



RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Social dimensions of land-use and catchment health

Description:

A research team led by Prof Allan Curtis is undertaking the social science for the multi-organisation Landscape Logic CERF (www.landscapelogic.org.au). Landscape Logic seeks to understand the critical links between land-use and catchment health. Landscape Logic involves a range of organisations – regional CMOs, state agencies, CSIRO and universities – who are undertaking collaborative research during 2007-2010.

Landscape Logic is undertaking bio-physical and social research, together with integrated modelling, to better understand how specific land-use activities and policy instruments have influenced catchment health. While grounded in research sites in Tasmania and Victoria, it is expected that the results from this research will be informative for regional CMOs and NRM policy-makers throughout Australia.

Objectives:

The major objectives of the social research are:

- provide insights into the social acceptability of recommended NRM practices;
- identify local knowledge that challenges or complements scientific knowledge;
- provide understanding about the effectiveness of efforts to engage landholders in active management of riparian zones;
- support development and implementation of a methodology to understand land-use history;
- Identify the essential elements of programs for building long-term commitment to

improved native vegetation outcomes;

- assess the relative importance of demographic change as a driver of change in vegetation condition in North East Victoria (PhD research by Wendy Minato);
- explore what landholders know, understand and believe about climate change and climate variability;
- understand how important climate change is as a driver of landholder property management; and
- identify the implications of landholder adaptations to climate change for the condition of remnant vegetation on private property.

Methods:

The social research will involve:

- quantitative analysis of mail survey data provided by landholders with riparian land in Tasmania;
- in-depth semi-structured interviews with a range of landholders, agency and NGO staff, and agribusiness specialists; and
- facilitated workshops with a cross-section of experienced land and program managers to confirm key findings and explore their implications for NRM.

Project staff: Prof Allan Curtis, Drs Catherine Allan, Nicki Mazur, Digby Race, Maureen Rogers and Rik Thwaites, and Kris Deegan, Simon McDonald, Wendy Minato and Royce Sample.

Results from this research will be available from late-2008.

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