



Australian Government

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Development of interpretation for the Warra Long- Term Ecological Research Site



Forestry Tasmania

TCFA Alternatives to Clearfelling Research

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Summary

Funding from the TCFA Alternatives to Clearfelling research program was used to develop a series of display panels at the Warra Long-Term Ecological Research site and an interpretation sign. A 'Warra' theatre was developed and located at the Tahune AirWalk, and is permanently open to the visiting public.

Background

Alternative silvicultural approaches to clearfelling, for application in tall wet oldgrowth eucalypt forests, are being developed at the Silvicultural Systems Trial located in the Warra LTER site. This site is immediately adjacent to the Tahune Forest reserve and AirWalk, so the Tahune precinct is an excellent location for provision of interpretation of these research initiatives.

Method

The goal for Warra LTER interpretation was to increase public and visitor awareness of the scientific credibility of the alternatives to clear-felling. Forestry Tasmania therefore engaged an external consultant (Anna Housego) to advise on the best methods for delivery of this interpretation. The findings indicated a variety of messages and needs, with 3 priorities being identified.

Development of an audio/visual display

The required display was to have broad appeal for the 100,000+ tourists visiting the AirWalk annually, and to permit them to learn about Warra. The audio/visual display was commissioned using footage from the Southern Cross Television series 'Going Bush' (filmed during Oct/Nov 2007) of five researchers speaking about their work within Warra. Also used as a resource was historical footage (from 1998) of Dr Mick Brown (former Chief Scientist with Forestry Tasmania) speaking about the establishment of the Warra LTER site. The footage was edited into a 15 minute DVD presentation, with voice-over providing an overview of Warra.

In cooperation with the Tahune AirWalk an unused area within the Bluestone Shelter was identified as being suitable to develop into a theatre with the capacity to seat 10-15 people. The existing fittings were removed, and curtaining and bench seating were installed. A 42" LCD panel was purchased, together with a sound system to complete the theatre, which began operation in August 2008.

Interpretation sign on the AirWalk site

An interpretation sign was developed that provides a connection for tourists to the Warra theatre audio/visual presentation. The all-weather/vandal-proof interpretation panel, constructed by Eye-Spy signs, was installed in June 2008 at the Tahune AirWalk within Warra. The panel gives a brief overview of the Warra LTER site and the science being

undertaken, together with a listing of the site partners and recognition for the interpretation funding body.

Display panels within the Warra LTER

Specialists, students and members of the public were identified as the three main groups which regularly visit Warra. The interpretation requirements for each group were recognised as diverse and, as a result, a series of A1-sized, all-weather display panels were erected within Warra. Each panel is located at a significant place within the site, and is designed to enable tour hosts to easily mount and remove posters appropriate to the visiting audience.

Conclusion

The project was completed to the \$30,000 budget, with the display panels and interpretation signs in place for the February 2008 *Old Forests, New Management* conference, when approximately 200 visiting scientists visited Warra. The project has now been taken over by the Division of Forest Research and Development, Forestry Tasmania, which aims to further develop the displays and messages of science in the forest.

A Warra display is being developed at the AirWalk, and future plans include the construction of a model of the Warra site, and installation of LCD screens (within the Bluestone shelter at Tahune) providing real-time readings of forest carbon absorption or emissions, stream flows etc, from sensors located within Warra.

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