



SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH INTO WEED MANAGEMENT

It was to an enthusiastic audience during the September General Meeting that **Associate Professor Sonia Graham**, a researcher at the University of Wollongong presented her informative talk on the social benefits of weeding and bush regeneration. While many OFF members participate in local bush care projects, we do so for many reasons. Learning about plants and the environment are key factors, but the social impacts are no less important. We all love our bushland, but intimate knowledge of weeds sometimes tends to spoil a walk to the shops, or a visit to our favourite national park. In areas devastated by natural disasters, there is often an overwhelming sense of despair due to loss and inability to know where and how to start the recovery process. Support networks at a personal level to those who are affected, and ongoing assistance to the learning process of bush regeneration techniques are key factors that help ensure ongoing participation. Bushcare is more than a list of priority weeds and how to remove them presented to us by local council authorities. The sharing of knowledge and support resources through the interaction of enthusiastic volunteers provides social cohesion and stronger community engagement. Our bushland areas ultimately benefit from this shared sense of responsibility.

Sonia's talk can be viewed on OFF's YouTube channel [here](#).

RE-GREENING

1. Moorlands

OFF members and volunteers spent an exhausting yet exhilarating weekend planting over 1000 locally native trees and shrubs at Moorlands Biodynamic Farm near Dalton in Southern Tablelands. Another 1,500 were also planted on the 11th of September! We are now only 1,000 plants away from our goal of a total of 5,000 plants this year which is a healthy addition to the developing open woodland habitat for such endangered species as the Superb Parrot.

THANK YOU to our members and all the wonderful volunteers who joined us for two amazing weekends of tree planting and camping at the stunning Moorlands regenerative sheep farm.



As our President, Kim Wagstaff, says, so many benefits come from this work: climate change mitigation; habitat rehabilitation for species like the superb parrot; and soil carbon and moisture improvement to name just a few.

2. Burradoo on the Wingecarribee River (near Bowral)

The Southern Highlands Landcare Network under the leadership of Ian Royds has been restoring the banks of the Wingecarribee River for more than two decades. 10,000s of local native trees, shrubs and grasses have been planted, many now mature and self-regenerating. [Details here](#).

The 'Pinaroo Farm' section of the river (this site for this planting event) is an important section to link upstream plantings with downstream plantings to provide a continuous corridor for fauna habitat but also to stabilize banks and improve water quality, including for platypus...

Members can volunteer to join a [weekend](#) of planting here on 21 and 22 October. They can also enjoy a walk or bike ride along a [track](#) on the Wingecarribee River before or after joining in the planting activities.

12 REASONS WHY CITIES NEED MORE TREES

(Thanks to Blue Mountains Conservation Society)

1. Temperature Control

One large tree is equivalent to 10 air conditioning units, and the shade they provide can reduce street temperature by more than 30%.

2. Noise Reduction

Trees can reduce loudness by up to 50%. In urban areas filled with the sound of cars, construction, sirens, aeroplanes, and music, trees are essentially the best way to block noise and keep cities, along with the homes and workplaces in them, quieter.

3. Air Purity

Trees remove an astonishing amount of harmful pollutants and toxins from the air. In urban areas air quality is often disastrously bad — with severe consequences for our health. Trees make the air we breathe much cleaner.

4. Oxygen

And, while absorbing all those pollutants, trees also put more oxygen back into the urban environment. Oxygen levels are significantly lower in cities compared to the countryside; trees help to solve that problem.

5. Water Management

Trees do more than just shelter us and our buildings from rain — which is, in fact, extremely important. They also absorb huge quantities of water, reduce run-off, neutralise the severity of flooding, and make flooding more unlikely altogether. Not to forget that their roots absorb pollutants and prevent them from feeding back into a city's water supply

6. Psychological Health

Studies have proven what we instinctively know to be true: that human beings are significantly happier when surrounded by nature rather than sterile urban environments. Our emotions, behaviour, and thoughts are shaped by the places we spend time, and trees have a profoundly positive effect on our psychology. The consequential benefits of being happier and more peaceful, as individuals and as a society, are immense

7. Physical Health

Beyond all the other ways in which trees improve air quality and the urban environment, much to the benefit of our health, they also encourage people to go outside. Cycling, running, and walking are all more common in urban areas with plenty of trees. A knock-on effect of people spending more time outdoors is also social integration and stronger communities.

8. Privacy

A simple point, but not inconsequential, is that trees provide privacy.

9. Economics

The total economic benefit of urban trees is hard to calculate. There are costs, of course, including the repair of infrastructure damaged by roots and maintaining the trees themselves. But the total economic benefit — a consequence of everything else in this list and more — far outweighs the expenditure. Trees make cities wealthier.

10. Wildlife

Trees are miniature cities all of their own, serving as a habitat for hundreds of different species, including birds and mammals and insects

11. Light Pollution

Trees don't only block the light shining down, therefore keeping us and our cities cooler — they also disrupt light shining up, from street lighting, cars, houses, and billboards. Skies are clearer in cities with more trees.

12. Aesthetics

And, finally, trees are beautiful. They break up the potential monotony of urban environments — the sharp geometry, the greyscale roads and buildings, the endless rows of cars — with their trunks, boughs, canopies, and flowers.

There are some drawbacks to urban trees, most of them context-specific, and they are not, of course, universally appropriate. But it seems fair to say that many cities would benefit from at least a few more trees here and there..



Coming OFF Events in October/November 2023

OFF Full Year Events Calendar: <http://www.oatleyflorafauna.org.au/index.php/progam/>

Meetings are held in the Uniting Church Hall, Frederick St Oatley, starting at 7.30pm. Meetings will also be available on-line, using the video conference application Zoom. If you are on the OFF News email list, you will receive an invitation by email prior to meetings or use this link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3742141020?pwd=i_daK5memiUVeVb7bERgr5WgKybj2w Note: Some OFF presentations & movies can now be found on [YouTube](#)

16 October 2023: Applying Artificial Intelligence (AI) to camera imagery to improve wildlife conservation and management. Jessica Tin-Ying Tam

Jessica is a UNSW postgraduate and OFF research recipient working on using computer vision to automatically identify species of wildlife in camera trap images as she is interested in applying tools from the cyberspace to aid wildlife conservation.

The development of artificial intelligence (AI) has opened many doors for the automatic analysis of large volumes of data. Applications of AI technology to analyse imagery data have exploded in the last decade, but these tools are emerging relatively slowly in the ecological space, especially for detecting threatened species and facilitating their conservation. Jessica will tell us about her efforts to improve the efficiency of data analysis by ecologists.

4 November – Heathcote Creek, up to Eddies Lookout Track returning via Banya Pool and Tamaroo Ridge Trail, Leader Ian Pitt.

Note. This is a change from the field day advertised in the program.

Meet at 10 am at the end of Oliver Street, Heathcote. A spring walk in Heathcote National Park. This walk isn't long but very pretty. However there are steep and rough sections, as well as a ladder and creek crossings. Bring water, hat, sunscreen, lunch and snacks. The walk will take approx. 3 to 4 hours. If you intend to come please let the leader know, Ian Pitt (0410 709 935), in case we cancel the walk due to wet weather.

14 October 2023 - Oatley Park Bushcare

OFF members volunteer to carry out bush regeneration at Oatley Park on the second Saturday each month starting 12.00 pm, (except January). Please check with GRC Bushcare Officer on 0435 963 643 before coming

26 October 2023 - Local Bushcare

Members can assist by volunteering to maintain OFF planting sites on a Thursday either 1 or 2 weeks after general meetings (exc Dec) from 8.00 am to 11 am. This month we will be at lower Gannons Park supervised by a GRC Bushcare Officer and we welcome new [bushcarers](#).

20 November – Advance notice – Meeting: The Wonderful World of Wattles, Rhonda Daniels, Australian Plant Society.

Note. This is a change from the speaker advertised in the program.

21 October – Picnic for Nature. Evatt Park. For details, see item below

Meetings of the Society are at the Uniting Church Hall, Frederick St Oatley from 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm, usually on the third Monday of the month. Visitors and accompanied children are welcome at meetings and field days. As noted above, the meeting is accessible on-line using ZOOM.

BRIEFLY SPEAKING

STREAMWATCH Supplies have now been received and Streamwatch is back! This activity will now take place on the Tuesday morning (9.00 am) in the week after OFF General Meetings. This month we will be at Dairy Creek on 24 October. Details: Graham Lalchere, 0430 968 260.

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>

PICNIC FOR NATURE

Join nature lovers in your local community to be a part of the NSW Nature Conservation Council's state wide Picnic for Nature on Saturday 21st October. Last year over 1,000 people participated at 40 picnics across NSW! Our local event will be a BBQ picnic at Evatt Park, Forest Road, Lugarno, from 11.30 to 2.30, hosted by Friends of Glenlee, Lugarno Progress Association and OFF. Bring your picnic, rug and chairs and enjoy a beautiful part of Lugarno. Contact: glenleeactiongroup@gmail.com.

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST IN TRIP TO SNOWY MOUNTAINS

OFF is pleased to announce that again we are facilitating another Snowy Mountains holiday at Pygmy Possum Lodge at Charlottes Pass. The dates we have selected are from 7th to the 14th January 2024 and participants can stay for as long as they want during that week. The rates are \$120 per person per day to a maximum of \$480 per person, that is if you stay longer than four days the extra days are free. Currently ten OFF members have booked accommodation and with over half of the lodge now reserved it might

be wise to make a booking soon. To make a booking contact Graham Fry on fryg@gmail.com to obtain the booking details.

2024 OATLEY CALENDAR

Don't forget your 2024 calendar, produced this year by Oatley Heritage and Historical Society. It is now available at the following locations:

- Oatley West Newsagency, 119 Mulga Road, Oatley West Mulga Road
- The Hungry Spoon Cafe Oatley, 59 Rosa St, Oatley
- O'Connors Pharmacy, 12 Frederick St, Oatley.

It will also be available at the Oatley Lions Market Day on 25 November. It's still great value at \$10 and will make a great present.

MEMBERSHIP.

OFF Annual membership fee of \$25 will be due 1st January 2024, as membership runs from Jan 1st 2024 to December 31st 2024. New members can join now & will be financial through to December 2024. Just send a completed membership [form](#) to one of the Membership Officers at suhoward@bigpond.net.au or beuzevilles@outlook.com Members whose memberships have lapsed are welcome to re-join.

Check the OFF [website](#) and [OFF Facebook](#) page for more information and news on OFF's activities. You can also comment on what we do or make suggestions. Get involved in your society.

