



Australian Ecosystems Foundation Inc.

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PRESIDENT'S POST

As President of the board of directors, I thought it might be timely to communicate with our members and supporters about the 2019 status of the Australian Ecosystems Foundation Incorporated [AEFI]. What is AEFI in 2019? Who are we and what do we do? What are our aspirations into the future? I hope to very briefly set these out in the following narrative.

AEFI is a not-for-profit organisation established to promote and carry out rehabilitation of natural Australian ecosystems and is registered with the Australian and New South Wales government as a tax-deductible charity. AEFI conserves threatened native species by protecting habitat and maintaining ecosystems' functions.

The AEFI Board of Directors is made up of a variety of natural resource stakeholders including conservation biologists, tourist operators, research scientists, accountants, public servants, Indigenous leaders, farmers and business executives. This combination allows AEFI to manage its reserves and wildlife with a broad range of experiences, skills and knowledge on hand. Our members are people with a strong interest in the value of natural ecosystems and their component parts that choose to devote their time and money to AEFI.

AEFI has assets to achieve conservation goals which include 4 nature reserves, one of which is a fully predator-proofed wildlife sanctuary on the outskirts of Lithgow, NSW. Located on the edge of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, the 10 acre/ 4 hectare Secret Creek Sanctuary was established in 2001 with the creation of the Eastern Quoll breeding facility. The next step in developing Secret Creek as a conservation reserve was to construct a ten acre feral-proof fence to exclude foxes, cats, wild dogs and rabbits from the area, creating a safe bushland environment. Within this sanctuary many breeding conservation programs have been established to secure the future of threatened native species; these include pure-breed Dingoes, Long-nosed Potoroos and Rufous Bettongs, endangered Spotted-tailed Quolls, Brush-tailed Rock-wallabies, Red-necked Pademelons, Eastern Quolls, Mountain Pygmy Possums, Koalas, Tasmanian Devils and Coastal Emus.

In the future we aspire to use the progeny of the species at Secret Creek to reintroduce the species to our other reserves and elsewhere. We aim to manage these areas into the future to restore function to ecosystems degraded over the past two centuries, including restoration of indigenous culture in the process.

I hope we will be supported in these efforts by dedicated people, including you the reader,

Dr. James Shields

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NEW SPECIES WELCOMED AT SECRET CREEK CREEK

An exciting addition to our wildlife at Secret Creek Sancturay is the recent arrival of Euccy the Koala.

Euccy is a hermaphrodite, which is very rare in koalas, and therefore found it difficult to assimilate into other koala populations. She is settling in nicely at Secret Creek and loves all of the attention.

If you'd like to sponsor Euccy, or donate towards her feeding and upkeep see the last page of our newsletter for more details.

Hi! I'm Euccy. I'm loving my new home



Euccy's amazing new enclosure was built with 95% donated and recycled materials.



NEW SPECIES WELCOMED AT SECRET CREEK CREEK



Photo Source: Sydney Morning Herald

We have welcomed two female Tasmanian Devils at Secret Creek Sanctuary. These Devils have come to us from the breeding program at Devil Ark in the Brarington Tops in NSW.

Devil Ark is the largest breeding program for Devils on the Australian mainland and have successfully bred over 300 joeys.

Typically Devils live for 8 years but only breed during their first 4 years. Our two females are now past their breeding age and have therefore come to Secret Creek for their retirement.

We also hope to educate the public on the Devils' plight with facial tumors that have almost wiped out the whole species.



We are so excited to announce that we now have 6 Mountain Pygmy Possums at Secret Creek Sanctuary. These critically endangered possums are the only hibernating marsupial in Australia. They are normally found in Victoria's alpine regions and Mt Kosciuszko where they hibernate for about 5 -7 months of the year under the snow. They emerge in Spring weighing only 40 grams! Unfortunately research suggests there are only 2000 left in the wild as their main food source, the Bogong Moth, has dropped from over 4 million to only a few hundred in Victoria. It appears the drought in Queensland and NSW are preventing the moth from venturing south. From the 1st of September Zoos Victoria are spreading awareness for the **Lights off for Moths** campaign saying that every unnecessary outdoor light be switched off from Queensland to Victoria to help the moth complete their migration south.

RECENT EVENTS



Our Vice President, Steve Nott, visiting the Arctic last month!

We have welcomed baby Spotted-Tail Quolls here at Secret Creek! Unfortunately this little guy fell out of his mum's pouch whilst she was sun baking. Therefore, we have been hand-raising him which includes keeping him warm, simulating a pouch, and bottle feeding him!



Board Member Nominated as Adventurer of the Year 2018

In 2018, our board member, **Matty Hunter**, was the first person to travel the length of the Murray River, from the source to the sea, in one continuous trip. The journey began in the Australian Alps, near Mount Kosciuszko, where Matty hiked by foot. He then kayaked, white-water rafted and finally pedal-boated his way into the record books in just 83 days, totalling over 2,500kms. His trip was to help raise funds for AEFI and the rehabilitation of our creek and pond for a planned Platypus pond.



Matty was nominated as a finalist for the Australian Geographic 2018 Adventurer of the Year Award but unfortunately missed the ceremony which was attended by the Duke and Duchess of Sussex!

UPCOMING EVENTS

2019
OPEN DAY



Lorraine and Julie - 2017 Open Day

This years open day is being held on Sunday the 8th of September 2019 at Secret Creek Sanctuary. Similar to past years we will be having vegan markets on the day with coffee and food available from Secret Creek Cafe.

There will also be free walks and talks through the sanctuary held at various times throughout the day. As well as a number of different animal encounters and presentations! Keep an eye on our social media accounts for an upcoming timetable of attractions for the day



Tree Planting Weekend

We are looking for volunteers interested in helping us plant 2,500 koala trees on a property in Hartley, NSW. Although we haven't finalised the dates we are hoping that this will take place sometime in October 2019. Please get in contact with us to register your interest!



Q&A WITH A BOARD MEMBER



Each newsletter we will interview one of our board members so you can get to know us a bit better! This newsletter we have interviewed our President, Dr Jim Shields.

When and where were you born? I was born on the 14th of November, 1952 in Amarillo, Texas, USA. Our family moved back to eastern Kansas 4 months later, and I spent my first 26 years in the Flint Hills in Lyon County, in a tiny village called Reading, Kansas.

What did you study at university? From 1970-74 I studied Wildlife Ecology [BSc] and American Literature & Journalism [BA] at Emporia State University, Emporia, Ks., USA; from 1982-1985, I studied forestry at the Australian National University, Canberra, A.C.T., Australia, and from 1987-1990, I did a PhD at the University of Washington, Seattle, WA, USA; my doctoral thesis was: "The Effect of Logging on Birds at Eden, NSW.

How did you get involved with AEFI? Through my employment as the state-wide wildlife manager for the Forestry Commission of NSW [now Forest Corp. NSW] I was a member of the Marsupial CRC, and in that role I attended a conference on the ethical use and management of wild marsupial populations held in the conference facilities at the Royal Prince Albert Hospital in 2000. There, I met Steve Nott, AEFI Vice President, and we found we had much in common; Steve invited me to get involved with AEFI and I haven't looked back in the ensuing 19 years.

Learn about one of our board members in every newsletter!

What is your favourite Australian animal? My favourite Australian animal is an unassuming little bird, the Eungella Honeyeater [*Lichenostomus hindwoodii*]. It is about 20 cm. total length, its most notable plumage feature is a blue bordered white "bridle" on its face. I am so fond of it because I observed it in the wild before it was described as a species [by my friends and colleagues Drs. Walter Boles and N. W. Longmore]. An expedition of discovery was one reason for coming to Australia on 12 February 1978.

Where is your favourite place in Australia? Waratah Creek, on the NSW-Victoria border, on the forested part of the Monaro. At about 1800m above sea level, it has tall [50 m canopy] old growth forests of Mountain Gum, White Ash, Monkey [Bear or Koala] Gum and Brown-barrel on rich black soils; it is beautiful, secluded, rife with wildlife and a spot where I spent at least 4 years in a tented camp studying birds and arboreal marsupials, from 1988 to my last visit in March this year.

If you could have dinner with three people (alive or dead) who would they be and why? Samuel Clemens aka Mark Twain. He is one of my favourite thinkers and was apparently much more entertaining, thoughtful, ribald and humorous over dinner than on the page. Sir David Attenborough. He is a living hero, a thoughtful leader and someone I aspire to emulate with the rest of my life. I would like to ask him, "How did you do it?". meaning influence generations of people who knew nothing about nature and its beauty, value and precarious existence in 2019. My Grandmother, Charlotte Coates Bailey, 1884-1984. I would like to ask her all the questions I didn't get around to, or forgot the answers to if I did ask. She lived from a time when there was no electricity grid, automobile travel or telephones. She could live a self-sustaining life, growing harvesting preparing and storing her own food and clothing [as necessary for the latter]. I was her special helper, s the youngest grandchild, and she gave me a window into the past. She could remember when there were wolves, mountain lions and elk in Kansas as well as indigenous people [she just missed the Bison and the frontier wars

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

There are many ways you can contribute to the work we do at AEFI. As a non-profit environmental organisation we rely on donations and the support of our members, as well as grants and the work of volunteers.

BECOME A MEMBER/DONATE/VOLUNTEER

If you'd like to renew your membership, become a new member, donate or register your interest in volunteering please visit our website and complete our online application form at **www.ausecosystems.org.au/support**

We are a registered charity in Australia and are listed on the Register of Environmental Organisations, therefore donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

SPONSOR AN ANIMAL

We currently support several species in captive breeding, as well as their conservation in the wild. You can help protect our endangered species through a single yearly or monthly contribution. When you sponsor an animal, you will receive a special sponsorship package including colour information sheet about your animal, and a certificate of thanks for your support. Head to our website for more info!

HELP BUILD A CULTURAL CENTRE AT SECRET CREEK

One of the projects we are currently working on is building a Visitor Information and Aboriginal Cultural Centre at Secret Creek Sanctuary. We aim to use this site to highlight local Indigenous artists, for education, such as with student or school groups, as well as providing resources around saving Australian wildlife and protecting habitats.

Visit our Everyday Hero page to donate now!

www.give.everydayhero.com/au/australian-ecosystems-foundation

CONTACT US:

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 **Australian Ecosystems Foundation Inc.**



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