



Annual Report 2023

TREE RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND EXPLORATION

October 31, 2023



PHOTO BY ROB NELSON / UNTAMEDSCIENCE.COM



**We must save our Eighth Continent
if we are to save ourselves.**



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A Message from Executive Director Dr. Meg Lowman

Dear TREE supporters,

On behalf of our TREE (tree research, education, and exploration) Board and science advisors, thank you for your ongoing contributions and actions to conserve big trees around the globe. TREE continues its efforts to ensure a healthy future for our children and grandchildren through their inheritance of healthy forests, especially big trees which house over 50% of our planet's terrestrial biodiversity. Wow—that's a lot of species!

During the past year, TREE has ramped up our programs significantly, in part due to the increasing urgency to save forests around the globe. Dire reports of fire, drought, and heat waves have put remaining forests at great risk. But, thanks to all of you, we continue to increase our stewardship of endangered forests.

Our newest program, Mission Green, is up and running. Its primary mission is to construct canopy walkways in critical forests, thereby empowering local indigenous people (especially women) to be sustainably employed, offering

environmental education to visitors through ecotourism, and providing an important access tool for the next generation of arbournauts to undertake canopy research.

Walkways linked to Mission Green are operational in Malaysia, California redwoods, Florida subtropical forests, Vermont, and the Peruvian Amazon. Planning is underway in the Great Smoky Mountains, Madagascar, and upstate New York.

It is an especially critical time for the success of TREE Foundation, and we are grateful for your contributions.



For the trees,

Meg



In Memoriam

Cyrus W. Spurlino

Dear Friend & Supporter
(1935 - 2022)



We dedicate this 2023 annual report to our beloved friend and longtime supporter Cyrus “Cy” Spurlino.

Cy and his wife Joanne, both individually and through the Spurlino Foundation, have generously supported TREE financially over two decades. More importantly to all of us at TREE has been their longstanding awareness, deep caring, and abiding desire to protect and preserve the trees, species, and peoples of our planet.

Cy will be greatly missed, but his spirit is alive and healthy above our heads in the forest canopy!



Our Mission

Trees, especially fully-grown mature trees, are literally the lungs of the Earth. They are the superheroes 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.

RESEARCH UPDATES



RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

Dr. Soubadra Devy

Known as the “Canopy Lady of India,” Dr. Soubadra Devy is a biologist and pioneer in canopy research in India. She is a TREE Foundation Research Associate and Senior Fellow at the SM Sehgal Foundation Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment.

In [this Mongabay article](#), Dr. Devy shares fascinating glimpses and insights into the forest canopies of the Western Ghats. She talks about ways to attract young talent into canopy research, pollination research, and adventure tourism.



RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

Snousha Glaude

Research Associate Snousha Glaude examined how mature trees positively impact urban areas, including economic benefits, wildlife habitat, and social well-being. But did you know that mature trees also help mitigate urban heat and can contribute to reducing crime?

[Read her report here.](#)



Inspiring Research Around the Globe

Barcelona's FLORA inspired by Meg Lowman

As part of the Masters in Advanced Ecological Buildings and Biocities (MAEBB) program at the Institute for Advanced Architecture of Catalonia (IAAC) in Barcelona, students and researchers designed and built the Forest Lab for Observational Research and Analysis (FLORA). As [explained in this article](#), FLORA was inspired by the work of TREE Foundation Executive Director Meg Lowman. The facility is made from sustainably-sourced timber that allows researchers to live and work from within the forest canopy.



Photo courtesy of inhabitat.com

EDUCATION



Inspiring New Generations of NATURE RESEARCHERS



This summer, Meg Lowman traveled to her girlhood roots in Elmira, New York, to speak to girls and parents during the Meg Lowman Treetops Camp. The summer camp is held at the Tanglewood Nature Center & Museum each summer, specifically for girls ages 9 to 12 who have a specific interest in science. Activities include hiking, working with animals, studying weather, and all things science.



Campers had fun raising funds for an area canopy walkway being developed by the Nature Center.



Director of EDUCATION

Dr. Pamela Montero Alvarez



During the past year, Pamela, who is based in Peru, met with the NGO Perucano which is planning to build a canopy walkway very near Iquitos, Peru, in collaboration with the National University of the Peruvian Amazon (UNAP). The proposed walkway will be situated within the UNAP's managed forest. Pamela has also joined their mentorship program which supports students in the Amazon.

"They are very impressed with Meg's work," reported Pamela, "and look forward to working together."

In October, Pamela also virtually represented TREE Foundation at the 2023 International Canopy Conference in China.

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. Meg's many activities included engaging with fifth graders via school zooms, public speaking engagements for groups, conservation groups, universities, even a zoo!

In late 2022, Meg was the lecturer at Miami University's prestigious annual Hefner Lecture presented by the Hefner Museum of Natural History—an interactive educational institution that teaches the public about animal biodiversity, conservation, and ecology.



EXPLORATION



Exploring + Educating in Amazonian Peru

Meg Lowman and TREE board member DC Randle took individuals and families on a week-long citizen science trip to Peru in July 2023. The trip began with an exploration of Lima before the group traveled deep into the Amazon to experience the rainforest.



The journey was an “eco-teaching” experience, arranged by ecoteach.com. If you’d like to be aware of future trips like these, [please sign up for our newsletter](#), where we give advance notice of upcoming adventures!



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



MISSION GREEN



Peru walkway

While leading a citizen science expedition to Amazonian Peru, Meg and board member DC Randle presented our second Mission Green plaque to the local indigenous community, who are stewards for the Amazon Conservatory for Tropical Studies walkway.

Our Mission Green initiative continues to grow new roots!

Last year, Meg Lowman spoke at the Vermont Institute of Natural Science's event recognizing donors who helped fund the Institute's new canopy walkway. She also presented the Institute with the inaugural Mission Green plaque, which has already been installed on this gorgeous walkway.



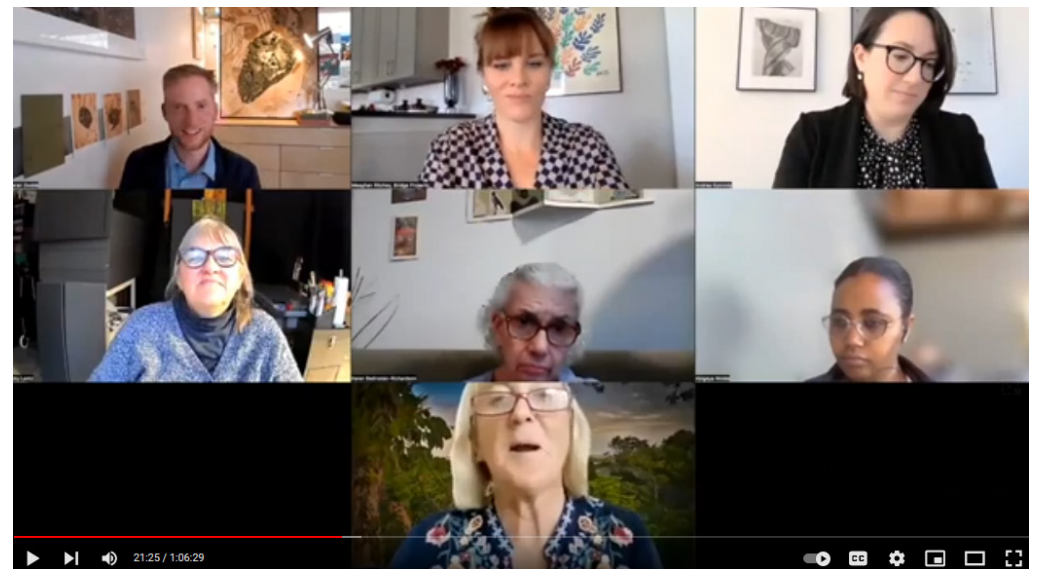
Vermont walkway

ETHIOPIA

TREE Foundation continues to fund the building of conservation 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.

Meg Lowman and Alemayehu participated in an international virtual discussion: *Hierotopia: Spirituality and Ecology of Ethiopian Church Forests*, with photographer Kieran Dodds. Presented by Bridgeport Projects, the conversation illustrated how “prayerful posture and social imagination meet in the sacralizing

space of Ethiopia's Church Forests, that, for Ethiopian Christians, evokes a future hope: a new Eden where all relationships—natural, human, and divine—will be restored.”



Click on the image above to listen, watch, and learn from this fascinating deep dive into the Church Forests of Ethiopia.

MOZAMBIQUE



In April, Meg enjoyed the opportunity to connect with Gregg Carr during The Explorers Club 2023 awards gala—where he received the very well-deserved President’s Award for Conservation.

TREE continues to support efforts for a canopy walkway in Mozambique’s Gorongosa National Park. Our contact for this potential walkway is American philanthropist and businessman Gregg Carr who was instrumental in rebuilding Gorongosa after it was impacted by nationwide conflict and negative ecological circumstances.

Earlier this year, Meg spoke with Mr. Carr to share her expertise in planning and developing canopy walkways. Based on their discussions, he applied for a USAID grant for funding the walkway in Gorongosa; unfortunately, the grant wasn’t funded.

Mr. Carr has pledged to work with TREE Foundation to continue efforts to build a Gorongosa walkway so that the Park’s ecosystem can be further stabilized, drive ecotourism for the park, and foster economic sustainability for the citizens of Mozambique. TREE will assist in any way to ensure his success.

In the meantime, Mr. Carr has been on the ground in Mozambique. He recently provided this photo of the proposed canopy walkway site which had been selected by Meg and a local research team several years ago.



MADAGASCAR



We're still in the fundraising phase to get the Ranomafana National Park canopy walkway off the ground—literally!—in Madagascar.

TREE Foundation's outgoing President Elizabeth Moore visited Madagascar again this year and provided these great photos from her exploration there. Our team continues to pursue grants and other initiatives to support our efforts there.

Watch our
Mission to Madagascar
video short!



TANZANIA



Last year, TREE was able to support the conservation of large baobab trees in Tanzania through a donor's generosity.

Chris Simwinga, Co-founder and Programs Coordinator of Serengeti Eco Protection and Development Alliance (SEPDA TANZANIA) provided these photos showing recent planting activities involving adults and area school children. "I have launched a campaign to plant 25 million trees in all regions of Tanzania," Chris reported to TREE. "Each school will plant and maintain 2,000 trees."



Ambitious plans and we wish him all the best in his goal to protect our planet and cherish its trees!



NEWS



A Very Special Award for a Very Special Arbournaut!

TREE Foundation founder and Executive Director Meg Lowman received the 2023 Explorers Medal for her formidable career as an arbournaut — a lifetime dedicated to exploring the treetops and protecting trees and forests around the globe.

The Medal was awarded in April by The Explorers Club, headquartered in New York



Aquanaut Sylvia Earle, a previous winner of the Explorers Medal, congratulates Arbournaut Meg Lowman.

City with chapters worldwide and supports scientific expeditions in all disciplines. The Club previously awarded its Explorers Medal to exploring superstars such as Jane Goodall and James Cameron.

The Club created this amazing homage to Meg's lifetime efforts to research, celebrate, and protect our planet's precious trees and forests. Click on the image below for highlights from Meg's incredible life as an arbournaut!



Meg gratefully accepted this award of a lifetime during the Club's annual dinner in New York City—the event is frequently referred to as the “Oscars of Exploration.”

Advocacy Committee Update

Last year, TREE's Advocacy Committee co-chair Alan Winston reported that, in partnership with the Environment Management Council (EMC) of Chemung County, in Elmira, New York, he had helped the EMC apply for a \$240,000 grant.

We're pleased to share that the grant was awarded and will be used to develop the Elmira Urban Green Equity Project. A first initiative for the EMC will be hiring a full-time coordinator for this project.



Alan Winston, Walkway Whisperer!

A former board member of the Center, Alan currently serves on its walkway development committee. He presented the committee's funding proposal to the Chemung County legislature, which

ultimately provided a \$1 million grant for the walkway's construction. Bravo, Alan!

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



REPORTS



We Couldn't Do It Without YOU.

Thank you, Donors!



For over 20 years, the TREE Foundation has been funded by donors like YOU!

Without each of you, we couldn't do what we've done on behalf of trees, forests, plant species, and insect and animal species. Your support has helped us reach hundreds of thousands of people of all ages to provide education about the immeasurable life-sustaining value and beauty of trees.

FISCAL YEAR:

July 1, 2022 -
June 30, 2023

Total Donations:
\$383,197

**YEAR OVER YEAR,
DONATIONS INCREASED 10.5%**

**INCREASE IN # OF
NEW DONORS: 13%**



TREE Sprouting Up Across the Internet

TREE Website Analytics



TF
Jan 2023 - Sept. 2023

☒ Total clicks 51.9K	☒ Total impressions 1.72M	☐ Average CTR 3%	☐ Average position 13.3
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Previous Year - Jan 2022 - Sept. 2022

☒ Total clicks 25.6K	☒ Total impressions 794K	☐ Average CTR 3.2%	☐ Average position 13.2
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Mission Green Website Analytics



MG
Jan 2023 - Sept. 2023

☒ Total clicks 699	☒ Total impressions 40.8K	☐ Average CTR 1.7%	☐ Average position 19.3
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Previous Year - Jan 2022 - Sept. 2022

☒ Total clicks 311	☒ Total impressions 17.3K	☐ Average CTR 1.8%	☐ Average position 14.7
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Social Media

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS



**Facebook Reach
up 117%**



**YouTube Followers
Increased
by 85%**



**LinkedIn Followers
Increased
by 85%**



**Instagram Reach
Down 51%***

**We're developing more videos and
reels on this channel to increase reach.*



**Grew Twitter
Followers
by 5%**



**Established Account
August '23;
no data yet**

Newsletter SUBSCRIBERS

Our goal for TREE eblasts is to educate, inspire action, and provide opportunities for supporting and donating to our efforts to protect mature “big” trees and forests.

The good news is that we’re attracting tree and forest protectors faster than the average nonprofit! According to leading online marketing guru HubSpot, as of 2021 data, nonprofit email lists grow, on average, less than 8% per year. Over the last year, our list grew by 19%!

The challenge is that we need to reach a vastly larger audience of subscribers to not only enable us to continue to do the work we are doing, but to empower individuals with knowledge and actionable ideas so they can do their part to protect trees, forests, our planet, and the future of humanity.



**IF YOU'RE NOT
ALREADY A SUBSCRIBER,
CLICK HERE!**

**Newsletter
Subscribers/Donor
Reach Increased
19% Over the
Past Year**

942 → 1,123

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
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Laura Peters



DC Randle



Alan Winston



Alemayehu Wassie



Vanessa Wassenar



Brad Oberle



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Carmela French

Mission Green Scientific Advisory Board



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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



RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

Research Associate Melanie Herrera



Melanie Herrera, a student at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, has joined our Research Associate roster. She is currently pursuing a Bachelor degree in Human Development and Family Studies

and a minor in Sociology. Melanie is co-captain of the UNCG women's soccer team and serves as UNCG's Student-Athlete Advisory Committee community engagement executive board member.

Research Associates

Dr. Anthony Ambrose

Wendy Baxter

Dr. Soubadra Devy

Snousha Glaude

Melanie Herrera

Bhaskar Krishnamurthy

Worku Mulat

Bryson Voirin

JOIN OUR MISSION





Deepen Your Involvement

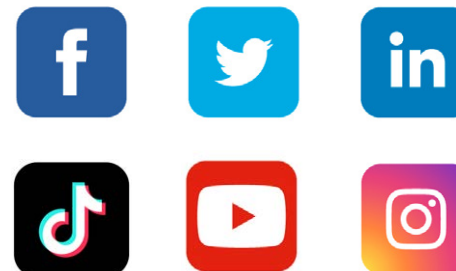
If you're reading the TREE Foundation's Annual Report, you are evidently very interested in research, education, exploration, and protection of Earth's trees and forests.

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:

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Visit Mission Green



Read our Mission Green Prospectus



Saving Forests and the Earth:

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



[CLICK HERE TO WATCH](#)

**We must save our Eighth Continent
if we are to save ourselves.**

