



## Short report on

# *Adaptive Management training for Protected Areas in the Asia-Pacific*

November 5-10<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, Australia



भारतीय वन्यजीव संस्थान  
Wildlife Institute of India



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



World  
Heritage  
Centre



UNESCO Category 2 Centre  
World Natural Heritage Management and  
Training for Asia and the Pacific Region

Acknowledging the Dharug, Gundungurra, Wanaruah, Wiradjuri, Darkinjung and Tharawal language groups as the traditional owners of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area

The 6-day intensive was held in Katoomba in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. The programme was convened by the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute and scholarships were provided by the Protected Areas Learning and Research Collaboration (PALRC<sup>1</sup>) and the World Heritage Leadership Program<sup>2</sup> through the provision of scholarships and travel assistance. The programme was also recognised through a partnership with the Wildlife Institute of India, a UNESCO Category 2 training centre.

There were 19 participants including ten internationals (from Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea) and nine from Australian state government protected area agencies. This diversity of participants provided for rich and valuable interactions and building of international peer networks.

## CONTEXT AND AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME

Extrapolating past experience into the future is often not helpful given the rapid dynamic changes taking place in the environment at a global scale, including the influence of climate change. New approaches to management, education and capacity building are now seen as the foundation for responding to environmental change.

Training in adaptive management can build capacity to not only adapt to change, but to shape and create change. Adaptive challenges are individual and collective as well as technical. While adaptive management calls for implementation of strategies and measures that address the technical aspects of problems, it also calls for us, individually and collectively, to be able to evolve along with the heritage that we are caring for. This can challenge assumptions and question underlying beliefs about what is taking place in the natural and cultural environment. This training programme sought to help to build the inclusiveness, discrimination, openness and reflexivity necessary for the management of change processes, to guide justifiable, appropriate and effective action.

The programme aimed to strengthen capacities in the management of natural and cultural resources, particularly in the context of protected areas in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region. The course provided an understanding of adaptive management tools based on the internationally recognised Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation<sup>3</sup> that help people be systematic about planning, implementing, and monitoring their conservation initiatives. The Open Standards framework assists decision-making about complex issues and can be applied to a wide range of cultures and situations at any scale. The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area provided a case study. The knowledge and practical skills gained are readily implemented and applicable for use in natural and cultural resource management by governments, non-government, private landholders and Indigenous communities.

## KEY FEATURES

- Methods and approaches to collecting, managing, and interpreting data that are necessary to understand dynamic changes for conservation of natural & cultural heritage
- Field learning in monitoring values and threats
- A decision-making framework that is suitable for varying cultures and situations
- Developing capacity to navigate complexity and uncertainty
- Challenging our assumptions and identifying non-obvious barriers to change
- Team-building and networking including regional and cross-agency collaboration
- Management issues as a focus of monitoring include: fire, water, & climate change indicators; introduced & threatened species; urban development; tourism
- Nature-culture connectivity

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.palrc.com/>

<sup>2</sup> The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) <https://www.iucn.org/theme/world-heritage/our-work/world-heritage-projects/world-heritage-leadership>

<sup>3</sup> <http://cmp-openstandards.org/>

## CONTENT

*“The Greater Blue Mountains Area is a dissected sandstone tableland that cradled the birth of new continental flora, while at the same time sheltering in its deepest recesses the floristic remnants of Gondwana. This vast and beautiful area of upland reserves, inhabited by indigenous people over millennia, stands adjacent to the largest metropolis in Australia. Through their scale and symbiosis with the City of Sydney, the Greater Blue Mountains exemplify the links between wild places and human aspirations.”<sup>4</sup>*

The programme was convened by Rosalie Chapple and John Merson (Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute) and the Open Standards framework was taught by Philippa Walsh and Stuart Cowell. Field visits in the afternoons were led by local people with expertise in different aspects of natural and cultural heritage conservation. The programme opened with acknowledgement of the six indigenous language groups across the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area – the Gundungurra, Darug, Wiradjuri, Darkinjung, Wonaruah and Dharawal. Representatives of the Gundungurra and Darug spoke about their culture and contemporary challenges and opportunities, especially in the context of a recent Indigenous Land Use Agreement.



*Welcome to Country by David King  
Gundungurra Tribal Nation*

The adaptive management framework that was taught during the program included:

- Overview of pre-planning and setting the scene and understanding the situation
  - Choosing Targets and defining their nature and health
  - Defining Threats and understanding the factors behind them
  - Conducting a Situation Analysis in preparation for developing the plan
- Making the Plan
  - Setting Goals and Objectives
  - Strategies and evaluating their priority
  - Results chains to test your understanding
  - Measures and monitoring
- Plan Review: “Closing the Circle”

The rugged landscape of the Blue Mountains is “not only of exceptional diversity in geological form, flora and fauna and spectacular ephemeral beauty. It is also tied to the lives of the people who have occupied, travelled through, thought about, been nourished by and cared for it over time, and still do. Current studies, following its world heritage listing, continue to reveal new evidence of the strength of those human connections. As specific knowledge expands, so must the authenticity of conservation policies be re-thought and adjusted”<sup>5</sup>. The Nara Document on Authenticity<sup>6</sup> (1994) was cited in talking about what is authentic heritage and authentic conservation practice and that “authenticity does not require any significant place to stay frozen as is; that the outstanding values of a place can be sustained dynamically, so long as its stories remain credible and truthful. This message is vital, when the very circumstances of each place are surrounded by so much dynamic change, climatically, humanly and in perception ...”<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service in association with Environment Australia, Domicelj, J. ed. (1998), *The Greater Blue Mountains Area World Heritage Nomination* (Environment Australia, Canberra).

<sup>5</sup> Joan Domicelj [https://www.icrom.org/sites/default/files/ICCROM\\_IC10\\_JukkaFestchrift\\_en.pdf](https://www.icrom.org/sites/default/files/ICCROM_IC10_JukkaFestchrift_en.pdf) p.143

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.icomos.org/charters/nara-e.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Joan Domicelj Ibid.

Participants worked in small groups, each focusing on one of four themes (people and culture, flora and fauna, fire or water) to progress through an adaptive planning, monitoring and management loop. The people and culture group focused on Indigenous and European cultural heritage and tourism management.

Management issues were explored to reveal underlying problems, and to find ways of working with complex and seemingly intractable issues such as climate change. Heritage management issues were always considered through the lens of nature-culture connectivity.



*Left to right: Niraj Kakati, Clive Barker (local guide), Manoj Nair, Ayemat Thandar, Maureen Ewai*



*Furwoko Nazor, Kezang Dema, Wil Allen, Mat Wolnicki, Joan Domicelj, Mark Poll, David King, John Merson*

## COURSE PARTICIPANTS

NAME	COUNTRY	ORGANISATION	POSITION
Abir Man Sinchuri	Bhutan	Department of Forests and Park Services	Forestry Officer, Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park
Kezang Dema	Bhutan	Department of Forests and Park Services, Ministry of Agriculture and Forest, Royal Government of Bhutan	Snr Forestry Officer, Nature Conservation Division
Furwoko Nazor	Indonesia	Conservation Community (NGO), Indonesia-Warsi	Regional Coordinator for Community Based Forest Management
Phuntsho	Bhutan	Bhutan Department of Forest and Park Services	Snr Ranger, Jigme Khesar Strict Nature Reserve
Zlin Lin Tun	Myanmar	WWF Myanmar	Forest sector project officer
Aye Myat Thandar	Myanmar	WWF Myanmar	Forest Project Officer
Maureen Ewai	Papua New Guinea	PNG Conservation and Environment Protection Authority	Provincial Interface Support Officer
Niraj Kakati	India	Wildlife Institute of India	Technical Officer
Manoj McNair	India	Wildlife Institute of India	Scientist & Conservator of Forests
James Sabi	PNG	PNG Conservation and Environment Protection Authority	Manager, Terrestrial Ecosystem Management Branch
Mat Wolnicki	Australia	Australian Department of Environment and Energy	Senior Policy Officer, Kokoda Initiative
Kerryn McTaggart	Australia	Parks Victoria	Melbourne Fire and Emergency Program Planning Officer
Will Allen	Australia	NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service	Team Leader, Planning
Scott Filmer	Australia	NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service	Ranger
Jessica Wardhaugh	Australia	NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service	Assistant Project Officer Aboriginal Cultural Heritage
Mark Poll	Australia	Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife Service	Planner, Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife Service
James Overall	Australia	ACT Parks & Wildlife Service	Ranger-in -Charge
Conor Wilson	Australia	Parks Victoria	Ranger-in-Charge
Allison Woolley	Australia	Tasmania Parks & Wildlife Service	Policy & Planning



From left to right: Mark Poll, Louise Clifton (National Parks, Blue Mountains), Wil Allen, Kezang Dema, Mat Wolnicki, Furwoko Nazur, John Merson

## PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

*Dear Rosalie and John, I would like to provide a short feedback on the totally brilliant training on Adaptive Management for the Conservation of Protected Areas in the Asia Pacific, which I attended in your good Institute few weeks ago. For me, the training was a huge success, where I gained lots of knowledge and skills, especially on management planning of protected areas and incorporating social and cultural values in such a plan. I work for one of the most important PAs of Bhutan which is faced with a challenge of conserving the cultural heritage of two indigenous communities, Monpas and Oleps, who are said to be the first settlers of Bhutan, and through the training I got to understand different intervention techniques which could help us keep this cultural heritage alive for times to come. Using case studies of aboriginals, their culture and social values in Blue Mountains region made it very easy for us to understand and relate the concepts to our own landscape. Overall, the training was excellent and met all of my expectations!*

*I am already working on management plan for my Park and I am applying those knowledge and skills in this work. Further, I have already recommended this course to some of my colleagues who work in similar field. Thank You. **Abir Man Sinchuri, Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park, Bhutan***

*We are currently at the stage of developing new management plans for the protected areas of Bhutan and we heard about the Open Standards procedure where we can create an adaptive management program within the management plan. I think the [adaptive management] plan should be inbuilt so it will make our plan more effective and user friendly and we can adapt to different situations and times.*

*We were given the Blue Mountains as a case study so we could understand the situation here and see the base line and understand the threats. Some of the content we knew, but other parts were quite new to us and was totally unknown. Its been an exploration process.*

*I enjoyed this program where cultural and social aspects were appreciated and addressed along with natural/biophysical factors. The training opened up my mind to whole realm of protected areas planning*

and management . I now have the skills and tools that i can use throughout my career.

Thank you once again for the support. **Kezang Dema, Nature Recreation and Ecotourism, Bhutan**

For me personally, from this course, I wanted to know how to do better monitoring of issues like the impact of climate change. We haven't done every well in the past so for me its really about finding better ways of monitoring these issues and seeing where we can improve. **Maureen Ewai, United Nations Development Program, Papua New Guinea**

I have learnt so many things from the course such as management planning in the Blue Mountains and how to manage nature and culture under the one umbrella. Also how to involve and motivate the local community and deal with management aspects such as bushfires, and the protection of flora and fauna. I have learnt so many things.. that I can take back and adapt to my local community and activities in Indonesia. **Furwoko Nazor, Indonesia**

I was really impressed by the way the whole training program was conducted here.

The first thing would be the venue. Its very nice to have the training right in the middle of a World Heritage site. You step right out of the venue and you are in the lap of nature. It's been wonderful being out here in the Blue Mountains. Also the passion of the instructors. It was really contagious. They are so very convinced and enthusiastic about the whole methodology and that really makes a difference because that kind of conviction rubs off on you.

I also really liked the informal atmosphere in which the course was conducted. With the YHA its almost like living a home and there was wonderful participation from my colleagues. Its a nice mix of people from all over the world and you really get to know people and you get to know their different situations from all over the world.

What makes the training even more effective is that every morning you have theoretical situations that then get applied in the field in the afternoon. You also have experts coming and talking to us about their respective areas of expertise. All up, its been a wonderful experience. **Manoj Nair, Wildlife Institute of India**

The reason that I've come to do the course is because we are required to do adaptive management in everything we do these days by policy and its also the most effective way to go about things.

So I'm here to learn about the Open Standards approach and how we might bring improvements to our system. I'm really impressed by how the Open Standards can apply to any kind of system. Governments generally have very strict ways of doing things but this system has been designed to fit in just about anywhere. I'm really impressed by how the logics apply to just about everything we do. I'm really happy and pleased with the level and the speed of delivery and the plain English approach. I think everyone here has benefited greatly. **Wil Allen, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service**



From left to right: Furwoko Nazor, Kezang Dema, Mark Poll, Louise Clifton (National Parks, Blue Mountains), Wil Allen, David Crust (National Parks, Blue Mountains), Mat Wolnicki, John Merson

## ONGOING SUPPORT

By the end of the course, participants were familiar with how to design and implement a monitoring program and integrate the data into a decision-making framework for adaptive management. To enable and assist long-term engagement, participants have been invited to submit a progress report in six months (mid-2019), to report on implementation of learning to their own work situations. These reports will contribute to a database of case studies on adaptive management and will to the ongoing analysis of the impact of training programmes including on-ground conservation outcomes.

An online portal for course alumni is being developed as part of a wider Community of Practice so that participants continue to engage with a network of peers applying this adaptive management framework. This aims to provide ongoing support and mentoring as needed, and to enable practitioner exchanges.

This programme forms part of a long-term capacity building strategy that is being developed by the Protected Areas Learning and Research Collaboration in partnership with the Institute, to meet the needs of leadership, knowledge, innovation and practical skills for the conservation sector in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region. This strategy is informed by a 2018 review (undertaken for PALRC by Rosalie Chapple) of capacity building needs for protected areas in the region. The ongoing support and partnership of the World Heritage Leadership Programme is welcomed in this endeavor.



*From left to right: Rosalie Chapple, Phuntsho, Ayemat Thandar, John Merson, Connor Wilson, Abir Man Sinchuri, Julian Crawford (BMWHI Board member), Kezang Dema, James Overall, Allison Woolley, Jessica Wardaugh, Kerryn MacTaggart*