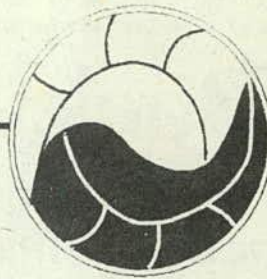


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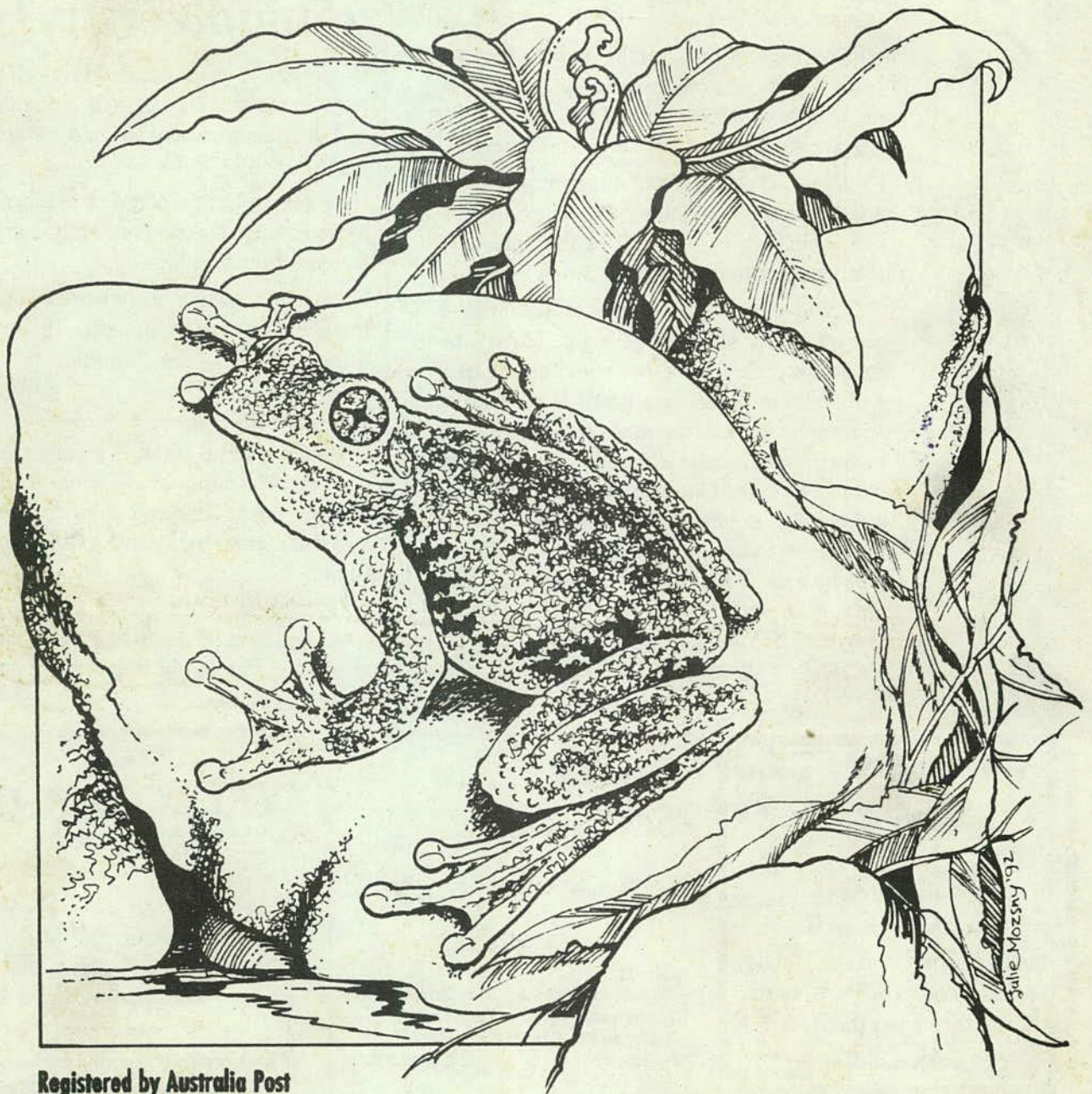


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# Environs

**IN THIS ISSUE:- Backyard Biodiversity, SEFA Protection Bill, Mummel Blockade alert, Tree preservation problems, Tetrapaks**

the north coast environment magazine



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# Backyard Biodiversity

*innocent gardening and landscaping practices involve exotic species which are current or potential threats to rainforests*

If people really wanted to strike a blow to the environmental crisis they should be looking at planting some of the species that are nearly extinct.

The seeds of biodiversity disaster have already been sown in our own backyards, according to John Hunter, National Parks and Wildlife Service's project officer for rainforests.

John said many of our innocent gardening and landscaping practices involve exotic species which are current or potential threats to rainforests in north east New South Wales.

"We've got a lot of species around that are not yet classified as weeds, but could become so because they have been introduced here without their natural predators. For instance, Asparagus fern is running rampant through many of our coastal rainforests, as are a lot of climbing species. Queen or Cocos palms, which are popular in landscaping cause problems - they're being spread around by flying foxes, who love the orange fleshy fruit. Rubber trees are running amok, and some varieties of wild ginger are becoming a problem, particularly on the Dorrigo Mountain Road.

## What is biodiversity?

Biodiversity - biological diversity - is a term which encompasses all living things and their environments as part of an integrated whole.

It represents the total complex of life, not as a fixed system but as a constantly changing pattern of relationships.

Biodiversity focuses on the variety of living things within an environment and how those things relate to one another to form ecosystems.

"However it is possible to reverse the trend, and start protecting biodiversity from our backyards. It is as simple as trying to plant trees local to our region - and knowing which weeds to keep out.

"If people are really concerned they should be looking at local plants, in an effort to maintain genetic integrity of the region," John said.



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**“If people really wanted to strike a blow to the environmental crisis they should be looking at planting some of the species that are nearly extinct.”**

“There are many beautiful plants native to this region, and I think they are under appreciated.

“A place like the north coast has one of the biggest collection of rare and endangered plants in Australia. If people really wanted to strike a blow to the environmental crisis they should be looking at planting some of the species that are nearly extinct. For instance there's a popular exotic plant called the Golden Shower tree around, called the *Cassia fistula*. It could easily be replaced by the *Cassia marksiana* which is very rare, just as beautiful and people would be more satisfied with it.

“There are short term rewards to planting natives as well as the long term benefits to biodiversity. The native plants will outlive the others, take less maintenance, and of course attract more wildlife.

John suggested that people also try to become aware of which weeds to look out for, as there were a lot around that people didn't know about. "Exotic vines are a real problem, but one of the worst is the Madeira Vine", John said. "They're a fleshy leafed vine that grows with tubers and are spreading on the north coast and

climbing into the rainforest canopy. Other enemies of rainforests include the Cats Claw, Bougainvillea, Indian Temple Flower, and trees like Camphor Laurel and Privet.

“The Camphor Laurel is a very long-living tree which likes rainforest soil,” John said. “If you see a patch of Camphor Laurel trees growing, you can almost always bet it was a rainforest area. The trees release a chemical into the soil which doesn’t hurt their own kind but makes it inhospitable to many other sorts of trees. They reproduce by suckers, and have a black berry which birds eat and spread around.”

John said it was worthwhile doing a bit of research to help maintain biodiversity. "Anyone who really wants to know how to identify these weeds could join a naturalist club - that is a way to get the latest information. And there are some very good books around on planting species to attract wildlife."

from Bio News 1992

*(Newsletter of the North East New South  
Wales Biodiversity Study - NSW NPWS)*



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# ICE AGE LEGACY

*Acid Sulphate Soils  
cause fish kills  
after floods*

Scientists have known for many years that drained coastal soils release sulphuric acid. But CSIRO scientists have now worked out why - and have discovered the enormity of the problem. "It is a natural phenomenon that is being exacerbated by human activities, says Ian White of the Centre for Environmental Mechanics, CSIRO.

The problem with drained wetland soils can be traced back to the ending of the last ice age. About 7000 years ago, when the sea level rose as a result of global warming, low-lying land on the margins of continents and islands was flooded. Coastal sediments were pushed landward into what are now estuaries. Mangroves and other vegetation grew in these sediments and when they died organic material accumulated beneath them under anaerobic conditions. Bacteria living in this abundant organic matter extracted energy from the sulphate in sea water by reducing it to iron sulphide, or iron pyrites.

When the soils are drained and the iron pyrites exposed to air, it oxidises to form sulphuric acid. The acid strips aluminium from clay in the soil. The aluminium hydroxide that is formed from this process asphyxiates fish. This happens when, after a long dry period, heavy rains flush out the drained areas and the acid and aluminium are swept into river systems.

At a lake near Tweed Heads, in New South Wales, researchers have recorded extremely acidic waters (Ph 2.6), and aluminium levels as high as 60 milligrams per litre. According to CSIRO scientists White, Willett, and Melville, the potential for disaster is huge. The Tweed Valley alone has 500,000 tonnes of pyrites. The deposits are too large to be neutralised by lime. They say that such soils are also found in Northern Australia, Thailand, the Philippines, Japan, Indonesia, New Zealand, Bangladesh and South America.

Natural tidal flow is enough to keep the iron pyrites under water, say the scientists. "If the water table is kept where it likes to be, there should be no problems," says White. "Crops could be grown on the top 40 centimetres of soil where centuries of leaching have removed the acid sulphate. Land developers will have to pay the price of adding lime to the soil and some areas just shouldn't be developed".

by Ian Anderson,  
from: New Scientist Nov 1991

## Micalo Island

A development currently being proposed for an island with extensive acid sulphate soils deposits is at Micalo Island. It lies in the maze of islands and channels that make up the Clarence River Estuary.

It is proposed that some 2 million cubic metres of the island's acid sulphate soil will be excavated to provide fill for a golf course and building platforms and to produce an artificial lake system. This amount of material (between 3.4 and 6 million tonnes) is estimated to contain up to 6,500 tonnes of pyrites, with the potential to produce the same amount of sulphuric acid if the material comes into contact with oxygen. (It would require some 19,000 tonnes of lime to neutralise this acid.) Effects on marine life would be disastrous if leaching into surrounding water occurs.

To avoid this it is proposed to separate the pyrites from the dredge soil using a simple sluicing process and return it to safe anoxic storage at the bottom of the artificial lakes. As this process has never before been tried many experts are dubious. Chief among the 85 conditions of consent is the requirement for a pilot project to test this and the revocation of consent if the project fails.

For more information on Micalo Island, contact Valley Watch, the local environment group, fighting the development, PO Box 351 Maclean 2463, or call (066) 452 168.



# EYES ON THE ESTUARY

## Call for Clarence River estuary residents

An Estuary Management Committee has been formed by the Clarence River County Council following a seminar late last year of their Flood Mitigation Authority. To succeed, this committee needs to have input from as many estuary residents, users and user groups as possible.

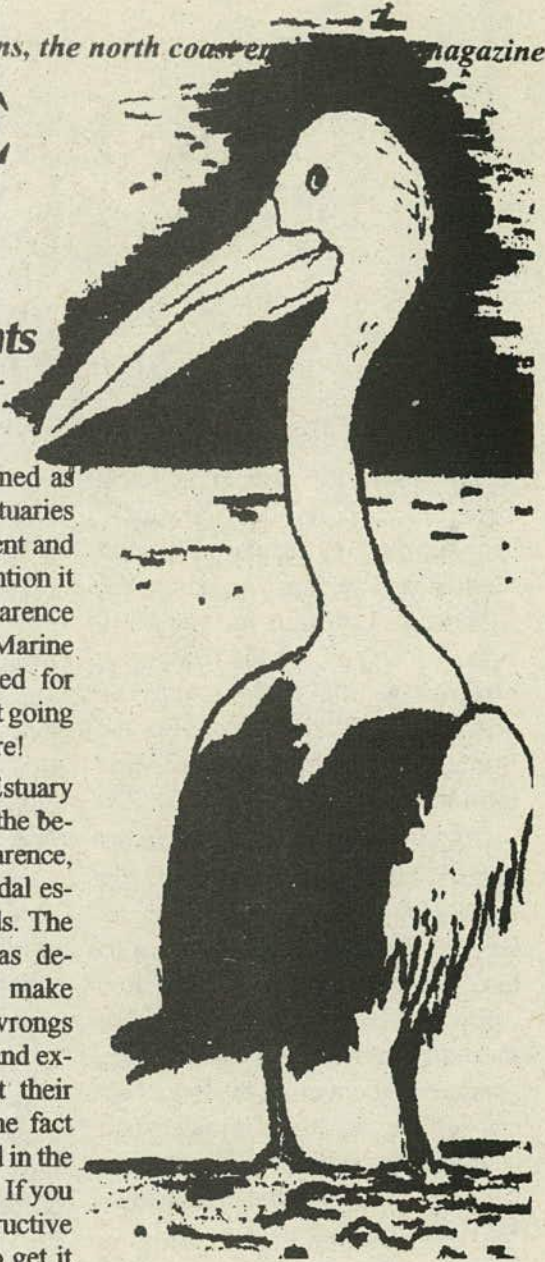
The committee will instigate an Estuary Management Program. Funding for the program will be sought from all user groups and effected councils and shires. I appeal to you all to tell your council representatives to back this initiative as much as they possibly can. Any amount raised by the Estuary Management Committee for this project will be matched by the Public Works Department and doubled.

It has become obvious there needs to be modifications made to the existing estuary management regime in order to protect terrestrial and aquatic habitat and to perpetuate life in the ecosystem and the ocean. Birdlife has suffered and needs to be considered in future estuary and wetland management strategies. One recognised problem is that of Acid Sulphate leaching. This occurs on the Clarence River's floodplains, often caused by lowering the natural water tables with excessively deep drains. It is accepted that Acid Sulphate leaching is responsible for killing masses of microscopic plant life, micro-organisms, juvenile fish and is suspected of being a contributor to Red Spot Disease of fish.

The Clarence River is named as one of the most significant estuaries on the east coast of the continent and must gain the respect and attention it deserves. Ideally, all of the Clarence Estuary should be declared a Marine Protected area and then zoned for appropriate usage, but this isn't going to happen in the too-near future!

The formation of a proper Estuary Management Program marks the beginning of good news for the Clarence, Esk and Woolli Rivers, their tidal estuaries and associated wetlands. The Public Works Department has declared their commitment to make things better and to right some wrongs of the past. Their enthusiasm and expertise will insure they meet their commitment. Best of all is the fact that the public will be involved in the process from beginning to end. If you or your group have any constructive input for this project, begin to get it together - now.

by Mark Merritt



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# Time for the South East Forest Protection Bill

the best chance to save the forests from another 20 years of clear-felling and woodchipping.

A special two year employment package has been developed to assist displaced timber workers and regional economic development. Bob Carr has requested financial support for the compensation package from Paul Keating. The next few weeks are crucial as the Prime Minister considers his response to Bob Carr's request.

SEFA notes that the local timber industry has declined since 1990 (for reasons other than conservation reserves). Two of the four sawmills have shut permanently with the loss of several jobs; Harris-Diashowa have sacked 10 men and are under further pressure to economise; the Bega Forestry Office has shut. It is understood additional sackings will take place in the local industry in the near future.

The South East Forest Protection Bill is accorded the highest priority by the peak environment groups in NSW. The south east issue has always in-

volved both the NSW and Federal Governments and is a 'litmus test' for the environmental policies of political parties.

The last 20 years have seen immense battles to protect the south east old growth forests. In 1969 they were the first large area of Australian forest to be allocated to export woodchipping. Since then, national park gains in the region have been concentrated in the un-loggable forests. Many high conservation value areas have been ignored time and time again. The Bill will create major new national parks in the region.

The Commonwealth Resource Assessment Commission released an authoritative economic study of the region in December 1991. It concluded that the forests are not being managed sustainably and if the current sawlog quota is maintained, the available old growth forests will be gone by 2012.

The study found that the cost of completely reserving the National Estate Forests of NSW and Victoria would cost only \$6.05 for every adult in these States. This figure includes a compensation package for workers.

It also concluded that the economic returns of a world-scale pulp kraft mill in the south east are marginal at best and the rate of return appears too low to justify an investment of over 1 billion dollars. (a figure which does not even include the environmental impacts of such a mill).

The South East Forest Alliance urges you to write to key parliamentarians requesting them to support the South East Forest Protection Bill.

for further information please contact South East Forest Alliance c/- TEC, 18 Argyle St, Sydney, 2000 Ph (02) 247 1737



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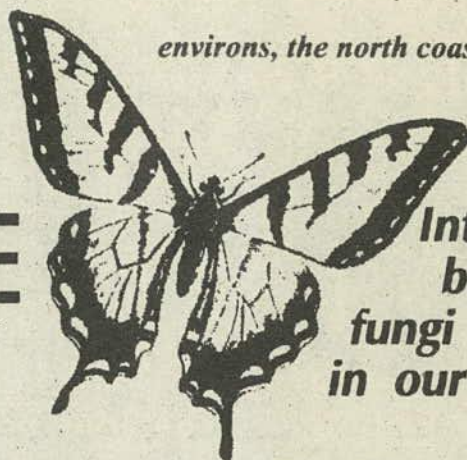
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# FOREST ALLIANCE



**Interrelationships  
between plants,  
fungi and mammals  
in our native forests**

**M**any forest fungi form intimate symbiotic associations with the roots of a variety of shrubs and trees. This association is termed a mycorrhiza, which means "fungus-root". Within some mycorrhizal relationships the fungus ensheathes the host root system and is responsible, among other things, for the uptake of nutrients and water from the soil. In return, the host plant donates carbohydrates necessary for the fungus to continue functioning and to form reproductive fruiting bodies laden with spores.

Research undertaken both overseas and in Australia suggests that the prime habitat requirement for many mycorrhizal fungi is an adequate organic matter layer on the forest floor. This layer is largely provided by decaying logs, branches and other debris from fallen trees.

Many mycorrhizal fungi have an underground fruiting (hypogaeal) habit, which limits the ways in which spore

dispersal may be achieved. Unlike their above ground relatives, hypogaeal fungi cannot usually disperse via water and wind currents. Instead, most rely on their fruiting bodies being dug up from the soil, eaten and dispersed by a variety of fungus feeding animals.

In south-eastern mainland Australia, the most specialised of these fungus feeders are small marsupial rat-kangaroos called Potoroos. At all times of the year, Potoroos actively seek the fruiting bodies of at least 40 species of hypogaeal fungi. Spores, present in the fungal tissue consumed by the Potoroo pass through the gut apparently unscathed, are concentrated in the faeces and deposited back to the forest floor by the animal at another location. In this way new mycorrhizal associations or additions to old ones are made. Other small forest mammals including bandicoots and rats also serve as dispersal agents.

Increasing scientific evidence suggests that fungus feeding mammals such as Potoroos play a vital role in the re-establishment of mycorrhizal fungal populations after forest disturbances such as fire and logging. Where the forest ecosystem is disturbed many of these fungi may initially be deleteriously affected. However, the fruiting bodies of some mycorrhizal fungi apparently survive the disturbance: it is these fungi that the Potoroo may depend upon as a food source immediately after habitat

disturbance. In turn, by consuming the fruiting bodies of these fungi, and dispersing their spores, the potoroo helps to re-establish the fungal root association essential to the regeneration capacity of new seedlings, and hence the regenerating forest.

The interrelationship between forest plants, fungi and fungus feeding mammals is not a simple tripartite association. A myriad of other organisms, mainly soil and plant dwelling microbes such as nitrogen-fixing bacteria, also help to form the basic building blocks of the forest. Additionally, plants play a role in providing materials for the build up of the organic litter layer, which in turn is broken down by a series of decomposer fungi and invertebrates.

The process of mycorrhizal spore dispersal in our native forests serves as an important example of why we should be trying to maintain all aspects of biological diversity. The many organisms involved both directly and indirectly in this process are all vital to the functioning of a forest ecosystem. The implications of this research for forest management will need to be carefully assessed.

by Andrew Claridge, Dept of Forestry, ANU. (BIOLINKS Dec 1991 published by DASSET)



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# MUMMEL OLD GROWTH

# BLOCKADE ALERT

**N**EFA and the Forestry Commission both signed an agreement to jointly assess the values and resources of all the old growth forests of the Walcha Area. NEFA has fulfilled their part of the agreement but the Commission has refused to cooperate in a number of ways, one being a refusal to provide important information and assistance.

"The Commission have failed to accept the reports and literature showing that the area is likely to have significant heritage, biodiversity, catchment, economic and conservation resources and values. Their own management plans clearly state the need for further assessment of the old growth forests in the headwaters of the rivers draining the Walcha Plateau. They have never done that assessment and do not intend to do so. This is why we are blockading at Mummel Gulf.

"NEFA has provided the Forestry Commission with 9 letters from scientists and government bodies, such as the National Forestry Inventory, to substantiate that the process for assessment we have initiated is appropriate, and extremely necessary for immediate identification of the old growth forest at Mummel Gulf.

"Many areas of remnant old growth forest are currently being targeted by the Forestry Commission, as they continue to prop up an industry wrought with illegal and unsustainable

*"The Forestry Commission are intending to log Mummel Gulf immediately", said NEFA spokesperson, Mr Steed "despite the icy conditions, we must again force the Commission to properly assess the resources and values of old growth forests, this time at Walcha.*

practices. The timber industry is surviving off the very last fragments of a public resource that is being incompetently managed by the Commission (as found by the Public Accounts Committee, 1990). The Forestry Commission, in the adjacent districts to Walcha, are running out of resource and cannot send the timber industry into areas of regrowth forest because of previous overcutting.

"Information that we have accumulated over the month long moratorium indicates that the Mummel Gulf area (comprising approx 3500ha) is highly significant, and includes approx a third of what remains of this type of old growth tableland forest throughout northern NSW. NEFA has made a commitment to ensuring that the forests are managed sustainably, in the belief that future generations have a basic right to experience the last remaining areas of these magnificent ancient forests, which are beyond economic value".

## BACKGROUND

**M**ummel is an area of urgent concern, occupying the headwaters of Mummel River and has approx 3000 hectares of unlogged forest, of which only a small proportion is tall old growth forest on moderate topography, the balance being rainforest and poorer forest on steep slopes. Logging has commenced within Compartment 134 of Enfield State Forest.

The tableland eucalypt forests of the plateau are characterised by high densities of old, gnarled trees with an understorey of grass and sedges. These forests support very high densities of Red necked Wallabies, Swamp Wallabies, Gray Kangaroos, Greater Gliders and Wombats. There are probably a variety of endangered species in the area.

Being from 1100 to over 1300 metres high, the escarpment has a





## BACKGROUND BACKGROUND

high annual rainfall with frosts and snowfalls in winter.

In June 1990 the then Premier, Greiner, announced a commitment to prepare Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) for most remaining old growth forests in north-east NSW. The map that accompanied the announcement clearly identified that the Mummel old-growth would have an EIS prepared for it before it was logged. Along with over 10,000ha of other old-growth forests Mummel mysteriously disappeared from the later detailed list issued by the Forestry Commission.

### How much will it Cost you to Log Mummel?

Last year (1990/91) the Walcha-Nundle Management Area lost \$11,500 on its eucalypt logging operations and \$228,100 on its pine

plantations, despite numerous hidden subsidies. In other words, the public had to pay the loggers to cut down old growth forest and convert it into sawn wood and export woodchips. In return some 1,300ha of irreplaceable old growth forests belonging to the public were decimated, populations of forest dependent animals reduced, soils eroded and streams degraded.

The cost of conservation is a burden that society as a whole must bear, thus there needs to be a community adjustment program to dampen impacts on local communities. Assisting employment of people to tend plantation and assistance to establish pine processing facilities would help put the timber industry on track for the future.

*Compiled from NEFA Sources*



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*GATT, General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. It's enough to turn you off and let your eyes automatically move on to a more interesting headline. But STOP. This concerns you. GATT is dangerous. It seeks to control your life so that a number of already rich people get richer.*

Concerned people from most countries of the world are attempting to fight this new menace. But the vested interests involved are extremely powerful. And since the mere mention of trade talks makes most people yawn, they have succeeded in keeping from the public at large news of a process which is like a revised hi-tech form of colonialism. Their intention is to make the world economy a friendlier, safer environment for multinational corporations, particularly those from the USA, Japan and rich EC countries.

GATT aims to remove all non-tariff trade barriers, which means every country gives up its right to determine what should or should not enter its borders. For example Britain and most European countries have stricter controls on injecting hormones into meat than the US. And these would be lifted as they are a barrier to free trade. Environmental laws everywhere would be revised as GATT wishes an international (GATT) code to take the place of current, more stringent rules won after years of hard

work by environmental and consumer lobbies.

Among other regulations GATT has already attacked are the Danish recycling laws, a US asbestos ban, a Canadian fish conservation programme, the EC's meat hormone ban, Canadian provincial-level reforestation programmes. Environmentalists had succeeded in getting legislation passed in the US that banned fisherfolk from using a method of tuna fishing which also killed dolphins. Now Mexico has gone to GATT complaining that the ban on the dolphin killing method is an unfair restriction on Mexican trawlers. And even a US Senator known for his conservatism joined the fight against GATT, furious that a US law could be overturned by Mexican or other GATT representatives.

Cultural or religious bans will not be tolerated either, so Islamic or Jewish populations will no longer be able to restrict the entry of pork products into their countries. And the people of the North are about to lose a big battle against safe foods. GATT seeks to

impose a set of standards which are consistently weaker than those of the US or EC countries and which will mean that Americans and Europeans will be forced to accept food laced with DDT.

Congress Watch activists, frustrated at not being able to make their point - neither US Senators nor Congress persons wanted to read boring GATT reports - dumped broccoli on every Congress person's table one morning with a note saying that after GATT regulations take hold, "the broccoli you eat will contain 33 times more DDT, 21 times more Permethrin, three times more Aldrin and five times more Heptachlor". Only then did the politicians sit up and read the report.

Already people from every nation have united to fight GATT. It has to be a world campaign. Join it. Your life depends on it.

from: "A Letter from India" by Mari Marcel Thekaekara, New Internationalist May 1992



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# State of the World 1992

by the World Watch Institute

***The world today is either in the early stages of an Environmental Revolution or on the verge of environmental collapse and economic decline.***

**S**tate of the World 1992" portrays a planet at risk. And it shows us that the policy decisions we make during this decade will determine whether our children live in a world of development or decline.

The trends are grim: Between 50 and 400 plant and animal species are being extinguished each day. The protective ozone shield over heavily populated areas is thinning twice as fast as scientists thought just a few years ago. Fossil fuel burning spewed nearly 6 billion tons of heat-trapping carbon into the atmosphere in 1991. The Earth's surface was warmer in 1990 than in any year since record-keeping began in the mid-nineteenth century; 6 of the 7 warmest years on record have occurred since 1980. And world population is growing by 92 million people annually, equal to adding another Mexico each year.

Eliminating these threats to our future requires change of revolutionary proportions. It requires no less



## BOOK REVIEW

than an end to the fossil fuel age and the creation of efficient, solar based energy systems, new transportation networks that lessen automobile use, redistribution of land and wealth, equality of the sexes in all cultures, and a rapid shift to smaller families.

"State of the World 1992" contends that we already know what we need to do, and that we already have the technologies needed for the Environmental Revolution to succeed. Whether we achieve the Environmental Revolution is therefore primarily a question of individual and corporate commitment, social change, and political will. If the Environmental Revolution succeeds, "State of the World 1992" asserts, it will rank with the Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions as one of the great transformations in human history.

"State of the World 1992" lucidly examines our options - for feeding our billions, for making our cities livable,

for preserving the diversity of life on Earth. It looks at the employment prospect in a sustainable economy, one that does not consume the natural resources and systems on which it depends. And it points to emerging international cooperation to restore the world's abused environment.

"State of the World 1992" has been translated into 23 languages and in the absence of a comprehensive annual assessment by the United Nations or any national government, is now accorded semi-official status by national governments, UN agencies, and the international development community. More than 1,300 US college and university courses, - ranging from biology to history, geography to political science, - use the volume. As the New York Review of Books points out, "State of the World deals with calamitous events rationally and constructively, and always offers logical solutions".

*Published for the  
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by W W Norton,  
New York & London*



***July 1992, page 11***



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# Clause 14 green spots WILL THEY TURN BROWN?

‘it seemed the majority of the committee would prefer to see no green spots on the map at all’

**OK** who remembers the long running saga of ‘Clause 14’? (The clause in Nambucca’s Environment Plan which is a type of Tree Preservation Order over some sensitive types of rural land).

Well, the council committee established to try to weaken this clause, The *Clearing and Scenic Protection Committee*, largely led by Mr Bob Frank of the NSW Farmers Federation, met on June 18 and decided to overturn the recommendation of the Chief Town Planner. This was that the clause should effect trees of 500mm girth or 4m tall. This is the tree size used in Council’s old Tree Preservation Order for the towns. Instead, the committee voted to retain the tree size of 30cm in diameter (not girth) - a much larger size, hence more clearing could take place without council consent. This was despite the fact that a National Parks and Wildlife Service officer was present and explained that some *Melaleucas*

and palms don’t ever get to that size so would receive no protection. It was also despite a public exhibition period which saw 13 submissions in favour of a smaller tree size and one against. (Guess who?) So the wrangle goes on.

## NAMBUCCA



### Tree Preservation Plan

Clause 14 as it now stands in the Environment Plan is much stronger than either the change supported by the Town Planner or the position taken by the Farmers. So while the wrangle continues we have quite good protection of sensitive rural areas such as steep country, wetlands and rainforest remnants in that landholders must apply to council for permission to clear.

At the meeting the Town Planner showed a map of the shire with a sprinkling of green spots on it which were the areas to be effected if the Town Planner’s ‘compromise’ position was adopted. There weren’t many areas at all, mainly because one of the changes proposed is that, if another government authority’s permission for clearing is required, council permission will not be needed. Soil Conservation Service (now CALM - Dept of Conservation and Land Management) require landholders to get their permission to clear steep lands and river-side strips. If Clause 14 is changed to either the compromise position or what the Farmers want, huge areas will be deleted from it and the decision passed from the local body of council to the state department.

Despite this it seemed the majority of the committee would prefer to see no green spots on the map at all, ie no clause 14 or the weakest possible clause and therefore no vegetation protection in rural areas.

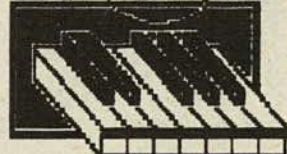
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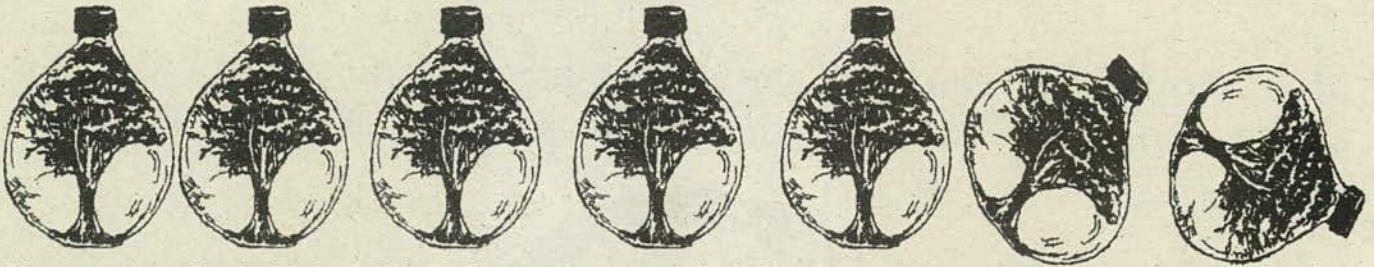


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The committee also decided to hold a meeting with government departments regarding the 300m strip along the western bank of Warrell Creek which is included in clause 14 and is part of the proposed Warrell Creek Nature Reserve. The committee hopes that this meeting will settle "one way or another" the proposed Warrell Creek Nature Reserve. Mr Frank owns land in the area so he declared an interest and didn't vote on the item.

The meeting will be closed to the public and only effected landholders will be invited. This is despite my argument that the nature reserve is a matter of wider public interest. The committee also rejected my request

that scenic routes and rainforest remnants be reinstated into the proposed changes of the clause. *I might also say that council has endorsed all recommendations of the committee.*

So, in summary, we still have quite a good protection mechanism for sensitive rural areas (the existing clause 14) but only because the Farmers and the various bureaucrats continue to argue and cannot agree on *how much* weaker it should be.

Bear in mind that the previous Town Planner, Mr John Massey, who drafted the clause, did it to avoid the necessity of having to define (& defend) environmental zonings to protect sensitive rural areas. Now that

the green spots have appeared on the map - and the committee has resolved that all landowners in the green spot areas should be notified (so they can fight it, presumably) - we seem to be defeating the original purpose of protecting vegetation by word definition, rather than specific mapping.

I believe if we move to mapping we might as well base it on a flora and fauna study (due to be done next year by council). The committee made one good decision: to invite a rep of NVCA onto the committee (as I am now on as a council rep) so **PLEASE SOMEONE** come forward to help me with this most important issue.

by Lyn Orrego

## Greening Australia and Seedbanks

A joint program for the collection of tree seed has been initiated between Greening Australia, the NSW Logging Association, and local schools. The logging crews will collect seed-bearing branchlets off trees felled in harvesting operations, using equipment supplied by Greening Australia. The seed will then be distributed to local schools, which

will carry out the drying and harvesting.

Seeds will then go to the Forestry Commission in order to build up a "Seed Bank". The seed will then be provided, free of charge, to groups willing to it for use in reforestation projects, with a demonstrable community benefit; eg: Landcare, and Koala care groups, and for direct seeding trials. The

scheme has commenced with a pilot project in the Coffs Harbour area, and will soon be expanded to the Richmond, Tweed and Clarence catchments.

Greening Australia also has a list of local nurseries and seed banks. Available at our new offices in 76 Conway St. Lismore. Phone (066)220 076)





# Ban Milk Cartons

**In Australia the ecology movement has fought a campaign on the use of milk cartons, otherwise known as Tetra Paks.**

There are a number of good, rational reasons for the banning of milk cartons from the consumer cycle including:

① The importation of the cardboard from Sweden which costs some \$30 Million to Australia.

② Some 600 chemicals are involved in the development of cartons.

③ Cartons are not being recycled successfully as opposed to glass bottles.

④ Cartons actually cost the consumer more than the milk bottle. (The public is being successfully hoodwinked)

Milk cartons have become a symbolic issue for environmentalists, and a baffling issue for the general public.

Despite the rational reasons for eliminating milk cartons in favour of glass bottles milk cartons look like being entrenched into our patterns of consumption and waste.

The reason milk cartons were slipped in under the consumers nose are varied and naturally enough based upon the dictates of vested interests. The purveyors of these cartons could make more profits from selling the convenience angle. The companies associated with cartons have a complex network of investments (some of it Australian) that create a composite product that sells the packaging as much as the actual product. The worst motivation however, and the one that



reflects the very heart of our expedient economic system, is that carton manufacture is intrinsically wasteful, which equates into more consumption of resources and growth.

The promotion of cartons and their image is a small example of psycho-economic exploitation. The public mind has been conditioned and befuddled by advertising propaganda. Most product campaigns that entail controversy on environmental issues, automatically receive a green propaganda budget. This sort of corporate portrayal has been rightly termed "information pollution." (The public pays for this in the product cost). This can hardly be matched by the meagre resources of the conservationists.

Our society embraces an imbalanced economic system that must have growth and as much of it as possible. It is caught in a bind which is highlighted by the tensions between the greenies and the commercialists. There is in fact no rational economic control and by and large anything that

can be made will be made provided it has a market. Its called the free for all of the Free Market. (Government regulations control standards and safety but its the terms of reference are confined).

Milk cartons should be banned from production and phased out accordingly. This condition should apply because of the detrimental effects to our environment and the cost to local jobs and production. Some supermarkets say there are more breakages with bottles. But if cartons became unavailable then you would be amazed at how quickly new and better handling technology would eventuate.

Milk cartons however will remain, because the real issue is one of economics, control by vested interests and the lack of rational distribution and maximum utilisation of resources.

by Craig Walter

from PROUT News (via Pegasus)

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# CSIRO Dispels Greenhouse Myths

**‘We know that these increases will affect the earth’s climate’**

A senior scientist moved to dispel some of the popular myths which have grown up in Australia about the greenhouse effect.

Chief of CSIRO’s Division of Atmospheric Research Dr Brian Tucker said that a degree of pseudoscience and misunderstanding had crept into public discussion of greenhouse, and CSIRO had a responsibility to put the record straight.

“Scientists are worried that some of the information now getting out to the public could lead people either to dismiss the threat or just as mistakenly, to exaggerate it,” he said. “Greenhouse is a vital issue for all of us, so it is important that it is properly understood.” Dr Tucker made his comments as scientists, government and industry met at the Climate Change Science Forum in Canberra to discuss greenhouse issues.

Dr Tucker said it was important that people realised the greenhouse effect had not gone away. New

Research findings in the past five years have tended to confirm earlier predictions on global warming.

“One myth which is current in the media is that scientists have somehow backed away from their earlier predictions about just how pervasive an enhanced greenhouse effect could be,” he said.

“That is not true. The science is standing up extremely well to scrutiny and further experiments.”

“On the basis of very strong theory we can show that greenhouse gases

keep the Earth’s surface temperatures warmer than they would otherwise be, and there is irrefutable evidence that human activities are causing the atmospheric levels of these greenhouse gases to increase.”

“We know unequivocally that greenhouse gases are increasing. We know that these increases will affect the earth’s climate. What we don’t know for certain is by how much and how quickly.”

“The best scientific models from around the world tell us there is likely to be a warming of about one degree Celsius over the next 40 years, accompanied by a sea level rise of about 20 centimetres.”

Our message is that despite the uncertainties we are convinced that the issue is potentially serious, so scientists have a duty to speak out.”

(via Pegasus)

## WALLSTOCK THANKS

NVCA wishes to thank all persons who helped with their fundraising activities at Wallstock Music Festival. Thanks to BOSCA for providing bins, Frances Hunt for the venue, and all our members.

And most importantly, thanks to all the bands:

HEP CATS  
JOHNNY & THE CUT BACKS  
THE LOVE CLUB  
APOCALIPSTICK  
RAW

DYNAMIC LIFTERS  
MORGANS RAIDERS  
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## THIS MONTH'S COVER

Peron's Tree Frog - *Litoria peronii*

**T**his frog's name comes from the 19th Century French naturalist Francois Peron who together with scientific artist Charles-Alexandre Le Sueur, arrived in Australia in 1802 in a French ship under Captain Nicolas Baudin. They were responsible for collecting and sending back to Paris thousands of zoological specimens, a number of which bear their names.

Our first encounter with a Peron's Tree Frog happened in Bellingen...in a refrigerated soft drink cabinet!! He was rescued from his cold prison and brought to our place where he soon made himself at home. His strange loud 'creaking gate' call could often be heard around the yard, as he tried to attract a lady friend. For a while he even took up residence in the laundry, joining the numerous Green Tree Frogs (*Litoria caerulea*) who were living on top of the cupboard!

Peron's Tree Frog is quite large - males reach up to 6.9cm long. It has the ability to change its colour for camouflage - grey-brown skin with small green spots can become brighter or darker to blend in with mossy rocks or tree bark. Other distinguishing features are its eyes, which are cross-shaped when the pupils are contracted, and a strong yellow and black pattern on its thighs and armpits.

Many of our frogs are joining the list of rare and threatened species - not surprising when you consider their diet consists of insects, often the ones that someone has just sprayed with insecticide. The frogs on our property are valued highly as very efficient members of our pest control system - much cheaper and safer than chemicals.

**JULIE**

## Environs

the north coast  
environment news  
magazine

Environs is published every month on a voluntary basis to bring together reports from a large number of environmental organisations. Many groups are affiliated with Environs, including the Bellingen Environment Centre, and the Nambucca Valley Association.

Editorial contributions are welcomed. They should include the authors name and phone number and should be sent to: Environs, PO Box 123, Bowraville 2449. Subscriptions are \$12 for 12 issues. Advertisements may be lodged with Julie Mozsny by phoning (065) 695 360. Editorial for Environs is by Carol Margolis and the Environs team. Layout and typesetting is by Mike Holland. Cover artwork is by Julie Mozsny.

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