



Annual Report 2022

TREE RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND EXPLORATION

November 7, 2022



**“ Without forests, our grandchildren
can’t survive. Period. ”**

– MEG LOWMAN

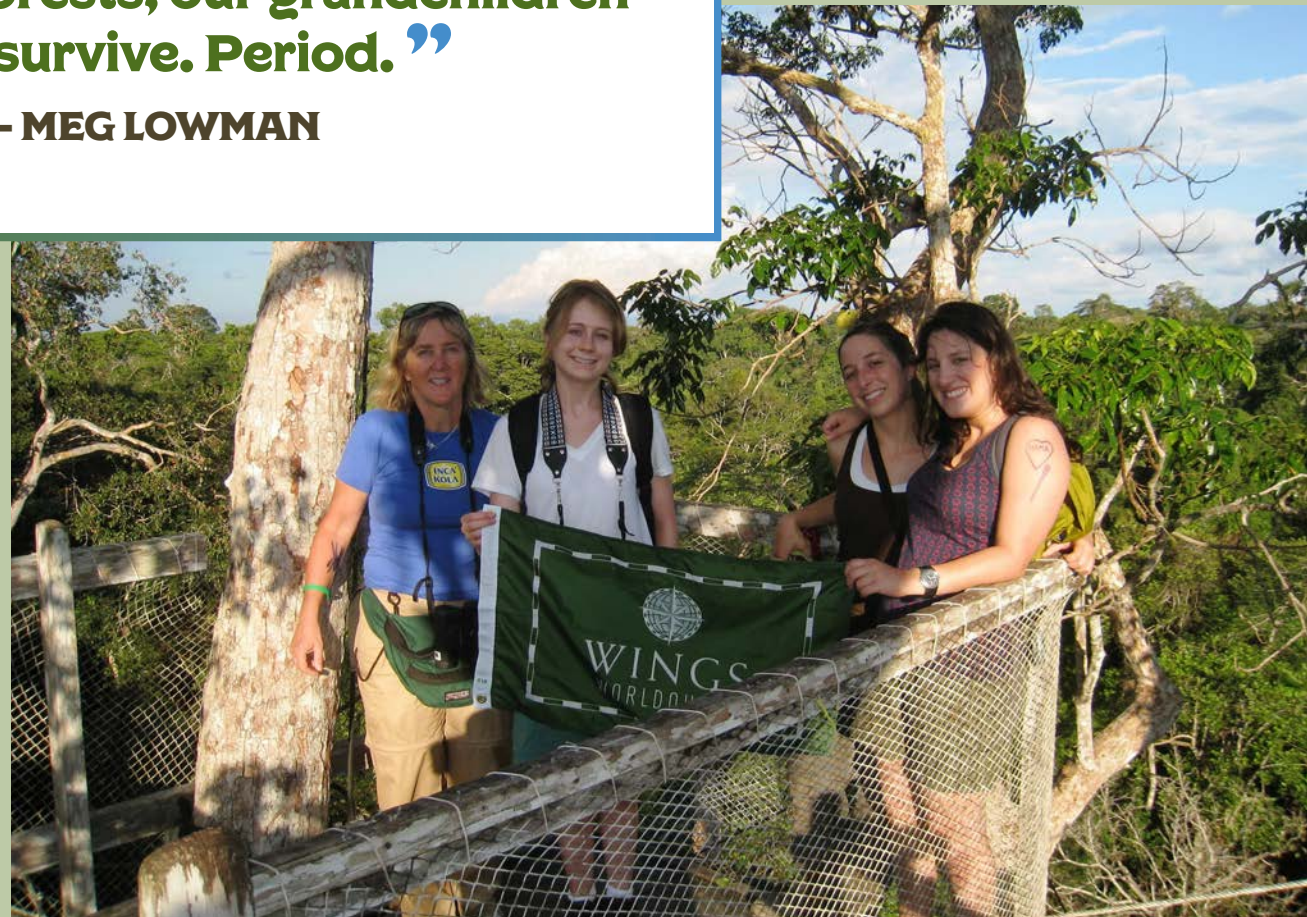


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A Message from Executive Director Dr. Meg Lowman

This has been a banner year for the TREE Foundation, as we continue to ramp up programs both locally and globally! Fasten your seat belts, as we launch our new program MISSION GREEN that is highlighted in this year's report. I get fairly breathless (and tired!) trying to juggle our expanding portfolio of tree activities, but that is a really good problem for a small and nimble NGO to have! We are expanding on all fronts—more canopy walkways, a huge expansion of our school talks (via Zoom), more student interns, more collaborations with global tree groups, and hopefully a larger understanding from the general public about the value of trees.

On the home front, our American canopy walkways continue to expand in visitorship and educational outreach. I spoke at the Vermont walkway to celebrate their anniversary. We got funding to pilot new ADA enhancements at the Florida walkway, so stay tuned as we create some innovative new ways to share the

treetops with diverse audiences who can't access the canopy walkway in situ. The new redwood walkway is open in Eureka, California which is a fabulous addition to our global necklace of important walkways in significant forests. The redwoods are North America's most iconic species, yet, very few people have ever seen or studied them. And finally, our Mission Green program is now partnering with the Cherokee nation to install canopy access in the Great Smoky Mountains, which are America's most biodiverse forests. Exciting opportunities for all!

On the international front, our Mission Green programs are focused on Madagascar as number one priority, since its forests are 97% gone. We are halfway to our goal of \$1 million to build this walkway, and the board is working tirelessly to make this skyway a reality in 2023! Our Ethiopian church forest project continues to add more conservation walls, as donors read in our website and other media (including *National Geographic*) about

this extraordinary and important tree program. Jane Goodall and I co-authored an Op Ed in the *Miami Herald* to highlight the value of saving big trees and not be content to simply plant seedlings. (Koalas and most biodiversity can't live in seedlings, as we all can appreciate!) We have submitted some big grant proposals for Mission Green and our fingers are crossed.

Thank you for your continued support of big trees and the notion of canopy walkways to advance research, exploration, education, and ecotourism. TREE Foundation is not only saving forests via canopy walkways, but also employing indigenous people as ecotourist guides. We are truly grateful for the support from our Board, public donors, foundations, and tree lovers around the world!

For the trees,





Our Mission

We, as a human species, are at a critical inflection point.

Approximately 50% of our tropical rainforests have been depleted by human hands. It will take thousands (not hundreds) of years to restore these ecosystems. We are on the verge of passing the tipping point of being able to restore them.

Trees, especially fully-grown mature trees, are literally the lungs of the Earth. They are the super heroes of the world; in one year, a single tree removes about 48 pounds of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, releasing oxygen in exchange. Without trees to do this hard and life-giving work, all species of creatures, as well as the human race, would ultimately wither and die.

TREE Foundation promotes global tree research, education and exploration in myriad ways. Our Mission Green initiative is specifically focused on the support, vision, and creation of a worldwide network of treetop canopy walkways. Our mission is nothing less than to make a massive impact on the conservation of trees and forests in the most at-risk biodiversity "Hot Spots" around the globe.

In doing so, we simultaneously support sustainable economic opportunities for local indigenous peoples through ecotourism. Canopy walkways offer enjoyment of nature, a conduit for research, and the ongoing opportunity to educate walkway visitors about the crucial necessity for protecting forests and the species of plants and animals that call them home.



A magical benefit of skywalks is the protected path of travel they provide for creatures.

LEADERSHIP



Tree Foundation Board of Directors



Meg Lowman
Executive Director



Elizabeth Moore
President



Michael Brown
Legal Counsel / Ex Officio



Michael R. Pender, Jr.
Cavanaugh & Company
Treasurer



Michael Dexter
Secretary

Board of Directors (continued)



Laura Peters



DC Randle



Alan Winston



Alemayehu Wassie



Vanessa Wassenar



Brad Oberle

NEW BOARD
MEMBER '22



Robert Beck

NEW BOARD
MEMBER '22

No Image
Available

Carmela French

FAREWELL &
THANKS



Mary Mountcastle

After serving for the last three years, Mary Mountcastle is rotating off the TREE Board effective November '22. We thank her for her countless contributions to our efforts!

Mission Green Scientific Advisory Board



Meg Lowman
Executive Director,
TREE Foundation



Sylvia Earle
President,
MISSION BLUE



Patricia Chapple Wright
Conservationist



Peter Raven
President Emeritus,
MO Botanical Garden



Pat Raven
Advocate,
Women in Science



Alemayehu Wassie
CEO, ORDA



Wade Davis
Amazon Explorer,
Writer, Professor



Harry Cockrell
Chairman,
The Habitat Foundation
& Pacific Tiger Group

NEW BOARD
MEMBER '22



In Memoriam

Over the past year, we lost two of TREE Foundation's mentors. While we mourn the loss, we celebrate the amazing contributions these two men made to the world—and, so generously, to our organization.



Thomas Lovejoy, Ph.D., TREE Foundation's Honorary Chairman of the Board, was undoubtedly the biggest global voice for Amazon rain forest conservation.



Dr. Edward O. Wilson was an internationally renowned ant biologist and conservation biologist who inspired TREE Foundation's MISSION GREEN initiative, and kindly served as our founding science advisory board chair until his passing.

Along with the entire world, we will miss these friends and important voices for biodiversity.

RESEARCH



RESEARCH

Publications

Biodiversity Survey on Penang Hill, Malaysia.

By Lowman MD, S Azizah Mohd Nor, N Ruppert (editors). 2021 / USM Publishers.

Research Associates

Dr. Soubadra Devy

Dr. Alemayehu Wassie Eshete

Dr. Worku Mulat

Dr. Anthony Ambrose

Dr. Bryson Voirin

Dr. Wendy Baxter

Dr. Bhaskar Krishnamurthy



In September 2022, Meg Lowman was the lead scientist on a National Geographic expedition to Borneo.

Inspiring New Generations of NATURE RESEARCHERS



Ms. Cotten and students presenting their work at the annual Texas Academy of Science Meeting, where they were the youngest attendees ever!

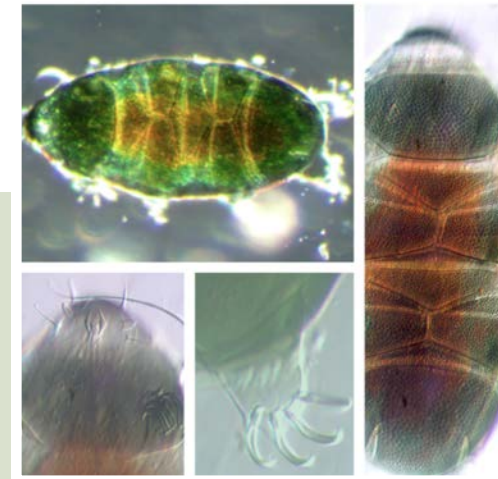
A number of years ago, fifth grade elementary teacher Hannah Cotten became engaged in TREE's tardigrade research and conservation work. Inspired by what she learned, she returned to the classroom ready to start inspiring the youngest generation of researchers and scientists.

Over the course of the school year, Ms. Cotten's fifth graders took on a series of field

experiments focusing on the moss and lichen hanging from the trees around their school. The students learned to identify tardigrades (water bears) in the lab from their field samples.

By the end of the study, Ms. Cotten's class had identified three tardigrade species previously unknown to live in Texas, and two tardigrade species previously unknown in the United States.

Their work was so influential that, in 2022, the fifth graders' work was published in *The Texas Journal of Science*—an unbelievably prestigious achievement for a group of ten-year-olds!



EDUCATION



Director of EDUCATION

Pamela Montero Alvarez



As Director of Education for our Mission Green initiative, Pamela is based in Peru and focuses her time on:

- training of local guides with canopy, rain forest and biodiversity knowledge
- creation of 10 (or more) messages that are critical for visitors to learn (and these can be part of the training as well as signage)
- ultimate creation of guide pamphlets at walkways, using key organisms from each walkway habitat
- sharing best practices for education outreach between walkway sites

K Through GRAY

In keeping with our mission to educate as many people as possible—from K through Gray—the TREE Foundation continued its longstanding tradition of sharing Executive Director Meg Lowman across many platforms to take our conservation message to the world.

Through countless speaking engagements, informational zoom meetings, appearances on panels and at conferences, our message was front and center: saving trees and forests will save our planet and therefore save the world as we know it for future generations.

Providing school zoom sessions, where Meg interacts primarily with middle school-aged children, continues to be a popular draw and an effective way to reach and create tree lovers and protectors at an early age.

Public Talks & Interviews:	113
Viewers & Listeners Reached:	4 million (estimated)



ABC Weather's Ginger Zee brought her family to the Myakka canopy walkway & filmed on location with Meg.

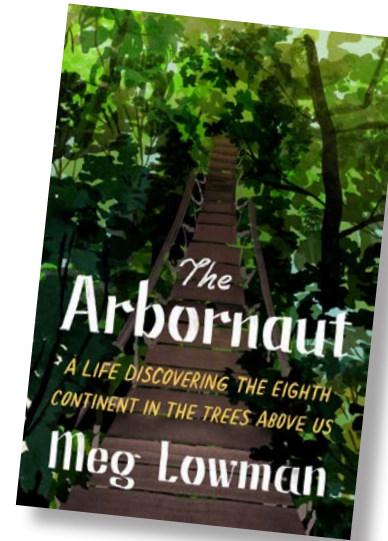
THOUGHT-LEADERSHIP

Throughout the year, Meg continued to promulgate the TREE message and inspire people to take action to protect trees, forests, and especially mature trees. With every step, she further established herself as a global thought-leader and TREE Foundation as an innovative, solution-based force in the battle against climate change.

In 2021, Meg Lowman was dubbed one of the **5 Women Defending the Wild** by The Discovery Channel.

In January '22, she partnered with Earth Sister Jane Goodall in a joint opinion essay published in the *Miami Herald* titled "To Avert A Climate Catastrophe, We Have To Save The World's Big Trees."

In August 2022, in response to the terrible fires in California, the *Herald Tribune* published her call to action, "We must act now to save trees for future generations." In that essay, Dr. Lowman highlighted the threats that large trees like the redwoods in California, as well as our trees in Florida and across the globe, face in the context of climate change and intensifying droughts.



A major messaging opportunity for TREE, and particularly for our Mission Green initiative, came through Meg's latest book, "The Arbornaut"—an exhilarating, illustrated memoir detailing four decades of her explorations of the vast abundance of life found in forest canopies—published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux in August 2021.

The book generated a great deal of buzz and was applauded by global thought leaders Jane Goodall and Temple Grandin, and reviewed by diverse media including Kirkus Reviews, National Audubon Society, The Guardian, Salon Mag, New Zealand Radio, and Yale University. Smithsonian Magazine selected Meg's book as a "2021 Must Read."

More importantly, publication of the "The Arbornaut" resulted in a deluge of speaking and interview invitations, providing diverse platforms (radio, podcasts, print, zoom, and in-person) for the TREE Foundation mission to reach new, untapped audiences well into the hundreds of thousands.

EXPLORATION



Explore PERU

Join TREE Foundation Board Member DC Randle and Meg Lowman as they lead an exploration trip to Lima, Peru, and head deep into the Amazon to explore the world's greatest rainforest!



DC and Meg volunteer their time, expertise, and passion to help others understand the urgent need to protect the critical biodiversity of the Amazon. Spotlighting the TREE Foundation's global efforts, this educational exploration event is the opportunity of a lifetime!

Dates: July 20-26, 2023

Cost: \$2,295 *(not including airfare)*

CLICK HERE FOR
INFO & REGISTRATION

**Travel for DC and Meg is funded by EcoTeach*



Explore – Lima's Culture and Cuisine

Discover – Amazing Biodiversity

- Learn about Amazon biodiversity from local guides
- Hike trails in search of insects, frogs, and monkeys
- Boat the Amazon to see sloths, toucans, and pink river dolphins

Engage – with Amazon Cultures

- Discover the power of medicinal plants from Amazon shaman
- Fish for piranha and enjoy it for lunch!

Traverse – the Rainforest Canopy

- Experience the rainforest canopy—where 90% of all Amazon life lives
- Walk through the treetops on 1/4 mile canopy walkway
- Enjoy unbroken views of a million acres of protected Amazon rainforest

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



ETHIOPIA

TREE Foundation continues to fund the building of walls in Ethiopia to protect the last remaining forests of that country. This work is directed by TREE Foundation Board Member Dr. Alemayehu Wassie Eshete, the CEO of ORDA (Organization for Restoration of Degraded Areas) in northern Ethiopia. He is one of the country's top forest conservation biologists, and has been working with TREE for well over a decade in protecting the forests of Ethiopia, particularly those that surround Orthodox churches.

Below are images showing the latest wall built for and by the Kidist Aresema Monastery of women priests.



FISCAL YEAR:

July 1, 2021 -
June 30, 2022

School Zooms:	23
Funds Raised & Donated by Schoolchildren:	\$2,893

Fifth graders across the world are inspired by CanopyMeg School Zooms; they do school projects to raise funds to support our global forest conservation, including in Ethiopia.



ETHIOPIA

“ Due to Covid and the war our last two years’ performance was low. However, still we made some progress.”

– DR. ALEMAYEHU WASSIE ESHETE

DISTRICT IN SOUTH GONDAR	CHURCH NAME	TOTAL AREA IN HA	REMARK
Eastern Estie	Selamye Meskel	10.2	Done
Eastern Estie	Zegora	15	Done
Dera	Mosha Silasie	5	Done
Farta	Lomidur Aresema Women Monastery	8	“This forest can expand further if farmers are willing to give their surrounding land for a fair compensation fee. It is my top recommendation that we do this if we are able to expand this woman-headed church forest.”

Hurricane Ian has sadly closed the Myakka River State Park as of the writing of this report.

When the park is able to reopen, TREE Foundation will be using available funds to work with Park staff to create and install additional features at the canopy walkway. Planned features include additional signage and educational information, and making the view experience from the top of the tower more accessible for differently-abled individuals.



During the fiscal year, Jerre & Nancy Hitz generously offered a challenge gift of \$22,500 if we successfully raised an equal amount. With the support of our wonderful donors who stepped up to match the Hitz's gift, we doubled our ability to support accessibility enhancements at Myakka. That project work, depending on the park's recovery, is slated for 2023.



MADAGASCAR

MISSION GREEN CANOPY ANGELS

Canopy Angels make or pledge
\$100,000 in gifts

WITH TREMENDOUS THANKS TO:

Dr. Robert & Dr. Lucy Beck

Borneo Trip Donor Group

James Follett

Elizabeth Moore

As part of our Mission Green initiative, Meg Lowman and TREE Foundation President Elizabeth Moore traveled to Madagascar with members of the canopy walkway design and construction team in 2022. There, they met with regional officials and Dr. Patricia Wright to tour and select building sites for the canopy walkway to be built in Ranomafana National Park.



PENANG HILL

In 2021, the Penang Hill Biosphere Reserve in Malaysia was officially designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Mr. Harry Cockrell, international environmental advocate and businessman, and his son Reza, played critical roles in funding and advocating for the conservation of the Reserve.

In 2017, the Cockrells invited Dr. Lowman to consult on the Penang project and help them raise awareness about the science in relation to the construction of a canopy walkway in Malaysia. Meg worked with the Cockrells to launch a BioBlitz event, which she co-chaired, to connect international and local experts to facilitate the rapid identification of critical biodiversity at the Penang Hill site.



Mr. Cockrell, who is the Chairman of The Habitat Foundation, as well as Chairman of Pacific Tiger Group (a Hong Kong-based global manufacturer focused on holistic food solutions), recently joined TREE Foundation's Mission Green Scientific Advisory Board.

FUND & FRIEND-RAISING



We Couldn't Do It Without YOU!

For over 20 years, the TREE Foundation has been funded by donors like YOU! We couldn't do what we've done on behalf of trees, forests, plant species, animal species, the air we breathe, and the hundreds of thousands of people of all ages that we've helped educate about the immeasurable value and beauty that trees contribute to our planet.



Whether you donated \$25 or \$100,000, your donation is invaluable to our mission. We thank you... but more importantly, the trees thank you... and future generations will be indebted to the efforts you made now so that they could enjoy nature later.

Thank you, Donors, one and all!

FISCAL YEAR:

July 1, 2021 -
June 30, 2022

Total Donations: \$346,425



Elizabeth Moore Hosts MISSION GREEN FRIEND-RAISER

TREE Foundation President Elizabeth Moore graciously opened her lovely home in Manchester By The Sea in Massachusetts for an educational outreach event in mid-July.

Elizabeth, a Mission Green Canopy Angel herself, and Meg Lowman shared the history, goals, and urgency of TREE's Mission Green initiative to a large group of individuals, many of whom were not acquainted with our efforts.



Grant Applications

In 2022, TREE Foundation focused significant energy on pursuing high-level grants to support the Foundation's Mission Green initiative. These efforts were spearheaded by Board Member Vanessa Wassenar, with many thanks to her for the invaluable time, know-how, and leadership she donated to these efforts.



APPLICATIONS PENDING

**Potential funding in
excess of \$1.6 million.**

Giving Challenge 2022

A round of applause goes to TREE friend (and Canopy Angel!) Jim Follett who funded all of TREE's expenses incurred (website, social media promotion, oversight, etc.) in participating in the Giving Challenge 2022.

Because of the social media and other publicity outreach funded by Jim, we garnered significant benefits in attracting new donors:

TREE Board member Vanessa Wassenar volunteered three to four days of her personal time to prepare our online platform on the Giving Challenge website. A big investment in time, but if we participate again in 2024, that hard work will already be in place.



Total Donations Received including Matching Funds: \$13,797

Campaign Costs: \$2,500

(Paid for by Jim Follett)

Return on Investment: 119%!

Our campaign cost less than \$2,500 resulting in a CRD (Cost to Raise a Dollar) of slightly less than .18 cents per dollar. *The national average CRD for nonprofits is .20.*

36%
of donors were
NEW to TREE

– having never
previously donated
or subscribed to our
newsletters

38%
increase over
2020 campaign
donation

Advocacy

The TREE Foundation has one Board Committee: the Advocacy Committee. It is co-chaired by Board members Alan Winston, Vanessa Wassenar, and Michael Dexter.

The mission of the Advocacy Committee is to protect, defend, represent, and advocate on behalf of our global tree constituencies through forming partnerships with like-minded environmental organizations and actively engaging with policymakers at the local, state, federal and international levels.

Throughout 2022, and in prior years, Alan has cultivated a partnership between TREE Foundation and the Environment Management Council (EMC) of Chemung County in Elmira, New York. Both Meg Lowman and Alan are from Elmira. Alan lives in Elmira year-round and is a member of the Council.

This year, Alan, who is a member of the EMC, was a key contributor to a \$250,000 grant submission the EMC made to develop the Elmira Urban Green Equity Project. The goal of the project is to support urban greening and mitigate the impacts of climate change in socially vulnerable areas of the community.

The project would:

- **update the GIS tree inventory for specific areas**
- **develop an urban greening curriculum specific to the planting zones, soils, and conditions of the City of Elmira**
- **provide community education and outreach on residential green infrastructure maintenance, problem solving and hazard identification**
- **develop the framework for a low-income tree voucher application process and tree voucher fund for priority disadvantaged neighborhood property owners**

Alan and his colleagues in this project will hear back on funding by year end.



Annual TREE Party

In February 2022, TREE supporters gathered at Michael's On East to celebrate the year, support TREE missions, and hear from Dr. Patricia Wright.



A GROWING TREE



Publicity Machine



Photo Courtesy of



Thanks to the ever-expanding, world-wide reputation and brand of founder “CanopyMeg,” the TREE Foundation enjoys nearly non-stop—and completely free!—publicity.

With her indefatigable energy and passion for saving trees and all that lives in them, Meg is a virtual publicity machine. She packs her schedule with interviews, writing op-eds, school zooms, panels, keynote and university talks, and speaking events for groups such as Google (!), Nat Geo, and the Pacific Northwest Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture '22 Arborpalooza Conference, just to name a few.



Publicity Machine

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Fiscal Year: July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022



**Facebook Reach
up 43.3%**



**Instagram Reach
up 1.8k%**



**Nearly Tripled
Twitter
Followers**



**LinkedIn Followers
Increased
by 210%**

Website traffic increased **14%**
over prior year.

**GREAT
NEWS!**

Google—to assist us with expanding our reach on social media platforms.

For the coming year (2023) TREE has received two Impact Media grants—one from Nat Geo and one from

Newsletter SUBSCRIBERS

In early 2022, we migrated 408 MailChimp newsletter subscribers to our new Constant Contact eblast platform. Over the ensuing months, our marketing team worked consistently to attract and encourage new subscribers to receive our newsletters—through which we communicate our broadest fundraising messages.

At the same time, we devoted considerable time to mining excel spreadsheets and other lists, going back 20 years, to

add in donors and contacts who had never joined our subscriber lists. We sent Constant Contact messages to hundreds of prior year contacts inviting them to stay on our subscriber lists but, of course, giving them the option to opt out if they so chose.

Naturally, some of these “old” contacts did, indeed, opt out of receiving future mailings, but the majority of former contacts have elected to continue to receive our monthly updates.

By taking the time to cull through years of old records, we grew our subscriber database—and renewed essential contact with potential donors:

**Newsletter
Subscribers/Donor
Reach More Than
Doubled Over the
Past Year**

408 → 942

Publicity Pays Off

ALL OF OUR HARD WORK IN THE AREA OF PUBLICITY PAID OFF!

During the Fiscal Year, TREE grew its donor database significantly.
The results speak for themselves:



\$205,000 Donated by New Donors

59% of All Donations Received Were
From New, First-Time Donors

With thanks to Meg Lowman, Elizabeth Moore, the TREE Board, the TREE consultant team, our key strategic advisors—and most of all—with sincere gratitude and appreciation for our amazing supporters from across the globe!

JOIN OUR MISSION





Deepen Your Involvement

If you're reading the TREE Foundation's Annual Report, you are evidently very interested in research, education, exploration, and protection of Earth's trees and forests.

We encourage you to deepen your engagement in all of the following ways:

Sign up to receive our
monthly newsletter—and invite
your friends as well!

[SIGN UP NOW](#)

Click on the icons below to
follow us on social and
professional platforms:



DONATE
TO THE TREE
FOUNDATION

LEARN MORE

Learn more by clicking any of the links below:

Visit TREE Foundation



Visit Mission Green



Read our Mission Green Prospectus



VISIT CANOPYMEG

Saving Forests and the Earth:

Watch this inspiring video that highlights
TREE Foundation's Mission Green initiative.



[CLICK HERE TO WATCH](#)

**“ Without forests, our grandchildren
can’t survive. Period. ”**

– MEG LOWMAN

