



SOCIAL CONSTRUCT OF FUELS IN THE INTERFACE: THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF LANDSCAPE

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Construction of meaning in the landscape

People make meaning through their everyday experience of the landscapes in which they live and work. People attach value to places and to objects in places.

Attachment to places and things that we value in places shape what we think a forest should look like and how it should be managed.

Decisions about the use of fire for ecological and fuel reduction purposes are made more complex by landscape fragmentation, pest plants and animals and proximity of urban and agricultural land to natural areas. Diverse environmental values strongly influence what different members of the community understand as 'hazards' and what is worthy of protection.

This project will undertake preliminary work to understand these issues by exploring the following questions:

1. How do we understand the values associated with the landscape in which we work and live?
2. How can interfacing local knowledge of fire, biodiversity (nature/ecology) and place at a landscape scale and associated with particular places, assist in the public and private management of fire?



Fire in the Adelaide Hills
Photo: DENR

Two Case Studies:

- Peri-urban region (Cleland, Adelaide Hills)
 - ✓ peri-urban fringe of Adelaide
 - ✓ tourism pressure in natural areas, particularly Mt Lofty Summit walk
 - ✓ some ecosystems/habitats of significance; some highly degraded
 - ✓ horticulture (eg. vineyards), agriculture
 - ✓ rebuilding and repopulation of residential areas burned in 1983
 - ✓ highlighted as a research priority by CFS and DENR staff
- Rural mosaic landscape/roadside vegetation (Western Victoria)
 - ✓ proximity to agricultural and protected land uses
 - ✓ significant remnant roadside vegetation
 - ✓ mosaic of ecosystem types and land uses; contested and multiple social construction of landscapes
 - ✓ history of land use change
 - ✓ need for research flagged by DSE staff

Expected
outcomes



1. clarification of community practices in relation to bushfire in Australian landscapes
 - how are 'hazards' socially constructed?
 - how do communities construct what is (or is not) valuable?
2. a whole of landscape approach to understanding bushfire as a social-ecological system
3. new methods for management agencies to employ in collaboration with communities that connect social and ecological systems with management outcomes