

# BLUE GUM HIGH FOREST RESOURCE KIT



FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS- STAGES 1, 2 AND 3.



## Foreword

The Department of Environment and Conservation, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, and the Friends of Lane Cove National Park have developed this environmental education resource.

It is intended that the Blue Gum High Forest (BGHF) resource inspire teachers to take their primary students to Dalrymple Hay Nature Reserve and Browns Forest on Mona Vale Road in St Ives to develop an appreciation and indeed a 'love' of the natural world.

This resource assists teachers in developing a unit of study that complements Board of Studies syllabus outcomes from Human Society and Its Environment and Science and Technology K to 6. The resource also connects students with their local natural environment.

The BGHF kit covers a variety of key learning areas and topics. The kit is designed to engage, motivate and inspire both students and their teachers to become stewards of a uniquely Australian forest.

# Contents

Foreword.....	2
Welcome.....	4
Introduction to the Blue Gum High Forest (BGHF).....	5
Kit Orientation.....	6
Book & Video Links.....	7
Activity Snapshots.....	8
Extension Activities.....	9

## Unit Lessons

Need for Shelter - COGs Local places.....	10
Wet and Dry Environments - COGs Local places .....	16
Australia: You're Standing in It – COGs Local environments.....	24
British Colonisation of Australia – COGs Our fleeting past.....	31
State and National Parks - COGs Local environments .....	35
Environment Matters - COGs Living land.....	39
Fauna of BGHF.....	43
Flora of BGHF.....	44
Background Information .....	45
Web Sites .....	47
Source your Resource & Kit Resources List.....	49
Risk Assessment .....	50
References .....	51



## Welcome to the **Blue Gum High Forest Discovery Kit**

Children's lives in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century are becoming increasingly detached from the natural world around them. This resource aims to provide teachers with background information, lesson plans and resource ideas to enable their students to have a direct experience in a local natural heritage site, the **Blue Gum High Forest** in St Ives, Sydney.

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service has developed this **Blue Gum High Forest Discovery Kit** for primary school students in Stages 1 and 2 for units of work in Human Society and Its Environment K-6 and the Science and Technology K-6 syllabus. The resource kit could also be used for Stage 3 students undertaking the Environment Matters unit in the Science and Technology K-6 syllabus.

The teaching and learning in this resource endeavours to impart positive environmental values, behaviours and stewardship to you as the teacher and to your students. The resource kit includes pre and post excursion lessons and discovery activities for on site at Dalrymple Hay Nature Reserve and Browns Forest where your students will experience first hand a Blue Gum High Forest in their local environment.

The logistics of planning any school excursion is an important part of a successful excursion. We recommend one to two classes visiting the forest at any one time. If your school does need to take a larger group of students at one time, we recommend having each class stay with their teacher and be divided into smaller groupings, i.e. table groups with each of these groups assigned a parent helper during the excursion and these smaller groups staying with their larger class group.


We also recommend that during the excursion each student brings a green plastic rubbish bag that can be used to sit on and the teacher carries Stingoes in his/her pocket that is easy and quick to get to in case of jumping ant bites.

The forest is a wonderful place for students, their teachers and parents to visit, however thoughtful excursion planning will ensure that wonderment of our local natural world is reflected upon.

Enjoy your visits!

## INTRODUCTION

### Blue Gum High Forest – Endangered and Special



Blue Gum High Forest once covered the ridge-tops of the North Shore from Crows Nest to Hornsby and west to Pennant Hills. When Governor Arthur Phillip first traversed the site in 1788, the Blue Gum High Forest covered approximately 3720 hectares. Today, this once magnificent forest is fragmented into many tiny remnants and it only occurs in the Sydney Basin Bio-region – nowhere else in the world. Estimates of the amount of remaining forest from aerial photographs and information from Local Government Councils indicates that less than 140 hectares remain.

Blue Gum High Forest occurs at altitudes higher than 100 metres above sea level and is predominantly restricted to deep soils derived from Wianamatta Shale in high rainfall areas that receive more than 1100mm per year.

#### An Ecological Community

Blue Gum High Forest is a tall open forest on deep shale-derived soils with high rainfall. Its dominant trees are Sydney blue gum (*Eucalyptus saligna*) and Blackbutt (*Eucalyptus pilularis*). Other trees include forest oak (*Allocasuarina torulosa*) and Sydney red gum (*Angophora costata*). It comprises a tall canopy of dominant trees, that may reach a height of over 30m, above a mid-storey of shrubs and small trees and a diverse ground layer.

As of April 2007, the NSW Scientific Committee, established by the Threatened Species Conservation Act, has made a Final Determination to list the Blue Gum High Forest in the Sydney Basin Bioregion, as a critically endangered ecological community. The forest is already listed as critically endangered under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

Only 4.5% of the original Blue Gum High Forest remains. The importance of this remaining forest cannot be underestimated in its unique grouping of interdependent plants, from dominant canopy trees to tiny ground orchids providing a range of habitats for a variety of native animals. Several tall trees may be approximately 200 years old providing much needed nesting hollows for birds and mammals.

The largest remaining tract of Blue Gum High Forest ecological community can be found in St Ives along Mona Vale Road. You can also see Blue Gum High Forest in Sheldon Forest Reserve off Warrigal Road, Turramurra, in Wahroonga between Burns Road and Water Street, at Maddison Reserve in Pymble, at Ludovic Blackwood Reserve and Observatory Park on Pennant Hills Road and part of Cumberland Forest at Pennant Hills.

The threats to Blue Gum High Forest should not be underestimated as urban development claims more forestland further fragmenting it. Remnants are degraded by the impacts of stormwater, weeds, introduced animals and urban developments that impede the movements of wildlife.



## How to use the Kit

The **Blue Gum High Forest Discovery Kit** is divided into two parts;

### **PART ONE**

Identifies Stages and accompanying units of work in both;  
***Human Society & Its Environment K-6 (HSIE)*** and  
***Science & Technology K-6 (S&T)***.

Activity plans are listed for each stage and unit of work with a section on pre-excursion, excursion and post-excursion activities. Unit outcomes are also listed and a pre-excursion video to present to your students is included in the kit.

- *Book Links*
- *Activity Snapshots*
- *Stages and Units of Work*
- *Lesson Plans*
- *Pre-excursion*
- *Excursion*
- *Post-excursion*

#### **About the DVD**

- *Why use and when to use*
- *What to expect*

### **PART TWO**

Contains background information and resources for classroom use

- *Background Information*
- *Fauna and Flora Lists*
- *Resources*
- *Risk Assessment*