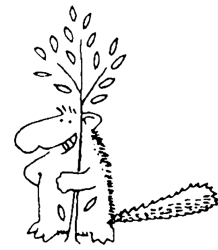


Wolli Creek Preservation Society Inc.

info@wollicreek.org.au

www.wollicreek.org.au



About the Wolli Creek Valley

Wolli Creek, with Bardwell Creek, is the major tributary of the Cooks River. The catchment begins in Hurstville and Penshurst, Narwee and Roselands and the creek flows east to meet the Cooks River at Tempe. Between Bexley North and Tempe the creek flows for over four kilometres through bushland in a steep valley.

The survival of the Wolli Valley into the 21st century is quite remarkable. The valley was used for timber-getting, charcoal burning and near-subsistence farming in the early days of the colony. Later areas of it became a place for noxious industries such as piggeries, tanneries, tallow works, and wool scouring. Nonetheless, it avoided major residential and industrial development (though much land speculation took place) because the valley was isolated, narrow and difficult to access. It was also away from the main avenues of development, which took place broadly along the present lines of the Princes Highway and Canterbury Road, themselves roughly paralleled by the early Illawarra (1884) and Bankstown (1895) railway lines.

Not until the East Hills rail line through the valley opened in 1931 did expansion really get under way, and then it occurred only slowly because of the Great Depression of the 1930s, followed by World War II. Then, from 1949, under the County of Cumberland Plan, the valley's bushland was largely within a road reservation (later the M5East corridor), which was only lifted after community action led to that road going underground to avoid the valley.

The valley is a strikingly beautiful and valuable stretch of bushland adjacent to one of the few remaining inner urban creeks that still has substantial lengths of near-natural banks. This bushland (50 ha in all) of regional significance, has become consolidated as the Wolli Creek Regional Park under the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). The Park area has many different landforms and plant communities and contains a variety of natural environments with sandstone forest/woodland, heathland, mangrove stands, marshland, reed beds, open parkland, and remnant rainforest species, all within a compact area. It is home to a wide diversity of flora, and fauna, particularly birds and reptiles. As a relatively isolated bushland ribbon in a very urbanised area, the Wolli Creek Valley is an attractive haven for birds. Over 150 species of birds, representing over 25% of the bird species listed for NSW, have been recorded in the valley since 1940 - this is impressive for such a small area, a mere dot on the map of NSW. The valley provides food, shelter, a passageway and resting place for migratory species and a niche in its own right for resident birds. It also retains a significant reptile fauna, notably Snake-necked Turtles (under threat from fox predation) and Red-bellied Black Snakes, as well as many lizard species. Grey-headed Flying-foxes set up camp beside Wolli creek in 2007, and it is now a Camp of National Importance.

About the Wolli Creek Preservation Society (WCPS)

The Wolli Creek Preservation Society was founded in 1983 to prevent motorway construction through the valley. Over the many years of this intensive struggle, WCPS was also involved in many community outreach activities, including interpretive bush walks, Bushcare, bird surveying, schools' programs and the publication of newsletters and books related to the natural environment and heritage of the area.

In 1999, the NSW government abandoned a surface road through the valley, building instead the M5 East tunnel. At the same time, it committed to taking the valley's natural areas into a 50-hectare Regional Park under the NPWS. WCPS was then able to use its volunteer resources to do more community environmental education, Bushcare, and promotion of the use of the valley as a valuable natural resource for schools and community groups. Unfortunately, in 2010 we had to turn to campaigning again to get the Park completed, many years after it was promised in 1998 and re-promised at various times since.

WCPS is committed to the conservation, enhancement and expansion of bushland in the Wolli Creek and Bardwell Creek catchments and seeks to improve community behaviours to protect bushland and the quality of the creek environment. We also seek to retain the best of the area's built environment. WCPS is a wholly voluntary community group and works cooperatively with State agencies and local Councils to achieve its aims. It has received State and local grants to support its work.

For more detailed information about the natural values and history of the Wolli Creek Valley and the struggle for its preservation, as well as the history and achievements of WCPS, and the various activities and events we are involved in, please see elsewhere on the WCPS website <http://www.wollicreek.org.au>