



North Head Sanctuary Foundation

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Thank you

Graham Owen from The Society for Insect Studies gave a very interesting talk on 19 May 2012 that was enjoyed by all. Thank you.

Funding received for a new research project

Judy Lambert

We were delighted to learn, on 22 May, that the Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife has decided to fund our project which will evaluate the ecological effects of both fire and clearing on the Endangered Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub that remains at North Head. Working with Cameron Radford and volunteers from Australian Wildlife Conservancy, we plan to monitor the vegetation, bandicoot activity and probably also the soil insects in patches scheduled for a Hazard Reduction burn in the near future (just waiting for a long enough stretch of fine weather for the bushland to dry out enough for the burn to be effective). Because Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub, like lots of other Australian bushland, needs fire from time to time, we anticipate that we'll see stronger, healthier and more diverse bushland in a year or two after the fire. To help guide future management of the bushland, we'll be comparing the effects of the burn with effects of the recent clearing around the stone walls and with some more selective thinning of dense tea-tree. At various stages during this year-long project, we'll be needing volunteers to help with the monitoring activities.

More information about the project in our next newsletter, but in the meantime, we are very grateful to the Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife for our funding.

Get involved:

Climate Watching on North Head 3 June

Next Climate Watch walk on North Head is on Sunday 3 June starting 10am from the Harbour Trust's Visitor Centre. This walk takes about two hours. Please wear enclosed shoes, a hat, insect repellent and sunscreen and bring water. The walk is free but bookings are essential, contact Rachel Maitland at Earthwatch for more information and to register. Phone 02 8966 9800 or 0403 167 556.

Email: rmaitland@earthwatch.org.au

Frances Bodkin- Author talk

On Saturday 30 June at 2pm, at Manly Art Gallery & Museum hear Aunty Fran talk about her book 'D'harawal Natural Resources Management Practices'. These practices were based upon the Mudong Cycle or the 11-12 year cycle of fire and flood. Enq; Robynne Millward phone 9976 2842, email robynne.millward@manly.nsw.gov.au

Acacia suaveolens



Or Sweet scented wattle is a slim shrub to 2 metres tall with straight narrow leaves. Have a smell next time you see one, also in flower now *Acacia terminalis*, *Acacia ulicifolia* and *Acacia myrtifolia*.

Education Centre – Bandicoot Heaven

Our Education room is open every weekend, from 10am to 4pm in Building 20. Call in and see us for a chat or information

My North Head

Sue Charlton

I have visited my son & daughter-in-law in Manly five times in the past and have always enjoyed walking up to North Head, thinking of it as a lovely walk with wonderful views of Sydney, especially after the metal walkway was established.

My latest visit however has been a much longer one, I was granted a 12 month visa which unfortunately will shortly expire. So, what does North Head mean to me now?

It is so much more than just a nice walk, it means dedication, hard work, friendship, tranquility and learning – and of course there are still the amazing views of the city.

Dedication and hard work are shown by all the volunteers who keep the visitors' centre, education centre and nursery going – giving of their time unstintingly because of their love for their local environment.

Soon after I arrived in June 2011, I enquired about volunteering at the nursery (I'd been pointed in their direction by my son who knew of my love of gardening) and I was welcomed with open arms and I have felt very much at home ever since. I have made friends and learnt such a lot from them about the local flora and fauna – although I have yet to see a bandicoot that we spend so much time developing suitable habitats for! I can now name quite a few of the indigenous shrubs and trees – I know the difference between an *Acacia longifolia* and an *Acacia terminalis* (straightforward for all you Aussie gardeners but not so easy for a visiting Pom). I was thrilled earlier in the year to see such

an abundance of Flannel flowers (*Actinotus helianthi*), one of my favourites.

Unfortunately there is also a slight downside to this acquired learning. When out walking I had always admired the Morning Glory that flowers with such exuberance on the walk from Queenscliff to Freshwater. I now discover that it is a pernicious weed, viewed with intense dislike by my fellow volunteers, as are several other plants I thought were natives!

So much hard work has gone into making the walkway accessible to everyone while still maintaining the beauty of the bush, you feel as if you are such a long way from civilization, it is a very peaceful walk. Whenever I do the walk I never fail to visit the Third Cemetery, despite the sad events that led to so many people being buried there, it is a beautiful, tranquil setting – and what better place to lie with the gorgeous view over South Head and to the city.

Although I have to leave in June, I will be back again to visit family and one of my first activities will be to visit my friends in the nursery – perhaps they'll let me plant again, and hopefully they will be kind enough not to tell me that everything I planted has since died!

I will also look forward to seeing how things have developed and changed during my absence from 'My North Head'.

Native Plant Nursery

Our next planting out/weeding morning is Sunday 17 June from 9am to noon. Morning tea supplied. If you would like to help us, please just turn up at the Nursery and help. Please bring a hat and gloves, wear long sleeve top and enclosed shoes. For further information, please contact Sue at shalmagy@bigpond.net.au

Protecting the walls of North Head

Matthew Taylor

North Head is criss-crossed with walls marking the boundaries past and present of various landowners. Built at different times of sandstone blocks they can be somewhat stark and forbidding, topped with broken glass to keep out the unwanted. However they were also built with gaps at the base, presumably for drainage, which allow the smaller animals like bandicoots to pass through and in later years some unofficial larger gaps have appeared to allow humans to pass through! . All the walls are heritage listed and recently National Parks and the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust undertook some vegetation clearing along the walls to achieve the joint objectives of providing lineal fire breaks for the protection of life and property and also to protect the walls from physical and heat damage from fire. The clearing was done at short notice when funds became available to National Parks and had to be spent quickly before their financial year end cut-off which is mid-May - for reasons best known to the bean counters. While both Parks and the Trust

followed appropriate protocols, and we were alerted to the impending clearing (which gave us the opportunity to tag and save some plants ahead of the clearing) we were not able to save all plants and some were lost. A number of other issues with the clearing were raised by Ken Higgs resulting in an Extraordinary Committee meeting on Saturday 19th May, to agree a way forward.

Issues

- 1) Clearing wider than the 3m planned in REF in some places - unnecessary clearance of valuable ESBS and other bush
- 2) Mulching of ground to suppress weeds inconsistent and too little / too much in places
- 3) Lack of consideration to impacts on water courses / micro habitats such as hanging swampy areas that could be inadvertently drained by careless vehicle tracks
- 4) Necessity of clearing full 3m width on both sides of walls when adequate fire access available close by on parallel tracks/roadways.
- 5) Risk of opening up access to mountain bikes / other vehicles creating unnecessary new/duplicate paths through the bush.

The outcome of this is that we will be meeting shortly with Peter Hay from National Parks to raise these issues and to suggest a protocol for co-operation around any planned clearing on North Head similar to the one in place with the Trust following the previous clearing incidents. He has indicated he is keen to do this to ensure better outcomes for all stakeholders on North Head - including the plants and animals!

Third Cemetery



The inscription on this tombstone has been affected by the weather. It is the grave of William James Hayden, aged 21 years, who died on 25 March 1900 at Quarantine Station from bubonic plague. He was a resident of Marrickville and was buried at midnight.

Behind his gravestone one can see a wooden stake. This marks the grave of George Cooper who was employed on the Darling Harbour wharf. He died at Sydney Hospital on 1 April 1900 and was buried here when it discovered that he died of the plague. The ward in which he died was cleared of patients and disinfected by fumigation.