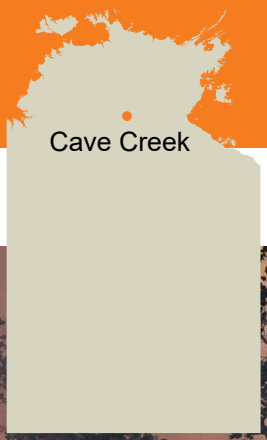
CASE STUDY - CAVE CREEK STATION

Using satellite data to plan our burning program

Who: Margo Sullivan, Cave Creek Station

Cave Creek facts: 809 km², savanna woodlands, hills and river country



Prescribed burning in our area is a must. A large portion of our boundary is shared with National Parks and Aboriginal Land – these areas have fires almost every year. Burning for fuel reduction and to create fire breaks is the best way of protecting ourselves against an out-of-control late dry-season fire.

We also try to do early wet-season burning to reduce woody weeds and suckers to open up grazing country, make mustering easier and to promote grass growth.

What we need to know to maximise success

Early dry-season burning has to be timed correctly. There is a small window between “too green” and “too dry”. We try to burn when the grass will burn well during the day but the green in the grass is high enough that it goes out overnight.

For all burning we need to make sure there is enough fuel over a large enough area to burn well. If the fuel is sparse and only a small area is burnt, the fire is ineffective at reducing woody weeds. It is also more likely to cause overgrazing because only a small area will have green shoots once the wet season arrives.

FARMING FOR THE FUTURE
This project contributes to the NT NRM Plan

For more information: 08 8942 8300 info@territorynrm.org.au www.territorynrm.org.au

Territory Natural Resource Management

This project received funding from the Australian Government’s Future Drought Fund.

Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment

Future Drought Fund

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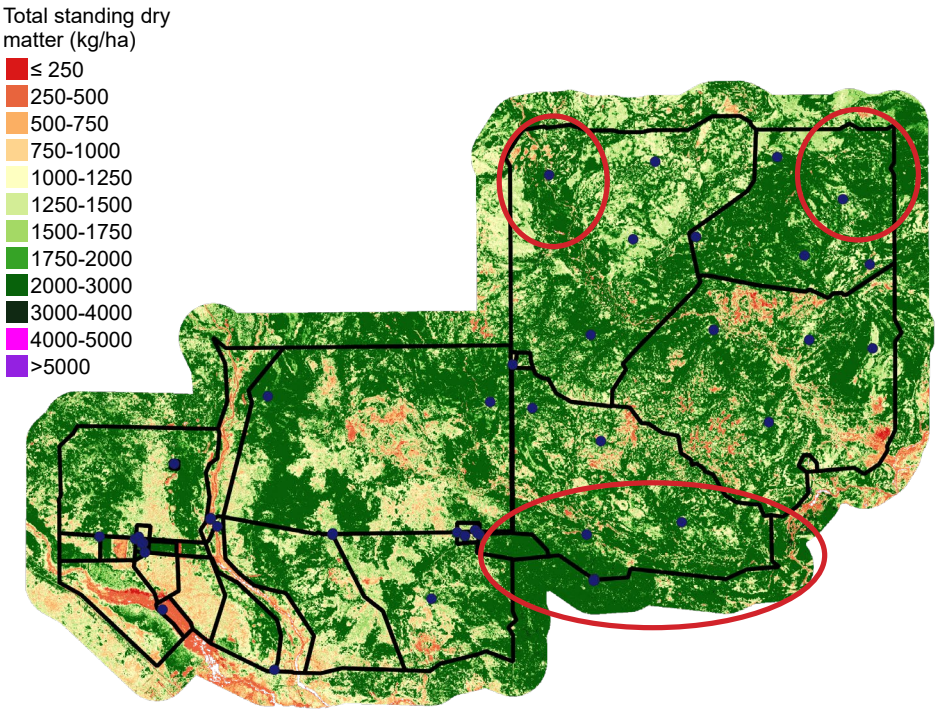
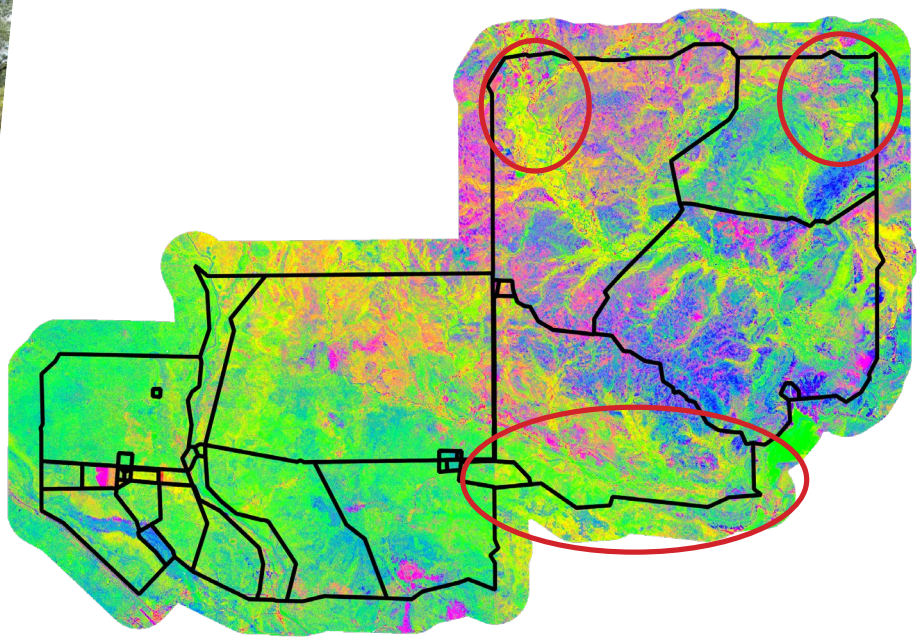
How Cibo Labs data helps us plan our burning and mitigation program

We have used Cibo Labs satellite images to show us:

- How much “green” is still in the grass - to get our timing right
- How much dry matter is available - will we get a good burn over a large enough area?
- How good the fire-break is after we’ve done a burn - we’ve found it clearer and more accurate than NAFI.



Areas of high biomass (circled in red) were identified for potential prescribed burns in March.



The fractional cover image helped determine whether the moisture content of the vegetation was high enough to ensure the fire would go out at night. Bright green colouring indicates higher levels of green vegetation whilst blue indicates drier vegetation. Purple indicates lower continuity of fuels, which might prevent fires from spreading.

Photo credits: Dionne Walsh

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