rain lashed Sydney on the wettest day in March since 1984. The bucketing rain that drenched commuters and closed Bexley Road also flooded the East Hills railway line. Wolli Creek turned into a raging torrent and Turrella Reserve was transformed into a churning body of water. Unfortunately, the receding waters revealed disgusting amounts of plastic bottles in the mud.

Watch Gavin Gatenby's dramatic Wolli footage:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kWNhfXITpm8>



Flooded tracks at Bardwell Park Station.

ANNUAL VOLUNTEERS BREAKFAST

A big thank you was held in April for all our volunteers who make such a valuable contribution to the Society.

About 25 people attended the bush breakfast at Judy Finlason's cottage in Jackson Place. It was a chance to relax and enjoy a generous spread, while catching up with the many people who help with bush regeneration, bird surveys, counting Flying-foxes and the ongoing administration that make the Society run smoothly.

Many thanks to those who provided such delicious food for all to enjoy.



Photo: Laura Zusters



**CLEAN UP DAY,
SUNDAY 4 MARCH 2012**

Eighteen industrious volunteers donned sunscreen, hats and gloves to tackle the rubbish on the Undercliffe Track. 57 bags of rubbish included 3 bags of old bottles, 3 tyres, 2 square metres of old bricks and a truckload of old metal, which was taken for recycling.

Well done and thanks for a great effort!



Photos: Laura Zusters

REMEDICATION OF JACKSON PLACE LAND

In June, Roads and Maritime Services (RMS, previously RTA) will commence remediation of part of the 2.8 hectares of land it owns in Jackson Place. The land was illegally filled in the 1960s with building materials and has elevated levels of soil contaminants. Prior to transfer of the land to NPWS, the RMS will cap the contaminated fill and replant the site with native species.

This site is in a significant location and the project will have long-term benefits. However, in the short term there will be extensive earthworks and considerable disruption to nearby residents. The work is expected to take 4 months.

For full details of project and REF go to http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/roadprojects/projects/sydney_region/southern_sydney/wolli_creek_land_transfer/project_documents.html

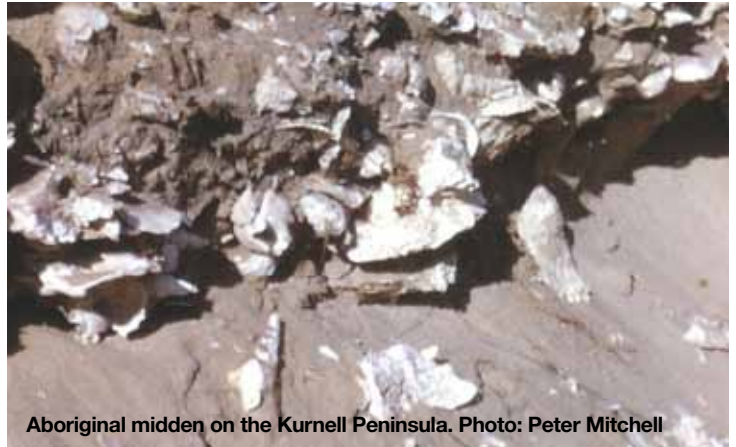
If you want to look at hard copy of REF contact Judy 9559 2821.

ANNUAL DINNER

FRIDAY 19 OCTOBER 2012, 7.30PM
ST GEORGE ROWING CLUB,
LEVEY STREET, WOLLI CREEK.
COST \$45 – BOOK NOW!

Guest Speakers **Bernie Hobbs** and **Dr Michelle Zeibots** will share the challenges and breakthroughs in sustainable transport including the proposed M5E extension that threatens the Western Gateway of Wolli Creek Regional Park.

Please make sure you note this date in your diary – early bookings welcome.



Aboriginal midden on the Kurnell Peninsula. Photo: Peter Mitchell

TRACES OF THE ICE AGE

DR PETER MITCHELL

THURSDAY 5 JULY 2012, 7.00PM.
CANTERBURY EARLWOOD CARING
COMMUNITY CENTRE (CECAL),
15 CLARKE STREET, EARLWOOD.
GOLD COIN DONATION.

Dr Peter Mitchell (OAM), one of Australia's leading environmental scientists, will give an illustrated talk on how Botany Bay and its environs have changed over the last 30,000 years with an emphasis on human occupation.

The talk will look at the earliest work on Aboriginal sites in the Nineteenth Century right through to the present when archaeologists have dealt with the few remnants of once extensive middens in the sand country.

Peter will also have copies of his latest book, *Exploring tidal waters on Australia's temperate coast*, for sale on the night.



KAYAK TRIP

WOLLI FROM CREEK TO CREST

Our very popular kayak trip along Wolli Creek with the River Canoe Club kayaks, includes training, commentary and a light meal.

The trips for this year are:

- **Saturday 22 September**
- **Saturday 17 November**
- **Saturday 1 December**

Cost is \$40 and to register or for more details contact WCPS.

VALE LESLEY

Dr Lesley Muir OAM, a stalwart of Sydney's local, architectural and political history died on 23 May. Lesley was a great supporter of the Society and was guest speaker at our 2009 Annual Dinner. She will be sadly missed. Our condolences to her husband Brian Madden and her family.

In the Valley...



AUTUMN BIRDS

On 11 May a beautiful young Southern Boobook (*Ninox novaeseelandiae*) took up temporary residence at a cottage in Jackson Place for several weeks. Local resident Tammy Owens took this nice shot of Australia's smallest Owl species.

A Black-fronted Dotterel (*Elseya melanops*) was caught on camera by Gavin Gatenby in the saltmarsh on Turella Reserve. Prior to a sighting last year the only other known sighting of this rare valley visitor was in the mid 1900's.



Gavin also got this great shot of a mob of Little Black Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*) on the creek after heavy rains in May.

WINTER FLOWERS

There's plenty of colour around at this time of the year. Many plant species including Swamp Oak (*Casuarina glauca*), the pea plant Eggs and Bacon (*Dillwynia retorta*), Wattles (*Acacia* sp.) as well as native orchids like Greenhoods (*Pterostylis* sp.) are all flowering in different parts of the valley at the moment.



Clockwise from top: Eggs and Bacon (*Dillwynia retorta*); Sunshine Wattle (*Acacia terminalis*); Prickly Moses (*Acacia ulicifolia*); Sweet-scented Wattle (*Acacia suaveolens*).

Photos: Damon Bassett

HUG-A-TREE DAY

SUNDAY 29 JULY 2012, 10.00 – 11.30AM

Come along to hug a tree in the restored Western Gateway bushland before its proposed destruction for the M5E tunnel duplication.

Test drilling could begin at any time. Meet on grass where Bexley Road crosses the creek (eastern side) see map below. Morning tea and chat afterwards.



Fishwatch

Canterbury City Council are doing a fish survey down at the Henderson Street weir at Turrella Reserve during the Winter school holidays in July.

A V-shaped net is placed in Wolli creek and left for 24 hours. The fish that are caught are counted, identified and then released. Volunteers are welcome to help with various aspects, from wading to recording results.

Please contact the society for date and further information on how you can get involved.

SALTMARSH GRANT

Coastal saltmarsh in the Sydney Basin is an Endangered Ecological Community and Wolli has the biggest sample in the Cooks River catchment. It's important as a fish nursery and a distinct habitat for birds like Dotterels (seen recently in the valley), crabs and other critters. WCPS has been awarded a grant of \$20,000 by the Sydney Metro Catchment Management Authority for another round of weed and some Mangrove removal to protect the saltmarsh. Action is complicated by the impending remediation of RTA land at Jackson Place.

CALENDAR

Bush regeneration: July 7, 8, 11, 20, 21, 28; August 4, 8, 12, 17, 18, 25; September 1, 9, 12, 14, 15, 22. Details of locations from WCPS or website Calendar.

New volunteers always welcome.

Bat counting: Third Friday of each month, just after sunset. Come along to see the fly-out or join in the counting. For detailed times and other bat news contact WCPS and join the bat group email bats@wollicreek.org.au.

Bird surveys: Eleven teams are doing regular monthly surveys of bird species and numbers present. They work to their own timetable, but we can get you involved on a team if you contact WCPS birds@wollicreek.org.au. All levels of skills welcome.

Streamwatch: We are monitoring water quality monthly at six sites in Wolli and Bardwell Valleys. We'd love more volunteers to join this. If interested contact WCPS.

Committee Meetings: Jun 25, Jul 23, Aug 27, Sep 24. Any member is welcome to attend the meetings, but notification to WCPS is essential because of security at the building.

Thursday 5 July – 7.30pm – *Traces of the Ice Age – human occupation over the last 30,000 years around Botany Bay.* Illustrated talk by Dr Peter Mitchell (OAM), one of Australia's leading environmental scientists. CECAL Hall, 15 Clarke St. Earlwood. *Gold coin donation.*

Sunday 22 July *Walk the Wolli Track.* Meet 8.45am, Western Gateway by Bexley Road. 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 renewed threat to the western part of the bushland, and the large number of bush restoration sites. Free to members, but registration is essential as numbers are limited. Allow about 4.5 hours for the 4-5km walk.

Sunday 29 July – 10.00am – 11.30am – *Wolli Hug-a-Tree Day.* Come along to hug a tree in the restored Western Gateway bushland before its proposed destruction for the M5E tunnel duplication. Test drilling could begin at any time. Meet on grass where Bexley Road crosses the creek (eastern side). Morning tea and chat afterwards.

Sunday 16 September *Reconciliation Walk.* For details check our website calendar or contact WCPS.

Sunday 7 October – 2pm – *Walk from Bardwell west to Bexley.* Option to start with a light lunch at 12.30pm at Earlwood-Bardwell Park RSL.

Friday 19 October *Annual Dinner.* Rowers Club, Levey Street, Wolli Creek. See page 4 of this *Update* for more details.

Wolli Creek Preservation Society

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