

# **TREE Foundation Annual Report**

**November 2009**

Compiled by Dr. Meg Lowman, Executive Director

Annual Meeting – November 12, New College Foundation Boardroom 5 PM

Cover: Canopy access workshop for students at 5<sup>th</sup> International Forest Canopy Conference in Bangalore India, co-sponsored by TREE Foundation

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DC Randle, Research Associate (non-voting)  
K-12 research associate  
2874 Riverbank Dr NW  
Isanti MN 55040

Bryson Voirin, Research Associate (non-voting)

Graduate student research associate  
Max Planck Institute  
Germany

Dr. Soubadra Devy (non-voting)  
Research Associate  
Ashoka Trust for Ecology and the Environment (ATREE)  
Bangalore, India

Dr. Alemayehu Wassie Eshete, Research Associate (non-voting)  
Research Associate  
Forestry Department  
Addis Abba, Ethiopia

Dr. David Jarzen (non-voting)  
Research Associate  
Senior Scientist, Museum of Natural History  
Gainesville FL

Dr. Leon Kaganosky (non-voting)  
Research Associate  
New College of Florida

Margaret Lowman, Ph.D. and Executive Director  
Director of Environmental Initiatives  
Professor of Biology and Environmental Studies  
New College of Florida  
5800 Bay Shore Road                      Sarasota FL 34243

Robert Richardson, Board Chair Emeritus  
2055 Wood St.  
Sarasota FL 34237

Michael Brown, Legal Counsel  
888 Second Street  
Sarasota FL 24236

Student Interns (Center for Canopy Ecology)

|                        |                           |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Dayna Lazarus          | Salome Graslans           |
| Elizabeth Crate        | Erik Wallimaa             |
| Pamela Montero Alvarez | Guillermo Sanchez         |
| David Mitre            | Marcos Oversluijs Vasquez |
| Ricardo Rifulgo        | Marcos Oversluijs         |
| Hannah Wilkins         |                           |



## TREE FOUNDATION

Dr. Thomas E. Lovejoy, President, The H. John Heinz III Center for Science, Economics, and the Environment  
Honorary Board Chairman

### **TREE Foundation Highlights for 2009**

Despite the economic downturn of the past year, TREE is pleased to report new initiatives and solid support of existing initiatives. Now, more than ever, both local and global governments and citizens recognize the value of our environment and the services that ecosystems provide for humankind. The role of the TREE Foundation to conserve forests and to educate the public about our environment provides a critical function, and your support is essential to our mission. Thank you to all TREE supporters for your great achievements during the past year.

1. TREE co-sponsored the 5<sup>th</sup> international forest canopy conference in Bangalore, India, the culmination of four years of efforts to bring together forest scientists from 35 countries. This conference focused on the future conservation of the world's forests, and inspired important research efforts in India, home of four biodiversity hotspots including the last remaining tigers, Indian elephants, and many other species of plants and animals. (Note the TREE logo next to Tata Cars in the conference banner – see photos attached). Dr. Lowman co-chaired the conference with Dr. Kamal Bawa of University of Massachusetts – Boston.
2. Dr. Lowman received a National Science Foundation grant to fund three critical elements of program at the Canopy Conference in India: 1. key scientists to give plenary talks, 2. young postdoctoral fellows and assistant professors to attend the conference representing the next generation of canopy scientists, and 3. a student workshop to train the next generation of India's canopy biologists.
3. Our National Science Foundation exhibit, Out on a Limb, circulated to schools for six months, and then spent six months on display at New College of Florida. Its bilingual activities, games, and educational lessons, in both English and Spanish, continue to educate thousands of students in SW Florida about the value of tropical rain forests.
4. The Fedder lecture series celebrated Charles Darwin's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday in February with a gala lecture by world Darwin historian, Dr. Tim Berra, author of the recent book "Charles Darwin: The Concise History of an Extraordinary Man. A full house enjoyed Berra's talk, and ate the enormous Darwin birthday cake afterward! Thanks to Joel and Ellen Fedder for funding our community lecture series.
5. TREE hosted two research associates from India, Dr. Soubadra Devy and Dr. T. Ganesh. Devy is India's top canopy scientist, and has made important discoveries about pollination and canopy biodiversity. Ganesh is an expert on tigers and other animals of India's forests, and both served as coordinators for the canopy conference. Thanks to the Booths for funding our global intern program.

6. TREE hosted several additional community lectures this year as a result of our expanding programs. Our research associate DC Randle (K-12 teacher and role model for minority students) presented on “Science Education Outreach – role models and field activities as methods to inspire the next generation.” TREE also co-hosted a lecture with Environmental Defense, entitled “Save the Rainforest, Cool the Planet” featuring Dr. Christina McCain (EDF, Washington DC) and Mr. John Carter (founder, Allanca da Terra, Brazil).
7. TREE has launched its second flagship education project: the creation of a TREEhouse for local children and families. A successful fund-raiser was hosted at the home of Susanne and Henry Rodriguez on Casey Key, raising over \$10,000. This amount will be matched in a subsequent grant or fund-raiser by The Crowley Nature Center, where the TREEhouse is scheduled for construction in 2010. Our website now accepts online donations. Committee members Laura Peters, Carolyn Johnson, and Susanne Rodriguez are to be congratulated for one of our first gala fund-raising events!
8. Our original flagship project, the Myakka River State Park canopy walkway, continues to achieve national recognition and hosts hundreds of thousands of annual visitors. New signage reflecting an updated map of canopy walkways of the world, plus a new conservation sign, are underway. The long-term bromeliad data monitoring program – undertaken by local elementary school students and representing the longest-term data collection in the forests of Sarasota County – is now posted on the TREE website. Check out the wonderful illustrations and field notes of local fifth graders tracking the growth of their bromeliads! Frequent guided walks are hosted by TREE Foundation throughout the year, including our (now infamous) fifth annual Boxing Day canopy walk. Thanks to the Spurlino Foundation for continuing to fund the walkway and these local education programs.
9. A new forest research and conservation project was launched, “Saving the Church Forests of Ethiopia” under the leadership of Dr. Lowman and our Ethiopian research associate, Dr. Alemayehu Wassie Eshete. Currently, Ethiopia’s last remaining forests are housed in the church yards of approximately 31,000 Coptic (or Orthodox Christian) churches, but they are fast shrinking due to the pressures of timber-gathering and agriculture. Working with the local bishops, TREE Foundation hosted a workshop for the clergy last January 2009 to educate them about the value of their forests, especially the ecosystems services of trees such as pollinators and as the major supplier of fresh water springs. The church is enthusiastic and grateful to work with TREE Foundation, as well as the local villagers, to undertake conservation efforts to conserve their last forests as an important part of their economy, spirituality and health. A big thanks to TRIAD Foundation for providing seed funding to launch this important global initiative, and to the Jarzens for the lead gift toward the biodiversity expedition in 2010.
10. TREE Foundation has a grant pending with National Geographic for funding to conserve the church forests of Ethiopia. In addition, approximately 8 professional scientists have volunteered their time (and funds) for August 2010 to participate in an expedition to explore the biodiversity of Ethiopian church forests, in particular to identify the important pollinators of local crops.

11. TREE Foundation partnered with Dr. Francis Gatz of Environmental Expeditions to create the “Amazon Amigos Program”. Similar in structure to Heifer International, this conservation initiative specifically targets forest “hands-on” conservation activities in the upper Amazon. Teachers and students who have attended workshops with EE or TREE can make donations to fund local conservation programs, including sustainable furniture-making, fish farms, and providing fresh water in villages. All of the funds support basic needs, conservation, environmental education, and sustainable development for Amazon villages.
12. Meanwhile, in our own backyards, TREE was instrumental in sounding the alarm about invasive Burmese and African rock pythons. These enormous reptiles currently pose a serious threat to Florida’s forests and watercourses. Initially thought to have been released by unsuspecting pet owners, pythons now number >30,000 in the Florida Everglades and > 2,000 in Myakka River State Park. Lowman organized a workshop of nationally-recognized herpetologists to educate Sarasota County staff about invasive reptiles. In addition, TREE’s website features an online component to identify all of the 44 invasive reptiles in Florida. While gigantic pythons may not appear to be related to a Foundation whose mission is trees, the impact of these 200-pound invasives on our forest ecosystems is extremely threatening, especially to native wildlife. TREE hopes to work with the Garden Club in 2010 to bring a rapid response training class to Southwest Florida, since the County not budgeted for this issue.
13. TREE students, interns and research associates continue to disseminate important information about trees. Students at New College produced a guide to the world’s rain forests, now available on our website as a series of powerpoints. TREE research associate, Bryson Voirin, was recently funded by the Booths to attend the canopy conference; Bryson is currently a graduate student with the Max Planck Institute in Germany, where he continues his forest canopy career doing a PhD in sloth sleep research! Research associate Leon Kaganowsky has worked with students to create a computer model about herbivory on the TREE website.
14. Executive Director, Dr. Meg Lowman, made numerous local and national presentations about forest conservation and education outreach, including a joint presentation with marine explorer, Eugenie Clark; invited lectures at University of South Carolina, University of Santa Barbara – California; Atlanta Botanical Garden; Valencia Community College; University of Florida; Audubon Society; St. Olaf’s College; and University of Wyoming.
15. Executive Director, Dr. Meg Lowman, received the 2009 ACE award (Achievements in Canopy Ecology) for her global education and research activities. This was presented to her by our Honorary Board Chairman, Dr. Thomas Lovejoy, in Bangalore India on 28 October 2009.
16. TREE has entered into an MOU (memorandum of understanding) to participate in a forest conservation initiative for Viet Nam, which currently has no national parks and hopes to undertake a program called 4-E: education, ecology, energy, and economics on a country-wide scale.
17. Three student interns were funded for research on the Amazon forest canopies. Congratulations to Salome Grasland, Dayna Lazarus, and Elizabeth Crate. TREE

- also funded Amazon research projects, including an ethnobotany brochure, for several students who worked on these as college tutorials. Thanks to the Nellie Mae grant for funding important New College student environmental projects.
18. TREE continues to distribute canopy books to students in developing countries, including Ethiopia, Brazil, Peru, Belize, and India. As a result of the canopy conference, approximately 40 books were presented to Indian biology students, who were thrilled to receive this gift! Thanks to the Booths for making this possible.
  19. Nature's Secrets, a fortnightly science column in the Herald Tribune, continues to communicate the message and mission of the TREE Foundation, especially fostering an appreciation for Florida's natural treasures.
  20. TREE Foundation will have a presence at the upcoming Copenhagen meetings in December 2009, where Dr. Lowman will work with other forest-based NGOs and non-profits to communicate information to the delegates about the value of global forests. Lowman will also write for the Herald Tribune about the activities of policy-makers. Stay tuned!
  21. TREE and the Myakka canopy walkway have our tenth birthday in 2010. We are planning a gala moonlight pig roast under the walkway, and will hope for your support to celebrate this milestone.
  22. And last but not least, your Executive Director ("Canopymeg") would like to express her heartfelt thanks to our President, Gerri Aaron, whose enthusiasm and support for all things unspoken that really make the TREE Foundation such a highly productive foundation.



# International Canopy Conference 2009

**FOREST CANOPIES**

Conservation

Climate Change

Sustainable Use

**October 25-31, 2009,  
Bangalore, India**

Activity #10

Activity #1



## 5th International Canopy Conference 2009

Forest canopies : Conservation, Climate change and Sustainable use

October 25th - 31st, 2009, Bangalore, India



[Deadlines](#)

[Keynote & Plenary](#)

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**Important notice - click below to view details**

**Abstract submission : Closed**

**3rd July 2009 — 17th August 2009**

**Registrations open**

**Approved abstracts list view here**

**Canopy access : Inviting contributions**



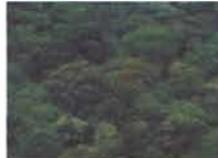
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Indian Academy of Sciences



National Academy of Sciences



Indian National Science Academy



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Department of science & technology  
Department of bio-technology  
Ministry of environment & forests

Forest canopies are the least explored habitats in the world. They not only support high terrestrial biodiversity, but also represent a critical interface between the atmosphere and the earth. Forest canopies also provide goods and services to support diverse human communities and offer opportunities to explore sustainable use of such resources for local livelihood generation. All this makes it vital for environmental policies to foster conservation, sustainable use of resources and the resultant impact on the health of global climate.

Researchers investigating the facets of forest canopies from various parts of the globe need a common platform under which interactions can be fostered and synthesized. Till date, four international conferences have been organized, at intervals of four to five years, hosted by different venues across the globe. The meetings have successfully convened scientists, environmental managers, arborists, and policy-makers concerned with the discovery and sustainable use of forests around the world. The 5th international canopy conference will be organized by the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment, (ATREE), in Bangalore, India.

The goals of the conference are to highlight the relevance of canopy research with respect to important global challenges, especially climate change, sustainability and conservation. Hence, the integration of canopy science with natural science, social science and information technology is critical. The conference provides an opportunity to build networks across continents, which will facilitate capacity building and foster collaboration using information from multiple sites, within countries and across continents.



3. Please await confirmation from the conference organizers over e-mail and all related queries can be posted to [info@canopy2009.org](mailto:info@canopy2009.org)

**INDIAN PARTICIPANTS:** All Indian participants are requested to follow the below mentioned steps to register.

**CAUTION:** Indian participants are strictly advised not to transfer any amount to the FRCA account applicable for foreign participants.

1. Please draw a demand draft (cheques will not be accepted) for the applicable amount mentioned in the registration fee table. Demand draft should be in favour of Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment, Bangalore
2. Please fill the online application form and obtain a reference number which should be quoted for all further references- [Application form](#)
3. Please write the "reference number on the blank back side of the demand draft" mentioning "Canopy conference registration" and post it to the following address:

|   |
|---|
| Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE),<br>Royal Enclave, Srirampura, Jakkur post,<br>Bangalore-64, India<br>Phone: +91-80-23635555 |
|---|

4. Please await confirmation from the conference organizers over e-mail and all related queries can be posted to [info@canopy2009.org](mailto:info@canopy2009.org)

environment &  
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UAS



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Programme



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## Activity # 2



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## 5th International Canopy Conference 2009

Forest canopies : Conservation, Climate change and Sustainable use

October 25th - 31st, 2009, Bangalore, India



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### Keynote and Plenary Speakers

#### Keynote:

The keynote address for the conference will be delivered by **Thomas Lovejoy**, the renowned conservation biologist. Tom Lovejoy's appreciation for wildlife and nature began at an early age. He has devoted his career to the environment, from studying biodiversity to creating the concept of debt-for-nature swaps and founding the PBS show 'Nature'. During the nearly 40 years Tom has maintained a research camp in the Amazon, he has hosted countless politicians, celebrities, and individuals who are eager to learn about the rainforest and how it is changing. Information, picture courtesy and more on <http://www.heinzctr.org/About/lovejoy/index.shtml>



#### Plenary speakers:

**Andrew Mitchell**- Is a leading authority on forest canopies and related climate change issues. He has extensive field experience in Asia, Africa and Latin America, combined with a thirty year career spanning research, journalism, broadcasting, policy and global project management. In 2001, he founded the Global Canopy Programme (GCP), an international network linking 38 leading scientific institutions in 19 countries engaged in research, conservation and education, investigating the impact of climate change on biodiversity and ecosystem services in forest canopies. Information, picture courtesy and more on <http://globalcanopy.org/themedia/file/PDFs/Press%20Kit/AndrewMitchellBiography.pdf>



**Kamal Bawa**- Is a distinguished professor at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, and is the founder and President of the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment. He is interested in developing new paradigms of conservation that take into account the need to alleviate poverty in biodiversity rich areas through sustainable use of biodiversity. He also remains interested in the sustainable use of ecosystem services including such provisioning services as non-timber forest products. Since he founded ATREE, and cofounded the Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in the Environment and Development (CISED), Bangalore, India, he is particularly interested in institutional building to foster conservation and sustainability science. Information, picture courtesy and more on <http://www.atree.org/kbawa.html>



Indian Institute of  
Science



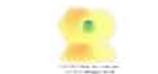
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Indian National  
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**Nalini Nadkarni**- Is a Member of the Faculty at The Evergreen State College, in Olympia, Washington, where she teaches in the Environmental Studies program. Her research is focused on the ecology of tropical and temperate forest canopies, particularly the role that canopy-dwelling plants play in forests at the ecosystem level. She carries out field research in Washington State and in Monteverde, Costa Rica with the support of the National Science Foundation and the National Geographic Society. In 1994, she co-founded and is President of the International Canopy Network, a non-profit organization that fosters communication among researchers, educators, and conservationists concerned with forest canopies. Information, picture courtesy and more on <http://academic.evergreen.edu/n/nadkarni/>



National Science  
Foundation, USA



Tree Foundation



Global Canopy  
Programme



International  
Canopy Network

**Raman Sukumar**- Prof Raman Sukumar is the current chairman of the Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. He is a leading ecologist who has made significant contributions towards Asian elephant ecology and conservation, climate change and tropical forest ecology. He was a former Chair of the Asian Elephant Specialist Group IUCN/Species Survival Commission (1997-2004). Research in his lab currently spans the following broad topics of wildlife ecology, Asian elephant ecology and management, population dynamics and wildlife-human conflict including tropical forest ecology. Information, picture courtesy and more on <http://ces.iisc.ernet.in/rsukumar/>



Institute of Wood  
Science and  
Technology

**Steve Turton**- Is the Executive Director of the JCU/CSIRO Tropical Landscapes Joint Venture at James Cook University in Cairns. His research interests include tropical climatology, rainforest ecology, urban ecology and natural resource management. Steve's research has a strong emphasis on sustainable use, planning and management of tropical forest landscapes in north Queensland, Southeast Asia and Melanesia. In 2008, he was appointed to lead the national research team for the Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre Climate Change Destinations Adaptation Project and was also appointed as Team leader for the Cairns case study region. Information, picture courtesy and more on [http://www.jcu.edu.au/ees/staff/academic/JCUDEV\\_014397.html](http://www.jcu.edu.au/ees/staff/academic/JCUDEV_014397.html)



Jungle Lodges &  
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**Vojtech Novotny**: Is currently serving at the Biology Center, Institute of Entomology, Czech Academy of Sciences, Czech Republic. He was associated with various professional appointments in the Czech republic, USA, Australia, Papua New Guinea and now continues to be interested in community and evolutionary ecology of insect herbivores, especially in rainforest ecosystems. The main areas of his interest include local and regional patterns of tropical insect diversity, organisation of insect communities, and insect-plant interactions, as well as the methodology of biodiversity surveys, biodiversity conservation, environmental education and parataxonomist training. Information, picture courtesy and more on <http://www.entu.cas.cz/png/cv-novotny-vojtech.html>



Karnataka  
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**William Laurance** : Is currently associated with the Smithsonian Institution, USA and his research interests include: - assessing the impacts of intensive land-uses, such as habitat fragmentation, logging, and fires, on tropical ecosystems Tropical plant and vegetation ecology Ecosystem science, especially relating to carbon storage in tropical forests; assessing the effects of global-change phenomena on tropical communities Land-use and conservation policy -



Government of India

[Picture courtesy and more information](#)

**Sharachchandra Lélé** – Is a senior fellow at the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), Bangalore. Sharad has worked at the Pacific Institute for Studies in Development, Environment, and Security, Oakland and at the Tata Energy Research Institute, before co-founding the Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Environment and Development, which recently merged with ATREE. Sharad's research interests include conceptual issues in sustainable development and sustainability, and analyses of institutional, economic, ecological and technological issues in forest, energy and water resource management. He attempts to incorporate strong inter-disciplinarity in his own research and teaching, which straddles ecology, economics and political science.



#### Public Lectures:

**Ganeshiah KN** –Is a trustee and member, of the executive board, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment. His research interests range from Evolutionary ecology of plants and insects to analyses of stock markets to biodiversity and conservation. At present, he is working on mapping and measuring biodiversity, insect plant mutualism and application of the concept of self-organisation to explain growth and development of plants. In evolutionary ecology of plants, he has been working on the sexual selection and parent-offspring conflict and the evolution of plant reproductive strategies. More information on <http://www.atree.org/kng.html#4>



**Mark Moffett** – Is an ecologist, explorer and a photojournalist. From the top of the world's tallest tree to deep in unexplored caves, Mark Moffett has discovered new species and behavior while risking life and limb to find stories that make people fall in love with the unexpected in nature. Research on canopy biology likewise takes Mark around the world, such as on the expeditions of the French canopy raft, Opération Canopée. He lectures on conceptual frameworks for canopy biology, especially the idea that forest experts can learn from studying systems such as coral reefs, kelp forests, algal mats, grasslands and biofilms. Information, picture courtesy and more on [http://www.doctorbugs.com/Dr\\_Bugs\\_Web.html](http://www.doctorbugs.com/Dr_Bugs_Web.html)



**Margaret Lowman** – Is currently the Director of Environmental Initiatives and Professor of Biology and Environmental Studies at New College of Florida. Meg Lowman pioneered the science of canopy ecology. For 30 years, she has designed hot-air balloons and walkways for treetop exploration to solve mysteries in the world's forests, with special expertise on the links between insect pests and ecosystem health. She currently serves as Vice President of The Explorers Club; Vice President of the Ecological Society of America; Treasurer of the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation; Executive Director of Florida's TREE Foundation; and Cluster Chair for the Sarasota Economic Development Corporation. Information, picture courtesy and more on <http://www.canopymeag.com/index.htm>





Workshop to train Indian students about forest conservation and canopy ecology.

