



RHHFFPS

Wallumetta

Newsletter of the Ryde-Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna
Preservation Society Inc.

Website: <http://rydehffps.org.au/>

Member of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC)
and founding member of the Powerful Owl Coalition

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2024

We acknowledge the Wallumedegal, original inhabitants of the Ryde – Hunters Hill area.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Natural environments are impacted by changes beyond their locality, and this is very evident in the Buffalo Creek estuary downstream from the Field of Mars Visitor Centre.

There is photographic and anecdotal evidence that the creek was both tidal and navigable upstream to the vicinity of the Cascades. We have been told that, until the 1930s, produce from The Cascades farm was taken by boat via Buffalo Creek to the Lane Cove River and then across to a shop in Balmain. And until the 1960s, there was a large waterhole near the Environmental Education Centre building, popular among locals for activities including swimming and prawning until the 1950s when the saltmarsh area was "reclaimed" by Ryde Municipal Council.

The garbage tips drastically reduced the extent of this saltmarsh area but it was not completely eliminated. A saltmarsh still exists near the Strangers Creek confluence and it has been the focus of recent discussions between our Society, City of Ryde Council, and the Field of Mars Environmental Education Centre whose staff embarked on studies with the aim to enhance its preservation.

Meanwhile, silt has been washed into the creek over many years, so the tidal section of Buffalo Creek now ends downstream from Monash Road. The common occurrence of silting in waterways along the east coast of Australia is a result of human settlement.

The Buffalo Creek catchment area has been affected by changes from natural bushland through farming and now residential, commercial and industrial developments.

In the 1950s the creek bed comprised mostly sand and gravel, mostly coming from roads around Ryde as our transport network developed. Most roads are now sealed, but they now contribute silt in the form of soil which becomes the muddy creek bed with which we are now familiar.

Replacement of natural areas with hard surfaces results in increased runoff during rain periods, thus carrying silt – and rubbish – into street drains, and ultimately into the natural waterways. The level is thus raised and the tidal zones with natural saltmarsh communities truncated.

Against this trend we have effects of climate change. It is possible that rising sea levels may increase saltmarsh areas.

But it is not a desirable solution.

Phillip Ward,
Editor

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COMING EVENTS:

NCC People Power Strategy Training Workshop 10-11 February 2024: online via Zoom

This workshop will give the tools you need to motivate and activate your community to campaign for change. Learn how to achieve powerful wins for nature. The program is organised into four pillars: Storytelling, Strategy, Advocacy and Outreach. There will be dedicated sessions on:

- Powerful ways you can communicate about the issues important to you
- How to develop a winning strategy
- How to get media coverage
- Lobbying your MP
- Recruitment and building people power.

Dates: Saturday 10 February & Sunday 11 February, 1.30pm-5.00pm both days

RSVP to attend: [People Power Strategy Training](#)

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY Sunday 3 March 2024

Our Society will be holding a Clean Up Australia Day event on Sunday 3 March from 10am to 12pm, under the aegis of the Clean Up Australia organisation. If you would like to participate, please email Alfred at alfred.vincent@bigpond.com or leave a message on 9879 6067.

We will be working on areas in the Reserve close to the boardwalk and the creek, between the Monash Road bridge and Pittwater Road.

Bags, gloves and pick-up sticks are provided, though you may prefer to bring your own gardening gloves to be sure of a fit. We will meet at the Visitor Centre; if possible please come a few minutes before 10am to register. Tea and coffee will be on offer. In case of bad weather and/or flooding, we may have to postpone the event, in which case you will be notified by email.

RHHFFPS AGM Saturday 16 March, 2pm at the Field of Mars Visitor Centre

We look forward to seeing you join us for this meeting, in which annual reports will be presented, raffle prize-winning ticket drawn, and afternoon tea served afterwards. You will also be able to admire some of the new equipment we bought last year!

NEWS FROM THE FIELD OF MARS

Your committee has had further consultations with City of Ryde Council staff, about the proposed pathway from the Buffalo Creek footbridge to the Visitor Centre veranda. Plans for this are now being finalised. It seems likely that it will come at bridge level to the vehicle access road, and a separate path will be constructed to lead directly out to the road from the accessible toilet (on the western side of the Visitor Centre), with levels adjusted to remove the step by the veranda.

There was some minor flood damage to the tracks in upper areas of the Reserve during summer rainstorms, but bushcare volunteers cleared away fallen trees and debris to keep the tracks open.

WILDLIFE

The usual birdlife has been around the Visitor Centre with increases in several duck, moorhen and even the magpie lark (peewees) families. And we continue to have several reports of water dragons, turtles and wallabies. Along the Sand Track, several under-storey bushes are flowering; among them are Hakeas, Wattles, Grevilleas, and those shown in these photos:



Patersonia sericea (photo by Pamela Ward)



Pultenaea ferruginea (these photos by Bev Debrincat)



Persoonia pinifolius



Petrophile pulchella

Also see the Habitat Network Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/HabitatNetwork/>

BUSHCARE

Variable weather and health issues with some volunteers have seen a slow-down in bushcare activity, but limited work has continued. At the Cemetery Creek 2 site, some attention has been given to the Fire Trail section between the east corner of the cemetery and the crypts. This boundary area is invaded by weeds and rubbish from a cemetery dumping ground above the bank.

VISITOR CENTRE

We welcome our new volunteer Linda Veloskey. She seems to really enjoy her shifts and has a good rapport with the public. Following rainstorms, members and friends of the Society have been doing interim clean-ups and also helping to clear undergrowth and tree branches encroaching on the boardwalk.

JOIN OUR VISITOR CENTRE TEAM! to keep the Visitor Centre open 9am-5pm on weekends and public holidays. Our roster of 4-hour shifts is negotiated according to members' availability. No specialised skills are required, and Alfred happily provides the training needed.

Most visitors' questions are answered in the maps and range of free leaflets we have available.

RYDE CITIZEN OF THE YEAR FOR 2024

We congratulate Society member Lyn Mann who was recognized as Ryde Citizen of the Year at the 2024 City of Ryde Australia Day Award Ceremony. Lyn spends much of her life serving community and is an extremely competent leader in Scouts. As Unit Leader of 1st East Ryde Joey Scouts, Lyn shares her passion for environmental education with the group of 20 boys and girls aged 5-7 years old. She encourages them to undertake environmental activities, including painting posters for display in the Visitor Centre. We congratulate Lyn on her recognition and achievement.

VALE JIMMY SHAW

In the December 2023 edition of Wallumetta we reported that, at the City of Ryde Spring Garden Competition Awards, a special award was given to long-standing Society member Jimmy Shaw. Sadly, at age 98, Jimmy passed away in December 2023.

A keen musician, Jimmy played drums in his jazz band Shawnuff. But his greatest passion was for preservation of our natural environment. A strong supporter of The Greens, on several occasions Jimmy offered himself as a candidate for elections. And until a few years ago, he drove an old van emblazoned with environmental slogans.

Each World Environment Day, Jimmy erected a banner in Ryde Park to draw attention to the day. He attended our Society's events at the Field of Mars Reserve, and donated the "Trees For Life" banner which is still hanging on a wall inside the Visitor Centre.

Jimmy also assisted local schools educate their students in developing their sustainable gardens; notably working in this capacity for 13 years at Our Lady Queen of Peace School in Gladesville. His home in Nanbaree Road Ryde was easily recognisable because the front yard was planted out with native bushes, creating a safe haven for small birds and other wildlife.

As a farmer, musician, environmentalist and friend, Jimmy lived a long and productive life.

MONTEFIORE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

With the Sydney North Planning Panel overriding Hunter's Hill Council, the controversial Montefiore multi-storey development proposed with Urbis Pty Ltd WILL proceed to a Gateway determination by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment.

A recent meeting of Hunter's Hill Council rejected this action after community speakers objected to the proposed multi-storey apartment towers. Montefiore argued an increase in the height and floor space ratio is its only commercially viable option and the only one that would allow it to preserve on site trees and heritage items. It will require an increase allowed under the Hunter's Hill Council Local Environment Plan 2012.

The Gateway process will entail public consultation and possibly a public meeting early this year. Residents are encouraged to make submissions.



Image – Daily Telegraph

NEWS FROM THE NATURE CONSERVATION COUNCIL (NCC) – HABITAT CLEARING

NCC wants part 5A of the Local Land Services Act' to be altered and biodiversity offset loopholes scrapped. These steps are needed in order to stop widespread destruction of habitat.

Australia is the only developed nation named as a 'global deforestation hotspot' and NSW is the worst-ranked state in the country. Habitat clearing for agricultural development is now the biggest cause of environmental loss in NSW with 50 million trees being destroyed every year.

PLASTIC WASTE REDUCTION

NSW generates over 800,000 tonnes of plastic waste every year, with only 12% being recycled. The NSW Government has released its *Plastic Plan - Next Steps*. It follows up on 2022 bans targeting straws, cutlery and other problem plastic items... but NSW languishes in 5th place behind Western Australia, Queensland, South Australia and the ACT on reducing problem plastics, and Boomerang Alliance wants NSW to start catching up. Among other targets, they would like to see all disposable coffee cups and single use plastic food containers phased out by 2027.

Recycle Smart

GOOD NEWS! We can now have our soft plastics and other things collected from our home and sent off to be recycled. City of Ryde Council is now running this as a trial for a year. See <https://www.recyclesmart.com/our-app> and download the app.

Microplastics and Nanoplastics in Bottled Water

Précis of an article by Ellen Phiddian, published by Cosmos 10 January 2024.

Bottled water is filled with even more microplastics and smaller nanoplastics than previously thought, according to a new study from US researchers. Using lasers, the scientists imaged hundreds of thousands of previously invisible plastic particles in bottled water.

Bottled water has more microplastics in it than tap water, both from the bottles and the processing. But a study published in the peer review journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)*, a peer reviewed journal of the National Academy of Sciences, used newer technology to find 10 to 100 times more microplastic than older estimates.

After testing three off-the-shelf bottled water brands, they found a litre of bottled water contained, on average, 240,000 plastic fragments. Concentrations ranged from 110,000 fragments per litre to 370,000 fragments per litre.

Most of these fragments – 90% – were nanoplastics, the remaining 10% were microplastics.

Because they're difficult to track, the health effects of microplastics and particularly nanoplastics are poorly understood.

Ironic!...The most common plastic in the water was polyamide, which likely comes from the filters used to purify bottled water. Another common type of plastic was polyethylene terephthalate (PET) which is what most bottles are made of.



AUSTRALIA NEEDS BIG MONEY OUT OF POLITICS

The Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) has this goal to save species and climate.

We often see big businesses disregard environmental damage, slow the transition to renewable energy sources, and steamroll genuine community concern.

It's time we end corporate influence over Australian politicians. An opportunity is here now.

A government committee has just made strong recommendations to reform the way elections are funded and run. But without people power to uphold the recommendations, the Albanese Government's responses risk having massive loopholes that allow political parties to keep receiving big money from powerful corporate interests.

[**We can strengthen the legislation by writing to our local Labor Senator/s now about what you'd like to see in the proposed bill responding to recommendations.**](#)

ACF has written a letter to get started, or you can send it as is.

Key issues are:

1. **Secret slush funds** from big corporations, fundraising dinners and political front groups
2. **Dangerous misinformation** to be limited by strong laws for truth in political advertising
3. **Limits on donations** and spending to ensure political parties can't rig the system
4. **Community advocacy needs to be protected**, and not tied down with red tape.

MONITORING THE NSW BIODIVERSITY CREDITS MARKET

IPART has published its Annual Report for 2022-23

The biodiversity credits market aims to connect buyers and sellers to trade credits at a price that reflects the efficient cost of offsetting biodiversity. A well-functioning credits market is important to ensure economic development takes place in a way that conserves our unique natural environment.

The report found several key challenges affecting fundamental aspects of the market such as pricing, transaction costs and barriers to entry. It recommends priority actions to remove price distortions and ensure government interventions focus on reducing entry costs and making the market more accessible and easier for landholders and development proponents to trade.

BOOMERANG ALLIANCE CAMPAIGNS

Looking Forward to 2024 - Critical Campaigns:

1. Continue the phase-out of unnecessary and problematic single use plastics
2. Making reusables commonplace, including a phase-out of disposable cups and containers for takeaway
3. A mandatory (and national) Product Stewardship Scheme for packaging
4. Even better performing container refund schemes.
5. We need to reduce the amount of plastic we use; require companies to take responsibility; and protect our oceans and waterways.

TOONDAH HARBOUR WETLANDS UPDATE

The campaign to save this vital habitat for migratory shorebirds will involve activities organised by the “Mud Army” (Toondah Alliance) near the site on the Sunday following World Wetlands Day, 2 February 2024.

Toondah Harbour wetlands are threatened by a development proposal of Walker Corporation, who wish to disregard the *Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance*.

Toondah is a breeding ground and staging site for several species including the vulnerable bar-tailed godwit, whose migrations involve travel to far-off places including China and Alaska – see map.



This campaign is being supported by several organisations including [Birdlife Australia](#) and the [Australian Conservation Foundation](#) who provide proforma letters you may use to write to Minister Plibersek and Premier Miles, in support of the campaign. A ministerial decision on the proposed development is due to be made in April.

FRACKING TO BE BANNED IN CHANNEL COUNTRY – News from Lock the Gate Alliance

On the Friday before Christmas, the QLD Miles Government has announced they are locking in protections for the rivers and floodplains of the Lake Eyre Basin from new oil and gas. The full ban on all new oil and gas on the floodplains will commence in August 2024, with new unconventional gas (fracking) exploration and production banned from now. Companies holding conventional exploration licences have until August 2024 to apply to move to production.

This win results from years of hard work, led by Traditional Owners, graziers, the Far Western Queensland community and people from South West Queensland.

The rivers in this area are some of the last free-flowing desert rivers in the world - they sustain a clean, grass-fed beef industry and hold cultural significance for Traditional Owners of the land. Oil and gas would have wreaked havoc on this fragile ecosystem and put precious cultural sites at risk. Without this protection, we could have seen thousands of fracking wells drilled across the landscape and millions of litres of water sucked out of groundwater systems.

NATURE REPAIR BILL – A HUGE WIN FOR COUNTRY!

From info@seedmob.org.au, December 2023

The Lower House is set to pass the Nature Repair Bill in Parliament. This legislation not only aims to enhance biodiversity outcomes but also mandates that all future unconventional gas projects undergo independent scientific assessments to evaluate their impact on ground and surface water. This requirement will apply to all future fossil fuel projects, throughout the country.

Traditional Owners and environment groups have been fighting for over a decade to stop these projects, that catastrophically damage the health of water, country and communities.

The Greens, Labor and independents aligned to pass the Nature Repair Bill. This federal law comes at a time when state laws have been relaxing in favour of gas expansion. It will close fracking loopholes, ensuring fossil fuel companies will no longer be able to bypass environmental laws that allow them to destroy waterways by taking unlimited amounts of water, and reconsider leaching ponds full of fracking chemicals that breach in times of heavy rains.

REMINDER: MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE NOW DUE!

Thank you to the many members who have already renewed for 2024.

We will be pleased if all other members do so soon. You will soon receive a separate reminder by email if yours is not yet paid.

The form below has details of fees payable and payment methods.

NEW MEMBERS WELCOME!

Please pay by direct transfer to our Bendigo Bank account: RYDE HUNTERS HILL FLORA AND FAUNA PRESERVATION SOCIETY INC, BSB 633-000, Account number 190716589.

Include your name in the transaction description; and email your name, address and phone number to rhffps@gmail.com

Or you may pay by cash: Complete and hand in this form with payment in a sealed envelope at the Field of Mars Visitor Centre, or post to: RHHFFPS, PO Box 552, Gladesville 1675.

NAME:

Address:

Phone:

Annual Membership (add \$10 for newsletter to be sent via Australia Post):

Individual \$ 15 (+ \$ 10)

Family \$ 35 (+ \$ 10)

Concession \$ 10 (+ \$ 10)

(Students/Pensioners) Donation

Total Payment:

Address to receive your newsletter - print clearly:

\$

WIN A NEW YARNKNIT* RUG

IN WARM NATURAL COLOURS!

Tickets \$2 each / 3 for \$5 – at the Visitor Centre...

or pay to Bendigo Bank account:

RYDE HUNTERS HILL FLORA AND FAUNA PRESERVATION SOCIETY, BSB 633-000, Account number 190716589.

Put "Raffle" + your name and phone number in the comment, and we will then organise the tickets for you.

The winning ticket will be drawn at our Society's next Annual General Meeting.

Proceeds support the work of our Society.



* Hand knitted and kindly donated by members of the Holy Spirit Yarnknit Group.