



LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN

Local member, Mark Coure, has congratulated the local community and OFF on the outcome of objections to proposed detrimental changes to the GRC Local Environmental Plan. He has stated that he is in regular contact with the Dept of Planning and will ensure that the LEP is finalised in its current form.

MISSING 2018 GRC VEGETATION MAPPING REPORT

This report which would have been of great assistance to submissions by the public has now been released to a persistent OFF member. If you would like a copy please go to:

<https://www.georgesriver.nsw.gov.au/Council/Governance/Codes,-Policies-and-Registers>

KOALAS

The plight of koalas throughout NSW is dire, with the prediction they could be extinct in the wild by 2050. So in this context, the Report of the NSW Upper House Parliamentary Inquiry brought down on 30 June 2020 should be the basis of urgent government action. The report calls for the NSW Government to "urgently prioritise the protection of koala habitat and corridors in the planning and implementation stages of urban growth areas." It made 42 recommendations for koala protection state-wide.

OFF members are great defenders of the Koala Colony along the upper Georges River north - south corridor from Appin and Campbelltown and onto Glenfield before it strikes out east crossing Holsworthy Army lands towards Heathcote, Woronora and beyond. Because the colony is healthy and breeding, it's on the move to find new habitat, and the new housing estates to the west and south of Appin are significant barriers, and roadkill on Heathcote and Appin Roads is a particularly serious risk to its viability.

So it should be of interest that the parliamentary Inquiry made the particular recommendations paraphrased below, with respect to the protection of those koalas, in a sense our local population:

Recommendations

4. The government and (Campbelltown) council must secure protection of the koala colony and habitat before allowing any more development of the Figtree Hill Estate (at Mt Gilead, by Lend Lease).
5. The (upper) Georges River Koala National Park should be created.
12. The government should ensure the combination of underpasses and overpasses and fencing in areas of koala habitat.
13. The government must provide an overpass and underpass on Appin Rd to serve wildlife corridor entry points.
14. The Roads and Maritime Service should provide, manage and maintain exclusion fencing along Appin Rd.



For more information including a full list of the report's findings and recommendations see:

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/inquiries/Pages/inquiry-details.aspx?pk=2536#tab-reportsandgovernmentresponses>

<https://saveourkoalas.org/>

ANIMALS HIDING IN OUR CITIES FACING EXTINCTION

The Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) is campaigning for stronger Australian environmental laws by highlighting that nearly half of Australia's nationally threatened animals can be found in our urban areas. Weak environment laws have let urban sprawl destroy the habitat of Australia's threatened species in the ACF report. Read more here:

https://au.news.yahoo.com/surprising-list-of-animals-hiding-in-our-cities-which-face-extinction-060304256.html?soc_src=social-sh&soc_trk=fb

NARRABRI GAS PROJECT

The Independent Planning Commission (IPC) extended the submission date to 12th August. Approximately 23,000 submissions had been received when the OFF submission was submitted: The IPC is expected to make its decision in September. <http://off.oatleypark.com/2020/07/20/narrabri-gas-project-off-submission-to-the-independent-planning-commission-on-the/>

OFF 2020 RESEARCH GRANTS

OFF again offered research students some funds to assist with their projects. The research funds are provided by you through your donations to OFF. The Treasurer advised that there was \$6000 available. We contacted a number of the major NSW universities advising of the availability of the funds and asking them to advise their students of the availability of the grants. This year we received four applications. They were all excellent and it was difficult for the OFF research committee to prioritise them. Eventually, the committee agreed to fund three of the applications.

The three projects to be funded are:

- Jingyi Ding - University of NSW – Environmental drivers of woody plant structure from the coast to the desert.
- Sam Allan – UTS – Habitat associations, climate change and range limits of the iconic weedy sea dragon on the east coast of Australia.
- Ben Stepanovitch - University of NSW – Ecosystem effects of western quoll reintroduction on prey species inside a fenced reserve.

As part of the conditions of the project candidates have to make a presentation to OFF about their project in the next year. Consequently in 2021 we look forward to hearing about their projects.

The OFF Committee thanks our members for their generous donations and hopes they support our selection of the projects to be funded.

CLIMATE ACTION STRATEGY

The initial draft of OFF's climate action strategy will be discussed by the committee in August. High priority actions will be identified and circulated, with the strategy, to members for comment before finalising in September.

WATER FOR WILDLIFE PROJECT (Funded by IFAW)

The final report by Peter Ridgeway is now on the OFF website.

See also OFF YouTube for related Keeping the West Alive presentation.

BONORONG WILDLIFE HOSPITAL (Brighton, Tasmania)

International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) provides funding to Bonorong, a Sanctuary for wildlife. You can go behind the scenes of Bonorong for a virtual tour with its director, Greg Irons. While the sanctuary has been closed to the public due to Covid-19, work to treat and rehabilitate wildlife continues:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2T7ul6YFIVw>

NEST-BOX PROJECT: AN UPDATE FROM THE FORESTS

Earlier this year, the Nature Conservation Council (NCC) launched a project to provide emergency shelter for native animals left homeless after the devastating 2019-20 bushfires, which swept through millions of hectares of forest up and down the east coast. In this video, NCC ecologist Pete Knock explains how the nest-box project on the mid-north coast is progressing.

<https://www.nature.org.au/blog/2020/07/nest-box-project-an-update-from-the-forests/>

OATLEY CALENDAR 2021

Entries to the 2021 calendar closed on 15th August. The calendar sub-committee reports that they received a large number of quality photos.

NEW OFF WEBSITE

OFF Members Melina Amerasinghe and Michael Korber have recently developed a new version of the OFF website, with the intention of modernising it to be more usable, particularly on tablets and mobile phones. It is currently being appraised by committee members.

Coming OFF Events in August/September 2020
OFF Full Year Events Calendar at: off.oatleypark.com/program

OFF will continue with the monthly guest speaker program for 2020. However, due to the COVID-19 restrictions, we must conduct these meetings on-line, using the video conference application Zoom, which you can download for free via this link: <https://zoom.us/> or from Play Store (Google) or App Store (Apple). You should run a test before meetings to ensure you can connect on the night. You will receive an invitation prior to meetings or use the link below. Note that some OFF presentations and earlier movies can now be found on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCd_PLK8og40D0ekuYAys3IQ

24 August 2020 — Presentation on Mt Annan Botanic Gardens – from where the cicada calls

Dr Nathan Emery will provide an overview of cicadas, and discuss what we know and don't know about our noisy seasonal invertebrates and present results from his citizen science project, "The Great Cicada Blitz" and annual surveys in the Cumberland Plain Woodland. In particular, he will talk about the interaction between cicadas and plants. Nathan is a Restoration Biology Officer at the Australian Botanic Garden and has led several research projects on seed biology and translocation capacity of several threatened species and threatened ecological communities in NSW. Please login before 7.30pm:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3742141020?pwd=i_daK5memiUVeVb7bERqr5WgKybj2w

Saturday 29 Aug Field Trip – Bundeena to Marley return, Royal NP (limit 20 due to current restrictions).

Leader: Liz Cameron. Note: location of outing has changed; Muogamarra Nature Reserve will not be open this Spring, to reduce risk of COVID-19 transmission. Instead join us on the Coast Walk from Bundeena to Marley to enjoy the flowering heathland, birdlife and coastal scenery. This is a medium walk of about 12 km. Travel by train to Cronulla and ferry to Bundeena or drive there. Bring water and lunch, wear solid shoes and sun protection. Please contact leader to book and for further details – Liz Cameron ph. 9580 6621.

OFF Annual Dinner

The annual dinner will now be held later in the year due to the current restrictions. When Mortdale RSL informs OFF that normal operations are resuming, a new date will be set and members notified. Donations for the annual raffle are still most welcome. Contact: Sue Howard 9579 1718 or Vicki Bolling 9580 3107.

National Tree Day 2020 Events Cancelled

Georges River Council had notified OFF there would be no National Tree Day plantings or plant giveaways this year due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Council has re-scheduled the event for February/ March 2021. However Council's Bushcare Team celebrated the event with a COVID safe planting at Riverwood Park on 31 July! 1,000 plants were planted which will help to green up the park and provide environmental benefits to the area. See GRC Facebook page for details and photos: <https://www.facebook.com/GRCBushcareVolunteers/>

Meetings of the Society are normally held at the Oatley RSL Sub-Branch Hall, 25 Letitia St, Oatley from 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm, usually on the fourth Monday of the month. Visitors and accompanied children are welcome at meetings and field days.

However, until the restrictions of the COVID-19 Pandemic are lifted meetings will be held digitally using the Zoom application.

BRIEFLY SPEAKING

OATLEY PARK BUSHCARE group is normally on second Saturday each month starting 12.00 pm. This month it will be held on 12 September. Meet at the main entrance in Oatley Park Ave. New participants welcome, contact John Kensett - GRC Bushcare Officer, m: 0435 963 643

LOCAL BUSHCARE Members can assist by volunteering to maintain OFF planting sites each month on the Thursday after general meetings (except December) from 8.00 am to 11 am. We will be back on 27 August at lower Gannons Park, supervised by a GRC Bushcare Officer

MYLES DUNPHY STREAMWATCH details Heather Stolle 0425 291 879. This activity usually takes place on the Tuesday morning (9.00 am) after OFF General Meetings. This month we will be at Dairy Creek on 25 August.

GEORGES RIVER COUNCIL is calling on community to help manage high risk weeds: <https://www.georgesriver.nsw.gov.au/Council/About-Your-Council/Publications/Media/Council-calls-on-community-to-help-manage-high-ris>

CITIZENS CLIMATE LOBBY meetings held at 2.30 pm on the second Sunday of every month. These meetings are now being held on-line using Zoom. The address is <http://zoom.us/j/7868786878>.

NSW PARLIAMENT COMMUNITY RECOGNITION. The Society was recognised for its work in protecting the environment for future generations by Local Member, Mark Couré. See website for details.

GEORGES RIVER NATIONAL PARK OUTING

Twelve OFF members enjoyed a morning walk through the Yeramba Lagoon section of Georges River NP on Sunday 2nd August. Leader Karlo Taliana

knew just where to find the smallest and most perfect ground orchids, sundews and other inconspicuous gems for photographers. It was a lovely opportunity for 'forest bathing' with all our senses stimulated; there were vivid purple and yellow peas and a wide range of other flowers including many sweet-scented wattles (some prickly enough to provide a sharp tactile sensation). The bush had recovered well from the drought and froglets were calling from numerous temporary streamlets. The chorus of bird calls was dominated by honeyeaters and lorikeets feeding in flowering swamp mahoganies (the last remnant in the Bankstown area). Uncommon birds for the area included two white-headed pigeons, and 'cracking' whipbirds. For those planning a visit to Yeramba, Karlo predicted many more orchids and other plants would be coming into flower in the next few weeks.

PROPOSED WORKING VISIT TO SUSTAINABLE FARM

21 people will join OFF's inaugural planting trip on September 18-19-20 to the Upper Lachlan Valley to plant more than 2000 native trees and shrubs., Keith Fifield (Greening Australia) and owner Vince Heffernan have selected a 14 hectare paddock, which is already fenced off and from which sheep will be excluded for 5 years. Recent rains have caused flooding in the creeks and Lachlan River near the property, so there will be plenty of soil moisture for plants in the coming spring & summer. Adrian Polhill will provide a further update after his visit to Moorlands on August 14-15-16.

2020 ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS A big thank you to all members who have paid their subscriptions for 2020 and donated to the President's fund. In line with a recent committee resolution, those who had not paid their subscription fees by 30 June have had their membership cancelled.

Remember to check the OFF Facebook page and like us!

