

BURNING FOR BIODIVERSITY IN NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

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- Improved conservation management
- Enhanced Aboriginal engagement in fire management
- Greater public awareness and understanding

Territory Wildlife Park



Where & what

- New fire experiment
- Darwin, NT
- Tropical savanna
- 18 one- hectare plots
- Six fire regimes

Aims

- Ecological effects of fire frequency and time-since-fire
- Investigate effect of ecological processes (nutrients, water, herbivory, competition, seed dispersal)
- Mechanistic understanding

Developments

- 2006 will be our 3rd year of fires!
- All research projects progressing well
- New experiments started to investigate woody seedling survival with fire
- 10 overseas students working on plots

Traditional Aboriginal Burning



Where & what

- Kakadu National Park, NT
- Wetland burning at Boggy Plain, for improved natural and cultural resource management

Aims

- Enhance biodiversity in Ramsar-listed wetlands
- Enhanced cultural value of the wetlands
- Combine knowledge systems of traditional ecological knowledge and western science

Developments

- Burning extended to Yellow Water, with dramatic positive effects on biodiversity



Fire Education



Where & what

- Development of fire ecology unit for undergraduate students
- Collaboration between CSIRO, Charles Darwin University, Tropical Savannas CRC

Aims

- Equip students to meet challenges of fire management in northern Australia
- Tackle wide range of complex ecological, social, political and historical aspects of fire management
- Present students with real-world problems & resources

Developments

- Online course completed in 2005
- Winner of prestigious 2005 National ASCILITE Award for Education Design and Technology in Tertiary Education
- Plans to convert unit to a one-day training course for rangers

Fire Communication



Where & what

- Territory Wildlife Park, NT
- Kakadu National Park, NT
- WA CALM in northern Western Australia

Aims

- Raise public awareness and educate about fire in northern Australia
- Dedicated walk-through site at Territory Wildlife Park
- Make available a range of fire information products

Developments

- Signage in place along fire walk at Territory Wildlife Park
- Production of fire information products for Kakadu NP and WA CALM
- Public fire perceptions survey completed

NEW Activities!



Kimberley fire management

- Working with WA CALM to enhance understanding of the effects of fire on biodiversity and ecological functions
- Increasing public awareness and understanding of the role of fire in the region
- Educating rangers in the region about fire ecology

Charles Darwin National Park

- Working with the Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation, NT Parks, and NT Fire and Rescue Service to implement joint fire management at Charles Darwin NP, with ongoing monitoring of natural and cultural resources.