

Day report: Elaine, David, Dr Rosalba Bonaccorsi, Stephen and Jo:

Day 2 : 8:30 am the team drove to Site number 3, south of the Arkaroola airstrip, to collect samples of the cryptobiotic crusted area. We set up a 10m x 10m transect taking soil samples, measured pH and temperature and photographed the site. After this we moved to the second location, Nepouie Hot Springs. At this site Jo and Stephen assisted Reut, by taking temperature and pH readings from both the warm and cool Nepouie pools that are warmed geothermically. Dr Bonaccorsi collected samples from Precambrian clays that she found South-west of the springs.

In the afternoon, the team moved to the Mars Analogue site, here we set up another transect and repeated the process from Site 3. This area contained a high concentration of hypoliths, which are quartz rocks with adapted green algae growing underneath them. Here, Dr Bonaccorsi collected basalt samples, soil samples and Precambrian clays e.g. kaolinite illite. These samples were later processed for Gram negative microbes

On return to base camp, teachers had the opportunity to work alongside scientist, Elaine Bryant, preparing serial dilution plates from the soil samples taken. These plates will be used to identify the presence of life in these arid environments. A great day had by all!!!