



O.F.F. NEWS



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AT THE AGM - 1st FEBRUARY

Julian Sheen, the president of the Society began his address with the comment that each year the AGM serves to renew the Society, and that it has rarely been stronger in numbers and interest than at present. He spoke of the purpose of the Society and its objectives, on conservation that is not just a form of conservatism, a love of growing plants, or a view of humans as a scourge on the planet. He put the case strongly that conservation aims at our being a part of nature, a partner, striving to maintain and adjust to a dynamic equilibrium. Conservationists must work to maintain biodiversity, and he looked at some of the implications of this in the International Year of Biodiversity. He called on the Society to celebrate the biodiversity of Australia, to rejoice in it, to appreciate the wondrous variety and diversity, and to feel a love for our natural places. He said that as love has the four aspects of knowledge, respect, care and responsibility, so too has conservation:

He concluded that we need to give renewed thought to conservation's implications. It may be measured by the depth of our knowledge of nature, and the monthly talks can be of help there, the extent of our respect for the bush, its diversity and its right to prosper; the depth of our care in protecting the bush and what it signifies to us, and our acceptance of responsibility to maintain its diversity and continuity.

Liz Cameron delivered the Secretary's Report of which the following are excerpts. Our membership is growing, and we now have 313 members, (274 adults, and 39 children). Thank you Robin Dickson for looking after the membership so well. Melina Amerasinghe again produced an excellent program of speakers for the monthly meetings, attended by an average of 55 members and visitors. Janet Austin's field program offered ten activities with plenty of variety, attracting an average of 20 people to each. The weekend on the South Coast was very successful and we hope to run more such activities in the future.

In 2009 OFF wrote to various authorities on a number of conservation issues, namely:-

i) Opposing development of commercial tourism within national parks. ii) Urging NSW DECC to stop issuing licences to shoot flying foxes. iii) Supporting the Natural Resources Commission's recommendations on River Red Gum State Forests; especially the creation of new National Parks and Reserves. iv) Objecting to the Bulli Seam Operations Project of longwall mining of coal. v) Supporting the reservation of the Gardens of Stone stage two proposal on the edge of the

Blue Mountains. vi) Lobbying to keep the former Oatley Bowling Club site for community use.

OFF again awarded environmental book prizes at Oatley and Oatley West Public Schools and will offer a complimentary OFF membership to the families of the successful students.

COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

The 2010 OFF Committee elected at the AGM will be listed in the program posted out next month. Julian, re-elected as president, noted the essential role of the committee in the process of renewal, thanked the outgoing committee and other members for their work during the year and the new committee for their willingness to continue the work.

THE NATIONAL PARK DEBATE OVER 20 YEARS

In 1989 in response to some OFF News criticisms of N.S.W's forest management policies on the far south coast, the then Minister for Natural Resources wrote strongly supporting the continued "harvesting" of forests. "Conservation embodies both preservation and utilisation, with the need for a balance between them", he wrote. "Multiple-purpose management", he declared, was the only way to proceed; protection of flora and fauna "complemented" by harvesting an equivalent area for timber. "To preserve all remaining natural areas in an undisturbed condition would mean less than optimal benefits." [Reported in OFF News- Feb 1990].

OVER TEN YEARS

In 2000, the government was to decide whether it should protect the forests forever, or leave them open for logging for another 20 years. The forests, protective habitat for over 40 threatened species, some 35 thousand hectares of old-growth forests, 5 wilderness areas, and vital water catchments were still unprotected. [Reported in OFF News- Feb 2000]

Now [Feb 2010], the government is assessing an application by the owners of the Eden Chip mill to construct a native wood fired power station in the area. www.woodchippingsux.net.au/

SPEAKER AT THE FEBRUARY 22nd MEETING

Gary Dunnett is Regional Manager Sydney with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water. He is responsible for the management of a group of 20 national parks, nature reserves, regional parks, and state conservation areas across Western Sydney. He began as an archaeologist with Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife, has worked in both State and Commonwealth conservation agencies in a variety of roles including research, environmental planning, and reserve management. A strong focus of his work has been on the sustainable management of small urban reserves with high natural and cultural heritage value.

www.westernsydneyparklands.com.au/

Meetings of the Society are held at the Uniting Church Hall Fredrick St [cnr Letitia St] Oatley starting at 7.45pm, usually on the fourth Monday of the month.

Visitors and accompanied children are welcome to all meetings and excursions.

Coming Events:

- Feb 22nd (Monday)** 7.45pm: Regular monthly meeting with **Gary Dunnett** speaking on *Shiprock Aquatic Reserve and Other Points Of Attachment*, about the rocky outcrops in the Hacking River and Botany Bay.
- Mar 6th (Saturday)** Field Day migratory wading bird observation Kurnell. **Leader: Debbie Andrew.** [See note below].
- Mar 7th (Sunday)** OFF members and friends will be working in the Poulton Park mangroves for *Clean Up Australia Day* [see the note below]
- Mar 22nd (Monday)** 7.45pm: Regular monthly meeting with **Dr Peggy Eby** speaking on *Flying Foxes in Sydney.*
- Mar 28th (Sunday)** Field Day: Tour of the Glen Reserve and Burnam Burnam Sanctuary, Bonnet Bay. **Leader: Jason Cockayne** [Details next OFF News]
- April 19th (Monday)** 7.45pm: Regular monthly meeting with **Kris Spike** -speaking on Population & Sustainability
- May 1st (Saturday)** Field Day: Tour at Bulli - Illawarra Grevillea Park. **Leader Heather Mackey**
- May 2nd (Sunday)** Tree Planting Oatley West Public School. [See note below and advise friends receiving this by post].

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY - SUN 7th MARCH

For OFF this year's site is at the bottom of Poulton Park from 8.30 am to 12 noon. Meet at the corner of Morshead Drive and Kyle Parade near the entrance to Yara-Nura boardwalk (off the Great Kai'mia Way). Come along for as little or as long as you can spare. Bring sturdy shoes, boots or gumboots (recommended), hat, gloves, water, and sunscreen. A Scout Group will be putting on a "brunch" (bacon and egg rolls + some sausages) 7.30 to around 12.

MIGRATORY WADING BIRD OBSERVATION

Debbie Andrew is leading the field Day on Sat 6th March at Boat Harbour Kurnell. As the birds are best observed 2 hours either side of the high tide, at 1:40 pm on the day, meet at 11:00 am. Assemble at the corner of Captain Cook Dr and Sir Joseph Banks Dr (where the Desal plant is) and then drive to the eastern end of Sir Joseph Banks Dr, park some cars and proceed on the narrow road to Point Potter. It is about then about a half hour walk to Boat harbour and Merries Reef rock platform to the south, moderately difficulty, largely level but with some small rises and some uneven ground around the rock platform and shore. Bring hats, shoes that can get wet, sun protection, binoculars, telescopes and cameras and lunch and drinks. 2 telescopes will be provided. It is possible to have a swim on the Bate Bay side of the rock platform. With 1-2 hours observing the birds, the whole excursion would be 3-4 hours. Birds commonly seen there in summer are the migratory wading birds e.g. Red-necked Stint, Ruddy Turnstone, Golden Plover, sometimes Mongolian Plover, Sanderlings ^, Terns, Cormorants, Reef Heron, and even Sooty Oystercatchers. images.google.com.au/



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WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE GROWTH?

Prof Dexter Dunphy notes problems with this often-used term. "The notion that the world in general and Australia in particular can continue on an economic growth path is a form of insanity. We are already consuming resources at a rate well above the planet's capacity to replace them; the world is being devastated to meet the growing demands of its existing population." www.environmentalmanagementnews.net/

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

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The Secretary, PO Box 52 Mortdale.

Subs remain at \$25 per person or family living at the same address.

ABORIGINAL FIREFIGHTING

A project in northern Australia has cut carbon dioxide emissions by an estimated 488,000 tonnes during its three years and generated 200 jobs by helping avert wildfires. Under the scheme, Aborigine rangers fight fire with fire - setting small blazes early in the dry season to create fire breaks and a patchwork of burnt and unburnt savannah. That helps avoid far more damaging wildfires when vegetation gets tinder dry at the height of the dry season. www.abc.net.au/science/articles/

BRIEFLY

Birds in Oatley Park: 145 species are recorded for the bushland of the Park, its tidal mud flats, mangroves and Lime Kiln wetlands. The full list is at <http://off.oatleypark.com/>

Earth Hour 2010. Saturday 27th March 8:30pm - 9:30pm. All lights off for the hour. You might light a candle in a safe and prominent spot to indicate that you are taking part.

Grand Canyon Track in the Blue Mountains is closed until further notice. [Reported in Hut News Feb 2010]

Oatley West Public School Tree Planting There are a considerable number of young native plants for a planting in the area of the newly exposed rocks at OWPS. Originally set for 27th Feb, it is now to be on Sun May 2nd. Members of the school community would be delighted to receive help from OFF. [NB the date change was not listed in OFF News posted 11 Feb.]

Royal National Park: World Heritage The Sutherland Environmental Centre is campaigning to achieve a World Heritage Listing for the RNP. The centre is looking for learned papers on the Park's special and unique features to submit to the UN. It is convening a special meeting at the Council offices on 11th March. If you wish to contribute to the discussion, you will be very welcome office@ssec.org.au www.ssec.org.au 9545 3077

Sustainable Energy without the Hot Air written by David J C McKay, [only available as a downloaded PDF file] is reviewed by Ross Coster in Hut News. He describes it as a brilliant explanation of global warming and sustainable energy. withouthotair.com/ www.bluemountains.org.au/HutNews/

