

How Goats are Regenerating a Forest and Protecting this Town from Bushfire

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by [Happen Films](#)

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From Weedy Forests to Grassy Woodlands tells the story of a community-led permaculture initiative to mitigate forest fire risk using goats and hand tools rather than herbicides, heavy machinery, and burn-offs.

On the edge of Daylesford, a town on Dja Dja Wurrung country in Victoria, Australia prone to massive bush fires, a small group of community-minded folk have pulled together to work towards restoring the ecology of their commons forest – in order to stop the future need for controlled burn-offs by the local fire authority.

Burn-offs keep the township safe from out-of-control fires, but they hinder the forest's ability to regenerate, and thus cannot provide the environment necessary for the diversity of insects, birds and animals that are necessary in a healthy forest on a healthy planet.

Restoring the forest also allows for traditional indigenous burns to take place, as the danger created by flammable non-native species has been reduced.

The work being done by the Goathand Cooperative is not only showing stunning results on the forest floor, it's having much

broader effects: the forest's wildlife is thriving, the goats are healthy and happy, but in addition neighbours previously dubious about the project have come on board, so that new and strong community connections are being made. And as one Cooperative member says in the film, an important re-connection is also being made with nature.

"We haven't always been trammellers of land," says Patrick Jones. This connection to the soil and to the forest is, he believes, "our way back to sanity".

From Weedy Forests to Grassy Woodlands offers inspiration to anyone looking for ways to regenerate their own or a commons forest, anyone feeling the urgency of mitigating the potential disasters of forest fires in the most natural way possible, anyone in a locality and position to use goats for that purpose, and just anyone seeking reconnection to the earth that created and sustains us!

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