Developing People for the North

North Australia Fire Managers Forum
Alice Springs
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Background

• Post-Boorabin review of DEC by Ferguson (2010) highlighted succession planning as critical

• Report on Margaret River bushfires by Keelty (2012) highlighted operational complexity and the need for succession planning

• Most senior and experienced fire personnel (ex forestry) have diverse operational backgrounds

• Support and $$$$ for FMDP provided in late 2012
Fire Management Development Program

Scope

- 16 full time L1 – L4 positions, with vehicles, mainly south west based and focussed, plus a program manager

- Placements in districts, regions and state fire branch for around 18 – 24 months, then another placement

- Standard program requirements for each level, structured group/block training and development, tailored individual development, projects, deployments

- Recent program review and planned expansion
Fire Management Development Program

Northern Aspects

• After initial SW focus, FMDP teams have been involved in ground burning in the Pilbara, Goldfields and Kimberley 2014, 2015 & 2016

• FMDP placement in Broome for Yawuru fire planning, now the District Fire Coordinator in Kununurra

• Selected FMDP participants assisted with development of fire ecology courses – initial phase, tropical savannas, hummock grasslands etc.
Beyond Operations: Fire Ecology Courses

Why?

• Australia is recognised as a biodiversity hotspot and one of the world’s most fire prone regions

• Conservation and land management responsibilities of P&W WA

• Courses will facilitate a deeper understanding among fire practitioners and managers of the interactions that fire has with ecosystems and the biota they contain

• A sound understanding of fire ecology enables managers to make sound decisions about when, where and how to introduce fire to the landscape to ensure the conservation of biodiversity
Course Development

• The courses have been developed collaboratively between P&W fire managers, Science Division and subject matter experts
• Tropical savannas module produced by Dr Ian Radford
• Hummock grasslands module being produced by Dr Neil Burrows
• Learning materials developed by some FMDP participants
What is covered

• Fundamental fire ecology concepts:
  – Different fire environments (biomes)
  – Fire adaptations (flora and fauna)
  – Fire responses (flora and fauna)
  – Appropriate fire regimes
  – Influences of climate variability and change
  – Adaptive management
Two courses, Two audiences

Base Level Introductory Course
• For fire practitioners
• Mainly field delivery at suitable sites
• To gain an understanding of fundamental concepts of fire ecology
• To identify with the purposes of burns and to understand the effects different fire behaviours have on ecosystems

Intermediate Course
• For prescribing officers, planning officers, fire managers
• To gain a thorough understanding of fire regimes and how fire interacts with the natural environment
• To acquire the ability to recognise potential habitat and identify an appropriate solution to enhance or maintain biodiversity
2016 and Beyond

• A pilot course was delivered to participants in the Fire Management Development Program (FMDP) in June 2016 in the jarrah forest at Busselton + review of other biomes

• The course will be reviewed and extended to fire practitioners and managers at all levels across the department over coming years

• Development of modules for tropical savannas, hummock grasslands and other biomes are well advanced and will soon be ready for delivery

• Fire ecology courses will provide a foundation for the continuous professional development of all departmental personnel involved with fire