

Sheldon Forest Walk



Sunday 10 May, 2015

Sheldon Forest Entrance, Warragal Road, off Pacific Highway
Turrumurra, NSW, Australia
10am-12noon

Bushcare in Sheldon Forest

Bushcare for Sheldon Forest is held on the 3rd Sunday of each month. Meets 9am. Enter via Warragal Road, Turrumurra or Jubilee Avenue, Pymble
Only a short walk from either Pymble or Turrumurra Railway Stations
New members welcome

Sheldon Forest — for a future city?

Sheldon Forest is one of Sydney's rarest patches of Blue Gum High Forest and Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest. It is the last remaining stretch of forest that connects the Lane Cove National Park to the Pacific Highway. It is unique in that it is walking distance from two railway stations —Turramurra & Pymble.

Sheldon Forest is a tall, open forest dominated by Sydney Blue Gums and Blackbutts. In 2007 this forest community was formally recognized as a Critically Endangered Ecological Community, protected under both the *NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* and the *Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. This Sydney forest is of national significance because of its rarity.

Sheldon Forest is a critical bird and wildlife sanctuary for Sydney. The forest provides important habitat for many vulnerable native animals including ground dwelling bandicoots and bowerbirds. Its forest trees contain vital hollows that have taken decades to form and which wildlife, like the Powerful Owl, are utterly dependent on. The number of old trees with hollows in gardens and along streets has seriously declined.

Originally Blue Gum High Forest covered large areas of the ridgelines of northern Sydney. Today less than 3% of the original forest remains. The BGHF is restricted to Wianamatta shale soils along the North Shore ridgeline where the Pacific Highway and railway corridor run—an area targeted for high density.

The BGHF forest is also connected to many other majestic canopy trees throughout the North Shore ridges and valleys. Today it faces extinction due to the cumulative impacts of multiple rezonings for apartment buildings that not only clears canopy trees and bushland but also removes soil and seed bank. Indeed urban development is sanctioned in this environmentally sensitive area by all levels of government even though it is one of Sydney's most critical habitat for native wildlife. **Good planning?**

The Blue Gum High Forest has been diminished since the early 1800s—first by the timbergettes, then by farmers and then for housing. However in recent years the clearing has intensified with demands for high density development to cater for Sydney's population pressures. This has resulted in irreversible habitat loss, forest fragmentation, urban runoff, and weed invasion.

In 2013 FOKE gained a Ku-ring-gai Council grant to produce two educational signs to raise awareness of the importance of this rare urban forest.

It is now long overdue to consider how to guarantee the highest protection for Sheldon Forest, that was listed as critically endangered ecological community in 2007.

Why was the most vulnerable section zoned as 'RE1 for Public Recreation' in 2015?

Why wasn't all the forest zoned 'E2 for Environmental Conservation'?

Why was a long term lease granted to recreational groups occupying the forest?

Why was a recreational site included in a biobanking agreement for Sheldon Forest?

When will the Commonwealth and NSW government fulfil their obligations for a recovery plan for this Critically Endangered Ecological Community?

...surely it is better to stop the process of forest destruction...than to leave to future generations the work of repairing damage that should never have been allowed to take place
- Baulder Byles, Forester and Conservationist, 1932

Timeline — Ku-ring-gai's Forest History

- 1800s to 1850 **Ku-ring-gai's Timber Era** - Convict saw mill established on Lane Cove River near today's Fiddens Wharf Road, Killara. Most of NSW's Red Cedar gone by 1850s. Most of Ku-ring-gai's highly prized blue gums cut and taken by bullock teams to Fiddens Wharf, to be ferried via the Lane Cove River to Sydney for building materials for Sydney's wharves and housing.
- 1850s **Ku-ring-gai's Orchard Era** - Remaining Blue Gum High Forest often burnt for orchards.
- 1890 **Ku-ring-gai's Garden Suburb Era** - Railway comes to North Shore. Australia's most comprehensive repository of fine 20th century domestic architecture set in the context of BGHF.
- 1894 Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park declared as Australia's second national park.
- 1910 Conservationists concerned that many Australia's native birds & wildflowers faced extinction.
- 1915 Forest League NSW branch formed. Deep concern about forest loss.
- 1920s Richard Dalrymple-Hay, appointed as first Commissioner of Forests in NSW [1895], proposed the acquisition of a demonstration forest— the St Ives Dalrymple-Hay Nature Reserve.
- 1927 Annie Wyatt founds the Ku-ring-gai **Tree Lovers' Civic League**. Cresswell O'Reilly elected as Councillor to Ku-ring-gai Council [1927-1935; 1944-1948] and becomes Ku-ring-gai mayor [1929-1933] and is known as 'the Tree Mayor'. Becomes President of the Australian Forest League [1935-1936; 1939-1940] and is the founding President of the National Trust [1945].
- 1934 Annie Wyatt and the Ku-ring-gai Tree Lovers Civic League petition Ku-ring-gai Council to purchase land in the Dalrymple Hay Forest, St Ives and saves it as a viable forest.
- 1944 'Save the Trees, Conserve Our Forests' Conference. Attended by Annie Wyatt, Gordon resident, who formed the motion to create the National Trust of Australia (NSW).
- 1945 Post war housing demands accelerate forest depletion aided by powerful new machinery.
- 1948 Sheldon Forest acquired by an enlightened Ku-ring-gai Council who approached Lady Blanch Mary Sheldon, wife of Sir Mark Sheldon (1871-1956) to purchase her land "for the purpose of the improvements and embellishment of the area".
Visionary NSW Fauna Protection Act acknowledges habitat is vital for protection of wildlife.
- 1950s Koalas still exist in Middle Harbour bushland, St Ives.
- 2000 Environmental Baseline Studies establish environmental sensitivity and limitations to Ku-ring-gai's urban development. Ku-ring-gai Council's **Draft Residential Strategy 2000** [Michael Harrison, Travis McEwan Group] acknowledges that "Ku-ring-gai exhibits environmental splendour of such a scale it is of national significance." NSW Government rejects Strategy.
- 2004 **Ku-ring-gai's High Density Era begins** - LEP 194 allows high density residential development. Ku-ring-gai starts to lose its habitat for urban wildlife— gardens, remnant forest and wildlife corridors connecting its three national parks—Lane Cove, Garigal and Ku-ring-gai Chase.
- 2007 Community groups save two blocks of privately owned land within the St Ives Blue Gum High Forest is purchased and brought into public ownership and saved from development.
- 2007 BGHF ecological community listed as critically endangered by Commonwealth legislation.
- 2007 Community groups protect the remnant BGHF along the Pacific Highway between Beechworth and Warragal Road from rezoning as it threatens Sheldon Forest.
- 2013 Sydney records its hottest day ever on 18 January 2013 peaking at 45.8°C. City of Sydney adopts Urban Forest Strategy 2013. Where is Ku-ring-gai Council's **Urban Forest Strategy**?
- 2014 Ku-ring-gai Council endorses Sheldon Forest as a Biobank site to enable it to receive grant funding from the Office of Environment and Heritage for the purpose of conservation. At the same time the most vulnerable section is rezoned as Recreational.
- 2015 Sheldon Forest remains under huge pressure from cumulative impacts of multiple rezonings for high density in BGHF areas. These include Pacific Highway, Avon Street, Beechworth Street, Duff Street and Finlay Street in Turramurra and Fox Valley Road in Wahroonga.

FUTURE EVENTS & TALKS

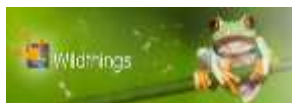
Allen Strom—a remarkable Chief Guardian of Fauna



SATURDAY 20 JUNE, 2015 10am-12 pm **Cost \$35**



Who was Allen Strom (1915-1997) and why in 1958 was he appointed NSW's official "Chief Guardian of Fauna"? How did he forge a generation of young people to commit themselves to the conservation movement before the term 'greenie' was even heard of? Learn about his pivotal role in founding the National Parks Association of NSW and the Nature Conservation Council of NSW—two of NSW's most significant environment organisations. Bookings essential. Course No: 52WK099 Contact WEA, SYDNEY, Ph: (02) 9264 2781 E: info@weasydney.nsw.edu.au www.weasydney.com.au



Let's Get Serious About Habitat *Wildthings Talkfest*

Sunday 19th July from 12noon

Turrumurra Masonic Hall, Pacific Hwy, Turrumurra www.wildthings.org.au



Annie Wyatt & the Conservationists of the National Trust

SATURDAY 27 JUNE 10.30-11.30 Northcott Function Centre, 1 Fennell Street, North Parramatta Enquiries 9635 8149

JOIN FOKE—Ku-ring-gai's environment needs you!

FOKE Membership Form

Name (incl title)

of Home Address:

Suburb:

Postcode:

Telephone:

Email:

Hereby applies for membership of Friends of Ku-ring-gai Environment Inc. (FOKE). In the event of my admission as a member, I agree to be bound by the rules of the Association for the time being in force.

Signature

Date

Membership Fee

Annually January—December

Ordinary \$10

Concession (student/senior citizen) \$ 5

Donation _____

Amount enclosed _____

Date received:

Date admitted:

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