

FROM THE 2019 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Investigating human & natural environments at Sydney Olympic Park

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An afternoon at the Intertidal Wetlands of SOP, led by Danielle, a SOP education specialist

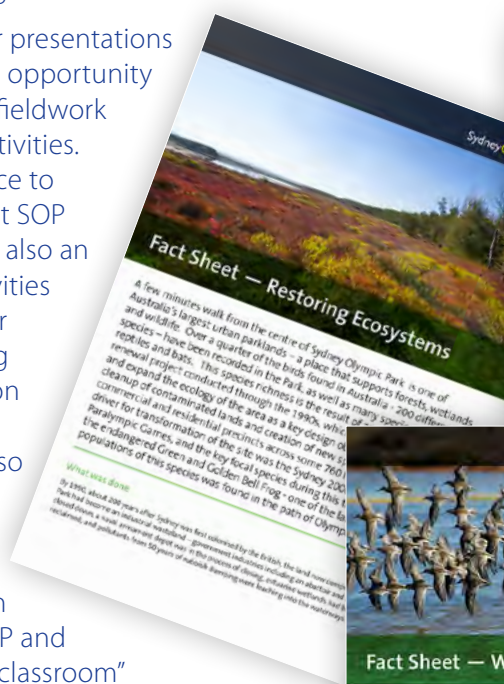
Sydney Olympic Park Authority

Delegates were fortunate to take part in several presentations and workshops presented by the Sydney Olympic Park Authority on day one of the GTA NSW & ACT conference. Delegates could elect short format presentations or a full day emersion program.

Sydney Olympic Park (SOP) focused their presentations around hands on learning, facilitating an opportunity for teachers to learn how to use various fieldwork equipment and complete a variety of activities. Not only were delegates given the chance to explore the fieldwork options available at SOP and learn more about the park itself, but also an explanation of how these fieldwork activities could be adapted to a fieldwork site near their own school. SOP were forthcoming with resources and provided some tips on how to adapt these resources for many different types of environments. They also gave some great tips on what fieldwork equipment a school could invest in to enhance their fieldwork program. Delegates provided positive feedback on the education programs provided by SOP and loved the opportunity to "get out of the classroom" and complete some hands-on learning! A full list of the education programs available at SOP can be found at www.sydneyolympicpark.com.au/Education/School-Programs

Additional information

Teachers can prepare for fieldwork trips by utilising the downloadable Fact Sheets, available in the Education Resource Centre on the SOP site www.sydneyolympicpark.com.au/Education/Resource-Centre



Tidal flows into the Waterbird Refuge at Bicentennial Park are carefully regulated to provide optimum levels for its feathered and finned inhabitants, and to minimise the generation of wetland odours.

Restoration

- The ten hectare wetland was created in the 1990s as a result of unfinished works to create industrial land. Tidal mounds, clay-based walls were built to enclose the mounds and sediment was pumped in from Homebush Bay to raise the height of the reclaimed land. The works were abandoned before the mounds were completely filled with sediment, and the enclosed wetland subsequently developed into a significant waterbird habitat with a high abundance and diversity of resident and migratory birds.
- Over time, the ecological health of the wetland diminished due to lack of tidal exchange. Species diversity declined, a gill blenny frequently occurred in the stagnant waters, and the combination of rotting algae, shallow water and nutrient-rich sediments regularly caused strong odour emissions.
- Restoration of the wetland followed years of detailed scientific study and careful planning. Scientists determined that restoration of tidal flushing to the landlocked wetland would improve its ecological health and reduce algal blooms and odour generation.
- Sydney Olympic Park Authority installed a solar powered computer operated tidal gate in the land wall in 2007, at a cost of \$187,000. Tidal settings were varied seasonally to regulate the extent of inundation occurring with each tidal cycle.