

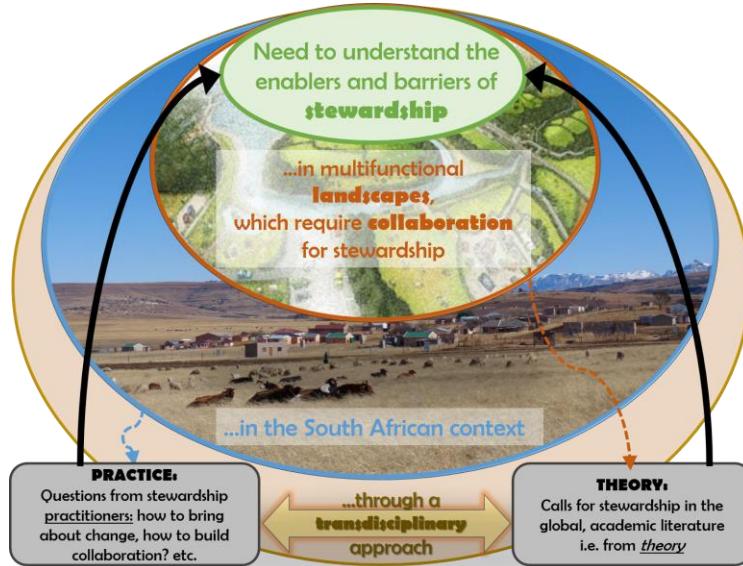
# Research Collaboration Update for the UCPP Research Forum

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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](mailto:jessicacockburn@gmail.com) | Cell: 072 1022875