

Social Construction of Fuels in the Interface (Co-existing with Fire)

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Outline of presentation

1. Recap of project background
 - the social construction of bushfire
 - “place” theory
 - importance of the research
 - for practice
 - for theory
2. Mapping “place”
3. Engagement with case study sites
4. Emerging findings
 - Practice
 - Theory/methods

The social construction of bushfire in the landscape

“Landscape” has physical and social attributes

- Physical:
 - many possible ecological/vegetation communities
 - soil types & topography
- Social:
 - expectations of landscape based on memory, experience, cultural images, practice, place attachment/sense of place
 - ideas about management are shaped by these expectations (often implicit)

“Place” concepts

“Place”: a location that has meaning to people (eg. scenic attributes, family connections)

“Place attachment”: people are more likely to want to protect a place they have become attached to

“Sense of place”: what “kind of place” suggests how it should be managed



What are we
looking at here?

Why this research matters

For managers:

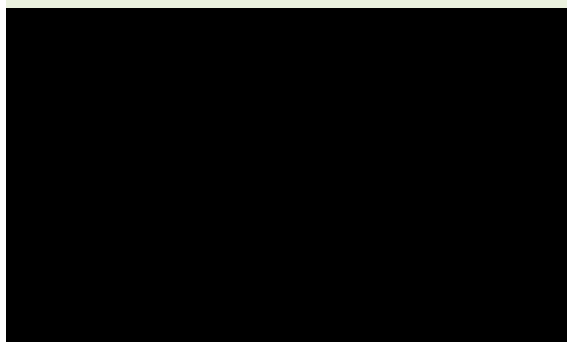
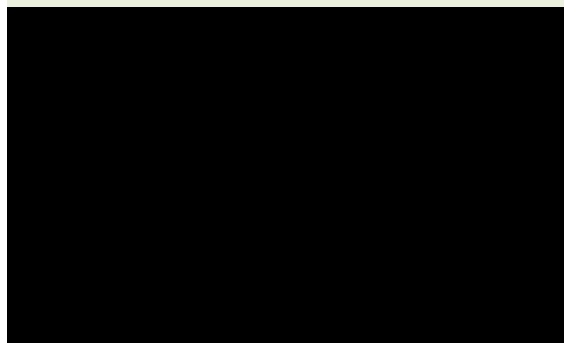
- the move to asset based research requires understanding of what an “asset” is
- what are the implications for management when “assets” mean different things to different people?
- incorporating multiple ways of knowing into management

For theory:

- the landscape “continuum” (Crowe 1958) and the inseparability of “assets” from landscape context
- methods for researching landscape as “continuum” – Place Mapping

Mapping “place”

- A method for integrating social and biophysical data (Cacciapaglia et. al. 2011)
- Multiple techniques to consider:
 - Computer based mapping
 - Aerial photos/maps to locate “special” places
 - “Mud maps” illustrating social and ecological community
- Interview recorded to capture narratives associated with places



Two Case Study Sites

Adelaide Hills – peri-urban landscape

Southern Grampians – farming communities & townships

Mapping & interviews in progress both sites

Adelaide Hills

- Pilot site for interviews (Bridgewater)
- Scope expanded to include Aldgate & Stirling



Community engagement:

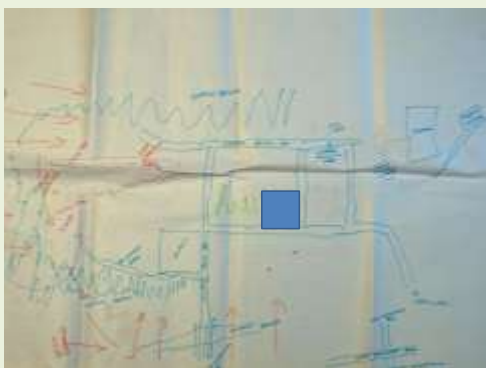
- DENR
- The Hut Community Centre

Training & exchange of experience

Southern Grampians



- Participation in Municipal Integrated Fire Management Planning Committee
- Focus on Cavendish, Victoria Valley, Mirranatwa



Edward and Margaret

Emerging findings:

What is important to you about this landscape?

“We’re just proud of the valley...love the big red gums...beautiful scenery and we’ve got the mountains all around...”

“Place”: - big Red Gums grow here
- mountain surrounds

“Practice”: - Red Gums are so good for our stock

“Memory”: - past fires and community response



David

Emerging findings:

“What is important to you about this landscape?”

“It’s just the place...like that spirit of place, where if you’ve been there long enough...you become part of it”

**place + practice + memory =
whole of landscape understanding**

Implications:

Integrated fire management:

- need to understand the “whole of landscape” attributes that people want to manage
- acknowledge that at a local level “assets” are relational (eg. Red Gums are tied to ideas about good practice and to place identity)
- help to clarify tensions between managing the “local” on a regional level

Theoretical:

- contributing to the international discourse about “place” and understanding bushfire in the landscape
- clarifying the impact of landscape “continuum” as a tool for assessing fire management (an interface between local and regional scales)

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