



BLUE MOUNTAINS WORLD HERITAGE INSTITUTE – NEW & CURRENT PROJECTS – OCTOBER 2009

NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM

Status	Project Title	Funding	Time frame	Researchers / Partners	Details
Current	Managing ecosystem change in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWH)	Aust'n Research Council Linkage grant \$450,000 plus partner cash contributions totalling \$183,000 Total project value: \$1.4m incl. in-kind 3 years 2007 – 2009 BMWHI cost estimate \$8,320/yr (total \$24,960)	2007 - 2009 (3 yrs)	Project partners: University of NSW; University of Western Sydney; NSW Dept Environment & Climate Change; University of Wollongong; Blue Mountains City Council; NSW Dept of Primary Industry (Vertebrate Pest Research Unit); Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Mgmt Authority	Overall goal: to assess the impact of drivers of change on biodiversity and ecosystem condition in the GBMWH, focusing on climate change, fire and pests. This project completes at the end of 2009. Several connected PhD projects will continue beyond 2009. Alex Gold's PhD (see below) will address specific outcomes of this overall project.
Current	Integrating Science to Policy – Adaptive Management in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area	PhD international scholarship; no BMWHI income (cost estimate \$2,760)	3 years from Aug 2009	Alexander Gold, PhD candidate, Institute of Environmental Studies, UNSW	This project is an extension of the ARC Linkage project and will address the policy and management aspects of the original proposal. Alex Gold, who undertook a Masters project on weeds as part of the ARC project, has now been awarded an international PhD scholarship to address how the scientific research that was developed by the project can best be integrated into the GBMWH management process. He will begin his research in August under the supervision of John Merson, Rosalie Chapple and Dan Ramp. He is working closely with staff from DECCW, in particular Peter Stathis and Tanya Strevens from the Management Effectiveness Unit, and Melissa Giese from the Blue Mountains region (focusing on revising mgmt plans for 3 parks).
Current	Impacts of invasive garden plants on biodiversity in the Blue Mountains and effectiveness of control efforts	No funding; BMWHI cost \$360	6 mths from Aug 2009	Tawnee Hill, UNSW Masters of Environmental Management	Masters research project – desktop study.

Scoping	Wombats in Mt Wilson	\$2,500 donated from local resident for operating costs plus free on-site accommodation for field trips; BMWHI cost \$360	2010 12 mths	Candidate TBC @ UWS, supervised by Dr Ricky Spencer	Aims: To increase understanding of ecology and population size of wombats in the Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine area. To inform management of the wombat population to address any problems as perceived by residents.
Scoping	Relationship between fire history in the Blue Mountains region and the distribution of threatened species	Funding to be sought (BMWHI cost \$6,400/yr)	2010- 2012	Dr Brad Murray, Department of Environmental Sciences University of Technology Sydney	Objective: To use digital map overlays in a geographic information system (GIS) to quantify the potential impact of fires on threatened flora and fauna of the Blue Mountains region. The project will address the following questions: Is there a common pattern of fire history underpinning plant and animal species that have declined most severely in abundance and distribution (i.e. threatened species) in recent times? Is this common fire history a result of specific shifts in fire regimes (e.g. too frequent burning)? Are there sister species (e.g. congeners) of threatened species that have experienced similar fire histories but which are not threatened, and if so, how do they differ in their life history and ecology from their threatened congeners?
Scoping	Phytophthora Dieback in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWHA)	Research operating funds: \$8,500/ year Botanic Gardens Trust. to support PhD candidate awarded an Australian Postgraduate Award (APA); Don Stammer top-up scholarship \$10,000/year	PhD 3 years 2010- 2012	Core supervisor David Guest , USyd (tbc); co-supervisors Ed Liew, Botanic Gardens Trust, NSW Department of Environment & Climate Change; Dan Ramp, School of Biological, Earth & Environmental Sciences, University of NSW	To better understand the role of Phytophthora in vegetation dieback in the GBMWHA and to facilitate better-informed policy and decision-making and risk management by assessing the level of threat that this pathogen is posing to the WHA. RESEARCH QUESTIONS Where is dieback within the GBMWHA? Is it caused by <i>Phytophthora</i> ? Is <i>Phytophthora</i> playing a contributory role only? What species of <i>Phytophthora</i> are involved? What factors are associated with the incidence and spread of this disease? How bad is the disease? Does something need to be done, and if so, what?

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Status	Project Title	Funding	Time frame	Researchers / Partners	Details
Current	Potential impacts of climate change on agri-industries and forestry.	\$22,250 - surplus funds remaining from \$260,000 grant from RIRDC 2004 - 2008 (this stage 2 project has been approved by RIRDC)	2009 - 2010	John Merson (Lead Investigator), Evan Webster (GIS), Sarah Terkes (research assistant)	This project is based on recommendations from the recently completed RIRDC project "Sustainable small-scale agri-industries neighbouring the WHA in the Hawkesbury-Nepean region". This project will involve an assessment of GIS-based tools to support alternative crop planning as higher temperatures and disease threaten traditional farming and forestry practices throughout the region.
Seed funding from FATE program UNSW. Confirmation of RIRDC funding late 2009	Native agri-forestry & bio energy project for the Western edge of the GBMWA	\$40,000 FATE program, University of NSW? approx \$300,000 sought from RIRDC		<i>Partners:</i> Central Tablelands Councils (Oberon, Lithgow and Mudgee); Catchment Management Authorities (Hawkesbury-Nepean, Central West and Lachlan); <i>Researchers & Consultants:</i> Peter Ampt (USyd), John Merson, Alex Baumber, and Peter Rogers (UNSW), Sandy Booth, Joe Landsberg; John Mathews (Macquarie Uni)	This project will complete the preparatory work required to establish an economically-viable native farm forestry industry in the target area of the Central Tableland Councils (Oberon, Lithgow and Mudgee). The project will develop a land-use plan and a framework for participation of individual landholders that can generate investment in strategic revegetation that sequesters carbon, increases biodiversity, improves riparian zones, delivers improved water quality and provides a biomass harvest. The project also aims to identify regional development opportunities that flow from the native farm forestry initiatives such as biomass processing and enterprises that add value to the native forest plantation materials. Alex Baumber's PhD addresses whether bioenergy is a driver of reforestation or deforestation and aims to develop an environmental policy for emerging bioenergy industries. Fieldwork in the Central Tablelands will commence from Sept 2009, and a potential ARC Linkage Grant will also be explored.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

Status	Project Title	Funding	Time frame	Researchers / Partners	Details
Current	Branching Out	Arts NSW \$7,500. Further funding being sought \$7,500 - \$15,000	2009	Project manager Cheryle Yin-Lo	This project uses the eucalypt as the focus for historical and contemporary stories of people's experiences and memories using archival material, social history and contemporary art works. The outcome is an online mixed media exhibition of dynamic and new interpretations of the people and environment. Material is ready to go onto the BMWHI website.
Current	Seasons Greetings	Blue Mountains City Council's Cultural Partnerships Program and the Australia Council for the Arts Community Partnerships Program.	2009 - 2010	Blue Mountains Aboriginal Culture & Resource Centre, Blue Mountains City Council, Shiney Pictures, Department and Environment & Climate Change and Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre	For one year, the Aboriginal community will document seasonal cycles in the Blue Mountains from a social, cultural and environmental perspective. The project will involve all age groups and encourage the learning by youth from local Elders. Journals and visual diaries will be used to record observations, stories and experiences. The next Seasons Greetings gathering is at Darug Corroboree at Muru Mittigar in Penrith on 3 October 2009.
Complete	Mt Wilson Bushfire Forum	Forum sponsored by local community \$2000	September 26, 2009	Coordinated by Joe Landsberg and Bronwen Maxwell Presenters: Ross Bradstock, Glenn Meade	Approximately 35 local residents of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine attended this 2-hour forum about bushfire ecology and management. The forum focused on Ecological knowledge underlying bushfire management Bushfire risk management planning Climate change implications and how they are being addressed The challenge of managing fire for the protection of World Heritage values alongside human life and property. The forum report will be tabled at October board meeting. Further forums are now planned as detailed under project 3.8.
Current	Golden Gumtree Postal Run – a celebration of 50 years of the Blue Mountains National Park	BMCC Cultural Partnerships funding \$7,500; Some small private donations received.	2009 Sept	Partnership event with DECC, ConSoc, BMCC Coordinators: Bronwen Maxwell and Wyn Jones National Parks Heritage Centre in Blackheath and other venues across the Mountains will host the exhibition	The event is a walk during September between Penrith and Lithgow, via each school in the towns and adjoining National Park. A group of adult bush-walkers, led by Wyn Jones, the bush-postie, and supported by the Blue Mountains Conservation Society and National Parks Discovery Rangers, will visit schools to collect and deliver postcards and stories from the children for exchange at the next school in the Postal Run. Diaries from the students' Bush Room activities will provide stories and information on plants and animals and thus the stimulation for the creation of their "sense of place" postcards. The postcards will be collated by a local artist to form a major public art display following the celebratory walk.

In prep	Community and household bushfire awareness and preparedness - a Blue Mountains study	\$120,000 being sought	12-18 months, 2010-2011	Chief investigator Anitra Nelson (social scientist). Grahame Douglass, UWS/NSW Rural Fire Service (primary partner); Blue Mountains City Council, Blue Mountains Bush Fire Management Committee (BFMC); Fire Brigades; DECC; Country Fire Authority (Victoria); Australian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC); NSW State Emergency Services; CRC for Fire – Environment and Society	This project, in partnership with the RFS, will focus on assessing residents' level of fire-preparedness, identifying weaknesses, gaps and strengths and local best practice models, to inform the development of policies and strategies to improve regional community fire awareness and preparedness. The study will involve a literature review, survey, interviews, property tours and household interventions Outcomes: An analysis of relevant literature, interviews and interventions will be presented in a full report, a brief policy bulletin and/or policy options discussion paper, providing key findings about levels of fire-preparedness, identifying key weaknesses and opportunities for improvements, and offering strategic policy recommendations to improve fire-preparedness of households and communities in the Blue Mountains.
Current	Schools /Youth Environment Summit	\$6500	Winmalee Public School 8 th Sept 2009	Partnership with BMCC / Schools Environment network. Bronwen Maxwell subcontracted through BMWHI to help organise the summit.	Purpose: A commitment to young people having a stronger voice in our future. A stimulating program addressing environmental citizenship, climate change concerns and motivation of students to be proactive. The summit provides a discussion space for students to engage in tackling questions about: their opportunities to be heard by decision makers, how they can mobilise, how they can make the changes and be the change themselves. Research, using video, will involve students documenting their thoughts, concerns and actions taken in caring for their environment. Workshops facilitated by students within the Australian Youth Climate Coalition.
Current	Community Dialogues: Bushfire Storytelling	Funds being sought (\$5,000)	2009-2010	Cheryle Yin-Lo	This project will document the knowledge and bushfire experiences of Blue Mountains residents. This dialogue has been identified as necessary for 'community healing' which has not been adequately addressed by community or government agencies. <i>Update:</i> Planning meetings with Miriam Bevis, Community Development Worker at Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre for workshop 27 October with John Hockney, storyteller. Research and preparation for workshop. Bushfire storytelling workshop confirmed for November 2009 at Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre.

Pending	Community dialogues: Bushfire forums	\$approx \$2,000/forum (depending on in-kind contribution from partners)	Early 2010 (after fire season)	Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre.	<p>These 2-hour forums aim to share information about bushfire ecology and management in the region, with a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bushfire ecology and how it informs bushfire management Bushfire risk management planning Climate change implications and preparedness Challenges of balancing fire management for the protection of World Heritage values with protection of human life and property <p>One forum has been held (September 2009), in the Mt Wilson area, and the next is proposed to be held in Blackheath at the invitation of the Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre. Forums lower down the mountains eg Springwood and Blaxland are anticipated, subject to partners.</p>
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