



Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute

January 2010 Activity Update

The Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute is an independent, not-for-profit organisation with a mission to broker research and community engagement that supports the conservation and management of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWhA).

Research and community engagement covers a range of topics:



- Biodiversity conservation
- Climate change
- Bushfire management
- Water quality
- Aboriginal cultural heritage
- Sustainable development
- Recreation and visitor impacts

News and Events

Mt Wilson Bushfire Forum

On Saturday 26th September, BMWHI organised a community forum about regional bushfire ecology and management, held at the Mt Wilson Community Hall. Attended by local residents and interested parties, the forum was chaired by Dr Joe Landsberg and speakers included Professor Ross Bradstock, Director of the Centre for Environmental Risk Management of Bushfires at the University of Wollongong and Mr Glenn Meade, Regional Operations Coordinator Blue Mountains, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. A report on the forum is available on our website: <http://bmwhi.org.au/what/events/mtwilsonfire.html>

Katoomba office relocation

The Institute recently vacated the Gates Avenue premises in Katoomba, which is now being made available to local Aboriginal communities. From December, BMWHI staff will be working from the offices of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service in Whitton Street, Katoomba – but our contact details remain the same. We are extremely grateful to the NPWS for housing us, and to the Blue Mountains City Council for making the Gates Avenue premises available to us over the past five years.

Research prospectus

BMWHI is developing a Research Prospectus of 15 projects that have been identified by its partners and through wider consultation as being urgently needed for the GBMWhA. The Prospectus will provide a guide for researchers seeking new projects and a focus for funding efforts. The Prospectus will be available on the BMWHI website from April 2010.

Projects

Natural and Cultural Heritage projects

Managing Ecosystem Change in the GBMWhA: This project is based at the University of NSW and was funded for 3 years (2007-2009) by an Australian Research Council Linkage grant plus contributions from the NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water and Blue Mountains City Council. Research focused on the impact of fire, climate change and introduced species on biodiversity and ecosystem condition in the

GBMWA. Several PhD projects, including *Integrating science into policy: adaptive management in the GBMWA* (UNSW PhD candidate Alex Gold), will continue beyond 2009 and address specific outcomes of the project. Further information is available at: <http://www.bmwhi.org.au/what/projects/managingecochange.html>
http://www.wetrivers.unsw.edu.au/Blue_Mountains_Project/BM_home.html

Dieback in the GBMWA and the role of *Phytophthora*: A new research project on the ecosystem dynamics of the fungal *Phytophthora* dieback will commence in 2010 as a PhD, with a top-up scholarship generously donated by Dr Don Stammer. The student will be enrolled at the University of Sydney and located at the Botanic Gardens Trust; the project will link with a *Phytophthora* project being developed by DECCW.

Sustainable Development projects

Potential Impacts of Climate Change on Agri-Industries and Forestry: Funded by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, this project is seeking to address recommendations of the recently-completed BMWHI project *Sustainable Agri-Industries in the GBMWA* – particularly, to develop a Geographic Information System (GIS) to assess and predict impacts of climate change on crops and forests in the region. The first phase of the project is complete and the second phase is due for implementation early 2010.

The Impact of Climate Change on Australian Tourism Destinations: In conjunction with the Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre (CRC), BMWHI completed a desktop study that looked at the impacts of climate change on future tourism to the Blue Mountains region. Changes to temperature and rainfall are predicted to increase the frequency, intensity and size of bushfires in the Blue Mountains. The study concluded that this would have the greatest potential impact on tourism for the region. The report is now available on our website: <http://bmwhi.org.au/what/projects/cctourism08.html>

Community Engagement projects

Community Bushfire Awareness and Preparedness – a Blue Mountains Study: Funding for this new project is currently being sought. The project, involving the NSW Rural Fire Service, will focus on assessing residents' level of fire preparedness, identifying weaknesses and gaps, strengths and best practice models to inform the development of policies and strategies which improve community fire-awareness.

Branching Out: Stories From the Blue Mountains: Funded by Arts NSW, this two-part online exhibition was developed by Cheryl Yin-Lo (community cultural development worker with the Institute) and involved a community curatorium. Using the eucalypt as a catalyst for stories, this mixed-media exhibition of archival material, social history and contemporary artwork reflects people's memories, experiences and inspiration of the Blue Mountains. The exhibition is available to view on the BMWHI website:

<http://bmwhi.org.au/what/projects/BranchingOut/> <http://bmwhi.org.au/what/projects/BranchingOut/2/>

The Golden Gumtree Postal Run: In September 2009, 16 schools and hundreds of children participated in this exciting event, a community celebration of the natural and cultural landscapes of the Blue Mountains National Park. The event involved a bush-postie (Wyn Jones) walking across the Blue Mountains, visiting schools from Penrith to Lithgow, collecting and delivering postcards made by the children. As a conclusion of the celebratory walk, all the postcards are on display from 4th December at Blackheath's Heritage Centre, and from the 7th December until end January will go on display at Katoomba & Springwood Libraries and Glenbrook & Katoomba Visitor Information Centres. For more information, please visit:

<http://www.bmwhi.org.au/what/events/goldengum.html>

Donations to the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute are **tax-deductible**.



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For more information on Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute activities, news, research projects and events please visit our website <http://www.bmwhi.org.au>