Coupling Ozflux and Ecology: The Supersite Strategy

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TERN is supported by the Australian Government through the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy and the Super Science Initiative.
The Australian Supersite Network
Ecosystem Observatories

FNQ Rainforest
SEQ Peri-urban
Cumberland Plain
Tumbarumba
Victorian Dry Eucalypt
Warra Tall Eucalypt
Great Western Woodland
Litchfield Savanna
Alice Mulga
Calperum Mallee

TERN
Australian Supersite Network
What is a TERN Supersite?

1) An intensive field station in a typical and important biome
2) Physical instrumentation
3) Scientists and technical support staff
4) Transect(s) or Contrasts (10-400km)
5) One or more nodes.

Core activities

Vegetation plot 1 Ha – field monitoring
Plant physiological and soil/water measurements
Faunal monitoring – field and sensor monitoring
Data / Web portal - linked to TERN portal and ANDS
OzFlux system – biogeochemical fluxes, microclimate
The Supersite Strategy
Developing a Process based understanding of an Ecosystem

OzFlux system
– biogeochemical fluxes
– microclimate
Vegetation plot 1 Ha
– field - diversity, structure, C
– phenocams, LAI
Plant physiological
Soil – spatial, metagenomics
Water
– bores, surface water
Faunal monitoring
– field – avifauna, invertebrates
– sensor monitoring – acoustics, camera trapping
The Supersite Strategy

Providing a Resource that facilitates collaborative research

Ecologists (and other scientists) are attracted to come and study at a Supersite because of infrastructure, data resource. Ozflux provides part of that key infrastructure. More scientists then more of the picture can be assembled.
The Supersites and Ozflux
Underpinning measurements of change with the drivers of change

OzFlux system - providing spatially integrated measures of carbon and water dynamics – primarily involving the plant community.

– providing microclimate data to underpin most ecological measurements

Soil – spatial sampling nutrient and water status, (metagenomics)

Water – bores, surface water flows/chemistry/ecology

Vegetation plot 1 Ha
– field measures (dbh, height, litter), diversity, structure
– phenocams, LAI - assessing flora – the substrate

Plant physiological – field measures to provide the fine detail to assist the modellers in calculating the right fluxes.

Faunal monitoring – changes in biodiversity influenced by changes in substrate and climate (and competition).
TERN Auscover

Each Supersite (Alice remains to be done) has had airborne campaigns collecting high resolution Lidar (10cm), hyperspectral and ground based Cal/Val measurements such as terrestrial laser scanning.

The aim is to provide detailed 5km x 5km data sets to assist in biomass and biodiversity assessments. Which in turn can be used to calibrate satellite based products that are produced by Auscover as a national time series.

The Supersites are providing the locations and the vegetation plots are assisting in cross comparison of biomass/biodiversity estimates.
A team of plant ecophysiologists from ANU (Atkin, Keith et al) have been working at the Supersites to measure a comprehensive and directly comparable set of plant variables. This data will be used subsequently to inform SVAT type modeling that is being undertaken by eMAST. Development models are being used to evaluate how to most effectively couple Australian plant response to climate and soil into higher level models such as CABLE and LPJ. Enhancing current estimates of both Australia’s and the global carbon balance.
BIOMASS TO CARBON

In the next section biomass to carbon estimates will be provided.

Above Ground Biomass (AGB) is typically expressed as a function of diameter at breast height (D), in addition height and density are used where these are available.

\[ \text{AGB} = \exp\{-5.014 + 3.068 \ln(D)\} \]

AGB is then converted to %C.

1) Great Western Woodlands (GWW) – fire – Suzanne Prober (CSIRO) 
Arid Mediterranean, Mid-stature-Dry Mixed forest – Salmon Gum.

2) FNQ Rainforest – biodiversity – Matt Bradford (CSIRO) 
Warm Tropical, Mid-stature – wet rainforest. – Mixed species

3) Warra Tall Eucalypt – forestry – Tim Wardlaw (Forestry Tas) 
Cool Temperate, Tall-Wet Eucalypt forest – Mountain Ash.
Great Western Woodlands Supersite

16 million hectare mosaic of semi-arid woodland, heathland and mallee vegetation in south-west WA.

Globally unique - nowhere else does woodlands persist on 250 mm MAP.

“Are old-growth semi-arid woodlands carbon sources or carbon sinks?”

“Where do woodland trees source their water from?”
Great Western Woodlands Supersite

Credo Station node
First vegetation type: Salmon gum woodland
Core 1Ha vegetation plot established in 2012
Salmon Gum woodland. Proximity to flux tower.
Above ground biomass (ton/ha) 35
Estimated total living biomass C (ton/ha) 24
Second vegetation type: Gimlet woodland
1Ha vegetation plot established in 2012.
Above ground biomass (ton/ha) 33
Estimated total living biomass C (ton/ha) 23

Credo Station ~ 250mm MAP.
Groundwater bores drilled in 2013.
No water to bedrock (~ 50m)!
 FNQ Tropical Rainforest Supersite

1) Robson Creek node
Upland tropical rainforest

2) Daintree node
Lowland tropical rainforest

Major clines in
• Altitude
• Rainfall
• Temperature

“What are the fundamental carbon & water stocks and flows in FNQ tropical forests and are these likely to change significantly in the future?

“How does seasonal water availability relate to species distribution, growth and phenology?”
Robson Creek node
Core 1Ha vegetation plot established in 2012
Mixed species upland rainforest 266 species.
Above ground biomass (ton/ha) 409
Estimated total living biomass C (ton/ha) 247
Robson 2000mm MAP.

Daintree node
Core 1Ha vegetation plot established in 2000
Above ground biomass (ton/ha) 270
Estimated total living biomass C (ton/ha) 148
DRO 5700mm MAP.
Groundwater bores (3) drilled in 2008.
near constant 10m water table.
Carbon stocks are not reliant on ground water.
Warra Tall Eucalypt Supersite

Managed / Unmanaged Wet *Eucalyptus obliqua* forest

“Understand fundamental ecological processes in *E. obliqua* wet forests”

“Determine long-term effects of different forest management regimes on natural diversity and ecological processes”
Warra Supersite

Warra 1Ha
Core 1Ha vegetation plot established 2012-13
Mixed species wet temperate 19 species.
Above ground biomass (ton/ha) 1205
Estimated total biomass C (ton/ha) 687
Warra 1650mm MAP.

CWD volume in this forest 1236 m³.
= 349 ton/ha C!

Longest running Intensive LTER in Australia – 15 years.
Ecosystem measurements used to inform management practice.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- **Field work** has been undertaken by a large number of scientists and support staff from around the country.
- **Funding** for the infrastructure used in this research has been provided by DIISRTE and State governments.