FLAT ROCK GULLY
Flat Rock Gully, covering approx. 10 ha., is rich in both natural and cultural heritage. The name originates from the large flat rock where the creek was crossed (now under Flat Rock Bridge, Willoughby Road. See map). Two creeks from Artarmon and St. Leonards merge here to form Flat Rock Creek.

Aboriginal History:
The Cammeraygal Aboriginal tribe once lived in the area with the estuarine tidal flats providing their source of food. The last recorded encampment of Aborigines in this area was in the 1870’s to the west of Willoughby Road and known as Struggle Town. The Australian Museum has found evidence of 6,000 years of habitation in this area.

European History:
Suspension Bridge: The Suspension Bridge (originally Northbridge) was opened in 1892. The timber decking was from local ironbark and the sandstone from a quarry in Castle Cove. The company that built the bridge went into liquidation and the Government eventually rebuilt the bridge (no longer a suspension bridge) in 1939 and named it the Cammeray Bridge.

Council Tip: In 1934 the Walter Burley Griffin Incinerator was built. However it closed in 1967 when it became obsolete. From the 1940s industrial and domestic waste were tipped and burnt in the area on both sides of Flat Rock Drive and into Flat Rock Gully. This ceased in 1985.

The landscaped area on the east side of Flat Rock Drive is situated on 30m of tip and soil fill. Unfortunately the Naremburn Waterfall situated just east of Flat Rock Bridge was filled in with Council refuse in the 1930s.

Other points of historical interest: See Map
Fatty Dawson’s Ruins.
Henry Lawson’s Cave.
Walter Burley Griffin’s Incinerator.

References:

PLANT COMMUNITIES:
Note the contrasting vegetation types on the sun-drenched north-facing and the cool, shady south-facing sides of the gully. Down the south-facing slope you pass through stands of Allocasuarina littoralis and into the closed Coachwood forest along the creek.

Open forests of Blackbutt, Peppermint and Sydney Red Gum, are spread through the gully, with areas of heathland, and Kunzea ambigua (Tick bush).

YOUR ‘BIT’ FOR THE BUSH
➤ Keep dogs on leads and clean up after them.
➤ Keep on the track – to stop erosion.
➤ Carry out all rubbish – keep reserves clean
➤ Never pick wildflowers and plants – just look at them
➤ Do not disturb the native animals.
➤ Never dump garden clippings and rubbish in or near reserve areas.

BUSH REGENERATION WORK:
Following adoption of the Urban Bushland Plan of Management by Council there is bush regeneration work being carried out on this site by Council and two local volunteer BushCare groups. The Flat Rock Landcare Group supports site works and community education projects through sponsorship from local companies. If you would like to help please phone Open Space Branch ☎ 9777 7756.

WALKING TRACK:
4km – rugged bush track (slippery when wet) with steep sections and creek crossings. After rain the creek crossings may be impassable.
Public Transport: State Transit Bus routes 202-8 run across Cammeray Bridge. Alight at the corner of Strathallen Ave and Cliff Ave and walk down to Tunks Park.
Bus routes 257 and 273 run along Willoughby Road. Alight at the corner of Garland Rd. and Willoughby Rd.

For more information:
Phone: 9777 7755
Bushland Section, Open Space Branch
Willoughby City Council
PO Box 57 CHATSWOOD 2057
**BUSHLAND THREATS**
The urbanisation of the upper reaches of Flat Rock Creek has led to significant impacts occurring along its lower reaches. Industrial and household pollutants, rapid flooding due to urban run-off, and the introduction of weed species via the creek system, are factors causing bushland degradation.

**AQUATIC LIFE**
Despite human impact the creek system still provides habitat for a number of aquatic species including mullet, common jolly tails, striped gudgeons, long-finned eels, long-necked turtles, frogs and water birds.

**COACHWOOD FOREST**
*Ceratopetalum apetalum* or Coachwood is the prominent tree species in this area of marginal temperate rainforest. At the creek crossing there are sandstone walls constructed during the 1890’s and 1930’s.

**WILDLIFE**
Many bird species can be seen, e.g. the eastern yellow robin, grey fantail, eastern whipbird, tawny frogmouth, golden whistler, superb blue wren, spotted pardalote, and red-browed firetail. Spherical nests in trees (dreys) indicate the presence of ringtail possums. Eastern water dragons may be seen sunning themselves on rocks.

**SOUTHERN TRIBUTARY – OLD WHARF**
The creek was once navigable up to this point by barges collecting quarried sandstone from the West Street Quarry. Little evidence of the wharf remains due to siltation and weed invasion.

**‘FATTY’ DAWSON’S RUINS**
These ruins are the remains of a sandstone house and garden built by Fatty Dawson who ran a piggery nearby in the 1870’s.

**PRIVET FOREST**
Privet is one of the most common weed species present in Flat Rock Gully, its seeds being spread by birds. A short side-track here leads to a dry sandstone retaining wall which bordered the former orchards.

**HENRY LAWSON’S CAVE**
Early this century Henry Lawson spent many a time retiring from society in this cave located opposite the rear of Willoughby Leisure Centre’s carpark.