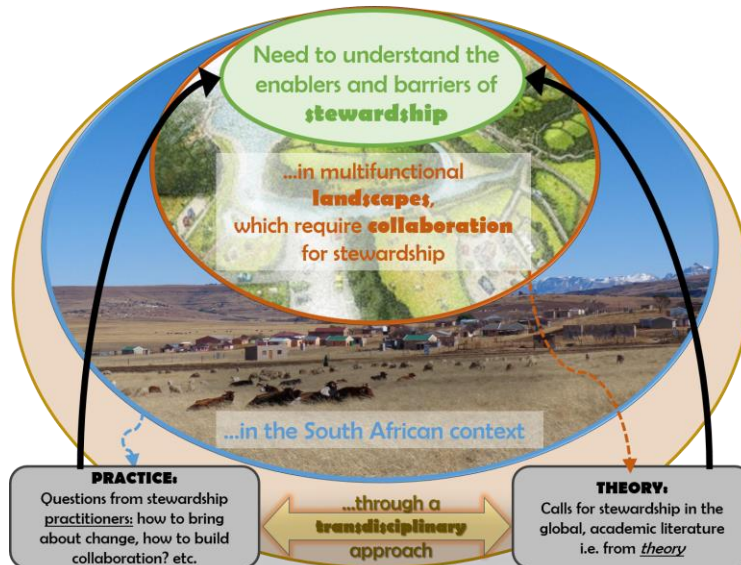


Research Collaboration Update for the UCPP Research Forum

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I am a PhD student at Rhodes University, in the Department of Environmental Science. The title of my PhD research is: "*Exploring environmental stewardship and collaboration in multifunctional landscapes in South Africa through a transdisciplinary enquiry*". (See diagram below which describes the overarching research framework for the study).



The research methods for my PhD include case study research to answer the following key questions:

- ❖ What are the enablers and barriers of environmental stewardship at the local level?
- ❖ How do practitioners engage stakeholders and build collaboration for landscape-scale stewardship?

I have selected the UCPP as one of six comparative case studies in the research, all of which are examples, in different social-ecological contexts, of "*Landscape-scale Collaborative Stewardship Initiatives*" in South Africa. By committing to a "transdisciplinary" approach to this research, I recognise the importance of working beyond the 'ivory tower' of academia by building relationships with practitioners who are working with communities at the local level. In this way, I hope to co-produce knowledge on stewardship and collaboration with these practitioners, which is relevant both to theory and practice. Research methods for the case study have a strong emphasis on co-learning, and included site visits, interviews, collecting stories, photos and artefacts from each case study in a collective 'Learning Jar', and finally a participatory workshop with practitioners from each case study to share lessons learnt and build a network of practitioners working on these innovative and challenging initiatives.

Nicky McLeod and Joyce Loza represented the UCPP at the participatory workshop which was held from the 7th-9th February 2017. We had some inspiring and eye-opening discussions about the difficulties practitioners face in getting stakeholders involved in collaborative initiatives; the need to demonstrate tangible benefits of practicing stewardship; and ideas on how to overcome some of the deeply entrenched barriers to stewardship.

I have completed the data generating activities for the 6 case studies. I am now working on analysis and thesis write-up, which is due to be submitted by December 2017. I would like to continue working with landscape-scale initiatives like the UCPP in my postdoctoral research to build on the findings and relationships developed during the PhD.

My sincere thanks go to the UCPP for participating in my research!

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or comments about my research: jessicacockburn@gmail.com | Cell: 072 1022875