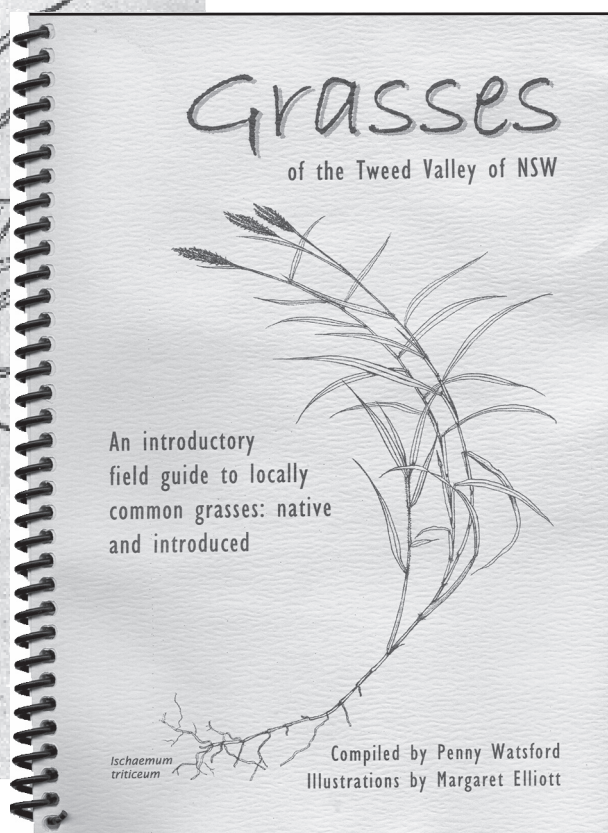


TREE

Tweed River Environmental Echo.
Newsletter of The Caldera Environment Centre.

issue 1 March 2005

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Grasses of the Tweed Valley, available at the CEC

Uranium: Listen to the expert and ask questions ...
Peter Schnelboegl has agreed to be guest speaker at the
1st March launch of our Expert Briefing Programme.
See the notice on the backpage!

editorial

The TREE newsletter in its traditional form wasn't published for quite some time and the lack of communication amongst the members of the Caldera Environment Centre (CEC) didn't help its purpose of looking after our regional habitat. One could feel that the work of the CEC needed a boost on several levels. Kate Binder analysed the situation pretty thoroughly and wrote a 7 page report - pointing at the weak spots and making proposals. Thank you Kate, for the good work! A copy of that paper can be viewed in our shop in Queen Street.

Kate suggested - amongst a lot of other things - that the TREE newsletter should be published again and come out regularly - at least 4 times a year. It should keep members updated about what the centre is doing [see the edited minutes of the last two meetings on pages 4 and 5] and encourage them to take action.

The numbers of CEC-members have dropped considerably in the past while the status of our environment cries for a lot more people getting involved. There are only a few younger environmentalists visible around here. What forms of activities would appeal to them? Please, dear reader, give us some feedback and tell us about your ideas ... or even better - be one of those making them alive!

The local environment movement needs to utilize the whole potential of creative people still dreaming of a radical different world. If you are one of those then feel the urge to do something. We know that small changes

will not save the planet - biodiversity is shrinking by the minute - but we have to prevent the worst ... and from there we turn it around - by making conscious decisions, living in opposition of the mainstream consumerism. So let's be creative, let us practice a lifestyle counterproductive to the one the moneyworshippers want to imprint on us.

Festivals like the one at Woodford and our own Wollumbin Festival at Tyalgum are important opportunities to get the feeling for what we are aiming at. There - by the Elders - we are introduced into a whole new dimension - new at least for most of us non-aboriginal fellas:

the earth is sacred

Just imagine we took that message seriously and not only as one of our intellectual insights. Imagine we - and all other people in Tweed Shire, NewSouthWales, Australia and the rest of the world would live every moment of our lives in full awareness of that truth: that the earth is sacred. Well - that would be a radical different world.

If you want to know more about it - come to the next Wollumbin Festival in October! At this point a big thank you for all the support of the CEC presence at the last festival. Those festivals are the highlights of the year - but how can we transfer some of the creative energy onto the streets of Murwillumbah for example? Who is putting the words and tunes together for some acting at places where the people are: at our supermarkets and stores? Based on well researched information we may attract more people than we do now. We would counterbalance the brainwashing of

the monopoly-media in regards of big time development. But we could also make the consumers aware how powerful they could be: if they boycott certain products because of the way they are produced. Confronting shoppers with the consequences of their decisions may start with health issues for themselves, lead to the materials being used, the working conditions under which something is produced and goes over to the question how the desire for this product was aroused in the first place.

After such a discussion it would be logical to ask for alternatives ...and wouldn't it be wonderful, if we could welcome them into our Environment Centre -planning together the courses of action!

The street performing group was just an example how we could get more people interested in becoming active environmentalists. If you want to support this idea or have any other proposal or comments on what you read in this newsletter etc: Come to the shop in Queen Street (10 - 4 pm) or grab the phone and call 66 72 11 21, we can call you back at a time, when it suits you.

Come to our monthly meetings at the CEC, every 2nd Tuesday of the month at 5.30 pm, afterwards we hang out and have dinner around the corner.

If you get this newsletter because you are somehow associated with the CEC but not a member yet (or anymore) ...then please become a member (again). That's a good first step.

Klaus Fuhrmann



The Current Inquiry into the Tweed Council ...

... is taking up many inches in the letter pages of the local press.

While the appearance of corruption has been a constant in the last and current term of the Council, it remains uncertain as to the real motivation for the inquiry.

It may just be a fishing expedition by the ALP who rather expected to have a controlling interest after the last election but ended up with only the well-meaning but easily led Steve Dale. It may be that the Carr government, which itself garners the majority of its electoral donations from property developers, wants to sack the council and cut out the middle man. Or it may even be the result of actual evidence of turpitude which they hope to verify.

That so many correspondents, both players, urgers and hired help scramble to influence the public perception of the inquiry gives rise to the thought that there may well be something to discover. Unfortunately, as the last ICAC inquiry demonstrated, it is very difficult to amass damning evidence.

There are three possible outcomes - (1) Evidence will emerge that some or all of the Balance group have gone too far and are dismissed leading to a by-election.

(2) A general finding of a perception of generalised corruption leads to the sacking of the whole council and the appointment of an administrator. Or (3) the most likely - nothing can be proved.

A by-election would almost certainly lead to the end of the Balance group influence. With the latter two, more likely, outcomes either an ALP-selected administrator will be appointed, or the Balance group will remain in power. In both these instances it will be business as usual for the developer interests - just a different destination for the donations.

The real problem lies in the NSW Electoral Act which allows unlimited donations to parties, groups and individuals and then sees no conflict when the elected representatives support the developments of their benefactors - this is unequivocally corrupt by any definition. Until this legislation is changed politicians of all stripes will remain able to practice corruption within the letter of the law.

Tom Tabart

Wollumbin Scout Camp

Crown land that has up till now been used by the Scouting Association at Bogangar may soon be up for grabs. It seems the expense or difficulty of maintaining the facilities there has prompted the Scouts to relinquish the site. The Minister for Crown Lands, Tony Kelly, is expected to call for expressions of interest from community and business members regarding future management of the site.

Considering the long tradition of public access and use of the Wollumbin Scout Camp environs, it would be a great loss for the Tweed community if the land ended up in the hands of private interests. It is easy to imagine how desirable this bit of real estate would be to a private developer. Yet

it is equally obvious that in this shire, with coastal land being overwhelmed by urban and suburban expansion, the Wollumbin Scout Camp is an asset too precious to lose.

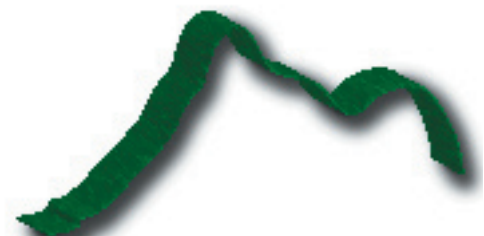
Bordering the Cudgen Nature Reserve, the Scout Camp incorporates some beautiful littoral rainforest behind the foredunes, and the low-key infrastructure of the place makes a small impact on that environment.

So much of our coastal bushland has succumbed to development in the last few years. Consequently, any opportunity we have as a community to keep such land in public hands should be welcomed. Perhaps incorporating the site into Cudgen Nature Reserve would be an ideal solution,

especially given the fact that so little of the Tweed Coast is dedicated to protection of native habitat.

Currently the site is under the custodianship of the Minister for Crown Lands (?). Peter Baumann, based in Grafton, is acting as Administrator (through the Lands Department).

I.Herscovitch



Minutes (edited), Caldera Environment Centre, 5.30 pm on Tuesday 11 January 2005, Queen Street.

>Business arising from last minutes: Wollumbin Scout Camp Trust – a request has been made to Peter Baumann, Trust Administrator for Wollumbin Scout Camp, for a copy of the Trust Deed and notice of advertisement of expressions of interest for future use of the land (email: 10 November 2004).

>Correspondence Out: Peter Baumann, Trust Administrator for “**Wollumbin Scout Camp**” – request for copy of Trust Deed and delay in advertising for expressions of interest for future use of the land (see article of Ian in this newsletter). Tweed Shire Council – comment on **DA 04/1331** and proposed amendment to **DCP9 West Kingscliff**.

>Treasurer’s Report: carried. **>General business:**

Welcome to Carolyn Latham as **co-ordinator of volunteers**.

Kevin spoke about uptake of the **Bushland Friendly Nursery Scheme** in Tweed. Boyds Bay Nursery has not joined the Scheme. Tweed Shire Council public lands are partially landscaped with weeds. Henry advises that Tweed Shire Council can be notified of any known weed plantings on public lands.

Kings Forest – An Interim Protection Order (IPO) has been placed on the southern part. Dept. Environment and Conservation (DEC) is investigating whether to place an IPO on the northern part of Kings Forest further to clearing and draining work undertaken in the northern part late last year.

Moreton Bay Bug Farm in Tweed – submissions have closed. HopE will send a letter to DIPNR and a media release to local papers on behalf of Caldera Environment Centre.

C4 Route – Jim distributed flyers for a meeting “Save our Lakes and Heritage” to be held on 22 January and 19 February at Tweed Heads with speakers on aboriginal heritage and biodiversity in the Cobaki Wetlands area. Jacki McDonald is the local representative of Bundjalung for this meeting.

Resolution: Moved Rhonda, seconded Claire that Ian purchase a hard copy and CD of the EIS for the Tugun Bypass (C4 Route) to be made available in the Caldera Environment Centre. Carried.

Inquiry into Tweed Shire Council – HopE circulated a draft of the Caldera submission. Anyone with input to this submission can contact HopE.

Ramsar Listing for Cobaki Wetlands and surrounds – HopE will send a letter of support for Ramsar listing to Dept. Environment & Conservation with copies to Bob Carr and Neville Newell.

DA 04/1331 and proposed amendment to **DCP 9 West Kingscliff** – Caldera has sent a letter to Tweed Shire Council in opposition to the development as proposed. Caldera recommends development be consistent with Draft LEP amendment 21. Approval for the shopping centre should include a plan of management to provide for the applicant to undertake a program of weed control, assisted natural regeneration and planting of native species on the land to be dedicated for drainage, open space/recreation and conservation purposes.

Draft Native Vegetation Regulation 2004 – Henry will prepare a submission on behalf of Caldera Environment Centre.

Black Rocks – Henry has made a submission on his own behalf regarding the Development Application for subdivision of final stages of Black Rocks. Concerns include encroachment into proposed coastal reserve; encroachment of bushfire control infrastructure into environment protection zones and an inadequate management plan for proposed conservation reserves.

Caldera Environment T-shirts – a vote of thanks to Heidi for producing the t-shirts for sale at the shop.

Caldera Strategy Plan – HopE circulated a draft to the meeting. The draft Strategy Plan will be placed on the notice board and anyone with input can contact HopE. Further discussion will be held at the February meeting [find the draft printed in this newsletter].

Far North Coast Regional Strategy - Total Environment Centre will hold meetings in February 2005. Tweed meeting is on Tuesday 1st February at Kingscliff Amenities Hall. Invitation to the meeting will be placed on the notice board at the shop.

Tweed Vegetation Management Strategy – HopE will send a letter of support for the Strategy to Tweed Shire Council.

>Next meeting will be held at 5.30pm on Tuesday 8th February at the Caldera Environment Centre, Murwillumbah.

Minutes (edited), Caldera Environment Centre, 5.30 pm on Tuesday 8 February 2005, Queen Street.

>Correspondence Out: Office of the Commissioner, Tweed Shire Council (TSC) Public Inquiry – CEC submission [CEC submission is available at the CEC]. Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR) – **letter in opposition to the proposed Bay Lobster Aquaculture Project**. Ms Lisa Corbyn, Director General, NSW Dept. Environment & Conservation, cc Manager Conservation Planning, NE Branch; Premier Bob Carr; Neville Newell - **letter of support for Ramsar listing of Cobaki Wetlands and surrounds**. **>Treasurer's Report:** Moved Ian seconded HopE that the Treasurer's Report be adopted. Carried. Report attached. Ian will bring a summary of last financial year for discussion at next meeting.

>General Business: C4 Route/SOLAH (Save Our Lakes and Heritage) Jim reported from the SOLAH meeting on 22nd January, at that meeting the following **motion** was passed unanimously:

As a result of the additional information provided to this meeting, (by Aboriginal community Elders, knowledge holders, and academic researchers), that this meeting support a vote of no confidence in the Tugun Bypass Alliance Report (identified as Technical Paper Number 15, Cultural Heritage Assessment) to accurately and fairly represent the environmental and Aboriginal cultural heritage values along the proposed C4 bypass route. And further, that this meeting support members of the Aboriginal community to conduct their own Cultural Heritage Assessment, which includes not only archaeological values, but also values for the community today, including spiritual values, educational values, and recognition of Aboriginal peoples continuing use of the area for expression of their cultural traditions. This meeting also acknowledges that this unique area contains the last remaining traditional campsite complex, in the Tweed Gold Coast Region, which still retains much of its former environmental context. Lindy Smith has asked **CEC to give in principal support to SOLAH**. Consensus.

Tweed Shire Council Cobaki Management Plan, written in 1998 is deficient in current information and needs updating. The SOLAH committee will write to TSC and TRC requesting an update of the Cobaki Management Plan and advise the NRCMA of the current situation at Cobaki.

Total Environment Centre meeting on the Far North Coast Regional Strategy. Work is underway (through DIPNR) to develop this Strategy to guide future local environment plans, strategies and catchment action plans throughout the region. CEC members attended a meeting at Kingscliff on Tuesday 1st February to give input to the Strategy, due to be completed by September 2005. Action: HopE will compose a press release on the Strategy on behalf of CEC.

Kings Forest: Rhonda reported that the Interim Protection Order (IPO) placed on the southern part has been extended to the northern part. The developer has lodged an objection to the IPO on the southern part. Action: CEC will send a letter to the Minister letting him know the developers are not credible, as fire and clearing on drainage lines continues and also ask for an extension on the IPO to the northern part.

Howards Tree Farm/ Bilinudgel: Clearing of vegetation on floodplain continues.

DA 04/1331 and proposed amendment to DCP 9 West Kingscliff: Caldera has sent a submission to Tweed Shire Council in opposition to the development as proposed. Caldera recommends development be consistent with Draft LEP amendment 21. Approval for the shopping centre should include a plan of management to provide for the applicant to undertake a program of weed control, assisted natural regeneration and planting of native species on the land to be dedicated for drainage, open space/recreation and conservation purposes. Action: Claire to liaise with Henry and Rhonda on letters from CEC.

Harmony Day: This annual celebration of our multicultural community will be held in Knox Park on Sunday 20 March, midday – 7pm. Action: CEC will have a shop stall. Christine and Paul will organize. Volunteers can contact Christine.

Clean Up Australia Day: CEC members are participating in their local areas. Action: Notices of local cleanups and contacts can be posted in the shop window.

Uki Sewerage Dumping: Jim reported on this recent case of pollution and the imposed small fine.

Tweed Shire Council Inquiry: Henry will address the Inquiry on Thursday 17 February at 3pm. HopE will address the Inquiry on Friday 25 February at 2pm. Action: Notice to be placed on the noticeboard.

Airport Runway Extension Plan: Jim spoke about the Airport Master Plan for runway extension, industrial development, rail link and the integrated C4 construction. Action: Jim will attend a meeting re the above on 9 February on behalf of CEC.

Computer Purchase: CEC to purchase a computer and scanner. Carried. Action: Brian and HopE to purchase.

CEC Draft Strategy Plan: HopE has received no feedback so far. Action: Draft to be published in the Tree magazine and on the noticeboard in the shop.

Volunteer co-ordination: Carolyn will liaise with Ian on volunteer insurance, Carolyn asks for input regarding a small equipment grant.

>Next meeting: will be held at CEC on Tuesday 8 March 2005.

Well dearie dearie me. It's all a bit much really isn't it? I tell you what though, it's just as well the TREE magazine was delayed a few months because straight after the Federal election I had written a rather vitriolic piece concerning the Australian electorate which probably would not have been helpful. It was certainly how I felt at the time, and I haven't moved too far since then, but I have been convinced that there's no point in concentrating on our differences, when our only chance is to come together. It all seems a bit of a cop out, but I intend to do my best. This is, after all, a good news column, so I think I'll keep my darker thoughts to myself.

So where does that leave us? Now the Richmond electorate was a huge good news story in the recent election. At a time when the Green vote fell federally, Richmond gained more than 12% of the primary vote, and went as high as 30%, 40%, even 48% in some booths. That says a lot for us. Most of the country fell foul of the brilliant machinations of the government, designed to breed more and more fear, hatred and greed. This is an amazing strategy which seems impossible to beat, and yet dear old Richmond resisted, and Justine Elliot beat Larry. That has to be good news.

Interestingly, the other major cause for hope came about due to the most horrendous natural disaster of recent times, the tsunami. Somehow this tragedy has resulted in compassion, generosity and genuine concern for the poor of the world, something which has been largely absent in our rush to better ourselves. There has been a world wide shift in consciousness as a result of this horror, and people have moved out of their narrow, self-interested focus. Let's hope such feelings continue.

Speaking of the tsunami, there is a tiny good news story worth relating. In Indonesia, a group of people involved in setting up permaculture operations in remote areas, convinced a large aid organisation, OzAid, to fund a venture to help some of those badly effected. Apparently the Indonesian army was supplying daily rations to people in remote areas, forc-

ing these people to walk up to 21 kilometres every day to get food. This because the army refused to leave the port and travel to where the aid was needed. Well our permaculture team, Indonesians and Australians, obtained a boat, and plenty of relevant aid, including bags of rice which would last a week or more, and ferried it to the people in need. This was great not only because the people no longer had to spend their lives getting food, but also because the food was more appropriate, as was the other aid provided. Good on them.

Closer to home, things do not look good. The looming takeover of the federal senate by the coalition could bring catastrophes unthought of. We have to pull together, and above all don't give up hope. There has to be a way through this, although it's difficult

to see it from here. More political engagement could be the answer, and mostly that has to come from the disaffected majority. People seem totally disinterested in politics, and that leads to complacency and denial.

Most people are good and just need to know what's going on in order to stand up and be counted. That has been proven by the response to the tsunami. If the same level of consciousness could be focused on the environment, Australia's indigenous people, or the refugees, things would have to change.

And despite my disaffection for our government, and my fears for our future, it has to be said that we live in an amazing and wonderful country. We are very privileged to live here and we need to remember that.

Living in hope,
Consuela



D E B A T E

Let's talk about poison. Should we use only selected ones or none at all? There are vastly differing opinions on this question, even within our own organization, and so it is important to get all the ideas out for an airing, so we can all have a good look at them and decide for ourselves. It's also incredibly important to remain civil and polite, so that the debate stays about the issue rather than turning into a bun fight.

So where do I stand? My position is twofold: firstly I believe that poison, of itself, is a bad thing, and secondly, it is unnecessary. I would like to keep the two issues separate because the one could cloud the other.

On my first point, that poison is a bad thing:

No amount of evidence which proves Roundup or any other poison to be harmless, cuts any ice with

me. DDT was thought to be harmless for quite a long time, and this substance was spoken of in very similar terms to glyphosate today. To point to any latest evidence (and all of it is hotly contested anyway) is just to state our knowledge right now. Surely we can imagine a time when we realise we've been awfully wrong, and if that time comes, then it's too late for the soil and the water and the flora and the fauna which has been doused with poison. If I'm wrong, we won't be nearly so badly off as we will be if the poison battalion is wrong.

So as far as I can see we'd be a lot better off to assume we don't use the poison, and then the next thing is to figure out how to do without it. This is a much bigger question, and the answers are many and varied. The most important point is that we will look for an answer to each problem, because we will not use

poison. I am working with some like minds on several projects at the moment, which are designed to remove weeds and do reforestation without the use of poisons. A couple are already at the stage where it is obvious the process is working. One of these, an acre or so of madeira vine, is rapidly turning into a rainforest garden. Nothing is out of the reach of the determinedly organic gardener; all we need is elbow grease and perseverance.

It would be excellent if some proponents of glyphosate would answer this offering, and from there we can hopefully start a proper debate. If we can each put forward our points of view then maybe we can start to come together and find out if a shift in either direction is possible.

Christine Moore.

CEC STRATEGY PLAN : DRAFT FOR COMMENT

- 1) Our "ideal" environment is that which existed before 1770.
- 2) To conserve and rehabilitate our local natural and built environment to "Ecologically Sustainable Development" (ESD) principles in order to nurture natural ecosystems and bio-diversity, and so minimising our "Ecological footprint" (E.F.Index).
- 3) To respect the culture of the original "Bundjalung" inhabitants and to continue to "Care for Country" through stewardship rather than exploitation of our natural environment.

Some ways of achieving these aims are:

- a) To attempt to limit growth, especially human population growth.
- b) To promote the R's: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rehabilitate, Revegetate, Renewable energy use, Respect for endemic species.
- c) To collect water and dispose of household by-products on site through tanks, composting and innovative gardening.
- d) To ensure optimum water quality through the conservation and rehabilitation of locally indigenous vegetation (especially in riparian zones and on steep slopes) and to dispose of stormwater and effluent productively/beneficially.
- e) To promote alternatives to private motor vehicle use.
- f) To educate the public about our "aims and objectives".

Paul Hopkins
CEC Coordinator

IT'S OFFICIAL!

Cashed-up corporates are buying access to our politicians through massive donations.

In the past five years, companies and organisations have given political parties

\$100,686,473

Who is giving these donations,
and who is taking them?

Which industries are pumping the
most cash into the major parties?

Find the answers at the new Greens website:

democracy4sale.org



*Democracy4sale.org is a Greens research project
to help voters better understand how the major
parties are selling off our democracy.*

Authorised by Geoff Ash, 19 Eve Street, Erskineville

www.greens.org.au

The Greens are running the above campaign (the reprint is of a leaflet they provide for printout and distribution), the website listed shows who gave and who got. The Greens are also running a tv ad to also promote the above, it is worth seeing, so if it doesn't make it to your telly telly bunkum box then see it on the website.

Expert Briefing

Peter Schnelboegl, a graduate of the Technical University of Munich, has agreed to talk at the CEC on Tuesday 15th March, 6:30pm.

Peter will speak on the topic of uranium, including the current practice of using it in military ammunition, which causes the vaporisation of the uranium into the atmosphere. Come and get the latest info.

Peter has written and published the research paper "Long Term Consequences of Uranium Mining", copies of which are available at the CEC-shop in Queens Street, and is an active campaigner for a nuclear free future.

The CEC Expert Briefing Program Committee are proud to welcome Peter as Guest Speaker.

Diarise this event and be there or be square.

Meetings of the CEC are always 2nd Tuesday of the month, 5:30pm, next meeting is on the 8th March, the following are 12th April and 10th May.

The CEC is located at Queen Street, Murwillumbah, Phone 66721121.

If undelivered, please return to:
Caldera Environment Centre
PO Box 5090 Sth Murwillumbah 2484